



Brightening a day of winter blues

Winter can get rather long sometimes, and I'm sure anyone who lives in an area with a legitimate winter can recall the feeling that spring will never come.

Since returning to Amherst, Mass. this January, it's been above freezing twice, but for some reason the two days of 33 and 34 degrees didn't do much to melt the snow. The forecast for another week of temperatures in the 20s isn't making me very hopeful that the snow will be melting anytime soon either.

If there's one thing that can make sub-freezing temperatures worse, it's getting your car stuck in the snow, which of course, I did. However, the seemingly awful situation ended up brightening one of my cold winter days, and I hope the mental picture you have by the end of the story will bring you a smile too.

I will admit that sometimes I'm a little unrealistic about my car's and my own capabilities when it comes to snowdrifts. The other night when I went to park, there weren't many spots left in the lot, but I saw one, and I instantly snatched it.

A little voice in the back of my head told me the spot was only open because all the sensible people had purposely avoided the ice and snow that covered it. Of course, I ignored that voice and powered my way into the spot and happily trotted back to my warm room.

A couple days and another snowfall came before I needed to make a trip to the grocery store. By then I had completely forgotten about any doubts I had about my parking.

Spinning my tires in vain, however, was a nice reminder. I couldn't move forward or backwards. I was totally stuck. Fortunately I have some really great friends who gladly came to my rescue.

Drumroll Please

Written by Jes-c Brandt

Now Amherst College students aren't exactly known for their physical ability. That's not to say we're all weak, uncoordinated and athletically challenged, but, well, most of us are. As I'm sure you can imagine, six nerds trying to get a car out of the snow is quite a sight.

Picture us as we gather around the car, sure that if we just think about it hard enough we can solve this problem. Certainly what we lack in strength we can make up for in logic.

So we begin to analyze the situation. Clearly we need to reduce the mass of the snow drift so the car will need less force to get through it. With that in mind we set to shoveling out a path.

Let me tell you, if you ever need some comic relief just find a liberal arts college in the winter and watch the students try to use a shovel. You'd think it's a pretty simple undertaking, but apparently knowing what angle will result in the best leverage doesn't necessarily translate to graceful shoveling.

With a path cleared, we next mapped out positions for everyone to maximize our pushing efforts. We ended up with all the windows rolled down, four people gripping the doors and two pushing from the front.

The one tip about getting unstuck that managed to make its way into my long term memory is to rock the car. So on the count of three we began rocking it back and forth. With a few grunts and loads of giggling we pushed the back wheels up and over what remained of the snow drift.

We took a moment to regain our composure, and then we got back to rocking so we could get the front wheels over as well. In the final heave, my car rolled out of its prison-like parking space and we actually cheered in celebration.

Fortunately, our professors are always encouraging us to pay attention to detail, so the minor detail that my car was continuing to roll while we celebrated didn't escape our attention.

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With surprisingly fast reflexes we stopped the runaway before there was any damage. I'm sure the owners of the Audi and Land Rover parked behind me are grateful.