CrossCurrents
CREATING COMMUNITY BY KEEPING YOU INFORMED
Monthly Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Church at Washington Crossing

July/August 2026

Those Lazy, Hazy, Crazy Days of Summer

By Scott Cullen, CrossCurrents Editor

A big thank you to everyone who contributed to this summer edition of CrossCurrents. My vision was to create a special summertime edition because I receive fewer *CrossCurrents* contributions this time of year.

Here's what I did. I emailed more than 100 members of the congregation a list of summer-themed questions and asked them, if they chose to participate, to respond to as many or as few as they were comfortable with. The response was positive and overwhelming.

I hope that, after reading their responses, you'll get to know them better and those responses will serve as conversation starters the next time you see them. Apologies to those I have yet to invite to participate. Once I began receiving responses, it became clear that space would be limited. As a result, I will publish responses to two of the questions in the September issue of *CrossCurrents*. I will also publish additional responses to the question What books are on your summer reading list? in September. That question generated the most responses by far. Clearly our congregation loves to read!



If I didn’t contact you when I sent out the list of questions, your response can still be included in the September issue of *CrossCurrents* by answering one or both of the following questions: How did you spend your summer vacation? and What has you excited about the upcoming church year at UUCWC? Email them to **scott_cullen@verizon.net** by Sept. 1.

Meanwhile, enjoy getting to know your fellow congregants better.

See you in September.



Spotlight on Racial Justice Ministry

By Pam Shadzik for the Congregational Engagement Ministry

In 2018, UUCWC adopted the 8th Principle by congregational vote: “We covenant to affirm and promote: Journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions.”

Our Racial Justice Ministry helps us live this principle on a daily, weekly, and yearly basis.

Why Participate in Racial Justice?
Participating in the Racial Justice Ministry helps you engage with our church mission to Change the World by working to eliminate systemic racism. This is powerful work: As you challenge yourself to grow in pursuit of racial justice and openness to diversity, you may find your participation expanding into a profound spiritual practice.

How Can You Participate?
There are many ways to participate in this work, either by joining a ministry or by working on an individual project. Projects might include bringing Excel, accounting, or other business skills to the Trenton Microloan collaborative; participating in book discussions; engaging with Trenton partner organizations, such as Trenton Eat Local, or with First Friday events; advocating to the legislature on reparations; or helping UUCWC committees and ministries weave the anti-racism covenant into their work.

Importantly, each person is on their own anti-racism journey. Regardless of where you are on that journey, you are welcome to join the ministry’s work if you are

committed to anti-racism.

More About Racial Justice Ministry
The group is currently experimenting with a leadership structure where the leadership of individual meetings rotates. At present, there are 12 members. The work centers on education and advocacy. Consider exploring the ministry's growing library collection on the third Sunday of each month. Borrow a book or two and expand your appreciation for the importance of racial justice in each of our lives. For more information, contact **Racialjustice@uucwc.org**.



No Summer Break for the Food Ministry

by Marcia Wittmann on behalf of the Food Ministry team

Summer is the season for time off and much-needed vacations. But the Food Ministry has been as busy as ever, helping to fight food insecurity in our greater community.

To give you a sense of what we've been up to and what's ahead, here are a few of our summer projects:

