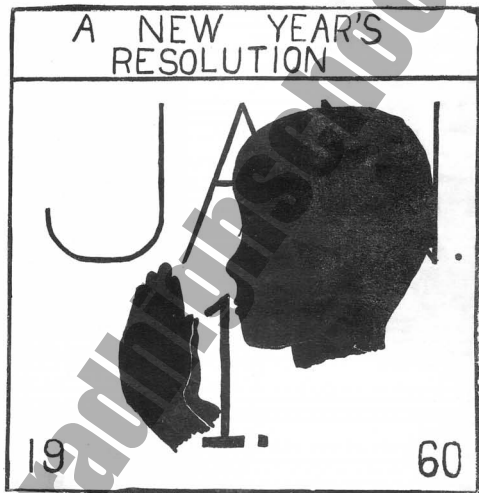


Smoke Signal

December 1959



IN THIS ISSUE:

BEST ENTRIES IN 1959 CREATIVE - WRITING CONTEST
CHRISTMAS ART
FIRST MARKING PERIOD HONOR ROLL
MOST VALUABLE ATHLETES

It came upon a Midnight Clear

Bill Trader, dubbed the stingiest man in town by his fellowtownsmen, head bent and with his hard breathing forming a vapor before him, tramped the crusted unbroken snow. Annoyed at being inconvenienced by the snow-fall in collecting delinquent rents, he was in no mood to appreciate the beauty nature had created in mantling the rooftops and trees and causing a veritable fairyland of glittering splendor.

Coming at last to the final debtor, heart hammering in his chest and gasping for breath from his exertions, he viewed with dismay the high drifted snow which prevented him from getting to the small mean cottage set back from the road.

Just one window showed a light, and no comforting plume of smoke eddied from the chimney. Like a defenseless creature, the cottage seemed to draw in upon itself under its snowy blanket.

Bill Trader stood stock still for several minutes, clenching his mittened hands and cursing under his breath. Finally deciding it was of no use to try to venture through the drifts, he turned and started home in a vile temper.

Unbidden thoughts began to nibble at the edges of his mind as he tried to concentrate on his footing.

If Tom Harding hadn't broken his leg by jumping in front of that fellow at the logging camp and pushing him out of the way of a falling tree, he would still be working and would have been able to pay his bills.

Seems he did hear at the store the Ladies Aid were fixing him and his family a basket.

He remembered Charlie Smith saying he intended making a sled for Tom's little boy.

"Pshaw! that money could be put to better use. Fool! Just because tomorrow is Christmas people get soft in the head. If they had a little more sense they would be as well off as he.

Furtively glancing over his shoulder, with suspicion that anyone could be near enough to divine his thoughts and have an inkling of just how well off he was, his eye was caught by the soft steady glow of a distant star which seemed to burn in the stark, cold sky with a brilliance surpassing all others.

Taken by surprise, he momentarily stumbled, and then stood still. Face upraised and eyes squinted, he studied the star. The glow seemed to pinpoint and flood him with an unwavering radiance. Tendrils of warmth, like seeking fingers reaching for his heart, startled him into renewed activity.

He redoubled his pace, mentally closing his eyes and ears. But a compelling hand seemed to touch him lightly on the shoulder causing him to tremble, and made the lifting of each foot and placing it ahead of its fellow a tremendous effort.

A different kind of glitter ahead of him

caused him to lurch forward and stoop to pick up silver some careless folk had lost. Straightening up, he caught his breath in a gasp of superstitious awe, as he stared numbly at a piece of ice with the star implanted in the center and shining into his eyes with a dazzling fire.

With a sob he cast it far from him and stumbled on. Now the radiance was before him, around him, not ordering, but beseeching.

Bill Trader stopped again, head bowed and arms hanging limply at his sides. He was fighting a losing battle with something he had never coped with before.

At last, he turned to the star, this time with questioning, puzzled eyes. The ethereal luminous glow bathed him with an emotion, making him dizzy and causing him to throw aside his arms and ask, "What do YOU want of me?"

The answer seeped into his soul, humbling but glorifying his countenance, strengthening his muscles and renewing his vigor to step out smartly and hurry home to open the door and call out joyfully, "Martha, Martha, we've got work to do this night."



2nd Prize PROSE

A Christmas Gift

The night was cold and clear, and the crisp air exuded a breath of purity. Above, countless stars twinkled brightly, unequalled in size or brilliance. Indeed the evening was incomparable in beauty.

All alone on a deserted mountain side sat a small shepherd boy, sadly tending a flock of sheep. He huddled close to the glowing coals of a little fire, in order to chase the chill from his frail body. This lad was barely seven years of age and hardly capable of protecting the entire flock. Why, then, had he been left with such a great responsibility? What was the cause of his sadness?

To find an explanation, one must look back to the preceding hours of the night.

All things had been quite normal at the beginning of the shepherds' watch. Then a wondrous event had taken place. The announcement of the birth of Christ had been made. Heavenly hosts had filled the sky. The stars had twinkled brighter. Angel choirs had sung, filling the earth with anthems of joy.

The older shepherds had all been filled with awe. And, after recovering, they had wished to hasten their footsteps toward the stable manger to offer gifts.

