



Monday Matters

January 20, 2014

The Big Snow

It was January 24, 1967, and the temperature soared to 65 degrees in Chicago. People were feeling like spring was already there. Time to break out the shorts. Let's head to the beaches of Lake Michigan.

Two days later there were 50,000 automobiles abandoned along with 800 city buses on the streets of Chicago. Thousands of people were stranded with no way to get home. Twenty-six people lost their lives. It was Thursday, January 26, 1967, and the city of Chicago was hit by 23 inches of snow. Snow continued the next few days bringing the total to over 3 feet, drifts over 10 feet and wind gusts to 53 MPH. In Chicago, it was a record that stands to this day.



My car was sitting in the college parking lot, surrounded by a chain link fence and only one way out. I was as far away from the exit as anyone and I had a date the next night, 300 miles away, and no way to get there. I remember walking down the middle of major streets, no traffic, just abandoned cars, and white everywhere.

Something amazing happened in Chicago 47 years ago - people's attitudes changed. The people that ventured out talked to each other even though they were total strangers. People helped others they didn't know, very uncharacteristic of Chicagoans in 1967. The city became a friendly town in many neighborhoods. It was refreshing. It was something to behold and a great memory. Unfortunately the snow melted and people went back to their old habits and ways.

It's too bad that we can't be known in our communities as being friendly. People just go about their business paying no attention to those around them, who could use a friendly word, a pat on

the back, even just a smile. Living in a very rural community today we see people are who wave to us, help us if we need something, and yes, even smile. It is refreshing and I'm learning to change.

Moving to this new community, one of our most important tasks was to find a new church. That was not easy. We visited maybe a dozen churches. One thing lacking in many were that people did



not go out of their way to be friendly. We were just a couple of old people who wanted to be welcomed into a church, made to feel at home and be part of the family. The last church got our attention. They had a couple standing at the entrance to the parking lot waving and smiling at us. Before we got in the doors we were welcomed at a tent set up outside. Greeters were in the foyer and at the doors to the auditorium. We liked that. Today I am a "waver" at the entrance to the parking lot and Linda is welcoming people in the foyer.

Today, in memory of The Big Snow 47 years ago, I would encourage all of us to put on a smile, be friendly all the time and be welcoming, in our businesses, the stores we visit, our neighborhoods and even in church.

Quote of the Week

"Welcome every morning with a smile. Look on the new day as another special gift from your Creator, another golden opportunity to complete what you were unable to finish yesterday. Be a self-starter. Let your first hour set the theme of success and positive action that is certain to echo through your entire day. Today will never happen again. Don't waste it with a false start or no start at all. You were not born to fail." ~ Og Mandino ~



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