

## **View from the Rear Pew**

Brent Skinner - March 2013

March. I hate this month. It is so deceitful. It has a reputation to live up to. You know. In like a lamb and out like a lion.

For most of March, every nice sunny day has been followed by a dull, snowy one. Then, last Thursday, we had a real humdinger of a prairie blizzard. It lasted all day and dumped tons of snow all over central Alberta, most of which landed on my driveway.

I paced the floor. I stared out the window. I anxiously watched the weather channel. Which, of course, was all kind of silly because I am now retired and really had no place to go. No meetings at the office. No car trip to Red Deer. No planes to catch. Our house was warm and my wife assured me that we had enough water, flour and tuna fish to last days or even weeks.

This didn't help. You see we had passed the vernal equinox and it was supposed to be spring. I felt like a penitentiary prisoner who has just been told that his sentence has been extended. I identified with the good people of Pompeii who first saw the ash beginning to fall from Mount Vesuvius in 79 A.D. I knew what it must be like to be a Toronto Maple Leaf fan during the NHL playoffs. In short, I felt betrayed by the world.

Then our grandchildren woke up and got all excited by all the fresh snow. Rushing through breakfast, they donned their snow pants, parkas, mittens and Kermit the Frog toques (their Grandmother has a strange fashion sense) and headed out into our back yard. They must have spent nearly an hour climbing snowdrifts, exploring the hidden world under our evergreen trees, building snow slides and jumps, making snow angels and catching snowflakes on their tongues. Except for one unfortunate episode when Henry fell into a basement window well (Grandpa to the rescue), they had a blissful time.

After coming inside and artfully draping various items of soggy clothing all over every hot air furnace vent in our house, our

grandchildren tucked into a snack of cocoa and Dare maple cream cookies. Granddaughter Amelia convinced me that maple cream cookies have to be one of the great advances in western civilization. (They are also very patriotic as they are shaped like little maple leafs). Henry showed me how to pry apart the cookie leaves and lick off the gooey maple cream centre without having to eat hardly any cookie at all.

We then spent much of the snowbound day watching DVDs in the family room. It was a double feature. The Chuck the Truck Big Air dare movie (Henry's choice) followed by Barbie's The Princess & The Popstar Movie (Amelia's choice). Amelia's parents don't really approve of the sexist image portrayed by Barbie so, like most good grandparents, she gets her fill of Barbie and other banned substances at our place (What happens at grandma's and grandpa's stays at grandma's and grandpa's).

And I was worried about the blizzard! You can't believe the emotional dilemma that princess Barbie has in choosing between life as a Royal or a rock and roll star, not to mention dealing with a crooked manager who tries to steal the kingdom's magical plant.

All of which taught me, once again, that life is what you make it. It's all in your attitude. One person's blizzard is another person's playground and opportunity to overdose on Barbie movies.

In fact, the day after the winter storm, I was quite amazed at how beautiful our yard and street looked with all the stately spruce trees covered in snow which sparkled like diamonds against the clear blue Alberta sky. Sigh.

I still hate March.