Since this boy was the youngest, being the least in respect to prestige, he had been left alone with this task, tending the flock. Also, there had been no need for him to go, since he had no gift to offer. Here was the reason for his sadness. His only worldly possession was a small, pet lamb.

He sat thinking a long time, but was not able to solve his problem. The night seemed terribly long to the little shepherd, accustomed to holding his watch for only short periods of time. By dawn his eyelids were shut and his head was gently nodding in soft slumber.

Finally he awoke, still as sad as ever. Slowly he trudged the winding path, homeward. His brain was still working hard, and still finding no solution. All day he thought, while sitting on his doorstep.

As twilight began to fall, once more he was prepared for his long climb up the mountain. But just as he was ready to leave, something soft rubbed against his leg. Looking down, his glance fell upon the fleecy grey lamb. It was not an especially beautiful creature, but it was his pet and one worldly possession, and a spot tenderly glowed in his heart.

At once a wonderful thought flashed through his mind. After carefully considering the idea, he decided to go ahead with his plan. Carefully he lifted the lamb in his arms and held it close to his body. Then he hurried to the stable where Christ lay in a manger. He would give the Babe a gift, not worth much in gold, but priceless to him. He would give all.

As he humbly knelt at the manger and presented his gift, he shyly peered upward. He then stared in amazement at the small infant lying in the straw! Why, He was smiling and reaching for the baby lamb! Indeed his gift had been accepted before all others.

As he left the shed to return to his watch over the flock, one large tear spilled down his cheek. For he, the humble shepherd boy, had given a gift not of material worth but one of priceless value-his complete love.

2nd Prize POETRY (Journalism)

The Meaning of Christmas

Long before the Christmas card,
And long before the tree,
Jesus was born in Bethlehem—
The ruler of men to be.

Long before the mistletoe,
And the bright red holly berry,
Jesus was born in a stable,
The son of Joseph and Mary.

Long before the Christmas bells,
Which on this great day ring,
Three Wise Men came to bring him gifts,
This precious, new-born king.

Long before our Santa Claus,
And long before the wreath,
God's heavenly powers on this earth
To His son He did bequeath.

So before you think of Christmas
As a tree, or toys, or sleigh,
Think about the little Christ-child
Whose Birthday is today.



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A New Spirit

At this season of the year we see glittering Christmas trees, bustling crowds, gay store windows, and hopeful children. But do we see the tranquility and contentment etched on an old man's face? We hear carols blaring from stores, church choirs, and organ music. But do we hear the sounds of the awakening world each morning? We taste the Christmas cookies, turkey, pie, and fruitcake. But do we ever savor the nectar of peace and well-being? In the hurry and excitement of the season, has Christmas become merely a superficial experience?

Let us hope that this is not so. Rather may it be that we withdraw from the outward turmoil of the tangles and enter the world of the intangibles in silence and alone.

We may find Christmas in a silent church late at night. We may discover it in a long walk under the stars. We may feel it in a quiet and heartfelt prayer. We may see it in the everyday miracles of life. And, when we grasp it, we shall obtain a new radiance, a new hope, a new joy, a new spirit—the Christmas spirit.

So much to be thankful for

So much to be thankful for—
The sun, the moon, and stars;
The beauty of the great outdoors,
And the gentle rain that falls.

So much to be thankful for—
A smile on a busy street;
The handshake of a friend,
When trouble you should meet.

So much to be thankful for—
For freedom and the right to live;
For justice and for honor,
And for hearts that still forgive.

So much to be thankful for—
For blessings great and small;
For God who gave His only son,
The greatest gift of all.

The Ascent

To me, the most beautiful thing on earth is a sunrise.

It comes early in the morning,
After the night dies,
On dreary dismal days
While the earth is still asleep,
It comes creeping 'cross the horizon
Like a fire that is ready to leap into the sky
And change the weary, slumbering dawn
Into a bright and cheerful morn.

1st Prize POETRY

Walking in a Storm

A feeling of sadness upon me is laid,
When I walk alone through the drizzling
rain.

The buildings about me are dreary and
bleak;

The people I pass are so dull and so
meek.

The rain is the tears that all mankind
has shed

In scorn for the living—in grief for the
dead;

The lightning's the hatred that's stored
in man's souls;

The thunder's man's anger which rumbles
and rolls.

But all is not dark when you walk in a
storm;

There's feeling that's strong and there's
love that is warm.

The rainbow shows this in its colors so
bright

The good of mankind overcomes the
storm's might.

2nd Prize POETRY

The Mouse In The Stable

In his home within the stable the little
mouse would stay,

Not daring to creep out of it until he saw
the day.

But one dark night when all was still, he
heard a strange new sound;

A little infant crying out from his cradle
on the ground.

The little mouse was frightened and
afraid to go outside,

But it was Christmas morning, so why
should he still hide?

Then from his hole he finally came,
(still frightened, I suppose)

And when he reached the windowsill he
saw a big pink rose.

His eyesight never was too keen;
therefore, I must explain,

The big pink rose was not a flower,
watered by the rain.

It was a newborn baby boy whom everyone
did greet,

Sleeping soundly in his bed, with angels
at his feet.

