

scious life better. Her path to recovery begins with literacy — not weight reduction. other.

storytelling

1950 snowstorm paralyzed the city but not this dad

By Ed Borrebach

The day after Thanksgiving 1950, on Nov. 24, I was at work as an electrical engineer in Building L of the East Pittsburgh plant of Westinghouse Electric Corp.

Five months before I had accepted a job there after graduating from Tufts College in Massachusetts and had migrated in our new Plymouth, with our even newer, 6-week-old baby boy.

There had been some snow on the ground that morning, but who's afraid of a little snow? So like one of the seven dwarfs (not naming which one), off to work I went, only thinking that it was the thing to do.

Really, though, not one of us knew that a major storm was on the way. We had only radio. No TV, no cell phones, no BlackBerry. So there we were at work while the snow kept a-falling.

Finally, around noon, we were told by management that we could leave. I took the trolley car up Ardmore Boulevard, close to Rebecca Avenue in Wilkinsburg, where I'd parked my car. The snow was building up, with lots of big flat white snowflakes that had no thought of melting.

I cleaned off the car and drove off to Squirrel Hill, where we had a small basement apartment (the only type of residence we could afford on \$315 a month salary) on Woodmont Street. I was not alone on the road; there were other drivers trying to get home before the storm worsened. It was a long, slow trip, but there wasn't a Squirrel Hill Tunnel at the time, so it could have been worse!

I made it home, finally, and parked out front at the curb. The snowfall was intense. We soon found ourselves in a beautiful white world. The snow built up to more than 30 inches deep.

My car was just one of many cars com-



Ed Borrebach

Skiers make their way along a Squirrel Hill street following the great Thanksgiving weekend snowfall of 1950.

pletely hidden under snow. Each was just a lump in a world of white lumps. I put on overshoes, but the snow was too deep for them, so I shoveled my way to the street and scraped off the car top — I feared of a cave-in. Driving anywhere was out of the question.

Back in the basement we talked about our son and his diet of whole milk. Where could we buy some? It was necessary for me to venture out in search of some milk. I walked up to the corner of Murray and Forbes avenues looking for signs of life. I found no open stores.

You can see from the picture I took that the old Route 22-30 through Pittsburgh at the time was still completely impassable.

Finally, well down a road running parallel to Forbes, I found a milk truck (one that delivered pre-ordered quart bottles of milk daily to residences) and there I was able to plead for and buy a bottle. I still think of and

give thanks to that dear man for daring to be out in such weather — even with chains on the wheels and the weight of the truck, it was no picnic — and for selling me a bottle of this life-giving nectar for my son.

I had just come from the Boston area, where people at that time seemed less friendly, to use a kind euphemism. I learned then and many times afterward that people in Pittsburgh are a friendly bunch. I loved it then and love it now.

Ed Borrebach, a retired electrical engineer, lives in Cranberry. He can be reached at edjb@zoominternet.net.

Holiday memories and other Portfolio submissions should be e-mailed to page2@post-gazette.com; or mailed to Portfolio, Post-Gazette, 34 Blvd. of the Allies, Pittsburgh, PA 15222; or call Gary Rotstein at 412-263-1255.

ONLY ON THE WEB