

The politics of snowmen



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PRAIRIE RUSTLINGS

I've been a little grumbly these days. Fussing over things gone awry in my life. I know, we've all got things to fuss about, and I know — my life isn't so awry. But I tend to fuss when I'm walking the dog. I've learned that pets can be pretty sensitive to our moods. And my dog is a champ at knowing when I'm not happy. She wants none of it. Dare I cry, she heads to a different room. But if she's at the end of the leash — and it's her time to have fun and smell the world — and I'm upset, she turns around and gives me a look. If I persist in my grumbling, she jumps on me.

It was on one of these such walks on one of these moody days that I stopped in my tracks at the sight of this snowman. I like to see snowmen most any day, as well as snow forts dug into drifts, but this large snowman got me smiling. It was created completely upside down. My dog went over to see what was going on too, sniffing the snowman's rock eyes.

The snowman was looking at the world from another perspective, his sandals facing the sky, his mouth smiling the other way, and he was just as happy as could be. I laughed out loud. Yeah, yeah, yeah, I get the message, Mr. Snowman. Try seeing the world a little differently and it isn't all bad. My mood lightened and we continued home.

Winter has disappeared so suddenly and the snowman has melted. And it is springtime 2012. There are no more snowmen on our yards, upside down or not. Soon there will be the colors of a presidential election with campaign signs scattered about lawns. And more than that, all state senators and house representatives are up for re-election to St. Paul. Plus, there is one U.S. Senate race and all U.S. House of Representative seats are up for grabs.



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY JODY RUSSELL

Try seeing the world a little differently.

And if that wasn't enough, there will be a constitutional amendment ballot question too. And that's just so far.

Pretty soon, things are going to heat up. Whether you follow politics or not, this year is going to be a biggie. There will be no avoiding it. Getting informed is important. It matters. It matters who is elected. It matters if we vote aye or nay. And I hope we all take the time to learn, understand and be involved.

But this is not a political statement. Not a call to action. Not a political commentary. This is a plea.

Eden Prairie has been divided before over issues. And this year might get grumbly. We might feel divided. We might feel that the "other side" isn't our side. We might drive down our streets and know the "other guy" by his/her signs. And I daresay there will be letters in this newspaper on all the salient topics. There will be television commercials that are true, some that are not true, and we will be tired of it well before November.

My plea is to remember that we are in this together. And when you feel that divisiveness that seems to come every four years or more, think about this crazy snowman. Or stand on your head. Try to see it from the other fellow's perspective, laugh, listen and keep on going.

Jody Russell is an Eden Prairie web designer, photographer and writer. Her columns appear regularly in the Eden Prairie News.