As you, no doubt, have guessed by now,
the child was little Jesus,

The One who saved us from our sins,
The One who'll always keep us.

1st Prize PROSE (Journalism Class)

THE UNIVERSAL SPIRIT

The snow-covered landscape lay incomplete silence as if expecting something. Everyone was in town finishing his Christmas shopping, for this evening was Christmas Eve. Suddenly a brightly-lighted object landed with a shattering noise in a pasture just outside of Small Town, U.S.A. It was a space ship! Out of it came Zickafooz, famous Martian undercover agent who was to complete some research work on the people of an average town in America. The result of this research was to help the Martian Army in its aim-vasion of Earth.

Zickafooz walked down the main street and into a large department store. "What are all these Kzyg (Martian translation: children) waiting in line for?" he thought. He walked over to a teen-ager who was watching the line. "Beg your pardon," he said. "I am new in this town and wonder if you could tell me what this line is for."

Sam, the teen-ager, turned in surprise. "They are waiting for Santa Claus! When the Christmas spirit is around there always is a long line."

"I am from far away," replied Zickafooz. "Who is this 'Santa Claus' and what is this 'Christmas Spirit'?"

"Man, you need help!" exclaimed Sam. "I can't explain it to you, but I will be glad to show you what the Spirit is." As they walked down the street, Sam pointed out the happy, smiling faces in the crowd and the beautiful music that was floating through the air. They stopped at one of the stores and watched a fabulous fountain display and saw a huge Christmas tree with many colored lights.

"Is this the Christmas Spirit?" asked Zickafooz.

"Just a part of it," Sam answered. As they went on, Zickafooz broke the silence. "I understood that the American people were always sad and thought of nothing but earning more money." He continued, "The reports also said that the American people are always fighting among themselves."

Sam retorted, "Sir, if you look at the happy faces, and listen to what some of these people are saying, you will realize your information is incorrect." Sam stopped and pointed to a Nativity Scene in front of a church.

"Is that the Christmas Spirit?" inquired Zickafooz.

"Yes, that is part of it, but that is not the entire Spirit," Sam replied. "Come on in, we are just in time for the candle-light service."

Zickafooz entered the church and was overwhelmed by the inspiring sight of a hundred-voice choir singing "Adeste Fideles" as they processed with candles as their only light. As they were leaving, Sam invited Zickafooz to come over to his home and enjoy an old-fashioned Christmas Eve. Zickafooz explained that he had much work to do, but would try to come over later. Before Sam left, Zickafooz, with pencil and pad in hand,

asked many questions about various parts of this "Christmas Spirit." After Sam had answered most of his questions, Zickafooz quickly left town and went to his space-ship, where he sent this message to Mars:

Stop all plans for invasion.

The American people are not as we have thought. They have been stricken by a serious disease called "Christmas Spirit."

It is caused by a super-human named "Santa Claus," beautiful music, brightly lighted trees, church services more inspiring than any we have on Mars, and the joy of friendship with others. This disease strikes everyone—the old and young, the rich and poor—and cannot be conquered. The inhabitants talk of nothing but peace, friendship, and goodwill. This "Christmas Spirit" has had more effect on the morale of the people than any wonder drug we have discovered. If the whole universe had this "Spirit" there would be no need for another invasion. I am closing now so that I will be able to attend an old-fashioned Christmas Eve celebration. This "Spirit" must be contagious for I also have the urge to shout Merry Christmas!

And so the spirit of Christmas had once again saved the world from destruction.

3rd Prize POETRY

PERSEVERANCE

In Spring the grass begins to grow,
And so we boys commence to mow;
We toil all day from morn till night,
For mowing lawns is quite a fight;
But if the grass would take a rest,
For fun and play we'd have more zest.

In winter it is quite the same,
O how we wish this snow were rain!
But when the snow is gone at last,
Back to the grass I do forecast;
This very pattern every year,
O how we boys must persevere!

JANUARY P.T.A. MEETING

"Conrad's New Guidance Department" will be discussed by Mr. Stanley Thomas, director. All parents are invited to attend and meet the Teachers and Guidance personnel — January 11 — 8:00 P.M.



The Christmas Tree's Lament

O me, O my, just look at me!
How terrible to be a Christmas tree!
My limbs weighted down with lights and
such,
With bulbs and icicles; oh, it's too much!
It wasn't so bad at the Christmas tree
stand,
With all the other trees at hand.
But then when they bought me and brought
me home,
Well, never in my life had I felt so alone.

But what's all this they're placing around
me?
So many things, they really astound me!
There's a train, and a bike, and a shiny
new boat!
Here's a book, and a doll in a little red
coat!

Now they're both leaving, tiptoeing out.
I'd sure like to know what the secret's
about.

1st Prize POETRY (Journalism)

The Duty

In a humble stall in Bethlehem
The little donkey stood.
His head held high, his eyes aglow,
His small heart filled with good.

And yet he was not unaware
Of the heartless jeering sound,
Made by his fellow "brothers",
As they idly stood around.

"You're nothing but an ugly ass",
Leered the vain dove from above.
"You have no talent nor any beauty,
Yet I sing songs of love."

"Ah, yes," the camel bellowed,
"Whatever are you here for?
For I am able not to thirst
For several weeks or more."

