



# Merry Xmas & Happy New Year



With the approach of the Christmas season students are beginning to form their own attitudes towards this joyous season which is one of the happiest times of the year.

Christmas symbolizes the birthday of Christ. It is a season of spiritual closeness with God. To some, however, His birthday is a time to receive gifts for themselves, to throw big parties for their own enjoyment, and to "let go" and relax, forgetting the significance of the season. Such an attitude is not the true spirit of Christmas, as it should be His day, not ours.

Santa Claus is the symbol of the spirit of giving. His jovial, happy, and eager personality indicate the fun and joy one receives when he gives. Today, however, merchants and businessmen have taken ole St. Nick and made him into a sales attraction.

Nowadays some merchants place Christmas wreaths, holly, and other such decorations along the streets way before the Thanksgiving holidays to draw to the attention of the citizens that Christmas is nearing and that it's time to begin shopping. The familiar term for this is "commercializing."

"Commercializing" defeats the purpose of Christ's birthday. Even on Christmas

cards the spirit of the season is removed when gay cherubs, bells and other "cute" drawings that have no relation to the birth of Christ, adorn the covers.

This year the local Merchants Association, for the first time in three years, voted to wait until after Thanksgiving to put up the Christmas decorations and begin advertising the Christmas "specials." This was done with the idea of stopping to an extinct the sales competition always prevalent at Christmas time between Rocky Mount and other eastern Carolina cities, as well as local businessmen.

Rocky Mount is making an attempt to observe the season as it should be. By co-operating with the local Merchant and Ministerial Associations in their projects we can do our part as high school students in promoting the proper Christmas spirit throughout the city.

We are at the age when we should begin to put less emphasis on the receiving of gifts and to put more spiritual emphasis on Christmas.

At Thanksgiving we gave thanks to God for all our numerous blessings. At Christmas we are given the opportunity to celebrate with Him the birthday of the greatest gift He has given us — Christ, His son, and our Saviour.

## THE BLACKBIRD

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### 'Spirit' Is Success Gene Arnold Stars

"Blithe Spirit," the first production of the Edsonians for the season, was presented Friday night, December 10, in the high school auditorium.

As the curtain opened on the first act at 8:15, seven students had their first taste of the thrill of opening night. This was also the first play the dramatics teacher, Mrs. Jackie Hathcock, had produced in Rocky Mount.

Leading roles were played by Gene Arnold and Peggy Jones as Mr. and Mrs. Charles Condomine. Other characters in order of their appearance were Myra Floyd, Edith the maid; Bill Toler and Norma Savage, Dr. and Mrs. Bradman; Lucinda Oliver as Madame Arcati. The Voice of Daphne, a spirit from the other world, was Doris Cooper.

After the performance, Gene Arnold, president of the Edsonians, presented Mrs. Hathcock with an arm bouquet of red roses in appreciation for her time and effort in putting on this production. After make-up had been removed and costumes put away, the cast and production crew had a party at the teen-age club. There were plenty of "eats and drinks" for all. After the party got underway, the cast called everyone to attention and presented Mrs. Hathcock with a silver disk bracelet with the inscription, "Blithe Spirit, 1954."

Plans are already underway for the second production which will take place sometime in February. As of now, no definite arrangements have been made.

### Clubs Sponsor Projects

Several high school organizations are taking advantage of opportunities to help others with gifts and contributions as their projects during the Christmas season.

Each year the welfare department announces a list of families who need help. Anyone wishing to adopt a family during this holiday could take someone from this list. In the local high school the Musettes and Miss Alma Murchison's sophomore homeroom have taken advantage of this and taken families. This program brings Christmas to families who would not have it without this help.

A common way of helping others is the purchasing of Christmas

seals which will be mailed out to every family in Rocky Mount. Money from these seals furthers the fight against tuberculosis.

Local Jaycees are having a drive to collect toys, clothes, or food for needy families of this community. They have been working through churches, schools and civic clubs to raise these articles.

Other civic clubs will be sponsoring drives to collect articles of clothing, food and toys. They will distribute these among the needy families. Church groups will be visiting the hospitals and offering their services in that way.

These are only a few of the golden opportunities awaiting the people of this community.

### Students Plan Christmas Dance

To start off the holidays, the social committee of the student organization is making plans for its annual Christmas dance tomorrow night in the school cafeteria from 9 p. m. to 1 p. m.

Invitations are ready for every student in school, and special invitations for guests may be obtained from Miss Kate Parks Kitchen. Social committee members have spent much hard work

and time into making the invitations, featuring green wreaths tied with red bows, they have also worked hard in decorating the school cafeteria.

The P. T. A. co-operating with the Student Organization, will help furnish refreshments for everyone. Games and other interest will be conducted in the General Purpose room for those students who do not dance. Music will be furnished by a juke box.



### Erwin Robbins, 'Miss Print'

In a musical atmosphere Julian Aldridge, editor-in-chief of THE BLACKBIRD, crowned Erwin Robbins, Miss Print during a special assembly on December 16 while the nation's top tune was played, signifying that Erwin was senior high's top beauty. A beautiful bouquet was presented to Miss Print before she went on stage.

Erwin with the help of her campaign manager, Ronnie Felton, received a total of 10,007 votes. Kitty Thurman was runner-up. Her campaign manager was Charles Sanders.

Other candidates and their campaign managers were introduced according to the hit parade songs, since the theme of the program this year was hit parade music.

On behalf of Mrs. T. D. Young and THE BLACKBIRD staff, Luddina Oliver, business manager, thanked each candidate, each campaign manager, those who helped in the campaign and those who contributed to make the campaign a big success.

This is the ninth year that the school paper has sponsored the

Miss Print contest, the funds of which are used for the publication of the paper. Each penny donated counts one vote and the students who work in this campaign are doing the school a real service.

Miss Print's picture will appear in the Blackbird and the HI-NOC-AR.

Jean Thorpe was Miss Print for the 1953-54 year and Lillian Daughtridge won the 1952-53 contest.

### Srs. Choose Top Twelve

Congratulations are in order for Jane Hatchett, Kay Williford, Mimi Brewer, Erwin Robbins, Nancy Newbold, Audrey Kennedy, Bobby Savage, Bill Kincheloe, Sandy Thorpe, Marvin Barnes, Julian Aldridge, and Bobby Wimberly, who were elected the twelve most outstanding seniors.

These students have been outstanding all four years at Rocky Mount high school and they have each served the school in some way. Their pictures will appear in this year's annual.



Many students in high school participate in the true spirit of Christmas in different ways. Tommy Patton and Sylvia Uptograph are gilding one of the greatest Christmas opportunities. In the next picture are Sue Yelverton and Janelle Frazier painting the invitations for the Christmas party that will be held tomorrow night in the cafeteria. In the last picture are two of the working people in high school, Jane Hatchett and Jimmy Herring. Jimmy is dressing a Christmas window at Baldwin's while Jane looks on ready to help.