It was almost as if history was repeating itself.
As I welcomed another year on my birthday last Monday, the state of Mississippi welcomed in a harsh winter storm whether it wanted to or not.
On the day I was born, 31 years ago, there was also a state of panic in the place of my birth. A major ice, slush, snow, etc. storm hit Natchez on Jan. 14, 1982.
As soon as the freezing rain and piles of snow began to accumulate, so did my mother's choice to head to the hospital to give birth to her first child.
Jamie Lynn Kemp was born at 3:17 p.m., a healthy and happy baby.
But the events that led up to that moment weren't such a blessing.
Granted, I am going by hearsay since I obviously have no recollection of these events. But considering more than one relative has shared the story, almost to the exact detail...it's safe to say it's true.
And before I begin the events of the day, I can't help but think of the saying "country came to town" because when the Jackson family arrived, they let the whole town know about it.
My Momma first went into labor during the early hours that morning. She got to the hospital just fine that day with no episodes, no dramatic events, nothing out of the ordinary. She was just a first time mommy, ready to meet her baby.
The phone calls began to circulate among Momma's family.
My Paw Paw picked up the telephone on the first ring that day. He was already up to keep an eye on the weather. A winter storm was barrelling into Adams County, and he wanted to be prepared.
Some say women are the only ones who get excited about babies. But Paw Paw was the exception.
"Earlene," he yelled at the top of his lungs, slamming the phone down. "Get out of the bed. Rhonda is going to have the baby...right now."
Running through the house, Maw Maw said he took down an entire wall of pictures trying to put on his coat. He burned his hand as he poured his Thermos up with scalding coffee. He even called his neighbor to let him know the good news.
Maw Maw was slipping on a sweater hat when he pulled the truck right up next to the bedroom window and let the horn ring out into the entire community.
Kingston Road was iced over, and there were a few bridges he had to cross. Maw Maw said he had a crazy look in his eye.
"We gotta go," he said, trying to balance his Thermos and smoking pipe on the steering wheel. "Those babies....they come when they are ready. They don't wait around."

Maw Maw said she prayed the entire way into town, but they safely made it to the hospital.
Clear across the county, my Aunt Sonya and Uncle Herbert got the same call.
“Herbert,” my aunt yelled, throwing on a pair of shoes that didn’t match. “Get the car running. Rhonda is having the baby.”
“Why don’t we just wait and see what the weather is gonna do,” Uncle Herbert asked. “We won’t be able to do anything. She might in labor for hours. Let’s just wait an hour or so.”
“I’m going without you,” she said, grabbing her purse. “Rhonda needs me.”
Uncle Herbert said he didn’t argue with her. He didn’t even try to stop her. He knew it would be useless. He sat back in his recliner with his cup of coffee as he heard the car’s belt squeal down Pine Ridge Road.
I would like to tell you that Aunt Sonya made it safe like Paw Paw did. But that won’t be the case.
She made it into town, but right at the intersection going into the hospital, she had an accident. She rear-ended another car. And not just any car...a shiny BMW.
In a panic, she sweet-talked the BMW owner into exchanging information. I’m not sure whether he felt sorry for Aunt Sonya trying to get to her sister or whether he thought she was crazy.
Aunt Sonya sped up the emergency ramp that led to the hospital. Yeah....the ramp that was iced over from the winter storm.
She began to slide sideways. Then she started sliding back down it again.
Once the car came to a stop, she just left it there. Right in the middle of the emergency ramp. A Lincoln with a huge dent in the front from her accident just sat there.
Hospital employees tried to stop her. She just threw her keys at a medic and told him to do what he wanted with it.
“My sister needs me,” she shouted, running into the hospital.
My family waited six more hours for me. Uncle Herbert even made it up there with a few hours to spare.
It may have been embarrassing at the time. An older man dressed in overalls with a Thermos of coffee, a burn on his hand, a pipe in his mouth busting through the door. A half-crazed woman with mismatched shoes and a smashed car outside.
But they were the folks who welcomed me into the world. And with such an enthusiastic greeting, I had to have known that I had arrived to the place where I belonged.