"And such a stupid animal,"
The wise old owl agreed.
And the little mouse peeped out and said:
"Your hooves pay me no heed."

Alas, the cow had one last word
To bequeath upon his brother,
"You give no milk, nor meat,
Like you there is no other!"

The little donkey looked at them;
Not one word did he say.
To hide the tears lodged in his eyes,
He slowly walked away.

"Indeed it's true," he glumly thought,
"I have no fame nor beauty.
There must be something I can do.
I know I have a duty."

But what the donkey did not know,
Nor knew the cow that roared,
This humble creature God had made,
Would someday hold the Lord.

The lights are all out now; I'm shaking
with fright.
However will I stand it all through the
night?

Ah, morning at last, what's that I hear?
Why, children's voices growing loud and
clear.
They're coming in here, oh what shall I
do?
Those creatures will clutch me, and then
I'll be through.

Now, they're in the doorway; how their
eyes glow!
Is it me that they're looking and smiling
at so?
Why they're all admiring me, why yes they
are!
From my bottom limb to the tip of my star,

They're dancing around and shouting with
glee,
As they open the presents spread around
me.
Each tiny face lights; stars shine in their
eyes.
Well, this is really the merriest surprise!

Could it be that I've really been wrong all
along?
How could I be lonely in this happy
throne?
With singing and laughter, I'm not sad at
all.
Being a Christmas tree isn't bad after all.

Mr. Walker's First Christmas

"Ouch!" exclaimed Mr. Walker as he
was hit on the head by a pogo stick,
being carried by a rather plump lady,
"Can't you see where you're going?"
"Oh, I'm very sorry, but—" was all
Mr. Walker heard as the lady was pushed
on to the back of the bus by an onslaught
of bundleladen passengers shoving one
another through the bus's narrow door.
"Will this season ever end?" thought
Mr. Walker, as he steered the big bus
back out into the mob of madly rushing
automobiles. He had been in a good mood
this morning, but that was before every-
one had decided to leave home early so
that they might avoid the rush, before
he was asked at least a hundred times
if his bus went to Fourth and Vine, and
of course this was before he had been
hit by the pogo stick. By noon time the
crowds had slackened down enough for
Mr. Walker to fight his way into a restau-
rant to get a bite of lunch before
he had to start his trip all over again.
At least fifty more times that afternoon
Mr. Walker was asked if his bus went to
Fourth and Vine, and nearly ten times
he barely missed ramming one of those
wildly dashing foreign autos. To top
off the afternoon his pants had been torn
by a "berserk" chihuahua who had decided
it was meat time.

When the evening rush hour rolled around,
Mr. Walker was more than ready to go home,
but he had another two hours to go, during
which time the buzzer buzzed at least
three hundred times, and ten to fifteen
ladies got their coats caught in the
bus's door.

Poor Mr. Walker, having been a city
bus driver for more than twenty years,
had really had his esteem for people
lowered, and, being a confirmed bachelor,
he was pretty well set in his ways.

As he pulled into the ten-minute rest stop
between trips, Mr. Walker noticed a group
of his regular riders standing on the
corner waiting for him; moreover when he
opened the door, the group hurried inside
as each member presented him a gift.
On the top of the stack was a note which
read:

For Mr. Walker,
These gifts are to make up for
the many, many trials and tribu-
lations you have encountered in
the past years.

Signed,
"The Gang"

As he opened his presents, Mr. Walker
seemed very calm and unmoved by all his
friends' kindness, but the people sitting
closest to him could notice a faint glint
of tears in his eyes. Barely before he
had finished opening the last package,
passengers began to board the bus for
the next trip. Due to the rush, Mr. Walker
was only able to utter, "Thank you, all,"
before his friends filed out the door, each
shaking his hand. While unobserved he
dabbed his eyes with a handkerchief; then
he placed the gifts down beside him and
started off once more.

At the first stop there was only one
gentleman waiting as the bus came to a
halt beside the curb. As Mr. Walker
opened the door, the man came charging
in, carrying a pair of stilts with the
valor of a Roman infantry soldier carrying
his spear off to war. And as can be ex-
pected, it happened. Mr. Walker turned
around to give the elderly man a piece
of his mind, but as he did so he spied
the stack of presents sitting on the floor
beside him. Seeing them brought the
memory of the kindness of his friends;
so instead of doing the natural thing he
turned back around, took a deep breath,
rubbed his aching eye, and guided his bus
back out into the maze of once-a-year
traffic.



The Gift

Many years ago when I was a boy in Palestine, I helped to guard and care for my father's small herd of sheep. Like my father and brothers, I wore a robe of our own sheep's wool to keep me warm when the weather grew cold.

One evening after the animals had been herded together for the night, I noticed, to my dismay, that I had lost my robe sometime during the day. The robe wasn't much—simple, brown, and threadbare from much use—but it was the only one I had. I knew it would be a long time before I would get another, so, leaving the sheep with my brothers, I set out to find my robe.

