

For immediate release
Monday, Dec. 9, 1974

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary to Mrs. Ford

Mrs. Ford will host a party for children of members of the Diplomatic Corps Wednesday, Dec. 11 at 4:30 p.m. at the White House.

The Amazing Randi (Magician-escape artist James Randi) will provide the entertainment. Mickey Mouse will also make an appearance. Santa Claus and five clowns will be on hand to help Mrs. Ford greet her guests.

About 500 children are expected. The guest list was coordinated through THIS, The Hospitality and Information Service, a volunteer organization to help Diplomatic families in Washington, D.C. Some 89 countries will be represented at the party.

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BACKGROUND:

The Amazing Randi is a 46-year-old bewhiskered magician from Canada. He says he got his start about 20 years ago while performing in Montreal. The Quebec police watched his escapes and magic tricks and decided he would be a good man to test the security of their city jail. He says he was handcuffed, put in a restraint belt and chains, and placed in jail. He escaped, and the next day the Quebec newspaper labeled him "The Amazing Randi," and his career was launched.

Between performances, he lives in Rumson, N.J. with his adopted son. He has appeared across the US, Canada, Europe and Asia, and has performed on the Mike Douglas and Johnny Carson shows.

Santa Claus is being played by John Nidecker, Special Assistant to the President.

The five clowns are members of the Almas Temple Shrine, ^(Wash, D.C.) the sixth year they've helped entertain at Christmas parties for Diplomatic children. They are John Barrett of Rockville, Md; Max M. Feinsilber of Takoma Park, Md.; William Hillsman of Hyattsville, Md.; Lyle J. Howard of Annandale, Md.; and Lloyd E. Webb of Rockville, Md.

The children will be given a photo autographed by Mrs. Ford and candy, donated by Sen. William Brock of Tennessee.

The centerpiece on the refreshment table in the State Dining Room features patchwork doll-versions of Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus and his elves. Dressed in patchwork outfits, Santa and Mrs. Claus are holding a large basket of holly. The elves are looking on from a bed of greens on a patchwork runner.

The gingerbread house in the Dining Room was made by Hans Raffert, assistant executive chef at the White House. It is made from gingerbread, icing, candy and cookies, and is entirely edible except for the figures in front.

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