

# Art Students' Drawings Give Their Version Of Christmas; Teacher Explains Background

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As you read or glance through this Christmas edition, you will notice that a new expression of Christmas is evident.

Many of this year's greetings were drawn by Heppner's school children—grades one through twelve. My only regret is that not each and every one of their pictures could be used, because they are all delightful. Before anyone can really enjoy these pictures, children's art and creative growth first must be more clearly understood.

There are definite ordered stages in a person's growth and maturity pattern, and likewise there are definite ordered stages in a person's creative growth. Just as a baby crawls before walking, and walks before running, so must each person pass through seven different stages in creative awareness. These stages are the following: Scribble (two to four years), Preschematic (four to seven years), Schematic (seven to nine years), Dawning realism (nine to eleven years), Pseudo-Naturalistic (eleven to thirteen years), and Crisis of Adolescence (thirteen to seventeen years). I realize that the stages I have mentioned above may not hold much meaning at the moment, but I will explain them briefly as I deal with each age group.

First, I would like to explain how they drew these Christmas pictures. My art students started preparing these pictures for your enjoyment around the first of November. We talked about Christmas and tried to name as many things as we could about the first Christmas and our celebration of it today. From the list that each group made, each student then chose and drew eight different aspects of the holiday. Each person chose one of his drawings to send to the Heppner Gazette-Times, which in turn would be shown to the local merchants for their selection as a Christmas greeting. Each student spent a great deal of time drawing and re-drawing his picture so he could execute it on the final paper without making a single mistake before the final drawings were turned over to the newspaper. This is true not only of the high school students but also of the first graders.

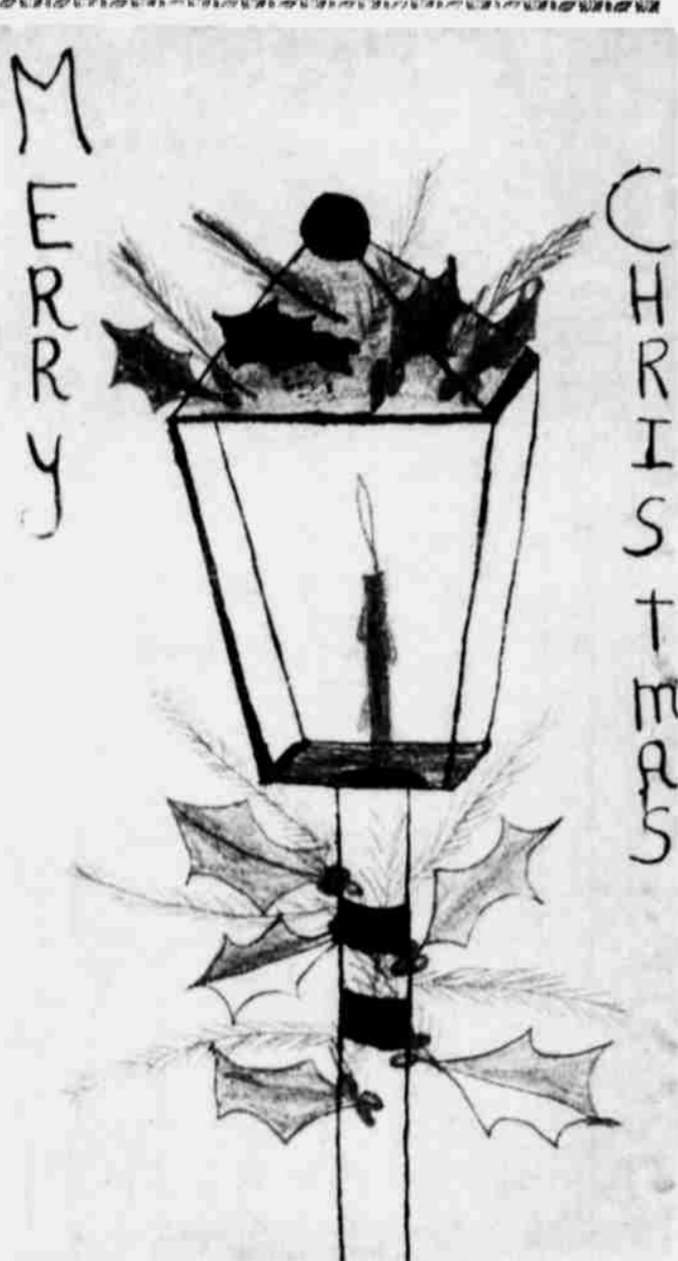
The majority of the first and second graders have started to enter the creative stage of Schematic drawing. They are now forming definite concepts of man and his environment. In pure schematic the child doesn't express intentional experiences—only the Christmas tree, star, Santa Claus, Baby Jesus. But by exaggerating important parts of his picture and omitting other parts, the students' experiences are expressed.