I searched for many hours, returning to every pasture in which the sheep had grazed that day. As darkness soon fell upon the valley and the warmth of the day ebbed with the setting sun, I was left, cold and shivering, in the moonlight. I continued to search for some time, but at last I gave up hope and started to return. But then, by chance, an oddly shaped bush caught my eye. I went to examine it and found my robe lying over a small shrub. Jubilantly I donned it and soon became warm and comfortable again.

I was far from the herd and decided to follow the crude path which wound its way through the valley. This would lead me back to my brothers and our sheep. I hurried along quickly until I saw two figures approaching me. Fearing that they might be robbers, I ran behind a large rock and waited. As I heard them drawing near, I peered out from my hiding place. In the moonlight, I could see a man leading a small donkey, upon which sat a young woman.

The man appeared to be much older than the woman. His face was covered with many wrinkles and his long beard had begun to turn grey.

The woman had a very placid countenance, one that was not easily forgotten. That night her dark eyes and delicately shaped features wore a tired expression. The man must have noticed that, for I heard him say, "It's not too much farther. We should be there soon."

The woman nodded, faintly smiling, and the couple continued along the path in silence. I watched them, moving slowly on, and wondered who they were and what would cause them to be traveling so late at night.

Suddenly a stiff breeze developed and blew across the valley with cool gusts. I saw the woman pull her wraps closer around herself. The man, seeing that she was cold, stopped and began to take off his cloak. As he struggled with it, I could see that the woman had begun to shiver. Even when the man did give her his cloak, it looked so thin that she would still be lacking warmth. I knew what it was like to be cold.

"Here," I shouted running from behind the rock. "Use mine." They looked at me with startled expres-

sions while I shed my robe and laid it in the woman's arms.

"I'm sorry if I frightened you," I began. "I couldn't help seeing you and you looked so cold. It isn't much (I nodded toward my robe) but it's warm."

The woman smiled very kindly at me and thanked me as the man placed my robe around her shoulders.

"We are grateful for this, boy," said the man, taking hold of the donkey's halter. "God bless you."

They started again down the path and I watched until they faded into the distance. I turned and resumed my journey home. I would find some way to get another robe and, in the meantime, I did not feel and wind, for the glow of the woman's kind smile had warmed my heart and shut out the cold.

Contentment

Disappointment came my way,
And I stood there to face it;
I looked it squarely in the eye,
For I knew men must taste it.

I know that on life's rocky road
Much misfortune we shall find;
Yet we must take what we are given
Until the end of time.

Where is Christmas?

Long ago on a chill morn
A beautiful, glowing, babe was born.
Shepherds, wisemen, one and all
Followed the star and the angel's call.
This day was then celebrated year after
year,
And millions of people with joy did hear
The tale of the gifts that were brought
with joy

To this wonderful saviour, a little boy.
Christmas was the name given to this day
When everyone's happy, joyful, and gay.
Then something happened as the years
did fly
The meaning of Christmas changed by and
by.

Oh! There's still the gifts and the feeling
of joy
But much less thought of the little boy
who brought happiness, just by being born
Long ago on a chilly morn.

Autumn Nocturne

Autumn is the death of summer,
magnificent, yet sad,
like some great cat with tawny
mane and flickering
amber eyes.

Her blood runs forth and touches
all the trees.

She moans low, and seeks a place
of peace,

For her great hunting days are done.
She growls once more, and sinks back,
And a wintry death lies over all
the earth.

Shopper's Lament

OH! Each year I worry and wonder,
Just what gift I'll buy for whom.
And for days I pace and ponder—
Stockings, slippers, or a broom?

Many nights of restless tossing,
Forgetting sleep to make my list
Of the perfect gift for giving
Every teacher on my list.

For Mister Palermo I thought for hours,
What gift would suit one such as he?
A necktie with decor of girls and flowers,
But what would be said by Mrs. P?

Now Mr. Casto's name next appears,
He should be easy, so I said,
But alas I thought till I in tears
Decided to send him a card instead.

For Mr. Brown and Mrs. Jarratt, and
perhaps Mr. V,
Who like things exact and proven,
A gold-plated slide ruler under their tree
Might start all our grades improvin'.

And the teachers of English from Allen to
Rowe,
Must receive a gift quite nice,
But what it will be is a mystery to me,
For I seem to have written it on ice.

To Madame Webber and Madame Dill
A Joyeux Noel I'll sing.
Probably ils auront besoin de pill
When un bon bon chocolat I bring.

With visions of Aeneas dancing through my
head
Of Mrs. Richardson I thought.
I'll give her a toga of bright green and red
But no where could it be bought.

But what about Mr. Keay,
Mr. Briggs, Miss Dawson and the rest?
I wish you in my own little way
Merry Christmas and the best of the best.

Le Pauvre

Snowflakes settled down on this old town;
'Twas once again Christmas Day.
I sat at my window watching the dim glow
Of the lights across the way.

I gazed at the alley all gloomy and scowly;
Oh what did I see down there?
I saw him all battered, all mussed and
tattered;
His head was barer than bare.

He was old and decrepit, and nowhere his
way led,
Except 'round occasional benches.
He was much underfed, and surely unwell;
On no friends could he ever depend.

I turned my sad head, after a tear I had
shed,
And glanced at our turkey so fat.
Said I, "Do not fear; you're better off in
here,
Than outside like that poor alley-cat."



