



JIM C'S QUIZ OF THE WEEK

Thursday - 6/21/2007

June 21, 2007 was the “*summer solstice*,” which marks the beginning of summer in the northern hemisphere.

HOW DID “*SUMMER SOLSTICE*” ORIGINATE?

Summer: The warmest season of the year, between spring and autumn, running from June to August in the northern hemisphere.

Online Etymology: circa 1250 from Old French *solstice*, from Latin *solstitium* "point at which the sun seems to stand still," from *sol* "sun" + pp. stem of *sistere* "to come to a stop, make stand still."

For several days around each solstice, the sun appears to stand still in the sky—that is, its noontime elevation does not seem to change.

Science: The maximum effect of the inclination of Earth's rotation axis is at the summer and winter solstices. At these dates the Sun is not directly overhead – in fact, it is at its furthest point from zenith, at only an altitude of 66.56° either to the north or the south.

Seasons: The cause of the seasons is that the rotation axis of the Earth is not perpendicular to its orbital plane, but currently makes an angle ("obliquity of the ecliptic") of about 23.44° . The northern hemisphere tips toward the Sun from Mar 20th to Sep 22nd.

C W: Summer Solstice = Longest Day & Shortest Night of the Year

Moment of Zen: The earth is furthest from the sun on July 3rd