

Who doesn't love a good snow day? As kids, just the hint of a storm was enough to glue us to the local evening news. We were desperate to hear Don Kent proclaim a Snowmageddon. Back in the day, Don Kent was something of a local hero in the suburbs around Boston. It wasn't so much his accuracy. I'm sure he got it right (or wrong) as often as anyone else did. It was his enthusiasm. Weather guys love weather, the bigger the better, and Don Kent loved it more than anyone.



Of course, Don Kent didn't use the term Snowmageddon. He talked about nor'easters and snow showers. The more theatrical terms – Snowmageddon, Snowpocalypse and Snowzilla – have only finagled their way into our vocabulary in the past decade. I don't know about Don Kent but I must say, I kind of like them. And what about the recent bomb cyclone? Certainly, the magnitude of the storm would have been excited Don Kent. I wonder if he would have embraced the colorful, new moniker or stuck with the proper term – explosive cyclogenesis.

Depending on Don Kent's prognosis, we spent the evening peeking out the windows looking for flakes. My bedroom was well located for storm watching. My window looked out onto the streetlight on the corner. It was perfect for illuminating the falling snow or lack thereof. Throughout the evening, I bounced from homework to window. Little was accomplished and, eventually, it was time for bed. I tried to sleep but the smallest noise had me bolt upright. Was that a plow?

In the morning, Don Kent was back, this time on the radio. We figured he hadn't slept a wink, but then, neither had I. He'd report snowfall amounts, offer the day's forecast and finally announce the school closings. Or maybe it was his cohort Arch MacDonald who plowed through all those towns, private schools and daycare closings. Andover, Boston, Cambridge, Framingham, Humpty Dumpty Daycare, Lexington, Our Lady of the Saints, Peabody, Somerville, Watertown, Weston ... wait a minute! Did he say Wellesley? He must have! I didn't hear it.

And so, we were forced to listen to the litany all over again. Only this time a dozen or more cancellations had been added. The list went on forever, a Montessori school in Haverhill, Mother Goose Nursery School, Natick, Wayland and, finally, Wellesley. Phew!

Armed with a PC and linked to the world by the internet, snow days aren't quite what they used to be. It doesn't matter; I still love a snow day. It's still dark outside when I slip into what I like to call my daytime pajamas – leggings, an old turtleneck and an even older sweater. After shoveling snow away from the garage doors and making coffee, I spend the morning doing all those things I would have done at the office. Doing it from home doesn't change the work just the mood.

Just like a kid, I sneak constant peeks out the window at the falling snow. As the fluffy white stuff piles up outside, the world seems to slow down. Snow muffles the tread of the few cars out on the road. A sporadic plow rumbles by. It passes the house heading west. Minutes later it comes by again, this time going east. A peaceful quiet settles over the neighborhood. It will be a few hours before the plow comes by again.

Whatever needs doing gets done – lots of email, website and social media updates, a few phone calls – they know where I live, a press release and more. While still good, thanks to the internet, snow days aren't what they used to be.

Have fun in the snow and bon appétit!

Applesauce Muffins

Baking is a great activity on a snowy day. Warm up the kitchen with the delicious aroma of apples and spice.

Enjoy!

Makes about 20 muffins

- 2 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ginger
- 1/4 teaspoon cloves
- 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1/2 cup (1 stick) butter at room temperature
- 1 1/4 cups brown sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
- 3/4 cup unsweetened applesauce, preferably homemade but store-bought is okay
- 1/4 cup sour cream
- 3/4 cup raisins
- 3/4 cup chopped walnuts



Set the rack in the center of the oven and preheat to 375 degrees. Line muffin pans with paper liners.

Put the flour, baking powder and soda, salt and spices in a bowl and whisk to combine.

Put the butter and brown sugar in large bowl and beat with an electric mixer on high speed until fluffy. Add the eggs and vanilla and beat until smooth. Add the applesauce and sour cream and beat until smooth.

Reduce the mixer speed to low, slowly add the dry ingredients and mix until just combined. Fold in the walnuts and raisins.

Fill the muffin cups about 3/4 full with batter. A 2-ounce ice cream scoop is perfect for standard size muffins.

Slide the muffin tins into the oven, bake at 375 degrees for 5 minutes and then reduce the temperature to 350 degrees. Continue baking until the tops are golden and a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean, 15-20 minutes more.

Serve warm or at room temperature.