- **Food Drive for Westminster Presbyterian Church, June 7 & 14** – More than 300 non-perishable items were collected for Trenton-area individuals and families in need.
- **HomeFront Joys, Hopes and Dreams Sandwich Bags, June 9** – The team assembled sandwiches and packed them up along with snacks and beverages for kids who study at the Lawrenceville Library Tuesday evenings during the school year.
- **HomeFront Tutoring Program Picnic Supper, June 15** – A meal of hot dogs, mac and cheese, veggies, watermelon and dessert was prepared, delivered and served at this popular annual event marking the end of the school year.
- **TASK Culinary Program Graduation, June 19** – The Roland Rahn Memorial Scholarship Fund, administered by Lori Rahn and daughters Renae and Natalie, provided knife sets for each graduate. Lori and Sandy Unger attended the ceremony and enjoyed a gourmet dinner prepared by the current culinary students.
- **HomeFront Wacky Wednesday Dinner, July 15** – A meal of chicken nuggets, mac and cheese, salad fixings and dessert was prepared and served by Food Ministry. An added bonus was seeing the educational program presented by Travis Gale, the charismatic Owner/Education and Animal Care Director of Eyes of the Wild exotic animal rescue. The rapt audience was treated to an array of "ambassador animals," including a porcupine, a white fox, and a chinchilla, which the kids were able to pet.
- **Meals for Luther Arms, June 25, July 29, August 27** – Each month, the team prepares and delivers a hot midday meal for residents of this Trenton low-income senior apartment building. Recent entrees have included lasagna and Spanish chicken and rice, along with salad fixings and dessert.
- **HomeFront Camp Mercer Breakfast, June 30** – The team purchased and delivered bagels and spreads, cereal and milk, and oranges for the 75 campers.
- **Urban Promise Summer Camp Snack Bags, July 12** – The Food Ministry can't take credit for this project. As soon as the kids were released after the Story for All Ages, they got straight to work assembling 200 snack bags containing granola bars, cheese crackers, fruit cups, and juice boxes. What seemed to be a daunting task at the outset was completed before the service was even over by this energetic group of young people. Their impressive efforts resulted in an entire week of healthy snacks for 50 happy campers!
- **Coffee Hour Food Prep, August 23** – After the Story for All Ages, Food Ministry will introduce the kids to our Sunday steward, Roberto Santiago, who will explain the many ways he serves UUCWC. Then we'll help the kids prepare a few snacks for Coffee Hour.

The Food Ministry team is grateful for the opportunities we have to feed people and "Change the World," and we look forward to continuing our work in the fall. We welcome new team members, so if you'd like to participate, contact us at **foodministry@uucwc.org**.



The Art of Letting Go: Intuitive Drawing Can Open the Door to Creativity, Reflection, and Joy

By Joseph Goldfedder

After leading an intuitive drawing class in June as part of the Sharing Our Joy auction, I found myself reflecting on the experience.

People often say “I can’t draw” because they equate it with creating a realistic likeness. But drawing is so much more. It's a language that expresses ideas, emotions, and experiences beyond words. Like handwriting, every person’s marks are unique.



Above: Joseph Goldfedder, the class facilitator.

As an acupuncturist, I'm fascinated by the relationship between the hand and the heart. Several meridians pass through both hands, making drawing feel not only like a creative act but also a bridge between inner experience and physical expression. Our intuitive drawing class began with a brief meditation accompanied by the sound of Tibetan singing bowls. Guided by a series of prompts, the class started drawing.

Drawing quiets the mind and invites a more sensory way of experiencing. Through mark-making, unexpected memories, emotions, and images often surface. The room grew quiet as the class became absorbed in the simple pleasure of making marks on paper. Creativity blossomed.

