

## ICY DRIVEWAY by James Collins

December 1982, began a tough winter in New Hampshire. There was a lot of snow. However, those days, when the temperature was down around freezing, and we ended up with ice on the driveways, driving was more hazardous. New Hampshire drivers learn to handle the snow pretty well, but the ice is always a threat.

My home had a garage underneath the house with a driveway, about 60 feet long, which sloped down to the street. The street was on a very steep hill and we were situated near the top. Getting a car in and out of the driveway when ice was present was always a challenge.

On this morning, the radio warned that there was heavy ice on the roads. My trip from my house to my place of work was about five miles and if I go slow I can usually handle the conditions. I grabbed my briefcase and all my work, put on my hat and coat kissed my wife goodbye and left for work.

I got into my blue Ford, started the engine and backed the old car which still used rear wheel drive, out onto the icy driveway. All of a sudden, I was on an amusement park ride I had not expected. One of the rear wheels spun while the other found traction. The car backed out at an angle and slid down the driveway sideways. I hit the brakes but to no avail. The nose of the car with the heavy engine slid faster and the car nosed into a snowbank at the mouth of the driveway near the mail box. It rested diagonally across the driveway with the driver door facing up the driveway to the garage about 45 feet away. Then it halted. I immediately shut off the engine.

Once I shut the car off, I started hollering to my wife to tell her to call work to let them know that I would be late. I planned to wait until the ice melted. My wife came down inside the house and stood at the garage door to view my predicament.

I opened the car door, stepped out holding onto the car because the roadway was quite slippery. I bent down and very carefully inched my way up the slight slope toward the garage door. My wife was standing there watching me, telling me to be careful. Step-by-step I slowly slid my feet up the driveway till I was about 2 feet from my wife. I tried to reach out my hand to her. As I reached out, I slipped, ending up face down on the driveway and accelerated feet forward down the icy driveway directly towards my car, which was across the driveway.

My feet went under the body of the car and I slid under the exhaust system of the car with my feet. As I had accelerated pretty fast I ended up stuck underneath the car leaning against the exhaust. Luckily, I had not run the car very long, so it had just started to get warm, and I was not burned. I called my wife to come help me.

"Not on your life, I'm not leaving the garage" was her response.

She had cut me loose. She was laughing so hard she had to sit down on the concrete. Now you have to imagine the picture. I am not a small man. I was 6 feet 2 inches tall and 210 pounds at the time bundled in heavy winter gear as needed in a New Hampshire winter. I was pinned face down on the driveway with my feet and legs jammed under the body of the old blue Ford. I was too big for my little slight 5 foot 4 inch wife to handle even if she stopped laughing. I knew I was on my own!

**Eventually I pulled myself out and, using the car as a support, I moved my way over to the snowbank. This time I walked up in the snow until I got to the edge of the garage and using my arms worked around the wall until I was onto the dry garage floor. I had to wait about two hours for the ice to clear on the driveway even though I liberally sprinkled ice pellets to help remove the ice from the pavement.**

**Once the rear wheels were dry enough, I was able to back the car out and go to work. That was the worst experience I had with ice on my driveway in New Hampshire and ever since that time I have kept a lot of ice melt in the garage so I would not have to experience that embarrassing condition a second time. My wife laughed about this episode every time the kids talked about my driving experiences.**

**THE END**