

# Smoke Signal MONTHLY

December 1958



FIRST PRIZE IN  
ART CONTEST—  
*Roy Jernigan, 12th Grade*

## IN THIS ISSUE-

PRIZE WINNING PROSE AND POETRY

in Christmas Literary Contest

Co-sponsored Annually by Conrad

Parent-Teacher Association and Smoke Signal

PRIZE-WINNING SERIOUS AND COMIC ART

# EDITORIAL

## Just Another Christmas?

by Terry Graham

Over the generations Christmas has become known as a "celebration." What kind of a "celebration" should it be, and what are we truly celebrating? To answer this is simple--discover what kind of a person Christ really was. Christmas will then be revealed as the festival of the nativity of Jesus Christ, because its chief aspects must be Christ-like in nature in order to be real.

Christmas brings about a mixture of feelings and attitudes. Where did these beliefs and ideals originate? Some came alive in our minds and others in our hearts.

The mind retains those thoughts which have been retold to us generation after generation; stories both real and fictitious; songs which have become traditional; and even decorations which have come to be the commercial part of our "annual celebration."

In our hearts lie the personal beliefs and joys of Christmas. To some, this means the exchange of gifts and greetings, to others a sense of well-being and tolerance.

Christmas is a "universal anni-

versary." It is not just a religious ceremony but a realization of a great truth to you and yours. Though I have certain feelings towards Christmas, yours may be very different, for Christmas transcends personal happiness or sadness, peace and even war. These contrasts are not due to just the religious aspect, but to our surroundings, teachings and activities. Thus Christmas is observed in many ways.

We all know Christmas is more than just a tree, carols, cards, holly, lights, gifts and mistletoe. Thus we know what it is not, but do we know what it is? It cannot become real by the mere relating of the "Christmas Story."

And so, I am trying to say, Christmas is not just Santa Claus, but Christmas is you, you are Christmas, and Jesus Christ is the Father of both.

We, as teenagers, must realize the true significance of Christmas. So, each time we say "Merry Christmas" give it more than a seconds thought as to why you extended this traditional yuletide greeting.

many people. Living in the country I had to travel several miles to reach home. The longer I walked the more anxious I became to get home to my family with the presents I had bought.

Then, as I brushed by an old brick building, something caught my eye. I stopped and, walking back, I noticed a man standing deep in the shadows. When I paused there for a moment, he stretched out his hand to me.

"Tell me, good sir," he spoke timidly. "What night is this? Would this be Christmas?"

I was so much taken aback by this question that all I could do was reply, "Yes, it is Christmas Eve."

The man's face brightened up considerably and, smiling, he thanked me and carefully made his way down the street, following the large buildings closely.

There was something strange about this man but, in all the excitement of the next few days, I almost completely forgot about him. Then several days later I saw in the paper a story that really touched my heart. A blind man had returned to his home after five years. He had been in an accident and could not adjust to being blinded. Therefore he had retreated into the country and refused to come home until this Christmas Eve when he had made his way back through the familiar streets to his home and family.

He said he hadn't known it was the Eve of Christmas when he started for home, and I often wonder if it was this same man I had met on the street who had asked me, "What night is this? Is it Christmas?"

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The strange force that pulled him back home pulls us all homeward at Christmas time. Something happened a long time ago on Christmas morning greater than anything any of us could possibly ever do or know. It is this that makes us all feel so entirely happy and glad. Everyone is a part of Christmas and Christmas is a part of everyone. Whether you are blind, a cripple, a deaf mute, or a simple tramp with mighty little to eat, or, like you and me, a normal, healthy person, it does not matter. At Christmas more than any other time in the year everyone is equal. The blind man sees, the cripple walks, the deaf hear, the tramp celebrates in his own way, and they are all equal for this one season if not at any other time in the year.

WINNER OF PROSE AWARD - 12th Grade--

## A Blind Man Sees

by Elizabeth Bristow

It was Christmas Eve and the snow was deep on the ground. The whole world seemed bright and happy; everyone was at peace. The pine trees were thick and green, just right for trimming with balls and brightly-colored lights. The sky, the earth, and all around seemed to overflow with the joy of the season.

I went into town to look at the

various sights. Oh! It was beautiful! The streets were crowded with last minute shoppers and the gaily colored lights shone down on the streets making everything sparkle. Faces were rosy, smiles enveloped all, the whole world was happy that night!

