

Brent
POPE

Brain freeze

When you have Cabin Fever, ideas snowball

I can see it now: the snow is 7 feet high, the wind chill factor is 40 below zero and everything is closed: roads, stores, even the post office (which is never closed, except for

those 95 federal holidays every year). The Farmer's Almanac is predicting the coldest, snowiest, butt-freezing winter in decades, and The Farmer's Almanac is never

wrong (unless you count that time it said that Little Richard would someday be president.)

And when a huge snowstorm barricades you in your apartment like Fat Albert in size 28 pants, you have a good chance of going a bit stir-crazy. I believe the exact medical term is "Cabin Fever" (although I'm not a medical student, and I don't even play one on TV). Personally, I have always thought that Cabin Fever was a stupid name. I prefer to call it "What Happens When The Snow's Too High," or W-H-W-T-S-T-H for short.

In any case, this phenomenon, caused by the cruelty of Mother Nature, is less enjoyable than a fork in the eye — I should know, I'm very clumsy with utensils — and the only way to keep your sanity is to



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distract yourself from the fact that you are trapped.

Luckily, before this happens, you will have some options, courtesy of your friendly neighborhood columnist. That's not to say you don't already have options. You could always sit entranced by the television until the roads are cleared, but, as my Uncle Mentos always says, "You can only watch so much of Chuck Norris in 'Walker, Texas Ranger' before you start yanking out your own teeth with your bare hands." (Although I do enjoy that one episode where he kicks the bad guy.)

Anyway, here are some other fun things that you can do when you're snowed in:

1. Make new outfits from things you find in your trash can. Garbage ensembles are great stocking stuffers for loved ones, and I just made

myself a tuxedo out of four pizza boxes, three pot pie tins, two plastic one-liter bottles and a slightly rotted banana peel.

2. Pretend that you are Super Mario. This is how you do it: You run around your house really fast, jumping on all the tables and countertops in your way. Then you pound every inch of the ceiling and walls with your fists, looking for hidden gold coins. If you actually find any gold coins, you shout with glee in a phony Italian accent.

3. Play a game called "What If...". Here's how it works: You come up with a make-believe scenario for the world and imagine what would happen as a result. For example, I could say "What if... Big Macs were outlawed by the Surgeon General?" Then I would respond, "President Clinton would resign his office to spend more time trying to reinstate

the burger as an American institution. Hillary would then take over as president, because, as it turns out, Al Gore is actually just a large painted log owned by Hillary. She would then declare that all cities and towns in the United States would no longer be cities and towns, but villages instead. That way we could raise our children better."

4. Do a writing exercise I call "Stephen King's Bedtime Stories." You take a children's story and make it into a disgusting horror story. These come in really handy during finals week. Instead of drinking gallons of coffee for those late-night cramming sessions to keep you awake, just read one of these stories. I've come up with some really neat ones, including "The Little Ax-Murderer That Could," "The Dismembered Cat in the Hat" and "Green Eggs and a Stinky Corpse."

These suggestions should keep you from going completely wacko during that huge winter storm that is looming over the horizon. And if for some reason they don't work, just do what my Uncle Mentos does in these situations: curl up in the fetal position, hum the "Sesame Street" theme song and bite your toenails until the snow melts.

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Heather
LAMPE

The weather outside . . .

Not just frightful, it's downright bone-chilling

The calendar says it's only Dec. 5, but I can feel it coming on already. I have an allergy that only the Gulf of Mexico can cure. It's cold. It's wet. It makes me want to play Dr.

Kevorkian with the weather man. It's winter.

I've come to believe that God didn't intend for us to live in Nebraska or any of the surrounding snow-bearing

states. It was our idiot ancestors who decided to populate this area of the country.

"Well, Ma, what would you think of packing up all our belongings and moving to the promised land?"

"Sure, Pa. They say California is full of gold."

(Many months pass. A couple of wagon wheels fall off.)

"Ma, this seems to be taking longer than expected. I don't want to end up like those Donner people who had to munch on each other. How about if we take these people up on that Homestead Act and stay in this flat, barren, bitterly cold land?"

"OK, Pa. The wind is cold enough to make one's nipples fall off, but for free land, what the heck! Who needs nipples anyway?"

Like most people, I have an aversion to the six months out of the



“*When Bing Crosby sang about dreaming of a white Christmas, he was probably living in California.*”

year that I spend shivering. Winter doesn't officially begin until Dec. 21, but don't tell Mother Nature that. She likes cold so much that sometimes she starts in October and doesn't stop until March.

I'm not good at winter. I have a nose that runs when the temperature goes below 60 degrees. By the time January rolls around with its bone-chilling temperatures, I've quit trying to wipe my nose and have just settled for shoving the Kleenex up my nose.

I'm quite the sight to see, walking down the sidewalk, Kleenex hanging out of my nose, bright red ears offsetting pasty white skin, chapped lips that are cracked to the point of bleeding, cuss words spewing from my mouth.

If you see me, you will probably also notice that I am missing a glove. There's a winter phenomenon involving gloves and mittens that plagues a lucky few. The minute the temperature goes below 30, the Glove Fairy comes and steals one of

my gloves. Some think she's working for Michael Jackson, but we can't be sure.

I've done everything I can to protect my precious gloves. I've even bought those gloves that little kids get that hook onto coat sleeves. But it's no use. I look away for a moment, and they're gone.

I'm currently working on setting up the Center for Missing and Exploited Gloves. It would include a hotline that would take calls from those with information on missing gloves. It would be our goal to reunite the gloves with their beloved hands.

I've also contacted "Unsolved Mysteries," so that when the gloves are found, we can do touchy-feely reenactments of gloves being reunited. Robert Stack can't wait to get started.

Missing gloves and snotty noses are only a few of the things that make me want to move to the Amazon. There is also the snow and ice. When

Bing Crosby sang about dreaming of a white Christmas, he was probably living in California.

Don't let the picture postcards of snowbirds nesting in a snowy pine tree fool you. Somewhere behind that pine tree, there is a sidewalk covered with ice, ready and waiting for me to wipe out on.

I've decided that when it gets icy out, I might as well dress up like Tonya Harding. If I go anywhere near a patch of ice, I'm pretty much guaranteed that my fat thighs are going to kiss the pavement.

I've installed golf cleats on the bottom of my snow boots, but I still spend most of my time outside on my butt. I just tell the people who walk by and stare that I suddenly felt inspired to make a snow angel. They don't need to know that I have the coordination of a drunk toddler.

God forbid that I should have the money to go to school on the sunny shores of Malibu, so I might as well accept my fate.

If you can't beat it, then pretend to enjoy it.

Let it snow. Let it snow. Let it snow.

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