

# Christmas, Time For Joy

What is Christmas?

Is it just a time to decorate a tree, pile gifts knee-deep or hang a long, red stocking over the fireplace?

Christmas is more than just these material things so customary in our Yuletide festivities. Christmas is the day God, the Maker, gave the greatest gift in all of celestial greatness to a dying world . . . His son, Jesus Christ.

The story of the Nativity, of the angels' songs, of the shepherd's vigil, of the wise men's journey and of the birth of the Christ Child is still the most important part of the Christian Christmas. The purpose of the life, work and crucifixion of Jesus was to bring understanding and a better way of life and, most of all, to offer salvation to all mankind. Because the life of Christ is the basis of the Christian religion, believers devote a day in holy commemoration of His birth.

Those who are so quick to accuse America and her people of being entirely thoughtless and forgetful of the true meaning of Christmas evidently see only one side of the story.

They see the greedy little person who is more interested in stuffing his wallet than in filling his heart with Christmas joy. They see a few of the irritable sales clerks worn out from a day of pushing, shoving crowds. They see the Santa Clauses so covered with advertisements that the kiddies can't get even a peek.

They don't see the many clubs and civic organizations who make it a project to give some less fortunate family a happy Christmas. They don't see the millions, the nation over, for whom the story of the Christ Child is sweeter, more symbolic and more beautiful each year. They don't see those who gather on Christmas morning to thank God for His Christmas gift . . . His son.

Every American will have the true Christmas spirit when he realizes that while the lighter side of Christmas is a part of the holiday, the most important aspect is still that which is deeply rooted in religion and in the beliefs of all mankind.

## Tragedy No Respector

### Can Strike Anywhere

Helplessly the country stood by and watched, with horrified eyes, the great tragedy in Chicago where 90 school persons, mostly children, perished in a fire.

Arson was discounted soon after the fire and the cause contributed to accident. Whether arson or accident, the cause, not of the fire itself, but of so many unnecessary deaths is evident.

Actually the fire—as fires go—was not so bad. The tremendous number of lost lives was the result of panic and probably of a lack of disaster training.

Could it happen here?

Just because Rocky Mount Senior High is a one floor, stream-lined, supposedly fire-proof building rather than a rambling, three or four-story tinderbox with only one fire escape is no reason to become oblivious of any and all danger. There are never substantial grounds on which one may ignore the necessity of well-planned, regular fire drills and an extensive program of fire prevention.

Are people ever really as safe as they think they are? As far as the average student is concerned, fire is the farthest thing from his mind. His philosophy is "Only one in a million chances it'll happen to us." Perhaps . . . but when that one in a million happens, it's too late then.

Unfortunately, it takes a tragedy such as the loss of 90 young lives, now one of the greatest fires in the annals of American history, to jolt the public into facing reality. Suddenly, all over the country, groups are taking steps to see to it that what happened in Chicago won't happen in their schools.

The responsibility for safety, however, is twofold. It's up to the adults to provide relatively safe, fire-proof schools; it's up to the students to be prepared for disaster should it strike.



# Season....Hectic Yet Merry

Christmas . . . a joyous occasion but a hectic one almost any way you look at it!

If we think we have troubles, think of the poor people working in the stores! When do those poor folks shop? The girls of the gift-wrapping counters probably wrap packages and tie bows in their sleep . . .

The worst time for these people of infinite patience is **after** Christmas. Can you imagine how trying it must be to exchange grandmother's paisley shawl for two brass candlesticks, or baby's bottle warmer for four pairs of ruffled rubber pants? Makes me weak to think about it! After all the exchanging is through, the after-Christmas sales come, after which half the clerks either commit suicide or take the two-week vacation in January that they were planning to take in July.

Now back to the good old before-Christmas rush. Such fun!! Have you ever licked stamps until you can't talk for the glue on your tongue?? Or baked Santa Claus cookies until you'd like to see the jolly fellow in person to tell him his beard is too difficult to shape in dough?

During all the confusion of wrapping last-minute gifts, addressing the last hundred Christmas cards, baking what seems a million and one cookies, and cleaning up all broken Christmas ornaments for the day, we **STILL** have to act jolly and cheerful and have an "Oh, isn't this FUN??" expression on our faces at all times because of the **CHILDREN!** We can't destroy their wonderful delusions for one minute.

These darlings?? children always want to be Mother's Father's, Sister's, Brother's or Grannie's Little Helper, and end up leaving a trail of cake batter behind them, having particles of popcorn balls stuck in their hair, being wrapped from head to toe in red tinsel, or they can be found under the Christmas tree with the cotton from the snow-scene (you worked so hard on it too) in their shiny little ears . . . "But Mama, we was jus' playin' doctor. . ."

Despite all this, however, we'd go to twice, or even three times, the trouble and last minute worries, just to see the sweet, appreciative expression on their happy faces Christmas morning.

## Dear St. Nick

### 'Big Kiddies' List 'I Wants'

It's unfair but it's always the little kiddies armed with a lollipop in one hand and a long list of "I wants" in the other who get to sit on Santa's knee. The **BLACKBIRD** staff can't afford the lollipops but they do feel that for a change Senior High students and

teachers should have the chance to plead their cause with Saint Nick. From the following "I wants" the "big kiddies" are far from being lead with old age.

**Murray MacDiarmid**, the odd one in the bunch, wants a yerbasagrada (if Santa can decipher that).

### Meaning of Candles

Once again as the Yuletide season draws near it is time for the gay decorations that are a part of the American Christmas. The candle, one of the most beautiful and dramatic of all Christmas symbols is deeply rooted in legend and has a profound place in modern life.

**Miss Alma Murchison**, is really aiming for the moon (something our scientists have yet to do). She wants to find under her tree a millionaire husband who will take her around the world in 80 days.

The light of candles has always been symbolic of the enlightenment Jesus brought to earth. The radiance of His life and work sent beams of understanding and love to light the darkened pits of hate and ignorance.

**Skippy Best**, the daring one-and-only, wants a weeks vacation in Mau-Mau land, Africa while **Reed Nelson** wants something a little more sensible . . . like a girl friend.

Gayly decorated candles often light the windows of American homes today. In the earlier days their purpose was more than mere decoration. They were often placed in windows so that when Mary and Joseph passed often seeking shelter for the Christ Child, they might know that they were welcome.

**George Hondrous**, in a pinch, would like some time to think it over. Careful, George! It's later than you think!

Though today the meaning of candles is not so symbolic as in earlier times, the candle is still a thing of beauty and meaning and a treasured part of our Christmas.

**Mr. C. M. Edson**, going through a long speech to the effect of, "Have you seen one of those long, low, gorgeous '59 solid gold Cadillacs? Well, I want a pair of roller skates."

**Lawrence Satterfield** would like a straight "A" report card for a change. (Miracle, Miracle).

Just a reminder to Santa, in case you're listening. Please be good to these children since they've been fairly (??) good and since they've signed a written agreement promising to eat their Wheaties at least once a day.



## THE BLACKBIRD

### Rocky Mount Senior High



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