As I left the town to come home I passed by many buildings and I saw

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FIRST PRIZE WINNER ESSAY AWARD - 11th Grade---

## Little Things Mean a Lot

by Judy Whitmarsh

Just what is the true spirit and meaning of Christmas? I think the spirit God wishes us to have is an appreciation of the little things that make the holiday happy, holy, and peaceful.

A little thing that means a lot to me is the word Christmas. To see Xmas written anywhere always draws my unfavorable attention. The holiday is Christ's so he should be kept in Christmas.

Another little thing I like is the sending of cards. Every year in our home we string the Christmas cards we receive across the ceiling. These small tokens of someone's thinking of us give me an endless sense of joy every time I see them hanging over my head.

Smiles contribute a major part to the little things that make up my Christmas. The shoppers, as they hustle by in the crisp air, the children playing; friends, relatives, and even the manikins in the store windows seem to have a special smile of joy and expectation at this time of year.

Pinching and stretching pennies so I can afford to give to everyone on my list, the special shiver I feel when suddenly I spy the perfect gift for Deb or Skip, the crinkly feeling of bright paper, satiny ribbon and tinkling bells as I wrap each present with loving care all combine to make giving truly more fun than

receiving. But comes the dig of curiosity as to what I'll get from Mom or Sis, and the wonderful surprise of finding exactly what I wanted after only dropping two or three hints makes me wonder whether receiving isn't the most fun after all.

The crisp smells of pine, holly and evergreen mingle with turkey and new perfumes to make every sniff pure delight.

Decorations on every door plus the cheery greeting make me want to laugh right out loud to everyone I meet.

My Christmas wouldn't be complete without a fire burning in our fireplace all the day before, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. It gives a warm greeting to every guest that enters my home.

A traditional ritual that makes Christmas Eve full is the family trimming of the tree, never done without an okay from Santa (my uncle) by phone. This inspires close companionship and teamwork among us.

I'll end with the peaceful serenity that I feel when I say my prayers after the Midnight Service, go to Church Christmas morn and say the table grace Christmas Day. This final feeling is the icing on the cake, the final thanksgiving to make the season what God would have it through little things.

FIRST PRIZE WINNER POETRY AWARD - 10th Grade---

## The Snowman's Resolution

by Phyllis Larkin

*The snowman's hat was crooked  
And his nose was out of place,  
And several of his whiskers  
Had fallen from his face.*

*But the snowman didn't notice,  
For he was trying to think  
Of a New Year's Resolution  
That wouldn't melt or shrink.*

*He thought and planned and con-  
sidered carefully  
With his little snowball head,*

*Till his eyes began to glisten  
And his toes began to spread.*

*And at last he said, "I've got it...  
I'll make a firm resolve  
That no matter what the weather  
My smile will not dissolve."*

*Now the snowman acted wisely  
And his resolution won  
For his thin smile was wooden,  
And it didn't mind the sun!*

WINNER OF ESSAY AWARD  
IN THE JOURNALISM CLASSES--

# The Christmas Tree

by Marilyn Bujak

Where did the Christmas tree originate, and when did it first come into existence?

The true answer is shrouded in mystery. No one really knows the exact details of the birth and the growth of this colorful custom, for the precise event was never written down.

At one time, European peasants set up and decorated a tree on almost every important holiday. If the Christmas tree were one of these, then it is unaccountably the lone survivor.

We are certain, however, that the tree was contributed to Christmas by the common people. The Church definitely did not create it, and she disapproved of this pagan practice.

There are many accounts of Christmas festivities dating back to the Middle Ages, but they fail to mention a Christmas tree. In 1561 a forest ordinance was passed in Germany stating that no man could cut a bush for Christmas more than eight shoes in length. This seems to be the first mention of anything that can be recognized as the tree. A travel book dated 1605 tells of people setting up fir trees in Strassburg.

The Christmas tree's most logical ancestor seems to be the devil-defying greenery which people of the Northland used to decorate their houses and barns at New Year's. A tip of a tree was sometimes hung

from the rafters. Some people still do this. In many Roman Catholic countries of Europe the tip of a fir or spruce, decorated with red strips of paper, apples, and gilded nuts, is hung upside down in a corner of the living room. As late as the mid-nineteenth century in Germany trees were hung in windows with tip upward, the butt sharpened, and an apple suspended under it. Until 1890, in some places the tree was hung over the doorway, upside down, without lights, but colorfully decorated.