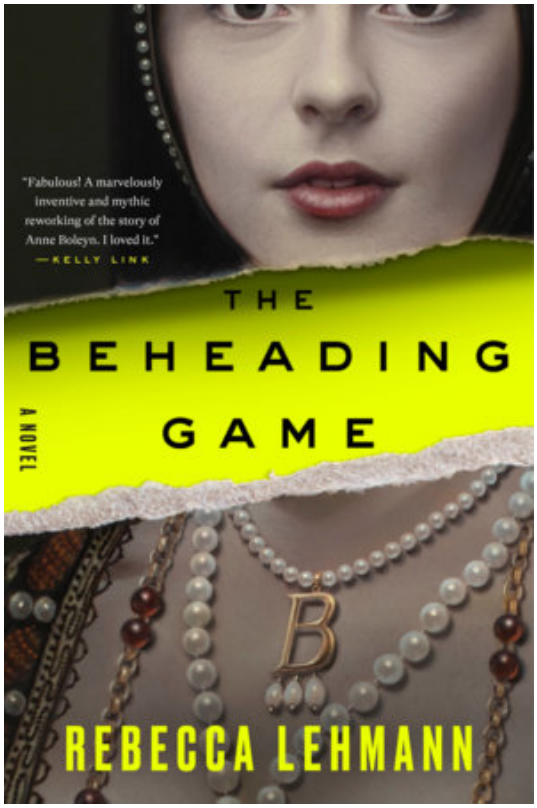


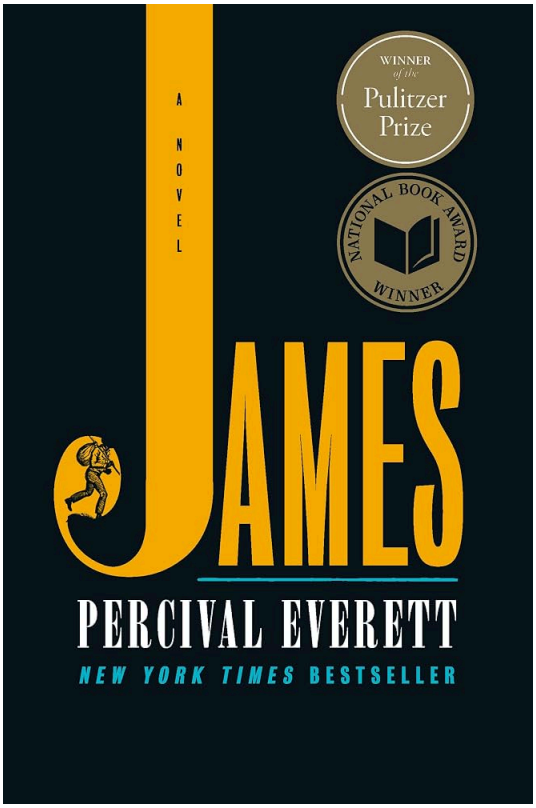
Above: Examples of the intuitive drawing class's creativity.

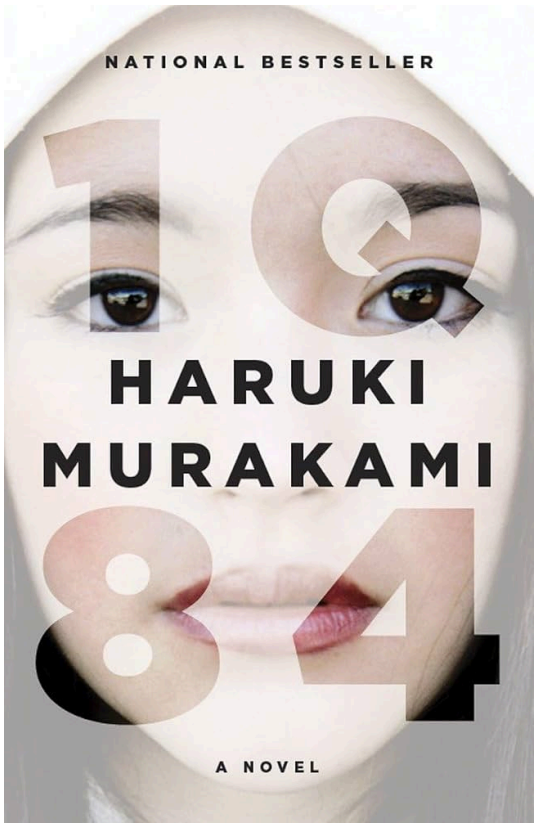
If you'd like a few prompts to capture your imagination, here's a simple practice you can try at home. Start by gathering your materials, including paper, crayons, colored pencils, markers, pastels, or pens.

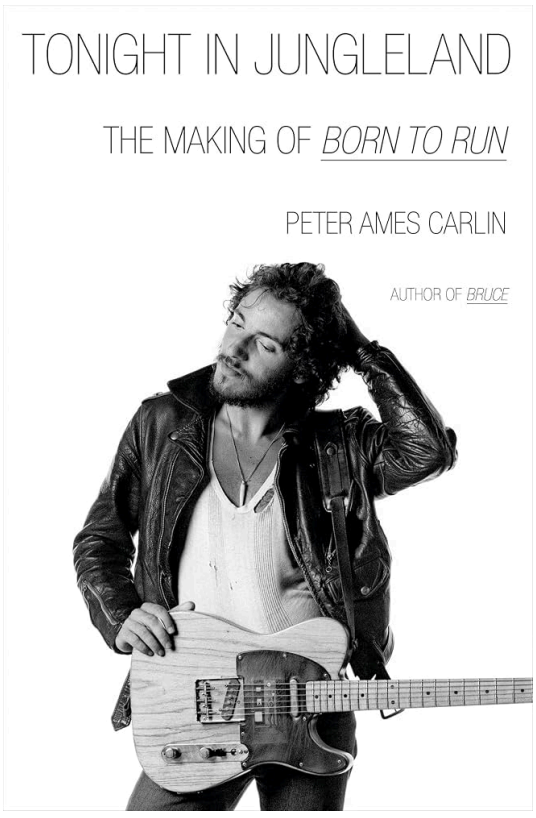
1. Close your eyes
2. Feel your body supported by the chair and your feet firmly resting on the floor.
3. Follow your breath for several slow, easy cycles, allowing your body to relax.
4. Imagine light radiating from your heart, gently filling your entire body.
5. When you feel ready, open your eyes.
6. Using your non-dominant hand, begin making simple marks or scribbles on the paper. Let your hand move freely without trying to create anything recognizable.
7. Gaze at the page and notice if an image, shape, memory, or feeling begins to emerge from the marks.
8. Once something catches your attention, switch to your dominant hand. Begin responding to what you see. Add lines, color, texture, or new forms, allowing the drawing to unfold naturally rather than trying to control the outcome.
9. Continue until the drawing feels complete. Take a few quiet moments to observe what has emerged and reflect on anything the process revealed.
10. Use this practice anytime you want to tap into your creativity.

