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SNOW DAY!

by BRIAN ABELING

On February 1, 2015, much of central Iowa was blanketed by 13 inches of white stuff. Photographer Brian Abeling captured the magic of a snow day in his West Des Moines yard.



The snow started out heavy and wet, clinging to tree branches and causing them to bend low over the ground. Kate Songer, age 9, of West Des Moines makes snow angels at sunset after the storm ended.



A plow barrels down the street in a cloud of snow late in the storm. Its rumbling approach drew Isaac and Evan Ullestad, ages 11 and 8, to watch it pass. The driver returned their waves and, to the boys' delight, blew his air horn in greeting as well.





The only one in Abeling's neighborhood who loves snow more than the kids is Dakota, an English mastiff. She frolicked all day with the sledding, snow fort- and snowman-building children. She particularly enjoyed plowing trenches through the snow with her nose. Here she inquisitively sniffs Abeling's camera lens after completing one of her snow ditches.





Photographer Brian Abeling, shoveling away during the height of the storm. "Those of us who still use shovels like to get out early when the first few inches fall so we can get a jump on the storm and not ruin our backs trying to clear it all at once," he says.

Abeling took this photo by parking his camera safely on a tripod in his garage. He triggered the camera's shutter and three flash units (one on the camera; two more in zip-top bags placed in the snow behind him) with a remote-control to light the scene and "freeze" the falling snowflakes.

Abeling also shot a time-lapse video that condenses 24 hours of snow falling, tree limbs sagging, snowman and snow fort making, sledding, shoveling, and snowball fights into 60 seconds. The video was featured by the *Washington Post* and NBC news online. You can view it on *The Iowa's* website at towan.com/snowday.

Brian Abeling grew up in Monticello. He is director of technology for West Des Moines Community Schools.