

My first 'real'

WINTER



SCOTT ROSEBUSH

Can a sunny Californian survive Michigan's chilly snow season?

By JIM TROTTER

Chronicle staff writer

It was Jan. 1, 1982 — a football fan's delight. I was ready to spend the next 12 hours in front of the TV trying to fill my then-insatiable desire for college football's bowl games.

AS I HAD done for the past few years, I plopped a pillow under my head and prepared to watch the battles. The temperature outside my family's home in Oakland, Calif., was a comfortable 71 degrees.

At a little after 1 p.m., it was time for the "Grand Daddy" of the bowl games — the Rose Bowl. The University of Michigan was set to do battle against UCLA in Pasadena.

It was then that a pre-game statistic — which for some reason I have never forgotten — flashed over the TV screen: temperature 81 degrees.

IN MUSKEGON ON that same day, the high temperature was 35 degrees. Two-tenths of an inch of snow fell that day, adding to the six inches that were on the ground that morning.

I began to wonder what it was like to live where it snowed. Only once in my life — prior to that day — had I seen snow fall. I was in the seventh grade and teachers let us out of class to go out and play in it.

Ah, but now I'm in Muskegon. One thing I noticed when I arrived was that people here talk about winter during the summer. And I

am constantly told to prepare to be embraced by the unforgiving wings of the "hawk." Snow is one thing, but the winds off of Lake Michigan are a whole new ball game.

It would take too long to detail all the horror stories I've heard about Muskegon winters; but it's no use fearing the unknown. Even my worst fears can't live up to horror stories — I hope.

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Chronicle staffer Jim Trotter, who originally hails from the Oakland, Calif. area, is bracing himself for his first taste of Michigan's bitter winters.

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