



Regardless of Language, It's 'Merry Christmas!'

See photo 3-A
By MARY BAHN
Staff Writer

Christmas is celebrated in many ways, in many lands—or so the foreign students at Seahorn High School will tell you. But the universal feeling of togetherness with the family is a tradition that is followed whether plans call for surfing in Australia or skiing in Norway.

Many countries, however, follow the traditions familiar with most Americans. Such a country is Ecuador.

"ALTHOUGH THERE is no snow and the temperature usually is about 85 degrees, we have a Christmas tree decorated with lights and ornaments and we ex-

change gifts," said Marie Burbano, a student from Quito, Ecuador. "After church and a dinner of turkey and fruit cake, the family spends the day visiting with friends and relatives," she said. The more serious aspect of Christmas is not forgotten, however, as the nine days before the holiday are spent in prayerful preparation.

"IN NORWAY, Dec. 24 is the big day," said Bert Tori Petersen, from the city of Tromso.

"We first go to the cemetery to pay our respects, then attend church services followed by a family dinner of ribs, sauerkraut, and ice cream. We trim the tree, which looks a great deal like American trees, except for our native flags which decorate it," she said.

Preparation for Christmas begins four weeks before, said Tori, at the beginning of Advent when a star is put in the front window. A circle wreath with four candles is also lit, one candle at a time, each week.

"The children hang up their socks on Dec. 23, not the 24th, for their gifts. Since there is usually lots of snow and the weather is quite cold, we celebrate that night with a hot cereal flavored with a large almond. The child who gets the almond in his bowl is treated to an extra present," said Tori.

"IT'S USUALLY about 100 degrees at Christmas," said Noelena Jones from Australia, which brought a chuckle from the rest of the group. (See LANGUAGE, 8-A)

LAST-MINUTE RUSH ON Christmas Is Coming; Area Getting Ready

It's hurry, hurry through a flurry of snow—Birmingham and area residents are pushing into high gear for that final five-day fling before Christmas.

For last-minute mailing of Christmas cards (packages are too late to go now), both the Birmingham and Bloomfield Hills post offices will be open from 8:30 to 6 p.m. today and tomorrow; 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, Monday and Tuesday, Dec. 21, 22 and 24.

The Birmingham Annex, at the eastern end of Cole, will be open from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. through

tomorrow for shipping parcels and selling stamps.

MOST STORES in the Birmingham area will be open from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. for the last-minute rush, according to Charles Mortensen, manager of the Chamber of Commerce.

Stores have scheduled 9 a.m. to 5:30 or 5 p.m. hours for Saturday, Dec. 21, and Christmas Eve, said Mortensen. There will be very few stores in the Birmingham area open for business on Sunday, Dec. 22, he said.

"The only exception that I know of is Jacobson's, which has scheduled after 5 p.m. shopping for Monday, Thursday and Friday nights only," he said.

SCHOOL CHILDREN in the Birmingham and Bloomfield Hills school systems will be out (an hour earlier in Birmingham) on Friday, Dec. 20, returning to classes on Thursday, Jan. 2. Pre-schoolers can still call Santa until tomorrow, from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. His number is MI 6-7222. (See CHRISTMAS, 8-A)

Santa Has a Ball in B'ham

Look for Him Downtown Saturday

By LARRY EVOE
City Editor

On Saturday morning a familiar face will be seen in Birmingham's downtown area.

Can This Be Christmas?

All this noise?—
Wailing sirens—
Fearsome brakes—
Brazen horns?

Can this be Christmas?—
Long senseless commercials?
Naasal songs—
Artificial trees
Synthetic stars
Plastic angels?

Can this be Christmas?—
Competitive cards—
Reciprocal gifts—
Nerves drawn taut
Over-Santa-ing Santa

Where is
The Silent Night?
The quiet Manger?
The radiant Star?

Who listens to Angels sing?
Follows lowly Shepherds
To Bethlehem?

HOMER J. ARMSTRONG
Minister, First Baptist
Church of Birmingham

It will be that of Santa Claus. Under the long, flowing, snow-white beard will be Bloomfield Hills executive William Martin.

Martin, 4772 Brafferton, has been playing Santa Claus in Birmingham for over 15 years, according to his wife Loraine when contacted by The Eccentric.