The forest ordinance indicates that by the middle of the sixteenth century some trees had passed from the stage of hanging greens to a standing tree. In other countries--England, Holland, Switzerland, and Scandinavia--it was customary to erect a pyramid of shrubbery. This was adorned with candles and a tinsel pennant.

Somehow this lighted pyramid and the decorated standing tree merged to become the Christmas tree as we know it today.

Who knows what changes will take place in the future? Already we see man-made trees replacing the real ones for the sake of economy and conservation. Will these substitutes take over completely? Let us hope that they won't.

The Christmas tree is a beautiful symbol of a happy season which should be kept alive and glowing for many generations to come.



HOLIDAY  
GREETINGS  
from the staff  
of the  
SMOKE SIGNAL  
Monthly

SECOND PLACE TIE  
POETRY AWARD  
10th Grade--

## My Special Gift

by Pat Johnson

*The stars shone brightly and the  
snow drifted high,  
As the moon cast its shadows we  
knew time was nigh  
For that moment of magic we'd  
dreamed of all year;  
In just a few hours St. Nick would  
be here.*

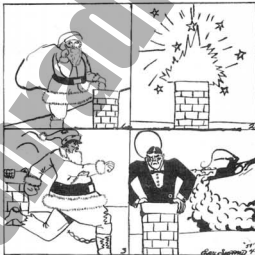
*Still deep in his dreams covered up  
to his chin,  
My little brother sleeps right  
through this din;  
As we scurry madly doing this and  
that,  
He snoozes soundly beside his  
toy cat.*

*How well I remember the Christmas  
of yore,  
I selfishly thought of myself,  
nothing more;  
Though each dream was fulfilled--  
'twas not enough for me,  
So I searched and searched, still  
failing to see.*

*However on high, He learned of my  
plight,  
And decided to help, to set my  
life right;  
How little I dreamed on that Sep-  
tember morn,  
My life would change, a tiny  
brother be born.*

*It's hard to remember the time be-  
fore he  
Came to mean so much to our  
family;  
To make each day like Christmas,  
you see,  
And oh, such a joy--he's only  
three.*

FIRST PRIZE CARTOON -- 12th Grade -- Earl Sheppard



# 10TH GRADE WINNER

1st Prize  
PROSE AWARD--

## Good Night, Santa

by Gary Vellek

It was eight o'clock as Mr. Parker, a rather portly grandfather of fifty five, settled back into his favorite easy chair, with his favorite cigar, and his favorite newspaper, to begin a pleasant evening at home. He presumed that Mrs. Parker would be in the kitchen performing the arduous task of placing the dishes in the dishwasher and tidying up the kitchen as she had done every other day of the year. He was correct in presuming that she was in the kitchen, but she wasn't doing the dishes.

Earlier that week Mrs. Parker had realized that Christmas was on its way and she was trying to think of some way to break this fact to Mr. Parker. George (Mr. Parker) took a dim view of her frivolous ways when it came to buying Christmas presents. It wasn't that George didn't like Christmas. It was just that--well, George was a very practical man. He had to work for everything he had and now that he was the first vice president of a small manufacturing firm and was making a comfortable living, he was saving for the day when he could retire. Mrs. Parker had other ideas.

Now, to get through to George. At first she thought of gently hinting that Christmas was on its way. She decided against that because she knew George would merely look up from his paper and nod, "Yes, dear," and not hear a word she had said. Then she thought of ordering Christmas catalogues and having them sent to George, but she knew he would throw them away.

Then all of a sudden she had an idea. This year George was going to have a big Christmas if it killed him.

Several weeks later, as Mr. Parker entered his study, he noticed something--a list--right smack dab in the middle of his desk. This, however, was no ordinary list. This was Mr. Parker's dear wife's Christmas list. It contained the names of the children, there were three, the nine grandchildren and some fifty names of people to whom they just had to give and some twenty five names which she termed "may-

bes." Mr. Parker stormed.

"Clara," he shouted. "Clara, what do you call this?"

"What, George?" she asked sweetly.

"You know what!" he raged. "This is absolutely out of the question."

"Yes, George," she said, "Maybe you can help me shorten it."

