

Spring Fever Redux

Written by Mark Shaffer

Wednesday, 14 March 2012 08:38 - Last Updated Wednesday, 14 March 2012 09:22



The Backyard Tourist suffers acute relapse, reprints



old Spring Fever piece

Past is prologue

It's true. The body of this piece originally appeared in this publication a few years back, shortly after my wife and I washed up on these shores. We were fresh – and by that I mean frigidly

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preserved – from a stint in Seattle. Shortly after we thawed out, purchased shorts and flip flops and we were no longer stupefied by the strange bright ball in the sky, we gazed around from our barstools and thought, *What the hell were we doing in Seattle all that time? Quick, somebody play “Changes in Latitudes,” and bring us more refreshing beverages and locally sourced crustaceans!*

And so it began. With the first hints of spring this malarial affliction reappears. And after years of experience we do what comes natural: we cave. Yep, we just give in. Resistance is futile, my friends. Hopefully, by reprinting this guide to Living With Spring Fever someone out there may feel a bit less guilty about blowing off work on a dreamy, breezy sun-drenched day to go fishing, catch a ballgame or laze in a hammock listening to the sounds of the re-awakening world.

March 2009: first symptoms appear

I bought a seersucker jacket this morning. I was washing the six inches of accumulated pollen off the car and the sun was shining, the sky was an impossible azure, the azaleas were in riot, a gentle breeze was blowing, the heady scent of Carolina jasmine wafted – yes, wafted – through the air, and the next thing I know I’m buying a seersucker jacket. Seersucker. No offense to anyone reading this and thusly attired, but I’ve never really considered myself a seersucker kind of guy. This is the fabric of Hollywood’s prototypical (and stereotypical) Southern “gentleman” that I despise so much – the uniform for Tennessee Williams’ booze-soaked scoundrels and John Grisham’s outgunned idealistic lawyers – and worse, it’s what Matlock wore. Sorry, Andy.

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