

LIFESTYLES

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Warmer Weather Will Soon Be Here

By Lora Vanderhall
Lifestyles Editor

You can feel it in the air. The birds are chirping, flowers blooming and spirits high.

We are three days away from the official start of the spring season. Where did the time go? It seems to have been only yesterday, we were digging out from the the worse snow storm we've had in years.

The beginning of spring is somewhat similar to the beginning of a new year. It is filled with resolutions and vows to enjoy the weather to the max.

We sometimes make plans for vacations, picnics, sports and a host of other activities.

Many view spring as a special time to become more active, but there are some who enjoy relaxing in the warm weather.

Some of us love cold weather while others enjoy near-tropic temperature. Many of us don't seem to be affected one way or the other by the weather and don't understand why others are. One third to two thirds of the population experience mood changes and shifts in energy levels with alterations in the weather.

According to Stephen Rosen, Ph.D., director of the Weather Sensitivity Research Center in New York City, for those individuals who are "weather sensitive" these changes can have a strong effect on energy level and health.

"Specifically he has observed that: (1) what some call "extremely good weather"-characterized by a hot, dry wind--makes people feel less healthy in general, reduces their desire to work, and actually decreases their work output. There's also a greater chance of them being involved in household or automobile accidents, probably because they aren't concentrating very well. (2) when a change in the weather is just around the corner, people tend not to feel well or feel like working. They become more sensitive to pain and also are more at risk of having accidents. (3) when the temperature and humidity both are high, it's no surprise that the weather makes many people feel tired; it may disturb their sleep. (4) when cool, dry air arrives, spirits are boosted, people feel livelier, and their reaction time may be quicker. In addition they are less likely to have accidents."

It is important to note that these observations are true mainly for people who are "weather sensitive": those who feel a real change in their health and attitude when there is a change in the weather. Millions of people suddenly become weight conscious with the onset of spring. Winter has enticed us to eat and sit around a lot but in the spring of the year we attempt to burn those unwanted pounds.

Most health professionals agree that the more common sense diets along with proper exercise are the best routes to fitness. The diets that promote balanced meals in smaller portions are the healthiest. It is highly recommended that everyone consult a physician before starting a diet or exercise program.

With the fresh air of spring blowing you can easily overestimate your strength. You may think you can run a few miles or exercise to no end, without prior preparation, but this newly found invigoration may cause you a lot of aches and pains. Gradually building up to an extended run of exercise routine is advisable.

The objective of dieting is usually to lose fat. You have to burn 3,500 calories to lose a pound of fat. Dr. Gabe Mirkin, author of Getting Slim, recommends a low-fat diet of 1,300 calories a day and 30 minutes of aerobic exercise (fast walking, biking, running, rowing) three times a



Photo by FRANK J. WILLIAMS

Valerie and Rodney enjoy a friendly afternoon in the park.



Photo by TONY WHITE

Cheryl Addison spends her lunch hour at the park enjoying the warmer weather.