The third graders are entering into the stage of Dawning Realism which the fourth and fifth graders occupy. It is now that the students become aware of detail and emphasis of it. Santa Claus now has buttons on his jacket and boots to wear. It is also at this time that the delightful X-ray vision exists. A house is drawn but everything inside the house—Christmas tree, Santa Claus, and fireplace—is also shown, and Santa is not only shown with his sack of toys on his back but also what he is carrying inside that sack. Halos of angels, Mary, Joseph, and the Christ Child are shown with connecting stems to the people's heads. Could this be their concept or are they products of our society?

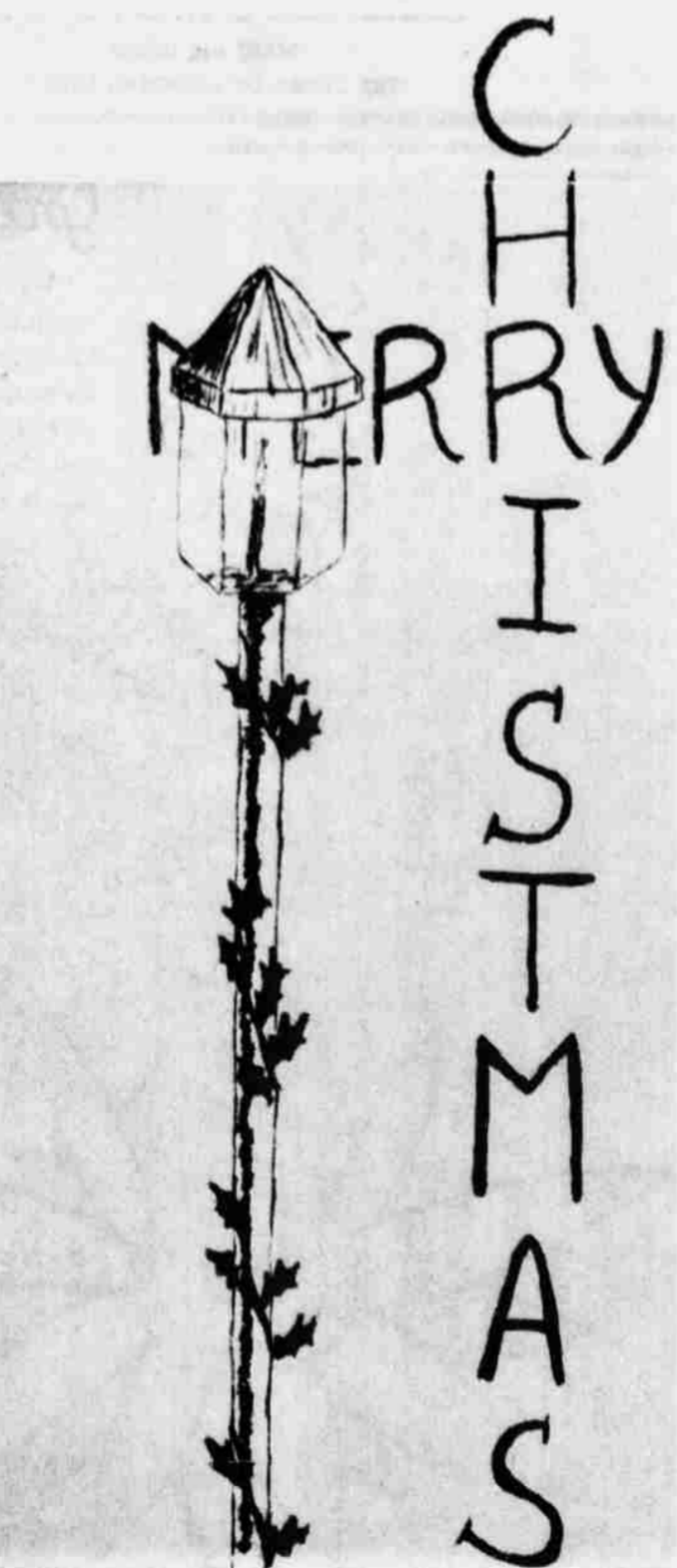
The sixth graders are well into the Pseudo-Naturalistic stage of creative growth. It is now that they are developing intelligence in their pictorial executions, yet remain unconscious for dramatization and action. It is now that their sense of humor becomes evident in connection with their environment. They begin to show Santa Claus riding in super sleighs—helicopter, jets and flying saucers, Santa getting stuck in chimneys or burning his toes because someone left the fireplace burning, and Santa's reindeer alighting on a roof with the sled dangling over the edge and toys falling to the ground.

