Another vacation is upon my husband and I. Although I am more than thrilled about the prospect about some beach time, visiting with my children and eating way more than is humanly possible, I am NOT looking forward to PACKING.

Packing rates right up there in my “dread” list right after bill paying and right before snow shoveling.
I was thinking about the project upon me and I have determined that we go through “packing stages” in life, just as we go through the cycle of life.

As a child, I don’t remember packing anything for our family vacations. We just piled in the old LeSabre convertible and took off. There always just magically appeared a picnic lunch, clothes for the next day, plenty of clean underwear and my toothbrush. Way to go, Mom!
When I was in my twenties, I put a little more thought into packing...but not much more. Throw some shorts and T-shirts in a grocery bag and I was good to go for a week. No plan - just go with the flow - no worries.

Then came the kids and we all know where that takes you. No matter what time of year you go, you pack for all seasons. Long sleeves, T-shirts, sun dresses, boots, rain gear, extra food, hats, mittens, sunscreen..and this is just for a weekend trip to the lake.

That brings us to now. No kids to pack for but the load doesn’t seem to get any lighter. We are heading south but it still gets a little chilly for my bones in the evening, so I need to take long and short sleeves, a light coat and a sweatshirt. I had better take a hat, too, because my ears have turned more temperature-sensitive with age.

Shoes? I used to take only flip-flops; now its orthopedic sandals and those toner tennis shoes and of course some comfortable slippers. I don’t like walking barefoot anymore - makes my bunions ache.

My medicinal “bag” is just about as big as those back packs we used to pack for the kids. We take our supply of vitamin C and other various letters of the alphabet vitamins, so we can keep

our immune system up. Don't forget blood pressure medications; pain killers for normal aches and pains; arthritis rub for the days when we have done too much, thinking we are much younger than we are; Immodium in case our bodies don't digest according to plan; motion sickness pills just incase we take on something really stupid; pills for acid reflux; and pills in case our allergies flare up.

As you grow older, you never know what your body is going to throw at you, so just like the Boy Scouts say, "Be prepared." Makes you wonder when we will have time to enjoy our vacation, with all the changing of clothes, rubbing on of the Bengay, etc.

Oh well, it definitely isn't going to stop me from going, I will just have to put up with those odd looks from my kids when I pull out my duffle bag of "must-haves."

I will just tell them, "Just wait, it's all in the cycle of life and their day will come."