The next time you find yourself saying, "I can't draw," instead, consider what you might discover through drawing. It's not about making perfect pictures; rather, it's about giving yourself permission to listen within. By strengthening your intuition, you deepen your capacity to "create community, celebrate life, and change the world."









What Books Are on Your Summer Reading List? Part 1

By Scott Cullen, CrossCurrents Editor

I've read 3 very different books: *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker, *The Wedding People* by Alison Espach, and *The Faith of Beasts* by James S. A. Corey. I'm currently reading *Simple Church by Thom Rainer, Eric Geiger, et al,* and *The 99%*

Invisible City: A Field Guide to the Hidden World of Everyday Design by Roman Mars and Kurt Kohlstedt. – **Bob Alt**

I do read a lot during the summer, both print and audiobooks. Here are a few titles I'm currently reading or have read: *Bury Our Bones in the Midnight Soil* by V.E. Schwab, a vampire fantasy; *1Q84* by Haruki Murakami, a hard-to-describe alternate reality mystery/fantasy/love story; *The Demon of Unrest: A Saga of Hubris, Heartbreak, and Heroism at the Dawn of the Civil War* by Erick Larson, a historical telling of the people and happenings leading to the start of the Civil War; and *On the Beach* by Nevil Shute, a fictional account that takes place after World War III when fallout from a nuclear war hasn't yet, but will soon, reach people living in Australia. – **Maria Baratta**

I read *Abundance* by Hafeez Lakhnai. And I will reread many of Kurt Vonnegut's novels, something historical, and something scientific. – **Beth Brasor**

Rereading *James* by Percival Everett and Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* for a book club where we'll compare the two. Also reading *Crossings: How Road Ecology is Shaping the Future of Our Planet* by Ben Goldfarb, which details how roads have affected wildlife and encouraged the adaptation and evolution of species. I enjoyed reading Robert Galbraith's (JK Rowling's) *The Running Grave*. – **Sue Busch**

The God of the Woods by Liz Moore. Set in the Adirondacks, it's interesting, but dark. Before that, I was bingeing on Elin Hilderbrand beach books, which are set in Nantucket. – **Kathie Chaikin**

My daughter bought me a big fat multi-generational novel called *Barkskins* by Annie Proulx that I am working on. I love historical fiction, and this follows two families involved in the timber industry from the 1600s to the present day. It has a lot of environmental themes and addresses attitudes and interactions with Native Americans from both their perspective and the white perspective. It is mostly set in the US and Canada, but visits a good portion of the world too, from Europe to New Zealand. - **Parker Cohen**

I've been chipping away at the 10 challenges on *The New York Times* Summer Reading Bucket List. Of the eight I've read so far, my favorites were *The Beheading Game* by Rebecca Lehmann about Anne Boleyn, who awakens in her coffin after her beheading, sews her head back on, and seeks to avenge her death and ensure that her daughter Elizabeth succeeds Henry VIII on the throne. It may sound crazy, but it's an entertaining story of female empowerment and revenge. I also reread *In Watermelon Sugar* by Richard Brautigan, a favorite ever since a college friend introduced me to him in 1976. I am currently reading *The Renoir Girls: A Hidden History of Art, War, and Betrayal* by Catherine Ostler about the lives and fate of three sisters--daughters of a prominent French Jewish banking family--before, during, and after World War II, who Renoir painted in the late 19th century. – **Scott Cullen**

