

Holding on to Summer
by Beverly Denver

This time of the year, I often find myself wondering about the rapid passage of time and what I've been doing with all my "lazy days of summer."

Long before the heat set in I had envisioned skipping out on Houston to avoid the worst of it, flying off to some fancy vacation spot that could rightfully boast of higher aptitudes and lower temperatures. Instead, I stayed in town and worked most of the time. Sadly, I missed little of the energy-sapping heat and humidity for which the Bayou City is so famous.

But, that's OK. As I write these words, it is officially four weeks until the end of summer, and my ritualistic rendezvous with a Franklin planner chocked full of commitments — football games, fall fairs, festivals and gala fundraisers — is a deed for a distant day. When the time comes, I will participate and enjoy, but pleeeeeease, not now.

Preemptive fall marketing is not effective when it comes to me. I'm still in summer mode, and I won't be moved.

Football games! How can I think of football when I'm still holding on to visions of another pennant run for the Astros? When I haven't eaten a bag of peanuts or a foot-long hot dog at Minute Maid Park all season?

Fairs and festivals! How can I think of autumn's best parties with all those barbecue and chili cook-offs when I've still not enjoyed a summer clam bake on the beach? Still not read the June issue of *Ophra* magazine? Still not seen Johnny Depp in *The Pirates of the Caribbean*?

Sorry, but I'm not ready for falling leaves, pumpkins and turkeys. Not ready for funnel cakes, Ferris wheels and midways. Not ready for holiday decorations of orange and black.

Fundraisers for the sick and needy? I promise; I'll be there when the time comes, but for now, I need to heal myself, address the problem of summer quickly slipping away and do something to make myself feel better.

Truth is I'm a real mess these days, a poster girl for the seriously under pampered and summer deprived.

My tan is pathetically pale. My sore, bent-over-a-computer-too-much back and neck muscles are in great need of therapeutic massage. My feet ache. I wish I could tell you I'd been abusing them with too much two-stepping with a good-looking dance partner. But no, I've spent too much of my summer days sidewalk-stomping in stilettos.

I'm not alone. My girlfriends suffer from the same maladies. They too whine about being too busy to enjoy the summer. They too ponder how it is that Father Time always seems

to race through the calendar at the most inconvenient times. Like me, they too are planning last-ditch efforts to salvage the summer of 2006.

One is flying off to Florida this week, trying to get there and back before a hurricane threatens her plans.

Another is heading to the great northwest, eager to hop aboard a ferry enroute to Vancouver.

Still another will be joining a crew sailing around in the cool waters off the coast of Maine.

Soon, I'll be heading east for a girls' getaway of sightseeing, spa treatments and shopping.

All of us expect to have great times and return happy and revitalized.

It's been said that a good woman can inspire a man to become a better man. It's true; but for us women, it's a good vacation that moves us be our best selves.

Not only do vacations entertain and refresh us, they remind us of something really important: our careers should be meaningful and rewarding! We work to live, not the other way around! This summer, and always, we simply must remember that!

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