And thus began the worst half hour of the year. "You can't cross off that one; they always give to us. We have to spend that much on the children; they need those things." This went on and on until George gave up in desperation. One name had been stricken from the list--he had since died.

It was two days before Christmas and Mrs. Parker was in a panic. The tree had not been bought, she had to fix Christmas cards for a few people she had forgotten, the children were coming for Christmas and she had to buy a turkey and extra trimmings. She had to find some stocking fillers and do a thousand and one other things. George was late for dinner and the roast was burnt to a crisp. The coat for Sue (her daughter) was too long and had to be exchanged. How Mrs. Parker ever survived Christmas one

would never know but she always came through.

On Christmas eve Mrs. Parker got out the Christmas decorations, for everyone was there and the tree must be trimmed. George put on the lights. Then as was the tradition, the whole family trimmed the tree. There was much merriment and many balls were broken but the Parkers always boasted about their tree. Then Betsy, the youngest grandchild, had the honor of placing the angel on the top of the tree. The angel was a little worn and bedraggled for she had seen the growth of all the Parkers, but she still looked as shiny as ever to the happy family. Then the children went to bed, sure that Santa Claus would come to Grandma's, and the adults began to talk.

One by one they filed off to bed leaving Mr. and Mrs. Parker alone. Mrs. Parker tidied up the room and looked at George snoring loudly in the chair. Then she went to bed. When George came to bed he whispered in her ear--"Good-Night Santa" and in a few minutes all that could be heard were George's snores.

LITERARY AND ART ACHIEVEMENT PRIZES WILL BE AWARDED BY THE CONRAD PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATION AT THE CHRISTMAS ASSEMBLY.

At this joyful yuletide season each and every one of us should pause and reflect upon the great many delightful incidents and customs of the past and thus repeat this most blessed of events on a canvas of memory. Christmas has given us more than any other day of the year. We approach it with feelings of tolerance and kindness toward everyone. Bitterness, greed and jealousy are erased from our hearts. We decide that life is well worth living after all--not just for ourselves, for we take keen delight in making it joyous for others. Let us keep this spirit with even more enthusiasm this year and never allow the color and warmth of Christmas to escape from our lives.

by Terry Graham

# A Christmas to Remember

by Jane Sarius

In the bright sunlight and the piercing cold of the day, there was an atmosphere of happy anticipation. Angie Shelton felt she was going to burst with the sheer bliss of the season. It was December 18--Christmas was only a week away. The public school was out early for the holidays, and this week there would be a continual round of parties, dances, skiing dates, and informal get-togethers.

Angie had finished her Christmas shopping and her presents were all wrapped, hidden away in her room. She had received one of her presents early. An involuntary shiver of delight passed through her as she thought of the magnificent gown bought especially for the big Christmas formal. The girls would certainly have something to say about that dress!

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"Your turn next, Angie!" a merry voice rang out.

Angie smiled and then laughed just because she felt like laughing. This was the first skiing party of the holiday season. There had been a heavy snow two nights before and it was just right for the sport. The long slope, dotted with evergreens, looked inviting.

After bending down to adjust her skis, Angie stood poised, ready to swoop down the incline. And then, with a forward movement of her body, she was off. The cold air took her breath away and stung her eyes, but she loved every moment of it. Suddenly she saw a dark blur before her. She swerved to avoid it, and then all was black.

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When Angie opened her eyes and finally focused them, she saw her mother and father bending over her anxiously.

"How do you feel, dear?" came her mother's voice.

Angie unexpectedly wanted to laugh. She didn't even know where she was or how she had gotten there, much less know how she felt.



She did realize that she was drowsy.

"What happened?" she mumbled.

"You ran into a tree while you were skiing, trying to avoid hitting someone coming up the slope," answered her father.

"Yes, that blur. . . ." she thought confusedly.

"Am I in the hospital?" she asked, while thinking what a silly question it was because she could now see a doctor in white standing behind her father.

The doctor came forward, as if he could read her thoughts.

"You're certainly a lucky young lady!" he declared. "Lucky in that you have only a broken leg instead of a broken neck!"

"A broken leg!" she exclaimed. For the first time she tried to move, but there was a heavy weight on her right leg. A cast!

Angie was fully awake now and a

myriad of protests came into her mind.

"But not now!" she cried. "Not with the holidays and all the parties and things!" She desperately tried to believe this was a dream.

