

A friendly, active and open group.

It is mid-March and the snow is melting. Things around here are beginning to show through the shrinking snow banks. We are seeing more sun, so our spirits are up. We are burning less wood per day. The woodshed is down to the last row. Soon the green stuff will be up as well. You cannot ask for more than that at this time of year. I will always welcome spring when the winter is about to end and Bev is back to planning to work in her garden for yet another year.

How does one mentally shift from the survival mode of thinking and living we've engaged in during the harsh realities of our winters? How do you adapt to the fresh bounties that spring brings with it to reawaken our joy at getting out of doors without having to bundle up in layers of constrictive clothing? For us, it usually begins with cleaning up all that winter has deposited, or conversely, torn down on our property. For example; draining off excess melt water, picking up broken branches, cleaning up leaves, spreading out un-melted snow banks so they disappear more quickly, and unfortunately, picking up all the coffee cups and other trash which the wind has brought up from the road, presumably left there by "thoughtful" motorists who have been passing by our driveway for the past several months. Not too pleasant, but necessary nonetheless.

You can approach these chores with feelings of drudgery, disgust, anger, or just that of resentment at having to do it at all. To get more joy out of life, try thinking about the clearly healthier approach you can take by choosing to focus on the pride you get from looking after and maintaining the beautiful yard and grounds you live on. The simple answer is: take pride in what you do, and ultimately you will be rewarded by feelings of a positive nature. Your outlook on life will most likely be more positive as well. Feeling good about something you have accomplished is good for your soul and overall wellbeing.

We have already begun that process in this household. It is early days yet, but as there was a great deal of ice accumulation this winter, we have been cutting channels in the snow banks, and into the ice itself. All this effort is to direct the melt-water away from the house and garage and on down the slope to where it will do no damage. A dry basement is always a good thing and a small investment in time and effort now will serve you well – don't you think? Water damage can be very expensive to repair and clean up, so it is easier to deal with now, before the damage is done. We have moved a number of times over the years. Virtually every home we bought has had land sloping toward the house itself. In every case, the first thing I did after taking ownership, was to take a shovel to those slopes and ensure that the flow was away from any building on the property. The cost? Nothing but an hour or two's work and a little sweat that a long cold drink took care of once the work was completed. Most work around a home is satisfying, doing it well, improving on your investment, and ensuring that things are put right is extremely rewarding.

The only real problem we expect to have this year will be co-ordinating the spring clean-up with getting the garden planted, plus of course, all of the other things going on in our lives right now. For one thing, I need to finish the final adjustments on a motorcycle I restored. I plan to enter it in a 250 KM reliability run in the late spring, but some things still need a final fiddling to be *set right*. The other problem is that I have to "break-in" the rebuilt engine for about 300 miles before I can run it at over a maximum of 35 MPH. Yes, that is correct, it is in miles. This bike is over 60 years old, and was built in Britain in the early 1950's. This all takes time unfortunately. I also have to go for a long drive with the trailer to pick up a "new" old bike and sidecar in need of restoring. I sold yet another "old bike" this winter, which fortunately is being picked up in two day's time. The "new to me" bike is replacing the one I just sold, as it will be much easier for Bev, to get into and out of this sidecar than she could the old one. Yes, Bev does

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