

# Winter Memories

## A Tomboy's Embarrassment

EVERY TIME it snowed in Keyser, West Virginia, my mother, Phyllis Sanders, would run home after school and put on brother Dick's knickers, sweater and socks and her mother's rubber boots.

Out she would go with her brother's sled and go sled riding on the street.

One day, in 1934, when Mom was 12, a man was going around the neighborhood taking pictures for a dollar, and he took a picture of her. Her mother probably couldn't afford it, but she gave the man a dollar and received the picture in the mail several weeks later.

A week after that, Dick secretly told their mother that he didn't mind Phyllis borrowing some clothes but wished that she wouldn't wear his sweaters because she made bumps in them.

My mom, when she heard this from her mother, was so embarrassed that she never wore her brother's sweaters again, and he never could figure out why.

—Susan W., Cumberland, Maryland

## Snowman's Surprise

THE WINTER that I was 11 years old, we had a blanket of perfect snow in the area around Ness City, Kansas.

My buddies and I spent all of one week having snowball fights and building snowmen before school and during recess. It was a joy disturbed only by a classmate's bullying older brother, Jake, whose pride was his brand-new 1931 Chevrolet.

Every day, Jake would deliver his brother to school and then drive his car into our newest snowman, laughing as he crushed our creation under his wheels.

One morning, we had finally had enough. “Jake, you’d better not run over our snowman. I’m warning you,” I shouted.

“Oh, yeah, shrimp. Whacha goin’ to do about it?” Jake bellowed. Sure enough, he revved up his engine and headed straight across the yard for our latest snowman. But that day, we were ready.

The Chevy hit the fence post hidden inside our snowman with a sickening sound of crunching metal. When Jake climbed out of the Chevy, he knew there was nothing he could do to wipe the smiles off of our faces.

We had warned him, after all.

—Loy J., Raytown, Missouri

### **Signature Moment**

WHEN I WAS a child, living in Madison, Wisconsin, we had a steep street that ran right down to a lake.

In the winter, when we had a good snowfall, the city would close off this street and the kids would sled down the hill and right onto the frozen lake, one of several in the area.

One day, after sledding too long, I was so cold when I got home that I warmed my back end on our potbellied stove. When I finally took off my snowsuit, I had the name of the stove, “Round Oak,” printed on my bottom.

A pillow and I became very good friends for a while.

—Velva D., Arlington, Texas

### **Building “Fort Eskimo”**

WINTERTIME was special for me as I grew up, in Flint, Michigan. I enjoyed the snow and ice and all the things a kid could do with them, like making snow ice cream or an igloo.

My friends and I would shovel the snow from around the yard into one big pile and then start digging a tunnel, which would expand into a room. Snow removed from the inside was thrown on top to make an even bigger pile and became our igloo or fort.

Usually, there was a room for three or four of us, and sometimes a sheet of cardboard was placed inside to sit on so we wouldn't get so cold and wet. There was usually a homemade flag of some sort attached to our structure.

We always placed the door facing away from the kitchen window of my house so Mom couldn't see what we were doing. She wasn't a member of our igloo club, anyway.

—Eugene S., Duluth, Georgia

### **Dad's Perfect Rink**

ONE WINTER, in the 1960s, my brothers complained about the uneven, bumpy ice on the pond down the street where they skated and played ice hockey.

Our dad, Ted Daniels, not wanting anything to stand in the way of his budding Bobby Orrs, flooded the backyard of our suburban Chicago home. With a large plastic sheet to hold water inside a frame of 2- by 6-inch boards, Dad soon had a rink up and running.

Each day, Dad inspected the rink's surface and methodically added a thin layer of water to fill in divots. When it snowed, the driveway could wait. If you failed to remove snow from the rink immediately, it was more difficult to get it Zamboni-smooth, greatly disturbing Dad and his quest for the perfect rink.

My brothers and their friends skated, and we girls pretended to be either Peggy Fleming or members of the Ice Capades.

Over the next few years, the rink was improved with a base of

sawdust under the plastic sheeting and floodlights on the garage to extend weekday skating.

Although my brothers never became Bobby Orrs, nor did my sisters and I rival Peggy Fleming's abilities, we did have a lot of fun. And a warm house, Mom and her hot chocolate—with marshmallows, of course—were only a few steps away.

—Dianne D., Gold Beach, Oregon

### **Belly-Whopping Surprise**

IN 1947, our son Ray asked Santa for “a belly-whopping sled.” Because of Uncle Sam calling my husband, Gunnar, to serve in WWII, it was the first Christmas he was to spend with our two sons and me since 1941.

After many lunch hours going from toy department to toy department, I found a sympathetic salesman at Bloomingdale's on 59th Street in Manhattan, New York. He told me of a shipment due the following week, and I gave him my phone number at General Motors.

Just before Christmas, I got the call. The sled was an adult size, so it was quite a haul for me to get it from Manhattan to River Edge, New Jersey on the bus. But the look on the boys' faces Christmas morning was worth it.

That night, as I kissed Ray good night, he asked, “When will it snow, Mommy?”

“Soon, dear,” I promised, “soon.”

The next day, the biggest blizzard we ever had hit the northeastern United States. I sure kept my promise!

—Irja W., Royal Palm Beach, Florida