

City's all a-twinkle

TWO MILES of lights will once again light downtown Birmingham for the holiday season — signaling the start of the shopping season and extended business hours for most stores. The Birmingham Department of Public Services wires and puts up over 35,000 tiny lights into the trees in the downtown area. Over 1,300 strings of bulbs are required to light the area. They'll stay up until early January.

The result is a sort of enchanted fairyland look that has created a "real holiday feeling" and caught everyone's fancy — even that of residents of nearby areas who come to shop and "just walk down the streets because it is so pretty."

For shoppers' convenience, many stores will be open Monday through Friday from 9:30 a.m. to 9 p.m.; on Saturday from 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.; and on Sunday from noon to 5 p.m. beginning Friday, Nov. 25.

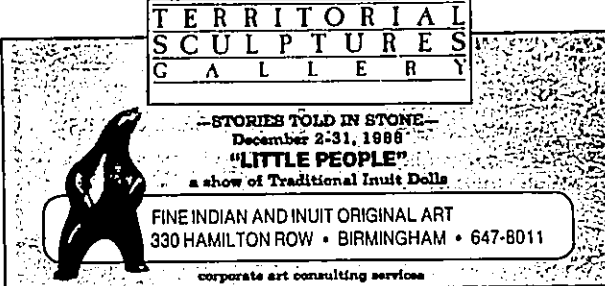
Highlight of the holiday season is the annual tree lighting ceremony and family singalong at 7:30 p.m. Dec. 2 in front of the Municipal Building. This will be followed by hot chocolate and the reading of holiday story in Baldwin library.

Along with the twinkling lights, shoppers will also be treated to music by strolling musicians throughout the season, beginning Dec. 2, at various locations. Strolling musicians are local school, church and community choral groups who have volunteered to continue the tradition. Over 40 groups will participate in this year's programs.



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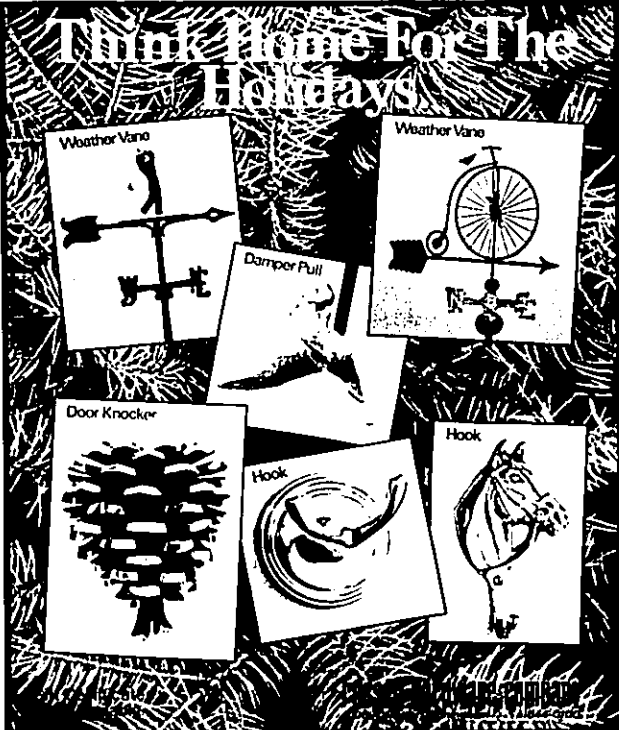


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