Normally I’m a fan of the snow. It’s fun to romp in, you can build snowmen, and you can tackle your best friend to the ground and smother them without causing any real damage. However, as I discovered last year and as I’m sure most of you are observing already, living at UMass Amherst with snow everywhere is kind of, well, hellish. You’ll find yourself cold all the time, get targeted by passing automobiles as they splash through puddles, and take involuntary skiing and sledding lessons as the ice catches you on our campus’s various hills. I like skiing, but I also like being able to, I don’t know, steer. It helps when I’m trying not to crash into the nearest tree. The best part, though, is that we all signed up for this. We volunteered, nay, are PAYING to imitate Siberians as we lumber through blizzards and biting rain.

School closings are frequent here, likely due to the liability issues inherent in a snowy campus, but college doesn’t build in extra days at the end of the semester to make up for the classes that get canceled. It’s kind of a bittersweet thing. You get a few random days off, but then have to learn a whole unit of material on your own by the time finals come around.

The thing is, we’re mostly paying for an education here, and a pretty darn good one at that. It thus drives me insane when I hear about students who skip classes because
they simply didn’t feel like braving the elements, even though UMass seems to shut
down for anything more than a snow flurry anyhow. More on that next week.

Then again, there are going to be times when you simply can’t make it. Your car might
break down. You could break your leg. The busses might be horrifically late (which is
pretty frequent, FYI). Any number of things can get in the way of studies on top of
assorted snow days. It just falls on us hapless students to keep up with the work.

All I can suggest is this:

1) Invest in hot chocolate and tea for when you get snowed in.

2) Do as much work as you possibly can on a snow day. (It would be idiotic to go
partying then anyhow since you’ll have school the next morning.)

3) Don’t party outside your dorm during heavy snow. (You’ll fall into a snowbank or get
whacked by a skidding car or be too drunk to feel hypothermia freeze your sorry
*cough* backside.)

4) Find a husky to cuddle with. Or any fluffy dog. It’s totally a legitimate source of
warmth.

5) For that matter, pet any fuzzy animal you can. You’ll feel better. Ask if your neighbor
has a pet hamster.

6) Consider hunting caribou and storing the meat in your dorm room for when the
weather turns too harsh to make the trek to a dining hall. Squirrels are a sufficient
substitute.

7) And, lastly, bring your lightsaber everywhere. You never know when you’ll get
captured in a blizzard and have to shove a friend into your dying tauntaun.

Best wishes to everyone on campus! Enjoy pretending to be a viking in the middle of a
Norwegian winter!

Song of the Week: This one’s “Young Volcanoes” by Fall Out Boy. Hey, I like to be ironic
as much as the next guy.

Blog Column:
Love, The Old Man

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