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Despite the Weather Winter Isn't Here

No matter how cold Birmingham residents may think it is or what the weathermen say, winter is not here yet.

"Winter will officially strike at 3:00 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 21," the shortest day of the year, says Hazel M. Loah, University of Michigan associate professor of astronomy.

"At that time the sun will reach its turning point or winter solstice, the most southerly position in its yearly journey around the earth."

On Dec. 21 the sun will: 1) rise and set about 30 degrees south of the east and west points of the horizon; and 2) reach its lowest altitude at noon of the whole year, swinging its shortest daily arc across our southern sky.

Result: "We in the northern hemisphere will have our shortest day, about nine hours, and longest night, around 15 hours," Professor Loah points out.

If you live in an older house and have a chronic rust problem with water, you might check the condition of the plumbing, say home economists at Michigan State University. Pipes are sometimes rusty and feed iron into the water.

County School Board Considers Finance

The effort to find new sources of revenue for schools was one of the matters discussed at the Oakland County School Board's association meeting last week at which the association's newly elected president, Mrs. Kathryn Loomis, presided.

An invitation from the Wayne County Board of Education to join them in this effort was considered and members decided that the Oakland board should be present at a meeting Wednesday night at Thurston High School in Detroit to explore the matter further.

The association also discussed the history and present and future plans of the special education program for handicapped children.

Queen Victoria's marriage to Prince Albert helped introduce the Christmas tree into England. Research experts say Albert brought the custom with him from Germany and set up a tree in Windsor Castle in 1841.

The British call the day after Christmas "Boxing Day," but it has nothing to do with heavyweights. According to the encyclopedia, this is the day when families give money to the milkman, postman and others. In earlier days, the custom was to give Christmas boxes of food and other gifts to tradesmen and servants.

The word Xmas as a form of Christmas originated in the early Christian Church. In Greek, X is the first letter of Christ's name. It was often used as a holy symbol.

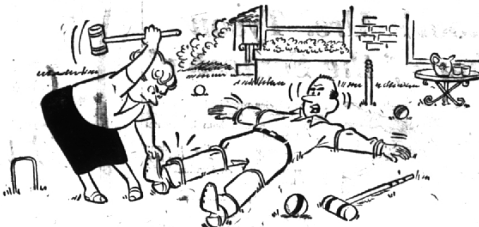
The Japanese version of Santa Claus is the ancient god Hotei, who has eyes in back of his head to help him see how children behave.

Stores in the U. S. depend on Christmas shoppers for one-fourth of all the sales they make during the entire year.

You don't have to go all the way to the North Pole to find Santa Claus—he has a home in Indiana. Hoosiers named a small town after the plump gift-giver and put up a statue of him dedicated to "The Children of the World." In a typical year, some 4 million pieces of mail pour into the post office of the town, to be remailed with the postmark "Santa Claus."

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"I think you're a very poor sport, Agnes!"

The university of Michigan is the nation's largest state university in resident credit enrollment located on one campus. It is also the largest state university without an agricultural college. (California is spread over several cities; Illinois has large programs in Chicago as well as Urbana, Minnesota is in Minneapolis, Duluth, and St. Paul.)

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