

Some stores are not so hot

Bill Hall/Lewiston Tribune

I sometimes regret living in the constant cold of June, July and August. A person could almost freeze to death in summer.

Mind you, I'm not writing this lament from Australia or Chile, way down there at the cold southern end of this big ball of diverse weather. I seem to live most of my waking life in the bitterly chilled office buildings and stores where management is careless about how low the temperature is set on the air conditioning.

The customers are freezing but the employees are comfortable. That's because the customers have arrived in automobiles that don't compel them to walk much or to get up a sweat. So customers walk into an overcooled store that chills us all by setting the temperature in the shopping aisles the same as for the quarters of beef in the meat locker.

And don't expect the shelf stockers and the busy checkout clerks to care. They spend their days lifting 20 pounds of this and 30 pounds of that with sweat dripping off their hot little noses. They're not ready to realize that 60 is a bit chilly for the customers.

You can't go into one of those food stores without wanting to buy a hot broiled chicken just to hug a feathered hot water bottle as you shiver around the store. In the summertime, those stores should provide ski jackets for the customers.

Restaurants keep the customers at the same temperature as the ice cream. Whether you're a fry cook with singed eyebrows or a waitress racing through the establishment like a gazelle with its pants on fire, you are working and that makes you hot, whether you're a blonde or not.

No doubt much of our existence on this planet is backwards. For instance, time and seasons move faster than they did when we were children - back when a year was 20 percent of a 5-year-old's life. However, when you arrive at your 75th birthday, a year is one-75th of your life.

As we age, the world revolves faster, rushing us from spring to summer, from winter to spring and back around again as our world circles the sun.

That's another reason why I regret seeing June, July and August coming. If summer has arrived, then that means winter is just around the corner.

On the other hand, if winter is about to happen, it can't be more than a few weeks before spring is here again.

But that's just outside. It's always a chilly spring in offices, stores and restaurants.

The most inept sign of summer leaving that I have ever heard of was the words of a clothing store the other day. Its advertisement advised us to enjoy the August weather while we can still wear shorts. Soon you will be putting your shorts away for winter, the store said, and reaching for your coats and longies.

No you won't. Maybe I will wrap myself in wool and padded goose-down and stuff broiled chickens down my pants soon after autumn arrives, but half the population - the younger half - will keep on wearing shorts right on into winter.

I live within 30 miles of three college towns way up north in the upper reaches of this country, right next to Canada (what a cool country) and I see 20-year-olds wearing shorts most of the time, cold or not. It takes blizzards and below-zero winds before these brave lads and lassies finally show enough respect for their child-bearing chances to protect their procreation equipment from frostbite.

When I see high school and college students walking bravely through the winter winds I begin to realize that most humans in their younger years are a little looney. But they are built that way. They have something in common with ducks. Ducks have been known to get their feet frozen into the ice and not only live to quack about it but they do no permanent harm to their feet.

Similarly, high school and college students can stride around a campus or stand at a bus stop with their bare legs hanging out and live to freeze again the next day without heavy damage to their tough young struts.

It may have something to do with global warming. But I'm not sure I believe in global warming. I think this wild weather of recent years is probably caused by nothing more than the fusion of hot shorts and cold legs.

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