The stage of Crisis of Adolescence is occupied by all high school age students. They possess two types of awareness—visual and haptic. Their visual awareness is concerned mainly with their creative execution while their haptic awareness deals with their self-expression and emotional approach to subjected experience. It is during this time that the students seek symbols of expression and emotion without true abstract (in-between awareness). An example of this type of approach is a student's drawing of a dove carrying the Christmas star in its beak with the wording, "Peace on Earth."

I hope the above sketchy outline of creative growth will help you enjoy and understand each and every drawn Christmas greeting which appears in these pages.



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**CARL SPAULDING**  
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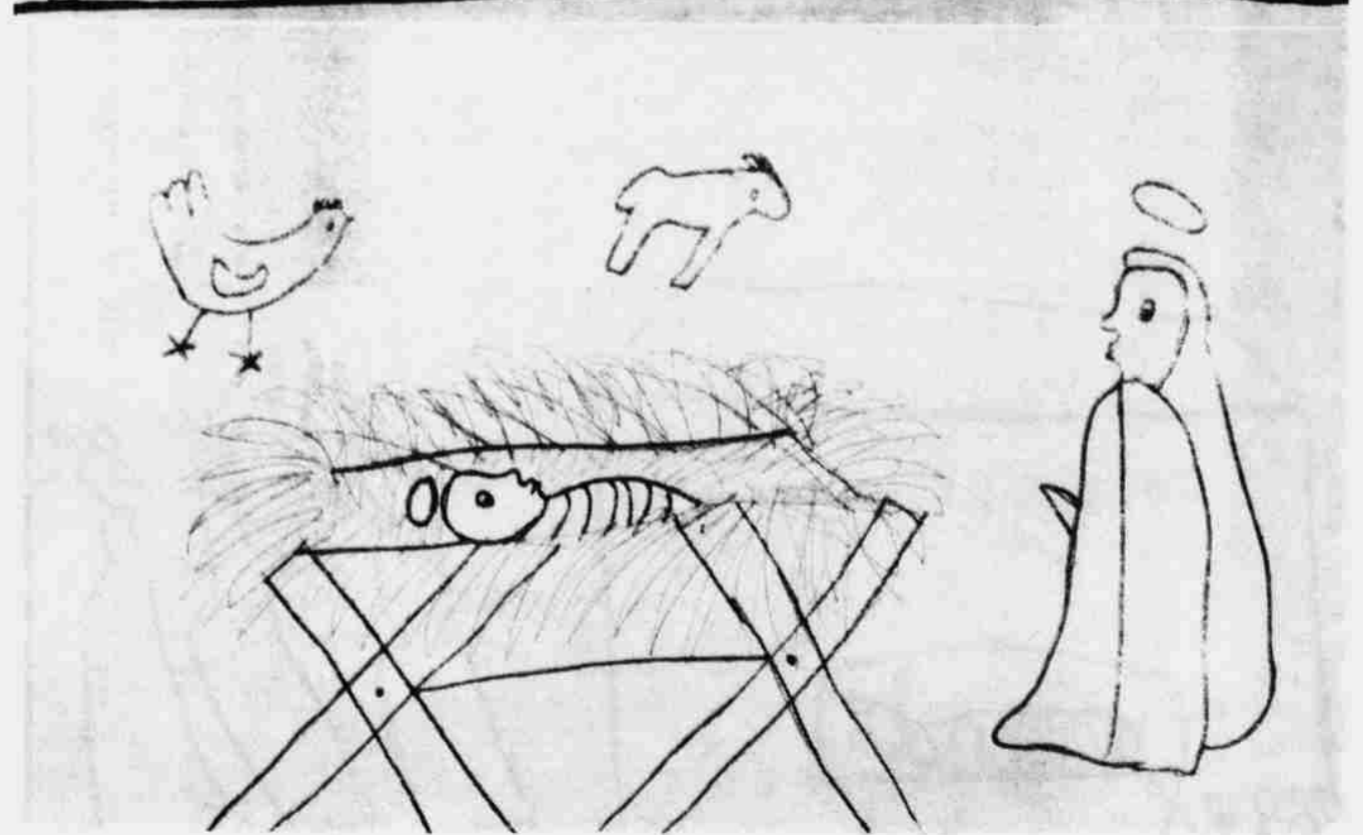
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## CREETINGS



DRAWN BY KELLY KRIEGER, 3rd GRADE

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