

It is snowing and blowing and is -6F. We have our morning barn chores done, there is a good fire in the cookstove, and the heat is rising through the oak slats of the register, moving upward from the stove in the basement. The cabin is cozy and warm, and two dogs are lying on their bed, one cat is under the basement stove, and the other is in a basket. All is snug.

That said, I can't understand the black looks I get from people I know when I tell them that I don't mind this kind of weather at all, and that winter is my favorite season. But, it is true.

In our family, this is not an unusual attitude. A lot of us like winter. I don't know if it has something to do with our genetic makeup, or if it is the result of a stubbornness that makes us believe that weather can't defeat us. I suspect the former more than the latter.

My dad said that when they were boys, they would routinely go out on such a day and open their coats, telling the Old North Wind that he couldn't scare them. And, I know that when we were kids, we often went out barefoot on such a day and ran all the way around the house. Why? I don't know. Just because we could, I guess. I still go out in my stocking feet if I want to look at the thermometer or get a few pieces of wood for the cookstove. It isn't worth taking the time to put on a jacket, gloves, cap, and boots just to grab a couple sticks of wood.

My seventy-plus cousin has been cross country skiing every day in this subzero weather, and I will be, too, now that we are getting enough for a good base.

Another pleasant aspect of cold, stormy winter days is the fact that the weather keeps us from some tasks that we can avoid for another day. So, there is more time to sit in front of the fire, read a good book, or work on some "inside" project.

I know that some people suffer from SAD, the condition called Seasonal Affective Disorder. As I understand it, this results not from the cold and snow, but from the lack of winter sunlight, especially in areas above forty degrees north latitude. I asked a doctor once if he thought the opposite could also be true, that some people are energized and enlivened by the winter season. He thought it might be so. I do know that when fall comes and we get those first crisp, clear days, I feel like jumping up and down in a most unseemly manner, given my gray hair, wrinkles, and birthdate.

But, I do wilt in the heat, and I can become pretty annoyed if we have day after day of bright sunshine and eighty degree temperatures.