"It all began many years ago when Bill used to play Santa at the Village Players annual Christmas party," she said. "After the party he got into the habit of leaving the Players at Chestnut and Elm and walking over to the downtown area.

He'd walk in and out of the stores talking to the youngsters and their parents and pausing to chat with the merchants," she said.

MRS. MARTIN said her husband always carries a large supply of red rubber balls to give out on his journey. "They seem like sort of a universal gift," she said. Mrs. Martin estimates "Santa" has distributed more than 1,500 balls during his career.

Both the Martins are life-long residents of the Birmingham-Bloomfield area and are well known among the downtown merchants.

Mrs. Martin said the Santa suit belongs to her husband and the beard was made "a long time ago."

by one of the make-up women at the Players.

HE FOLLOWS the same pattern he did when he began his task 15 years ago, according to Mrs. Martin.

"But he doesn't need a pillow for padding anymore," she said. "Just an extra suit of long underwear does the job."

When he's not playing Santa, Mr. Martin serves as sales manager of the Amplex Division of Chrysler Corp.

Christmas Greetings

Christmas greetings, Comrades all! Has your year been short—or tall? Our agenda's changed a trifle—Hill's new job is great as Eiffel! Even Billy, sage of Lansing, Makes for marks, instead of dancing!

T for "t"—and Gork's grammar—
Off to Wayne in Lu to hammer—
Do come down our vodka—hear?
Once again we'll jointly cheer,
Merry Christmas—Happy Year!

THE W. W. LIGHTBODYS
1498 Yosemite
Birmingham

AND GOT LOST

The Year Santa Took the Xways

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following story, first published in The Birmingham Eccentric in its Top Section of Nov. 22, 1961, is reprinted here in memory of Mrs. N. Davis. Mrs. Davis, former staff writer and town editor of The Birmingham Eccentric, died July 18. She probably was best known for her "Heavy" feature—and scandal stories such as this.

By IRMA N. DAVIS

One December evening about seven years ago, Santa Claus was sitting in his easy chair watching a snow-puff commercial on television when he suddenly sat up and said, "Oh, my gosh, I haven't talked to Fastus this year!" "Fastus!" he called.

"Coming, Boss," said a wee, small voice, and just like that a wee elf bobbed up on top of the TV set.

"Fastus," said Santa, "we've got to check the sleigh. Are the runners oiled for Christmas Eve?" "Sure, Boss," said Fastus. "By the way, I've got an idea."

motor on the sleigh and look what happened. We ran out of gas right over Tallahassee."

"Well, that was your fault," said the elf, "you kept going into overdrive when we crossed the Rockies. I kept telling you: Overdrive isn't for going over mountains."

"Harumph!" snorted Santa, "what about that time you tied jumping beans on Donner and Blitzen? I had the hiccupps all during Christmas dinner."

"Well," said Fastus, "I guess that idea wasn't so good. But this year I've a really good idea. Instead of using that old route why don't you follow the expressways?"

"Nope," said Santa, "the old ways are good enough for me."

But Fastus kept coaxing and coaxing and coaxing.

And that's why, seven years ago, on Christmas Eve, Santa got lost.

When they got near the Saskatchewan interchange, Santa remembered a little girl who lived on a side road so over and under the cloverleaf he steered the sleigh and down the chimney of the little girl's house.

When they were back in the air again, Santa couldn't find the expressway. He drove this way and that and finally he saw a gas station where he could get a map.

But as anyone knows, gas stations don't have fireplaces, and they don't have chimneys so Santa had to come all the way round to the front—right by the gas pumps—and show himself and his reindeer.

NOW THE gas station worker was so glad to see Santa that he just talked and talked and finally he said the expressways was just north of the third beacon over Kennebunkport, Maine, and Santa said, "Thanks my good man," and took off again.

But when he got over Kennebunkport, (See SANTA, 8-A)

Behold 1st Chrismon Tree In State in Area Church!

See photo 7-A
By NITA HARD
Special Writer

FRANKLIN — A 15-foot Christmas Tree, said to be the first in Michigan, towers resplendent in the sanctuary of the Franklin Community Church.