SANTA'S DISGRACE

A week 'fore Christmas in Santa's shop things were all a-flurry

Old Santa himself was rushing 'round,

"Oh hurry, scurry, hurry!

We've got to get through, there's tons

to do, so do things up just right.

We musn't be late, we've got a big date

on Christmas Eve night."

Santa Himself was trying his best to

get into his annual red,

But the only thing that fit him was the

hat upon his head!

"Alas! Alack! What shall I do? Oh,

this is going to be great!

I guess this year I've eaten too much

and put on a little weight."

The elves they worked their very best

on Santa's furry coat.

But Santa still inside it fit as well as

would a boat.

"Oh, Santa, there is nothing left for

you to do but diet."

And Santa replied, "It just might work.

The least I can do is try it."

So all that week poor Santa lived on

fried fillet of shoe.

But on Christmas Eve, getting into his

suit was something he still

couldn't do.

So Santa sighed resignedly, looking

sadly at the boys.

And then he filled his suit to the top

till it bubbled o'er with toys.

And he took his sack and cut holes in

it to fit his arms and head.

But lo and behold! Could this be Santa?

Only his face is red.

DAY OF BLISS

On the day after Christmas,
My father used to say,

With all their new found presents,
The kids played through the day.

But I've seen our "Modern Children,"

On this so-called "Day of Bliss,"

Bustly preparing,

Their next year's Christmas list.

SAVE THIS DATE - JANUARY 30TH

Smoke Signal's 1960 series of rock and roll dances starts Saturday night January 30th, featuring Conrad's own dance band and a popular recording artist. Watch for details next month.

3rd Prize PROSE

(Journalism Class)

A Crisis Averted

What a dull routine, I observed, as I sat in the ready room of the Northampton, Massachusetts Airport with my fellow weekend pilots. I had to admit that being in the Air National Guard had its advantages, where money was concerned, but what a way to spend a Thursday night the week before Christmas!

I looked around the room at my fellow officers. There were Bill Noore and Dick Rith, both coaches at the local high school, and myself, Sleeves Banyon, former comic strip pilot. We made up the three-man flight crew that was substituting for the regulars who were on Christmas leave.

Suddenly the horn sounded and a voice blared out the call for an unidentified flying objects alert. Dashing out of the building, I saw my mechanics already on the runway firing up my DZ-129. Climbing into parachute harness and oxygen mask, I heard the tower tell Bill we were cleared for immediate emergency take-off. Taxiling into runway position, I saw Dick go flying into outer space straight up without his plane. I was to find out later that he had pushed his ejection seat button while reaching for an ashtray. This accident had already given the creatures in the UFO a score of one for three.

As we took to the air, I received instructions to head the group due north. The object reported as long and rust-colored was heading for our town. While I was mulling this over in my mind, my train of thoughts was quickly diverted to Bill's plane on my left. While gunning his motor, as he often did, he stalled and was at this moment plunging tailward to the ground. After wishing him a happy landing, I flew forward to meet whatever was endangering my homeland.

I first encountered the object flying at eleven o'clock high and headed due south. Flying in a half circle, I inspected the object quite thoroughly and attempted to make radio contact with it. The rest of my story can be gained from a transcript of our radio conversation, made at the tower, which follows:

DZ-129 to UFO: "Please acknowledge."

UFO to DZ-129: "I don't have time to; I never have had to; I don't plan to now. Can't you see? I'm late. I don't know what the Mrs. is going to say when she finds out."

DZ-129 to UFO: "Would you please identify yourself?"

UFO to DZ-129: "Where in heaven's sake have you been? Who else goes out on Christmas Eve with eight reindeer and a red sleigh full of toys?"

DZ-129 to UFO: "But sir, you only have six reindeer, and your sleigh is chipped and rusted."

DFO to DZ-129: "You can't josh me, son. I may have been a little fuzzy because of the tranquilizing pills I've been taking on account of the steel strike making all my orders late, but I had a big red circle around the date. I think?"

DZ-129 to UFO: "Santa, you had better turn around. That circle probably marked the full moon. Perhaps you should set down at the base and let me show you a calendar over a cup of coffee."

UFO to DZ-129: "Mercy me, perhaps I should, but what will Mrs. Claus say about all this. I'll never hear the end of this!"

As Santa's sleigh glided off into the broad moonlight, headed north to Mrs. Claus, I, Sleeves Banyon, returned to my quarters, confident that I had again averted a national disaster.

DUSK

It was that time of evening when the sky is an amethyst, set in gold, sprinkled with diamond chips. The earth lay nestled in an ermine robe, her jewels sparkling as the last rays of a dying sun touched them. Trees, like ladies in shimmering stoles of frost, sang a strange, wild, soft song as the wind tugged gently at their hair. The earth met her escort, dressed in darkness with one flashing diamond on his lapel, as a chaperone moon remained discreetly behind a filmy curtain of windswept clouds.

THE CHANGING WEATHER

The rain is like diamonds
As it falls from the sky;
The white clouds like angels
Chasing the dark ones on by.

The sun in its splendor
Shines bright on the world;
The white sky from snow
Is like chiffon unfurled.

