

Weather October 2023

The old adage is that everyone talks about the weather but nobody does anything about it. Well if I may, let me talk about it here. I was thinking about this as I was reading the latest weather statistics as to how hot September was and how dry the summer was. Early October saw the Twin Cities high temperature hit the warmest October temperature ever recorded. Many of us, having grown up on a farm or in a small rural community, always were aware of the weather. In my era, when they talk about the drought this year, I instantly recall years like 1975/76, 1980 and 1988 as some of those similar years where rain was in short supply.

We also recall the winters where it snowed more than normal or it was colder than normal. My dad always would bring up the year of 1936. He grew up north of the Twin Cities around Braham. The winter of early 1936 was brutal. He said for them on the farm that year, it never got above zero for 6 weeks. I'm not sure the records would indicate that but if it did get above zero, it wasn't by much. Then the summer of 1936 was one for the record books. It was very hot and dry throughout that summer. The dustbowl years were in the 30's and it came to Minnesota big-time in '36'.

I remember two 3-day blizzards quite vividly. One was in March, 1971. My classmate Joel Sackett and I were headed to the Eubank farm south of Old Town as there was a party for some girls from Renville who were visiting West Concord High School for a few days. There was going to be a get together at the Eubank farm hosted by Joyce Eubank. Joel and I decided we were going to get there one way or another. The blizzard was just starting when Joel came to our farm to pick me up. We head east of West Concord and took the Caryl Bringgold road south to get to the Eubank's place. As we head south down the Bringgold road, we could barely see as the drifts were pretty high from all the previous snow we had that winter and the wind made the snow fall sideways. Joel told me to stick my head out the window so I could keep him away from the edge of the road. Somehow I was able to do that until we had a bit of a clearing.

We finally made it to Eubanks in what turned out to be a two-night slumber party. Me and Joel and 6 girls stuck in a three day blizzard. Even if I wasn't a weather nerd, I would remember this snowstorm. We were hoping this blizzard was at least a 5 day event but I'm not sure Mrs. Eubank was thrilled at that prospect. We had a great time and by Sunday afternoon, the wind and snow had let up enough that a snowplow could make its way down the township road. Turns out the snowplow was the Concord Township snowplow driven by my dad with Ed Roberts as his wingman. I told my dad on the phone that Saturday night that there was no hurry for them to plow the road to the Eubanks place. I was thinking of all the Concord Township residents that wanted their road plowed first. But no, by midafternoon Sunday, they had plowed township roads all the way to Eubanks. I think they actually did a part of Milton Township roads to get there. Joel and I did some shoveling to get vehicles unstuck in the farmyard and then we had to leave. In the summer of 71, Joel and I made a visit to Renville to visit with all the girls who we had a slumber party with in March. There was no weather event that made us stay extra-long. Darn the luck!

The other 3-day blizzard I remember quite vividly was in January, 1975. I was living in Waseca at the time as I was working at KOWO radio. I call it the 'Super Blizzard' as it was the weekend that the Vikings were playing the Steelers in the Super Bowl. I was doing the morning shift on weekends on the radio. That Saturday morning, I was the only one who could get to the radio station as I only lived one block away. I always enjoyed being on the air when storms were happening as we had a captive audience who wanted to know what was going on. We had so many businesses calling in to say they were closed that I decided that we would only take calls from places that were open. It took much less time to go through that list on the air. There were like 4 places open. 3 gas stations and 1 bar. That was the Horseshoe Bar which coincidentally was within walking distance from where I lived even in a blizzard.

There was one hot early October back in 1975 as we finished off a dry year. It was around the 8th or 9th of October and it hit 88° during the soybean harvest. I remember unloading soybeans, auguring them into the old hog house. It was so hot that I was working on a tan shirtless, shoveling soybeans in the heat. Needless to say and much like this year, jacket weather came back in a day or two as temps returned to the 50's and any tan I got unloading soybeans quickly faded. And that's why we talk about the weather, it will bring back memories, some good that make you smile and some you're glad you don't have to go through them again.