

Delmarva's Seasonal Disorder

Written by Fran Severn

Tuesday, 02 November 2010 20:03 -

I finally took down my hanging baskets this afternoon. I'm a 'summer will last forever' person, but the few blooms still peeking out from the tangle of brown leaves and dying vines look just plain tired. Winter is on its way. Which leads to what a friend of mine calls "The Delmarva Bi-polar Disorder." And I don't mean choosing between Santa at the North Pole and Penguins at the South.

Just how bad is this winter going to be, and how much preparing should I do?

All of the catalogs are coming in from L.L. Bean, The North Face, Duluth Trading Co., Woolrich, Winter Silk – all of them warning of cold and snow and ice and misery and promising to protect me from the elements with their sweaters and thermal underwear.

Then there are the 'stuff' catalogs and the displays showing up at Ace Hardware and Home Depot. Can I survive without an ergonomically correct snow shovel? Propane-powered de-icer? Snow chains for my truck tires? Fat wood for my fireplace? How many packets of hand-warmers do I need?

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Decisions. Decisions.

The Old Farmer's Almanac isn't much help. Whatever it calls for in the Mid-Atlantic doesn't take into consideration the unique climatology of the Eastern Shore. Remember a couple of years ago when the Western Shore was buried in drifts up to the top of the Washington Monument and the Governor declared a state of emergency and ordered everyone off the roads? Except that over here we only got a couple of flurries, not even enough for a 2-hour school delay. What's the point of spending the cash for a new snow-blower if it'll be rusted past the point of use before it's needed?

But then...

Last winter.

It nibbles uncomfortably at the fringes of our consciousness like an upcoming visit to the dentist. It really isn't going to be that bad. Really. Last year was just a fluke. Really. With global warming, winters will be milder now. Really.

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But what if I'm wrong?

So I rationalize. Most of the stuff keeps, after all. I might get an assignment to write a story about dog sledding in Wisconsin, and I'd need long johns then. It might not snow, but we could get freezing rain. That's kind of likely, actually. And that would take down power lines even faster than a foot of snow, so a generator makes sense. And I can carry the shovel in my horse trailer, where it will definitely see a lot of use year-round.

But isn't it silly to get worked up over the 'maybe' of winter when you know it's not going to happen? Spend that money when it can go towards other things, especially in this economy? Get caught up in the hype and hysteria of maybe mega-disasters?

But then...