

Drumroll Please

Written by Jes-c Brandt

Texas soft



On the day I left Holyoke, after a two-week Christmas vacation in an ice box, the temperature soared to a whopping 40 degrees; praise the Lord, it finally broke freezing.

There was a time in my life when I thought I handled winter well. Growing up in Colorado, I went sledding when school got canceled and learned early how to drive in the snow. Well, really, I learned how to get unstuck after failing to drive in the snow.

After moving to Texas, there have been many kind, supportive Coloradans who have tried to help me see that I am not as tough as I used to be. They strut around in short sleeves and never miss an opportunity to talk about how shocked they are by the recent “heat wave.” Bundled up during my Thanksgiving vacation, I just could not see what they meant. Needless to say, I was in denial. I have become Texas soft.

It wasn't easy to accept. I always thought new license plates would be the biggest adjustment I'd have to make when becoming a Texan, but apparently I was wrong.

One night, while sitting at dinner with a couple of my elementary students who are native Texans, I overheard a conversation that, at the time, I found laughable.

They were discussing how cold it had been lately, and one of them posed a profound question: “What if it was only 1 degree?” The wide-eyed 6-year-old sitting opposite her answered gravely, “You'd probably die.”

I smiled to myself as their conversation transpired, but I can tell you when I woke up the other morning and the thermometer read 1, I indeed thought I might die.

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Living in Texas for a mere year and a half has robbed me of any tolerance to cold I once had. I remember the times when I would sleep in shorts, with a fan directed at my bed. Now, the entire time I was in Colorado, I slept in sweatpants and a sweatshirt, with an extra blanket. Most mornings, it took all my willpower to subject my skin, even for a moment, to the frigid air outside my pajamas just to get ready for the day.

In high school, I remember slipping on a pair of flip flops to run down the sidewalk and check the mail on a winter morning. These days, I can't leave the warmth of my home without several layers of clothing, and cozy socks are a must.

After a couple weeks of snow, I was finally starting to acclimate to the weather, and by then, it was time to return to Texas. I must admit I was ready to return to warmer climates, and I was not disappointed upon my arrival. When I stepped out of the airport, it was 51 degrees, and for the first time in weeks, I enjoyed the sunshine without the fear of imminent frostbite.

The funny thing was, as I stripped off my heavy coat and headed toward the parking lot, wearing a sweatshirt, I noticed the people around me were still bundled up. I suppose 51 is relatively cold compared to the 78-degree weather we had when I left the state.

Still basking in the rediscovered warmth, I greeted my students when they returned to the school, and I stifled a chuckle as they complained that it was too cold to play outside. I suppose it's all about perspective.

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