

## You're Not An Iowan Until You've... ...Relished a Snow Day

Missy Keenan, Special to the Register January 29, 2016



When I was a kid, there was nothing better than a snow day. Watching TV in my PJs, sledding and skating until my toes were numb, the general thrill of a mid-week day off from school.

Now that I'm an adult, cold snowy days rarely feel so idyllic, with the white-knuckled commutes; the endless rounds of shoveling, snow blowing, and ice-melt; and the painfully-high heating bills.

And school snow days can be especially

problematic. Even when school is cancelled, the grownup world keeps chugging along, and parents have the added stress of finding last-minute child care so they can go to work.

In the two decades I spent working for a large insurance company, my office was closed due to weather maybe three times, an especially uncommon treat. The rarity of a true grownup snow day makes it feel so deliciously decadent – a surprise day off with nothing in particular to do, and no way to get the car out of the garage even if you wanted to.

One of my favorite snow days was five years ago when we were living in Fairfield during an epic storm. The wind howled all night long, and the next morning the drifts were so high against our house that we had to shovel our way out the door.

After bundling up in multiple layers covering everything but our eyeballs, my son Jack, then 5, and I managed to get the front door open to make our way outside. It felt eerily quiet that weekday morning, and few people had ventured out.

I was in the middle of reading Jack the "Little House" series by Laura Ingalls Wilder, and our games that winter tended to correspond with the book. That day I forged the trail ahead while Jack's little legs labored to follow in my boot prints. We pretended we were Almanzo Wilder and Cap Garland in

"The Long Winter," bravely heading into the wilderness to find food for the starving townspeople. The clouds of steam our breath made was smoke from the pioneers' pipes.

When we tired of our adventure, our walk home was easier as we followed the path we'd already cleared, and I held his little mitten hand.

After changing out of our wet clothes, we had a delightfully lazy afternoon of tea, cinnamon toast, and reading under a pile of blankets. Really the perfect snow day.

Now that Jack's almost ten, my attempts at make-believe adventures are usually met with an eye-roll. And most days he'd rather race down the hill on his snowboard with friends than accompany me on a snowy winter walk. But eventually he'll join me on the couch with a book, and I can count on a game or two of Uno by the fire. Still pretty perfect in its own way.