

**By GEORGE ROBERTSON, M.D.**

I must admit that I have enjoyed the mild winter so far, but I did get a little excited when we had a forecast of snow recently. Up until then the sleds had just been rusting in the storehouse and the heavy winter coats, gloves and hats were catching dust in the closet.

Even the suggestion of snow sends my thoughts back to the fun times when everyone would get out of school and business as usual came to a standstill. I think we all need a break from the fast pace of life, and any excuse, like a snowfall that shuts things down, is a welcome relief. Looking back on times like that I've never been left with remorse on not having completed that day at work.

In my youth the snowfall was always a surprise since weather forecasting was primitive and a two-day outlook was almost unheard of. We didn't worry about whether or not the schools would be open since the bus couldn't run, and in my small town the bus driver lived next door so you could just holler across the driveway for the latest report on road conditions.

We would wake up and look out the window and then start running for the outdoor clothes. The street would be filled with kids and sleds and snowmen would start popping up everywhere. After the first foray outside we would bring in a container of snow to make snow cream which would be our breakfast and a break before going out again for more sledding. Snowball fights could get as complicated as making forts and stockpiling ammunition. One fort we made with the children on a cold winter in the late '70s or early '80s lasted a whole month.

One activity I have participated in involves going out first and laying down tracks for the kids to follow. Walking in circles or walking backward gives them a real puzzle till they see where I've jumped the trail to make tracks in another direction. A 15-minute head start gives you time to circle around and come in the back door so from the comfort of your home you can look out the front window and watch them trying to figure out which direction you tracked.

## What happened to the snow?

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Another time we had a big bonfire at the base of the sledding hill to warm up by, but it was almost too cold to bring out the hot dogs and marshmallows to complete the outdoor experience.

Come to think of it, it's a whole lot easier and warmer, not to mention safer, to just remember the good times rather than experience them again, and mom is not having to mop up the wet floors from the muddy boots and I'm not having to pull the car out of the ditch.

***Editor's Note: George Robertson is a physician with Family Medical Associates, PC, in Lebanon. □ □***