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## **From a House to a Home**

Written By: Harry Gribnitz

*In Michigan we have two seasons, summer and hockey. I have also heard the warmer season labeled as "road repair". During our long "hockey" season snowfall is commonplace. In fact I scraped a few inches off the car this morning before heading into the office. Having grown up in Chicago I am very familiar with the joy of the first snowfall. However in many places, they have missed that experience.*

*During the years we lived on the far Westside of Houston, snow was an unknown. My children's classmates had only seen snow in pictures or on television during Christmas specials. One January afternoon in 1981, many of the Houston area schools let students out early so they could see the snow! It was true! If you lived north of the airport, you could actually see a few flakes in the air. I remember seeing a TV reporter standing out in the "snow". She was urging the cameraman to shoot a close up of her dark colored sleeve so the viewers could actually see a snowflake.*

*That winter I traveled with a Sales Representative from a local equipment supplier to his company's facility in Lake Mills, Wisconsin. Neil seemed a little apprehensive as we headed toward the airport. He shared that having grown up in the Rio Grande Valley he had never seen snow on the ground. He had heard that Chicago, our flight destination, had received several inches of snow last night. I assured him the Chicagoans were well equipped to handle the "blizzard conditions". Arriving at O'Hare, we found the sun shining with the temperature in the mid-20s and a few inches of fresh snow on the ground. Neil decided it would be better if I drove the rental car on our two hour trip north into Wisconsin. During the first few minutes of the drive, Neil quietly stared out the window. Finally he could not stand it any further and asked, then ordered, me to pull over on the shoulder of the Tri-State Toll way. He leaped over the guard rail and made his first snowball from the fresh snow along the road. This 30 something dressed in business suit and tie was making snowballs and throwing them toward a highway sign. After one of his poorly directed missiles splatter on the car windshield, I thought I should get him back in the car before he started making snow angels along the roadside. We both smiled and laughed all the way to Lake Mills. We decided it would be best that he not mention his adventure when we arrived at the company plant in Lake Mills, I was sure the "Cheese Heads" would not understand.*

*On January 11, 2008, Mohammed Abdul-Husein, a 63 year old retiree from Baghdad, for the first time, saw snow fall across Baghdad. "When I was young, I heard from my father that such snow-rain had fallen in the early 40s on the outskirts of northern Baghdad. Fawzi Karin, a restaurant owner in Hawr Rajab (six miles SE of Baghdad) was quoted, "I asked my mother, 80, whether she'd ever seen snow .....and her answer was no." "This is so unusual, and I don't know whether or not it's a lesson from God"*

*The snow showing no favoritism fell gently on neighborhoods of Sunni and Shiite alike. A day earlier, four F-16s had raced across the sky to deliver their deadly cargo on an insurgent target. A terrorist's suicide bomb in a market had killed several and injured many. A city that had suffered years of violence was united as the Green Zone was transformed into one giant White Zone. For a few hours a city divided by concrete barriers, checkpoints and ravaged by violence shared the joy of the First Snow.*

*To quote J. B. Priestley "The first fall of snow is not only an event, it is a magical event. You go to bed in one kind of world and wake up in another quite different, and if this is not enchantment then where is it to be found?"*

*Since January 11th, Baghdad has had fewer violent deaths than Houston. Could this be the "not until Hell freezes over moment" the Iraqis have been waiting for?*

Thank you,

Harry Gribnitz

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PS: Please keep our service men and women in your thoughts and prayers.

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