

# The C&A Express

Volume 11

## Are You "Springing Forward" This Year?

For many winter-weary people, springtime means daffodils, songbirds, and oiling up the old catcher's mitt. It's a perfect time to look forward to all the sunny days ahead.

For others, it just means April showers, spring-cleaning, and trying to remember to set the clocks ahead ("Spring forward, Fall back...").

**People have been celebrating the promise of rebirth and warmth since time began.** In northern lakefront cities like Milwaukee or Chicago, everyone knows that the first true day of spring is not necessarily March 21<sup>st</sup>. It's the day that suddenly everybody in town seems to be down at the beach. You may live in an area where springtime is heralded by magnolia blossoms or Opening Day at the baseball park.

But if April just means too many bills still coming in from December and ancient crabgrass peeking through the last of the snow, then you may want to do a little "spring-cleaning" on your psyche. You're not ready to "spring forward" just yet.

**Take a minute to write down several things that always cheer you up.** Pick three activities that are realistic for you to engage in within the very near future. (If that trip to Maui is not in your budget till 2007, cross it off for now.) List any friends or relatives with whom you'd like to share the experience. What clothing, money, or equipment will be required? Will you need to tune up your bike or locate some kite string?

**Now close your eyes and imagine yourself doing one of your chosen activities.** What does the scene look like? Who's there with you? Are you outdoors? What sounds will you hear? Are there any pleasant smells or tastes that you can associate with this activity? The more detail, the better.

Now go back to your notes. Decide what you need to do to make this scene a reality.

Who might like to do this with you? Benefits of teaming up might include sharing costs or transportation, or just having someone to remember the event with you later.

Consider picking one activity you can do with an adult pal and one that would be most enjoyed with kids, your own or perhaps a niece or a nephew. Identify at least one activity that is best appreciated in quiet solitude – spending a weekend at a retreat center, curling up with a new book, taking your dog on an extended walk. (OK, dogs are companions, too, but they don't talk much and you don't generally need to spend a lot of energy cheering them up.)

Now here's the hard part: Get out your calendar and **pick a specific date** to actually get out and do one of your activities. Feeling bold? Write it down in ink so it's harder for you to cancel for unimportant reasons. **Treat your peace of mind as a priority!** When that's done, write in another one. On a roll? Set a date for one more.

If you have a few relaxing or exciting things on the calendar, the mud and the clouds won't seem so dismal. **It's been said that good mental health involves the ability to plan for the future.** And when all is said and done, isn't having something to look forward to the very essence of spring?

**If you still need help de-stressing, consider calling the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) at (800) 742-2858.**

**It's free, confidential, and just a phone call away!**