Over 150 handmade gold and white ornaments, each a copy of a symbol or monogram used by the earliest Christians to identify themselves, hang from the branches of the dark green giant. About 500 miniature white lights twinkle like a myriad of stars.

THE IDEA of using Christmas, to restore the full significance of Christmas to the church, originated with Mrs. Harry Spencer of Danville, Va., in 1957 and it was introduced to the members of the Women's Society for Christian Service of the Franklin Community Church this fall by Mrs. Robert Blair of S. Cromwell Drive.

In the past months the churchwomen have been feverishly fashioning the intricate ornaments from styrofoam, pearls, gold beads, sequins, fringe and mesh. The details are so exact that each design has printed instructions, some of them four pages long.

Each is made of white and gold to symbolize the purity and majes-

ty of Christ. In some cases a single ornament took 20 hours to make.

A FORMER resident of the East, Mrs. Blair made several trips to New York City to find just the right materials. She applied to the Lutheran Church of the Ascension in Danville for the rights to make the Chrismons and received

Not Everyone Has Day Off For Holiday

Some people in the Birmingham-Bloomfield area won't be able to spend Christmas Eve and Day with their families.

The police and firemen in all the area communities will work their regular shifts. Although DPW workers in Birmingham have the day off, the men are on call in case a fresh snow storm hits the city. Similar arrangements have been worked out by the Oakland County Road Commission for its salt crews.

At the Post Office crews will be on hand Christmas Eve and on (See DAY OFF, 2-A)

"an overwhelming packet of instructions."

She had seen a Chrismon tree at her mother's church in Pennsylvania and thought it would establish a meaningful tradition in Franklin where she has resided for the past two years.

Although Mrs. Blair has a long and happy home-work background and is skilled and deft with her hands, she was thoroughly frustrated by one ornament and in desperation wrote to Mrs. Spencer for help. The reply informed her there was a typographical error in the original instructions.

ALSO IN the reply, four pages long, came the correct instructions and a warm message from Mrs. Spencer to express her delight that the Christmas Christmas tree was now in Michigan. The idea is spreading across America and churches are finding that their congregations are so impressed with the symbols and monograms (parts of the Greek alphabet) that interest in their meaning has been renewed.

An explanation of each symbol was published and is distributed with the Sunday bulletins for three weeks during the holidays.

According to its designer, Mrs. Spencer, "A Chrismon tree is complete only when those who see it understand its meaning."

One Christmas Rose A Hot Time At Yule Party Had by All?

PLACK at His Crib, one Christmas rose, And say, forgive, forgive. Just this one year, do you suppose, We mortals could relieve?

This was the year that children died Because of color-blinded hate. And then, a hero fell, our country's pride Because of—well, they say, "just fate."

At his grave, a white dove weeps. And then, with graceful ease, soars away Into the blue, and there a constant joy keeps For brother bird, young eagle, hunter's prey.

Now here we kneel, with single flower Helplessly placing the blame. At this Christmas time, in this usual hour, Erasing indelible ink blots of shame.

Yes, indelible, but with Your help, we can Below this page of history's writing, Make a better record for our fellowman. By lovingly, with them, uniting.

Are you smiling, little Boy, On this, Your Birthday morn? Then to the world, true joy, For Jesus Christ, our Lord is born.

MRS. FRANKLIN BURN
1846 Pembroke Road
Birmingham, Michigan

No one asked Eccentric special writer Julie Candler, 1288 Dorchester, Birmingham, to sing an encore at the Theta Sigma Phi national sorority for women in journalism Christmas party at the Detroit Press Club Tuesday night. It wasn't because she didn't do a fine job, either.

Right in the midst of Christmas caroling led by Mrs. Candler, a group of uninvited men, wearing long boots and raincoats and carrying hatches, came in. Billows of smoke followed into the second-floor dining room.

MOMENTS LATER, the women, including Birminghamites Margaret DeGraze, Terri King, Miriam Eicher, Rheta Victor, Lee Olson, Bettelou Middlemas and Barbara Marx of the local school system, followed the firefighters outside to watch "grace-fire" extinguishing procedures in the comfort of ankle-deep snow and freezing winds.

No one can say that that Christmas party didn't end in a "blaze" of glory.