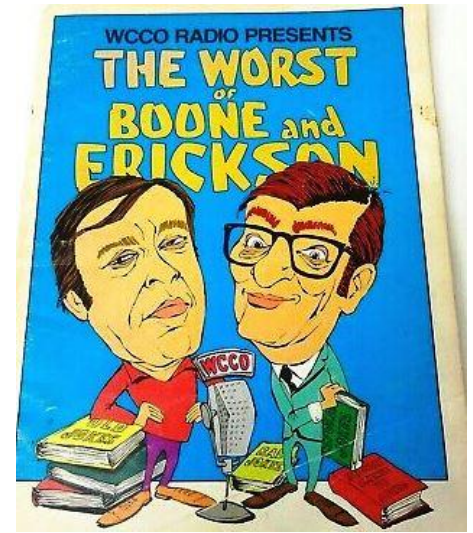


Snowstorms are always interesting. Other adjectives could be used like aggravating, fun, dangerous. It depends on how much it interrupts a daily routine or ruins travel plans. I was watching The Weather Channel (TWC) the other night to keep up on the latest winter storm. I found out it has been since the winter of 2012-2013 that TWC names the winter storms. It is not an official National Weather Service naming like they do hurricanes. It's TWC doing their own categorizing of storms. This naming of winter storms is not a new idea. Going back to the 1980's, WCCO Radio's Boone and Erickson were naming Minnesota winter storms.



The Weather Channel

One of those years they decided that the storms would be named after Minnesota school bus drivers past or present. They were looking for nominations so I sent them a note that my dad Elmer was a retired long time bus driver for the West Concord school district. Well it finally got to the fifth winter storm of the season and lo and behold it was named Elmer. I come to find out that the fifth national winter storm this year was also named Elmer on TWC. I don't think it was named for my dad but it was as far as I'm concerned. That's a long term goal of mine now is to have a winter storm named after me.

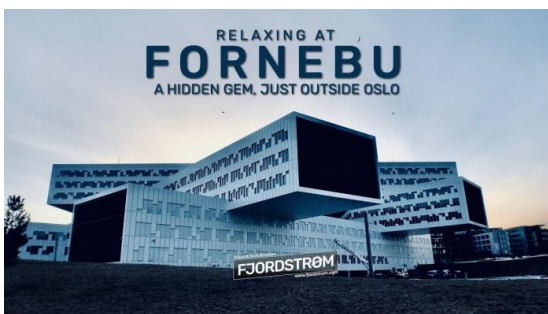
Ken Doty was the Superintendent at West Concord School District #205 from 1965 to 1990. Ken, on snowy days would often call my dad to ask what it was like in the country. My dad never said it was bad enough to cancel school. I think he thought if he could see the garage, which was about 50 feet from the kitchen window, he could drive a bus through it. I would look out the same window and maybe see the garage but the old quonset shed, which was about 150 feet away was not visible at all. So being the first bus stop of the morning, I would dress up like I'm going ice fishing in Alaska and hop on the bus. One of these somewhat blustery days (I call them winter storms) in the late 60's, we got stuck on the road just east of the Bob Montgomery farm on the north-south road which is County Road 7. Near the Schienbein farm the snow was 2 to 3 feet deep with the wind adding to that total by the minute. There were about 14 students on the bus at the time as we had already picked up the Engvalls, Johnsons and Montgomerys. My dad told all of us to pack into the seats way in the back so that all the weight would be over the drive axle and give us enough traction to literally plow through. It worked and I never forgot that idea.

I like winter storms unless of course they upset my daily routine or my travel plans. December 1977 was when I was to fly to Norway for the first time. I was going to spend Christmas with

my then fiancé Lisbeth and meet her family for the very first time. I was a bit apprehensive to begin with how this was all going to go and the snowstorm did not help my angst. I flew out of Rochester to Chicago on a typical winter day with cold and some light snow. But the KLM 747 that was to fly me from Chicago to Amsterdam got delayed. It was eventually 9 hours later that we unfroze the wings and were ready to head to the Netherlands. Well this threw all the timing off for my eventual trip from the airport in Oslo to the Vikre home in Skien, Norway.

I had to make a different connecting flight at Schiphol airport in Amsterdam. Schiphol I think is Dutch for ski pole. Or maybe not!

If you recall years ago, the Hertz Rent A Car commercials featured O.J. Simpson sprinting through an airport doing high hurdles over people and luggage. That's how I had to make my connecting flight. My fastest time in a 100 yard dash when I was young and in better shape was about 11.5 seconds. I think I cut 2 seconds off that time going through the Ski Pole airport. I slowed down enough to show the attendants my tickets and they rushed me right on. I think my carry-on bag got caught in the door as they closed it right behind me and I mean RIGHT behind me. Of course my seat was towards the back but I didn't have to look for a seat number, I just looked for the last remaining open seat. Everyone had their seatbelts on and their trays locked and seats in the full and upright position. Then they see this disheveled American, who had just run a 9.5 100 yard dash, come in with long wind-blown hair and navy blue and white houndstooth pants on. I think a couple of them got their airsick bag out just in case when they saw me.



I finally arrived at Fornebu Airport in Oslo. My future father in law Knut, not wanting to wait another 16 hours at the airport, had driven back home to Skien which at the time was about a 3 hour drive. Lisbeth stayed at the airport and was there to greet me when I finally arrived. We took a train back to Porsgrunn which is near Skien. Knut I think was still a little wary of me but my future

mother in law Judith warmed up to me right away. You see, I had to call their house from the Chicago airport to tell them it was snowing. More so to tell them I would be quite delayed. I was told later by Lisbeth that after we ended the call, Judith told her that I sounded really nice on the phone. Thank God I was blessed with a radio voice that won over the mother in law. Knut came around quickly too, especially when he found out I was handy with tools and I could help him move heavy furniture. And I could also sit on Lisbeth's little brother Thorleif and keep him quiet for an hour or so at a time.

So snow can be troublesome and an inconvenience at times but you know spring will come and the snow will melt and we'll look at the snowstorms with fond memories.

A snowstorm could not stop, only delay Emery from meeting his future in laws in Norway in 1977. This is a 1982 picture of the Vikre family from Skien, Norway. Front row parents Knut and Judith. Back row 1 to r; Lisbeth, Hanne Karin, Thorleif, Lina.

