

Summer in the country

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A torpid fugue has descended on me. Oh, it could be that I have been on call this weekend (it only takes the opening of the fishing season for me to get called in to remove a fish hook from somebody's body), or perhaps it's that I am not recovering as quickly as I think I should from a little bicycle mishap, of which we will speak no more. However, on reflection, this state of mind is probably mostly because summer is upon us.

It's not just me — committees at the hospitals I have worked at have long

had the habit of adjourning this time of year, for commonly understood, but unwritten, reasons. And it's not just doctors — the whole community seems to perceptively change gears for the warmer weather. The slower pace of life is a well-known characteristic of rural life, and around here we become *really* laid back in summer.

I am not sure why this is the case. The change in the season changes the nature of the chores, from snow shovelling to lawn mowing. The sports change from cross-country skiing to golf. None of this should require a change in, well, the temporal speed of life experienced. Yet, the change of season inevitably and profoundly does.

Nurses know that when they call me at home, unless I am on call, some evenings my wife will answer that to reach me they will have to call again after sundown (when I have tied up the boat). My patients know to expect a few extended weekends and closed weeks at the office. That's what I call protected time.

Oh, we are not irresponsible when we do this — the usual work carries on, the emergency department is particularly busy and needs attention, and I have an editorial to write. Lucky for me, it doesn't have to be hard hitting every issue. After all, the wind is coming up, and I have an itch to raise the mainsail. I'll be back before sundown.