"There's never a convenient time for a broken leg," stated the doctor. "It's too bad it had to happen now, but you should still be thankful that it's not worse!"

He turned to her parents and suggested that they come back later. Angie needed to sleep now.

After everyone had gone, Angie experimented with her leg. She was not strong enough to lift it yet. She began to cry, softly at first, and then the sobs racked her body.

A nurse came in to investigate the crying. She had beautiful, twinkling eyes.

"Now, dearie, it can't be as bad as that!" she said cheerily, as she plumped Angie's pillows.

# member



dread the afternoon. She would rather have stayed in her own room in case any of her friends came to visit.

Mrs. Cranston wheeled her into the children's ward. The small faces that confronted Angie surprised her. They were not unhappy, but eager in their anticipation. Her own misery had made her completely self-centered and she suddenly felt ashamed. As she glanced around her, she saw that many of the children had been in the hospital for some length of time, because their small limbs were encased in heavy metal braces. Yet, they did not seem to mind.

Mrs. Cranston had brought the preparations for the party. She handed Angie a large bag of candy and asked her to pass it out.

As Angie wheeled herself in and out among the beds, distributing the candy, she carried on conversations with the children. As the party progressed, Angie discovered that she was actually enjoying herself. Thoughts of the other parties had not disturbed her all afternoon and did not bother her now. The hard core of disappointment began to dissolve.

Later, the children wanted to sing Christmas carols. As Angie joined them whole-heartedly and heard their enthusiastic, if not always tuneful, voices, she felt a joy which she realized was a true aspect of Christmas.

When Mrs. Cranston started to take her back to her room, the children called after her.

"Don't go now! Are you coming back to see us?"

Angie promised she would come again the next day.

"And the next day, and the next!" she promised herself.

"Bed for you now, young lady!" declared Mrs. Cranston briskly. As she turned to go, she said softly, "And thank you for helping to make the party a success, Angie."

"Oh, but I'm the one to thank you, Mrs. Cranston," replied Angie.

As she settled her tired body gratefully back on the pillows, she was thinking how little it takes to make small children happy.

There had been and would be other Christmases with parties and dances, but this would always be a Christmas to remember!

## 12th Grade FIRST PRIZE POETRY AWARD WINNER—

### Courage to Score

by Jack Naudain

There is a Man  
That had to be.  
He has faith  
In you and me.

This Man's son  
Helped the poor.  
Do you think  
You can raise His score?

Christ is known  
As this Man's son.  
He is loved  
By everyone.

This was the beginning  
Of Christmas you see.  
Christ was born  
To save you and me.

The meaning of Christmas  
Will never cease,  
Because this Man's son  
Is the Prince of Peace.

If we explain Christmas  
To a few that aren't sure  
God couldn't be prouder,  
Of our courage to score!

## POETRY AWARD WINNER, JOURNALISM CLASSES—

### That Holy Night

by Alice Watts

'Twas the night before Christmas  
In Bethlehem town,  
That a star shown from heaven  
On a stable of brown.  
Such a radiant beam,  
All the world saw its light;  
A sign to the shepherds  
Of that birth in the night.  
From the East came three Wise Men  
Saying, "Where is the King?  
For a sign came from heaven  
Where the Cherubim sing."  
And, after they saw Him,  
Being warned in a dream,  
They returned not to Herod,  
But followed yon beam.  
The King who was born  
On that first Christmas Day  
Was Jesus, our Savior,  
To whom we now pray:  
"Our Father in heaven,  
Have mercy, we plead.  
Receive, bless, and keep us,  
Forgive our wrong deeds;  
We humbly beseech thee  
Provide all our needs,  
And henceforth, forever,  
Enlighten all creeds.  
Amen."

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**1ST PRIZE  
ESSAY AWARD WINNER  
10th Grade---**

## **Merry Christmas???**

*by Samuel Ellicott*

Christmas is a time of rejoicing, a joyful time when everyone is in high spirits while doing their Christmas shopping--everyone, that is, except those who have to shell out with the money. You shouldn't let a little thing like money bother you, though, for, remember, it's better to give than to receive. Who cares if you don't receive a gift from someone? You will get even with the cheapskate next year! Of course, not everyone is this cheap. A lot of folks will spend at least 20¢ for a gift. You'll get even with them, too, because it's the gift that counts, not the spirit! There are, however, those who will go all out to purchase a very elaborate gift. The only trouble with them is that when they realize how good the gift actually is they keep it for themselves and send you a card. Now it is quite clear that giving gifts is merely a method of getting even for last Christmas.