AUTUMN

Autumn is a wonderful, beautiful season!
Boys and girls, filled with love of life,
Walk hand in hand, happy beyond reason,
And forget all hardships and strife.

O, if only winter were far away,
Bare and cold, and so forbidding!
If only autumn were here to stay,
And with it our carefree love of living!

But winter will as always come,
Bringing its cold, inclement weather.
This one won't be as bad as some,
For we are happy and, above all, together.

2nd Prize ART



A LETTER FROM PAUL

The driving snow bit into the G.I. as he huddled in his freezing fox-hole, trying to keep warm. He scanned the bleak horizons of South Korea, noticing the fires behind the enemy's lines.

"Paul Leach, P.F.C., 3rd Regiment, 5th Division, U.S.A.," was the address that glared up at him from a gaily-colored package. It was from his mother and he had failed to open it. He thought of the other presents she had given him as a child. Paul had to lie to his friends at Christmas time, because they had always received wonderful gifts, while he had always found a cheap one of which was ashamed. He remembered how his friends used to make fun of his gift until he would go home crying. Paul began to dread Christmas and as he became older; he hated it. He came from a broken home with only his mother and his two brothers to support him. All he had known was poverty, and at the first chance, he had enlisted in the Army.

"This is the best place for me," he thought. "Away from home and Mom at Christmas time."

Just then his buddy, Jim Roberts, jumped in beside Paul.

"Hey, you have any matches? Mine are all wet."

"Sure," Paul replied. "Take mine."

They sat in the fox-hole and smoked until Roberts noticed Paul's package.

"How come you haven't opened up your present, Paul?" queried Jim.

"Oh, I guess I haven't had the time," Paul lied. "What did you get?"

Jim's eyes glanced at the ground and Paul remembered his story. Jim's wife had been killed only a few weeks ago in an automobile crash. His son had been placed in a foster home, for Jim was having trouble getting leave to go home.

"I'm sorry, Jim. I forgot."

"Oh, that's all right, Paul. I'm getting used to it. I sent my boy a watch. It wasn't much, but I'll bet he'll be proud of it when he shows it to his friends. I better get back now, Paul. I'll see you."

2nd Prize ART (Journalism Class)



Jim's words stuck in Paul's mind. The part about "it wasn't much" and "I'll bet he'll be proud of it" started Paul thinking how wrong he had been. He knew now how much those gifts had cost his mother in hard work and how he must have hurt her when he was ashamed of them.

He hoped it wasn't too late to make up for it. Paul got out a piece of paper and a stub of a pencil and began to write.

Mrs. Leach heard the mailman come, and she went out and brought in the mail. Her heart skipped a beat as she saw the letter from her son. She quickly tore it open and read it. Tears came into her eyes as she read the last paragraph. It said, "I really am sorry, Mom and I want to make up for it. I have some leave coming to me as of January 3rd. I'll be home as soon as I can. You can bet on that."

She ran upstairs and began to straighten up his room a little bit in preparation for his arrival. It was January 10th now, and he should be home any day she thought.

The doorbell rang and Mrs. Leach ran downstairs, hoping it was her son. She opened the door and saw a messenger boy.

"Are you Mrs. Leach? I have a telegram for you," the boy said.

Mrs. Leach took the telegram and opened it reluctantly.

"Here, boy. You read this telegram to me. Will you please?" Mrs. Leach asked.

PRINCIPAL'S LIST

Students receiving all A's or all A's and one B in every major five-times-a-week subject have received first marking period Principal's List recognition for highest academic achievement in the school so far this year. This list has just been made public by the Student Council.

Seniors earning this honor are Linda Churn and Joyce Ryan. The four from the junior class are Joseph Cavalier, Lee Hague, Joan Lange and Joann Mansfield. Members of the sophomore class with such high academic achievement are Jonathan Bragdon, Joan Carew, Carol Hadley, Linda Hirst, Judith Hornby, Steven Lucas, Kenneth Maclary, Christine Manning, Ruth Soltroff, Henry Stewart, Joan Theobald, Carol Whitmarsh, and Mary Young.

WANT A NEW BROTHER OR SISTER?

What a wonderful experience it is to share your home with an American Field Service Foreign Exchange Student! The cost to your family would be hardly more than that of another mouth to feed. For example, he would be able to share a bedroom with a member of the family. All his transportation to and from the United States, personal and school financial needs are taken care of by other agencies. During his stay with you he will need the same things you need, but probably a little more love and understanding.

Call Mrs. Henry C. Lautenklos at WY 4-9628 or talk to Betty Lue Fisher if you have questions or wish to apply for a 1960 foreign exchange student.



1959 Creative-Writing Contest

This year's Smoke Signal Creative-Writing Contest, co-sponsored by the Conrad Parent Teachers Association, was entered by more than 150 students. Some of the best of their entries are published in this issue which has been largely devoted to the beauty and holiness of the Christmas season.

All entries were judged by the literary staff's co-editors—Robert Eastburn, Janice Livermore, and Larry Kneisley. First, second, and third prizes were awarded to entries in poetry, prose and art categories—with awards being made this year both to regular staff members and other

students contributing entries from outside the journalism class.

