



Save a tree. Get the news.  
daily news delivered to your inbox



[click here](#)

Home > The Athens Banner-Herald > Opinion

## Opinion

EMAIL PRINT COMMENT AA - + BOOKMARK

# Snow days a treasured thing here

### Forum

By Jerome E. Dobson | Athens Banner-Herald | Story updated at 5:43 pm on 2/7/2009



Reacting to the first winter weather closure of his daughters' new school, President Obama stomped on the "third rail" of Southern politics. "Some ice?" he said. Toughen up. Do like Chicago. Go to school. Play in the snow at recess.

Abolish snow days? What's next? Biscuits? Country ham? Will we be forced to sweeten our cornbread and call our grits "polenta" like everybody up North?

Yes, the honeymoon is over. Hero one day, oppressor the next. Snow days are a sacred Southern right, cherished by young and old, rich and poor, black and white, and even transplanted Yankees (after acclimatization).

Tough, flinty Yankees? It's nice they have something to feel macho about, but toughness isn't the point.

It's a matter of common sense backed by hard science. My discipline of geography includes specialists who focus on natural hazards. One cardinal rule is that it never makes sense to prepare for the maximum disaster. In practical terms, that means it doesn't make sense to buy snow tires for only a few days each year. It doesn't make sense to maintain fleets of snowplows and vast stockpiles of sand and salt merely to keep schools open a few hours each year.

And, what about the snow itself? Geographers who specialize in climatology know: The colder the snow, the better the traction. I grew up in North Georgia, but now live in Kansas. I've driven the entire Alaska Highway in winter. I can attest that Southern snows are much slicker most of the time. Plus, more ice.

Clearly, the Southern response is the rational one. Contrary to all claims, Yankees sometimes make the wise choice, too. I once knew a man who knew a man who spent a winter up North, and he swore they do close school sometimes. They just hold out for deeper snow, and we can't fault them for that.

White House insiders insist President Obama's decree is not as harsh as it seems. Unidentified administration sources say his next "shovel-ready" stimulus package includes all-season tires for millions of Southerners disadvantaged by his order.

Now, all you tough, flinty, hard-working Yankees, ask yourselves why millions of you move south at your first opportunity. What turns you into flocks of snowbirds in your latter days? Could it be snow? Isn't it mostly the irksome fact that you have to shovel yourselves out and go to work in it? So you move south and insist we do the same. What are you thinking?

We Southerners solved that problem long ago. So, we love snow. Why would anybody want to spoil that?

Still, President Obama, I voted for you. I like you. I want you to succeed. So, here's the deal. President Wilson had his geographer. President Roosevelt had his. Give us back our snow days, and you can have one too. I'll gladly drop by the White House every once in a while to advise you on a kinder, gentler, evidence-based Southern Policy.

Of course, all politics is local, as Tip O'Neill said. So don't expect anybody, anywhere to re-elect that county school superintendent who followed your instructions and sent those poor little kids out on that

## Most Popular Articles

- Two teens die in crash on Loop
- A visit to mall pays off: \$1M lottery tick...
- Crash on the Loop claims two
- Officer doesn't buy man's butt tale
- Post office to cut jobs, operations in Ath...
- Judge says UGA must clear professor
- Deck plans in motion
- Charles ends wait, signs with Bulldogs
- Barrow gaining new jobs
- Economy trips up students' spring break pl...

[MOST POPULAR](#) [MOST COMMENTS](#)

### TOP JOBS

**PT Front**  
Office Position Company Confidential ...

**Manufacturing Positions**  
Clark Western dkinney@clarkwestern.com...

**The Worlds**  
Greatest Job!!! Wholesale Distribution company...

[View All Ads](#)

### TOP HOMES

### TOP RENTALS

**More Classifieds**

## What's your New Year's resolution?

- Get healthy
- Fix up the house
- Improve my finances
- Advance my career

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

icy ribbon of death.

• *Jerome E. Dobson is president of the American Geographical Society and a professor of geography at the University of Kansas. Send e-mail to [dobson@ku.edu](mailto:dobson@ku.edu).*

Originally published in the Athens Banner-Herald on Sunday, February 08, 2009

**WANT TO COMMENT?** Comments are **not** edited and don't represent the views of the Athens Banner-Herald. Please read our [Terms of Service](#). You can rate each comment by



clicking the or buttons. To flag an inappropriate comment, click the button. If you are experiencing problems posting a comment or would like to alert the online staff to a comment, please e-mail [melissa.hanna@onlineathens.com](mailto:melissa.hanna@onlineathens.com).



### Reader Comments

There are no comments. Be the first to post one.

You can comment by [logging in](#).

#### **APX - Scheduling Coordinator Services**

APX provides scheduling coordinator services for ISO market operation.  
[www.apx.com](http://www.apx.com)

#### **Tarus Coordinate Measuring Machines**

Tarus specializes in large volume Coordinate Measuring Machines's for  
[www.tarus.com](http://www.tarus.com)

#### **I Got A 12,000 Grant Check**

Learn How I Got My Grant Check In Less Than 30 Days. \$12,000 Paid.  
[www.UncleSamsGrant.com](http://www.UncleSamsGrant.com)

[Ads by Yahoo!](#)

**Contact Us**  
Have questions?  
Call us at 706-549-0123

**Save on International Calling**

**Vonage**  
START SAVING NOW >>

© 2009 | [OnlineAthens](#) • [Athens Banner-Herald](#) • [Morris Digital Works](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Local Business Listings](#)