Christmas is more than just giving gifts, though--for example, there is always the decorating of the Christmas tree. Everyone, especially the children, pitches in to help--and how they help! Who cares about a few broken bulbs, though, or having the tree knocked over a few times? It's all done in the Christmas spirit. Anyhow, you can always take it out of their allowances. Sometimes you may have the privilege of working to the sound of carolers. You have to work hard so you won't notice the horrible croaking of the carolers, who caught colds from standing knee-deep in the snow.

Of course, all this is forgotten when, on Christmas morning, the children come tearing downstairs to see what Santa left. There is the joyful sound of their gleeful squeals--also the beating of toy drums--as they set to work, like a demolition team, tearing open their packages and sometimes the presents themselves. This is all joyful mainly because you are sound asleep--in fact, pooped--and can't hear a thing.

All these things are climaxed by the wonderful Christmas dinner. There is turkey which is either dropped on the floor while being carried to the table or shot across

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and

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to

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the table while being carved, mashed potatoes with gravy spilled all over the place, cranberry jelly stains, pickles and olives being thrown around by the kids, and some kind of vegetable which nobody wants. This dinner is always fully enjoyed—that is, if you like cold-cuts, since the turkey probably wasn't done and had to be put back in the oven and eaten on the next day.

You must keep remembering, though, it's all in the spirit of Christmas. This Christmas spirit will probably last for a long time, too, because you'll be eating left over turkey for the next two weeks.



**THIRD PRIZE**  
**BETSY FISHER, 12th Grade**

### "THE REAL JOY" by Carol Strannahan

*At Christmas time there's one thing  
I sincerely believe--*

*It's more joyous to give than it is  
to receive.*

*You'll find "The Real Joy" when  
you lovingly give,  
For that is the time when you really  
live.*

*There will be a new feeling that will  
make your heart glad,  
A happiness to forget that you ever  
were sad.*

*"The Real Joy" will bring happi-  
ness, not only to you,  
But to your family, your friends,  
and neighbors too.*

*Keep "The Real Joy," and good  
deeds do,  
Not just on Christmas, but the whole  
year through.*

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*William Neave, 11th Grade*

## What is Winter

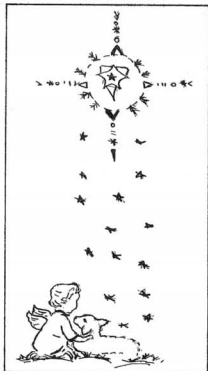
*by William Aisentzer*

Winter is the snow on the ground,  
The air crisp and clear,  
The frost in the morning,  
Homes full of Christmas cheer.

The wind whistling round the corner,  
Basketball games at the school,  
Fires in the fireplaces,  
Snow storms, pretty, yet cruel.

Branches, void of all leaves,  
Sledding, snow fights, and fun,  
Exchanging of holiday gifts,  
The New Year's celebration.

The bleak sky, dull and gray,  
With the sun a blur,  
As snow falls to earth,  
This, is winter.



*Betsy Fisher, 12th Grade*

## Jack Hanna's BARBER SHOP

Closed Mondays

Open Weekdays

in Newport

8 to 6,

across from

Saturdays

the Methodist

8 to 5

Church Parking Lot

SECOND PLACE TIE  
POETRY AWARD— 10th Grade—

# 'Twas the Night of the Dance

by Debbie Litchfield

'Twas the night of the Christmas dance and all over town,	When what to her wondering eyes should she see,
The boys were in suits and the girls were in gowns.	But a box of flowers as Tom said, "They're from me!"
The pearls were fixed in Sue's hair with care,	The little red bomb seemed so live- ly and quick,
For she knew that her date would soon be there.	She exclaimed, as they started, "This will be slick!"
When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,	It jerked and it sputtered and almost burst into flames;
She sprang to her feet to see what was the matter.	"Stop jerking, stop sputtering," and Tom called his car names.
The car was rolled up in a big drift of snow,	"To the Conrad High school for the Christmas ball,
Tom gave a honk of the horn and they were ready to go.	Now, stop sputtering, and get on the ball!"



SECOND PRIZE — Carol Pullen, 11th Grade

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Newport

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Portraits • Candid Weddings

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