Winners will receive their awards on the stage at today's Christmas assembly and the best poems will be read. Students receiving awards are to sit in the front row at the start of today's assembly.

Smoke Signal wishes to thank the PTA and its president, Mr. Ralph Carter, for appropriating \$30 in prize money to which Smoke Signal has added \$20. The staff would also like to congratulate all entrants on their fine spirit of cooperation and very well-written essays, stories, and poems.

"Sure, Ma'am. It says:

Mrs. Paul G. Leach,

We are sorry to inform you that on the day of January 2nd your son was....."

But he had sent his mother the best Christmas gift after all—his love.

THE FIRST CHRISTMAS

On the night of that first Christmas

In little Bethlehem town,
Lord Jesus was born unto Mary—
Our Savior renowned.

The heavens glittered with angels
While many trumpets sounded,
To tell the whole world that
Their Savior was founded.

A beam shining from a bright star
In the East.

Showed the Three Wise Men
The way of peace.

Having followed the star, they brought
Their gifts three
Of gold, frankincense, and myrrh
To thee.

The little baby lay in the
Tiny manger,
While people rejoiced and
King Herod angered.

Everyone the world over was
Happy and gay,
Never to forget that
Remarkable day.

For it was Lord Jesus who was born
On that first Christmas night.
To teach everyone to love—
And also to do right.



CHRISTMAS CATASTROPHE



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NEXT TO SHAFFER'S MARKET

FALL SPORTS FINAL

J.V.'s END SEASON ON TOP AND NOW — BASKETBALL!

Our J.V. Football team is coached by Mr. William Moore, who is also a varsity coach.

In seven games this season, the J.V.'s have won five, dropping their only decisions to A. I. duPont and Mount Pleasant. This fine record placed them on top in their "conference," where they were undefeated.

The J.V.'s have shown a powerful offense and a rock-like defense to go with it. They use straight drives from the "T" and occasionally open up with a pass on first or second down. The team had good speed, featuring Joe Sisifo, who, according to Mr. Moore, is almost as fast as Mike Brown. Their passing combination of Tom Spain to Ken Frederick or Mike Mack picked up much yardage and so has fullback Bill Corrigan.

Mr. Moore says that many of these boys will be participating in Varsity football next year, for they are getting good experience by playing "pretty fast football" now.

The team consists of:

Ends: Mack, Frederick and Tasker
Tackles: Bried and Stephens
Guards: Benoit, King, and Riblett
Centers: Cavalier and Blackway
Quarterbacks: Spain, Martin and Taylor
Halfbacks: Sisifo and Cooke
Fullbacks: Coney and Corrigan

"The team has shaped up well and next year we should be great," said Mr. Moore.

If there is a person (student or teacher) at Conrad High School who doesn't know the rules of basketball, he had better make an appointment with one of the gym teachers. But those who could tell how and why the game originated are probably few and far between.

Basketball is one of the very few games having a definite history. In Springfield, Massachusetts, in 1891, James Naismith invented, in one evening, a game which could be played indoors during the winter months and could be enjoyed by everyone. He thought that the world needed an indoor game that was active and required skill, but was not especially rough.

Because it was a game requiring individual skill as well as teamwork, causing excitement for the players and spectators, and needing small teams, Naismith's game of basketball spread rapidly from the Y.M.C.A. gymnasiums to the high school and college gymnasiums of America.

Today basketball is played professionally, and it has spread to fifty countries and territories other than the United States. Basketball was accepted very enthusiastically everywhere, and it has now become known as the all-American game.

NEXT ISSUE

SPECIAL PHOTOGRAPHIC ESSAY
ON CONRAD'S NEW VARSITY
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FLASH!!

The sports staffs of Smoke Signal take great pleasure in announcing the winners of the fall season's Most Valuable Player awards. These athletes were selected on the basis of performance in the sport, scholarship, and leadership qualifications by the players and coaches of the teams.

FIELD HOCKEY

Leta Martin

FOOTBALL

Lee Mc Master and Michael Brown

CROSS COUNTRY

Joshua Baine

CHOICE CHRISTMAS TREES

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To the Editors

I feel certain that I am speaking for the entire school—as well as many citizens of our community—when I break a precedent by publicly commending the cast, stage and lighting crews, Mr. Morgan, and his student director, William Harlow, on the remarkably fine production of *Mrs. McThing* presented this month by the Sock and Buskin Club. In my memory at Conrad—and this goes back ten years—there has been no full-length play produced with a more professional air, in my estimation.

Certainly the cast demonstrated how hard work and capable direction can team up with great writing to make a "hit" show. It was a difficult play to present due to its mystical and comical aspects as well as the need for special effects, and this was especially true for a high-school cast which had had little previous acting experience. Many in the audience noted how the performance compared favorably with these versions staged recently by adults in our community.

Of special significance, it seems to me, was the courageous performance of William Spurlin as the red-headed rascal-turned-angel upon whom witch McThing first vented her fury. He should be congratulated upon a great personal as well as artistic victory.

To sum up, may I say that I feel sure that Helen Hayes herself would have left Cummings Auditorium with a lighter heart after seeing our Conradians perform in her *Mrs. McThing*.

Malcolm E. Baird
Head of the English Department
December 7, 1959.