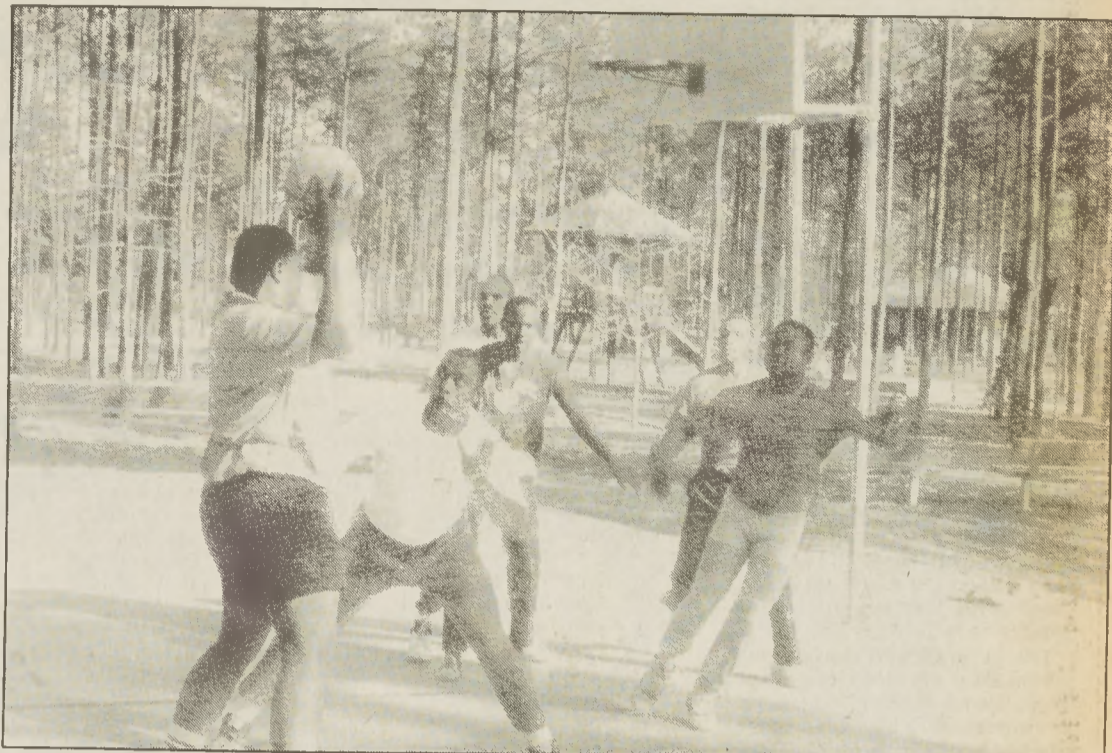


Photo by FRANK J. WILLIAMS

A game of basketball is a good way to get some exercise on a breezy, spring day.

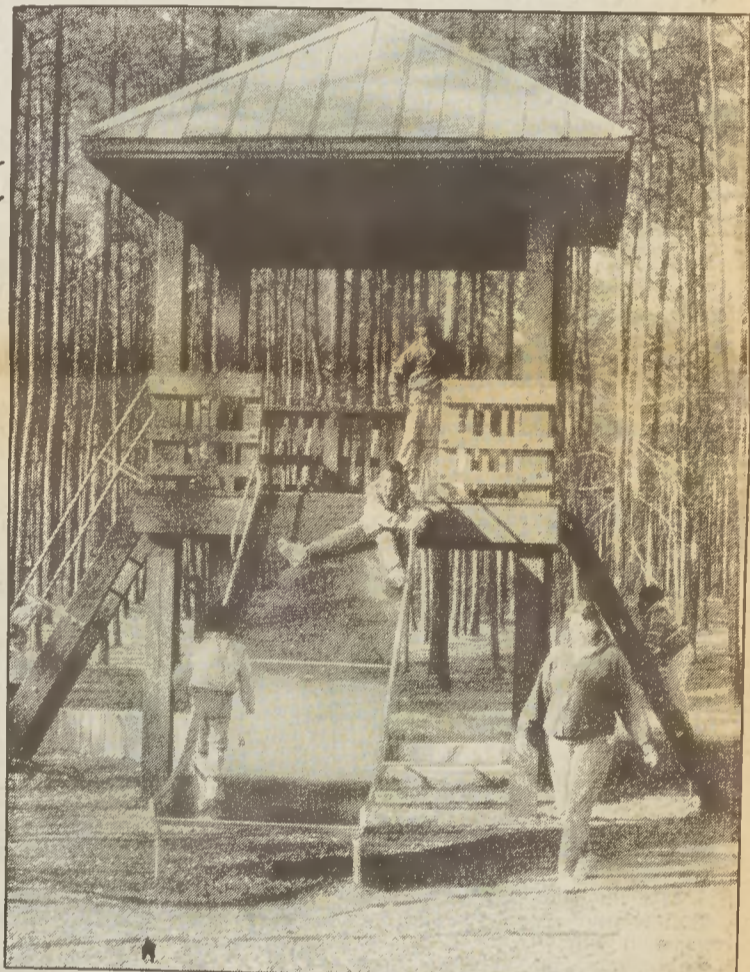


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Sliding Into Spring....

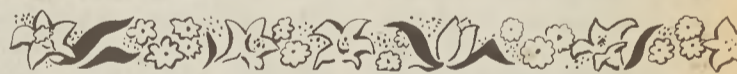


Photo by TONY WHITE

Thomas Davis is enjoying the warmer weather as he waxes his car.

