



ALLYCE'S ATTIC:

So Long Winter – Hello Spring!

by MARY ALLYCE

This winter was a cold, snowy, icy mess for much of the country. “Climate change,” say many.

“Cyclical events,” say others. I’m opting out of the debate here, but I will say there were winters of my youth in Wisconsin that easily stood up to the highly publicized “Snowmageddon” in the North East.

We didn’t obsess over it. It was just life when life was a bit slower. Mothers bundled us up like the kid in *A Christmas Story* and shoved us out the door where we made snow tunnels, snow houses, snow forts and had snowball fights if the snow was just right. When we could find the ground we made angels in the snow. I don’t remember making snowmen, but perhaps we tried and gave it up for the more immediate pleasure of smacking each other with hard packed snowballs and the horrific, but eminently satisfying, washing of someone’s face with snow.

And oh, the exquisite taste of fresh fallen snow . . . Yes, yes, we all know the cautions of staying away from the yellow stuff, but we weren’t idiots and there was plenty of pure white, crisp on the tongue, melt in your mouth snow for one and all. In Vermont they make snow candy by pouring real maple syrup on real snow and I’ll bet that is just amazingly good. Crunchy, candied snow. Yum! The plain stuff is mighty fine, too, as my 2 yr old great niece discovered this past winter in Brooklyn.

We had the peaceful joy of waking up and knowing, without looking, there was a blizzard enveloping the city. You know how we knew? A deafening silence. It was as if our world had been wrapped in cotton batting, damping down all sound - except the sound of silence, of snow. I wonder if Paul Simon woke to the sound of the silence of a blizzard? It’s profound.

There was the delicious contentment of a snow day from school. We savored them because we had precious few. The principal of our Lutheran grade school, a three story building with his office on the third floor, often said, “When the snow is up to the windowsill of my office, I’ll consider a snow day.” The same was true of Milwaukee Lutheran High School until the memorable day they did not call off school until too late in the day. Most of the student body had to spend the night, which was great fun for the students, not so much for the faculty. The next time we got a big dump of snow (our term for a blizzard) they let us out plenty early before the roads became impassable.



In Wisconsin they’re pretty darn good at snow removal, but once in a while the plows have a hard time keeping up with it, or plow people in. It doesn’t happen often, but even I, who learned from an early age that snow was not an excuse to miss much of anything, was mortified the Sunday my father led the family, on foot, the four or five blocks to our church when the snow drifts were too high to drive, to find the pastor scowling at the doorway. He looked at my dad, shook his head and said, “Morning, Hal. I only came over here in case

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