

Great Canadian winter on its way

By Sarah Sobanski

It's been a couple of times now, that I've been driving through the area and heard a radio announcer predict a 'great Canadian winter' or 'traditional winter in Canada' for this year.

Here I was thinking that last winter was one of our country's great Canadian winters. I must have drove through four major snowstorms. Isn't it hilarious that snowplows always show up behind you as you come within five minutes of your destination?

This year the *Old Farmer's Almanac* 'almanac meaning 'a publication containing astronomical and meteorological data for a given year and often including a miscellany of other information' according to *Merriam-Webster*, fun fact 'is predicting a warmer and wetter 2017-'18 winter.

'Winter temperatures will be above normal, with the coldest periods in mid-November, early and late December, early January, and early and mid-February,' it states. 'Precipitation and snowfall will be above normal in the east and below normal in the west, with the snowiest periods in late November, mid- and late December, and early to mid-March.'

It goes on to suggest we'll be having a cool spring and a hot, hot summer with less rain than usual 'thank goodness' but that's next year's problem. This year's problem is preparing for all that snow!

According to the *Almanac*, from now until the end of December we're going to see precipitation, snow, flurries and/or a snowstorm every week. Therefore, we better talk about some survival tips for the average great Canadian winter.

Rule one: don't go outside, unless for fun winter activities 'snowmobiling, ice fishing or tobogganing. Rule two: stretch before shovelling 'you should have started your winter squat and hamstring workout routine yesterday. Rule 2.5: first person to ask that the driveway be shovelled has to shovel it. Rule three: have extra snow boots and mitts and scarves and blankets and other warm attire in your car at all times 'that's just practical, every Canadian knows that. Rule four: have cat litter, salt or sand within arm's reach whenever possible 'no ice slipping related injuries allowed. Rule five: it's spelled a tuque. Rule six: don't eat that yellow snow. Rule seven: there's a difference between snowballs and ice-balls. Rule eight: snow forts left unattended will be crushed like sand castles. Rule nine: complaining about the cold every morning from here until June is an acceptable way to greet your fellow Canadians. Rule 10: all knitted gifts were made with love 'even if you hate it, don't show it. But you're Canadian, you'd never be anything other than nice I'm sure.

There's lots more you could think of 'ones that are just in your nature as a Canadian whose survived so many winters. I love that something we're so accustomed to is talked about as this terrifying, cold, desolate season by any other passerby. Some provinces have had snow for ages already, some territories always have snow.

We should have some fun with it, however.

If you meet someone who isn't from around here, and they say, 'Are you prepared for that great Canadian winter that's coming?? You untie the reins of your moose, pull on your tuque and ride into the sunset like the majestic creature you are.

Let the legend live on. A little snow never scared you or I.