

## — Winter, Winter, Go Away... —

It's official... I do not like cold weather! I know that here in the good ol' Southern United States our winters aren't nearly as harsh as most. In fact, many refer to winter in the south as being quite mild. Regardless, I'm never going to be a fan of wintertime unless I'm in a warmer climate or global warming kicks into overdrive.

The fact is, winter has been well underway since December 21, 2009. The good news is, we are over half way through the season which ends on the first day of spring, March 20, 2010. And like many of you, I can't wait for the beauty (and warmer temperatures) of springtime.

Now that the hustle and bustle of the holidays are behind us, it's time for many to fall back into those normal daily routines. Everyone's daily routine is different depending mostly on their occupation, shift or schedule.

My typical weekly routine consists of waking up early on weekdays, getting ready, commuting to work by 8:30am, sitting at a desk in front of a computer (working dilligently of course), a short lunch, more sitting at a desk in front of a computer (still making an assiduous effort), heading home at 5pm, eating dinner, then usually (more now than before) going to bed early. Occasionally, I attend meetings throughout

the week, but all in all, that's my work week in a nutshell.

My weekends involve more sleep, less sitting in front of a computer and more sitting in front of the television, especially during the winter. As I mentioned before... I do not like cold weather, nor do I like being out in cold weather, which may be one of the reasons for preferring to "stay in" or engage in less social activities. It is during this time of year, many find themselves (myself included) with a case of the winter blues, also referred to as winter depression or winter blahs.

Cold winter weather and too much time indoors can be annoying, especially when it goes on for weeks or months at a time. In fact, there is a biological condition that about 10 million Americans suffer from and another 25 million have a mild form of during the winter called Seasonal Affective Disorder or SAD (more appropriately called in my opinion). SAD is a mood disorder in which people who have normal mental health throughout most of the year experience depressive symptoms in the winter or, less frequently, in the spring, summer or autumn, repeatedly, year after year.

The US National Library of Medicine notes that "some people experience a serious mood change when

the seasons change. They may sleep too much, have little energy, and crave sweets and starchy foods. They may also feel depressed. Though symptoms can be severe, they usually clear up." According to [www.wikipedia.com](http://www.wikipedia.com), symptoms of SAD may consist of difficulty waking up in the morning, tendency to oversleep as well as to overeat, and especially a craving for carbohydrates, which leads to weight gain. Other symptoms include a lack of energy, difficulty concentrating on completing tasks, and withdrawal from friends, family, and social activities. All of this leads to the depression, pessimism, and lack of pleasure which characterize a person suffering from this disorder.

Sometimes a change of scenery can make one suffering with SAD feel better. And, as I've realized, the occasional weekend getaway or mini vacation can do the trick. However, for me it seems that once I'm away from home for more than a couple of days, I can't wait to get back. Perhaps the reason behind this is I tend to worry about my pets too much while I'm away. After all, they are my kids. Despite the worry, I must admit I do enjoy a well deserved and much needed occasional "break from the norm."

I recently took a weekend

getaway to Pigeon Forge and Gatlinburg with my boyfriend. Even though it was freezing cold (after all, it is in the Smokies), I still had a great time. I have been there many times, but with each visit, there is something new to enjoy, especially when I'm in good company. And with my best friend as a house and pet sitter looking after things back home, I didn't constantly worry about their well being. I returned refreshed and in a much better mood. That mini vacation was just what I needed to get over my winter blues. I enjoyed it so much, I've planned another weekend trip with my father to The Southern Museum of Civil War and Locomotive History in Kennesaw, Georgia. (That's definitely going to be a future *Tonya's Tales* article.)

Spring will be here before



# TONYA'S TALES

By Tonya Brantley

we know it, unless the groundhog sees his shadow, then it'll take a little longer, and with it will be the renewal of many things and the elimination of those winter blues.

In the meantime, I will continue with my normal daily routines, with the occasional spontaneous or planned getaways thrown in from time to time in order to keep my sanity. Watch out cold winter weather, here I come!

- *The best part of vacation, through far and wide we roam, is when it's time to travel back the trail that leads to home. Strange roads and ways are thrilling and mighty fine to see, but when vacation's over, at home we long to be.*

*It's fine to see the wonders and beauties of the land - the mighty snow-capped mountains, the rolling sea, the sand, the city's man-made glory; But when tired we have grown, we turn our faces toward the path that leads to home. It's fine to see the north land, the mountains of the west, the great southern plantations, but, somehow, I love best of all the towns and cities, though far and wide we roam, that little rambling village at trail's end we call... home!*

-anonymous

Do you have Questions or Comments about Tonya's Tales? If so, e-mail Tonya at: [people4news@aol.com](mailto:people4news@aol.com)

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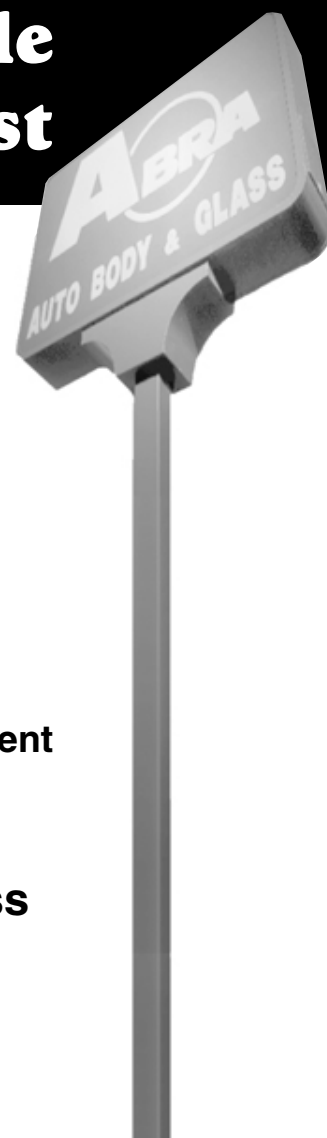
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