The Next Conversation by Jefferson Fisher and *Lessons of Love* by Melodie Beattie – **Sara del Castillo**

I just finished *Whistler* by Ann Patchett, which I really enjoyed, and have just started the new thriller by Lisa Scottoline (autographed!), *This Changes Everything.* Next is *The Hidden Life of Trees* by Peter Wohlleben. – **Barbara Drew**

I read Marc Maron's semi-autobiographical book. I finished Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* while on vacation and am now working my way through *White Noise* by Don

DeLillo. - **Mike Gianella**

After watching PBS's *The Forsytes* I read *A Man of Property*, the first book in John Galsworthy's series *The Forsythe Saga.* If you do the same, prepare to be shocked by the license Debbie Horsfield has taken while adapting the story for **TV**. For some best sellers, I joined the Doylestown Library book club. Our current read is *Daisy Jones and the Six* by Taylor Jenkins Reid. It's an unusual style; the author writes as if she is reporting interviews conducted with the members of a rock band. Next up is *Broken Country* by Clare Leslie Hall. – **Michael Howe-Smith**

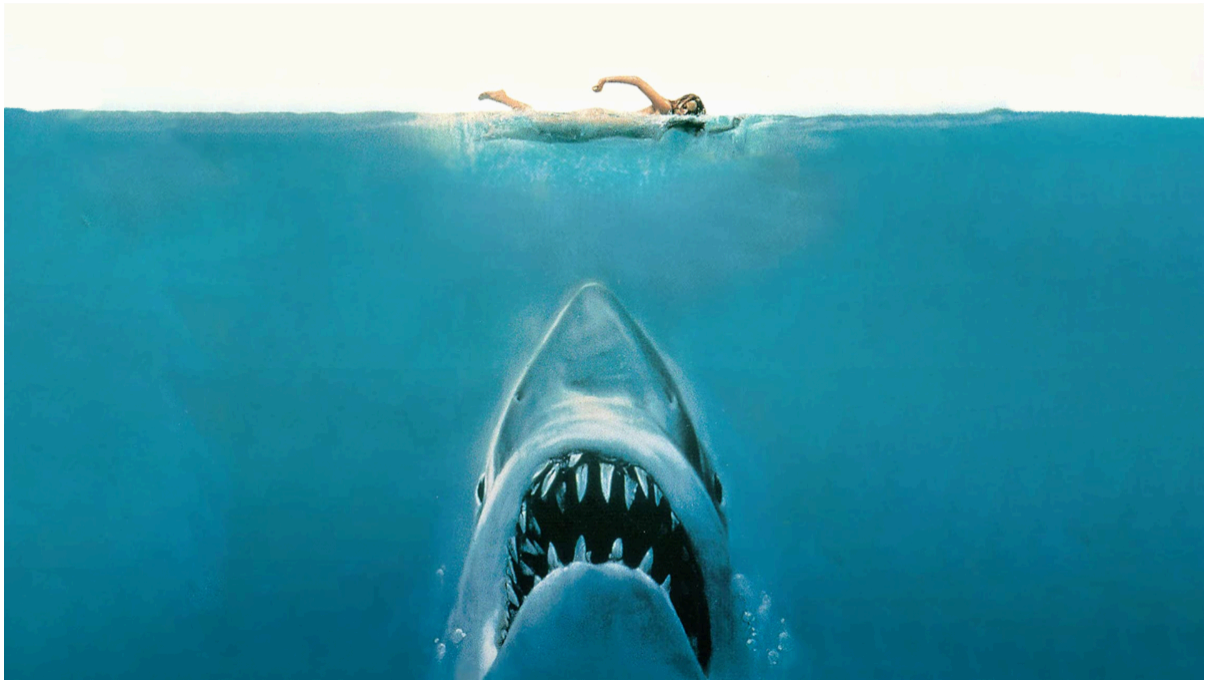
A few nonfiction books that touched some of my deep roots: *Where the Music Had to Go: How The Beatles and Bob Dylan Changed Each Other—And the World* by Jim Windolf, *Tonight in Jungleland: The Making of Born to Run* by Peter Ames Carlin, and *Trudeau & Doonesbury* by Joshua Kendall. – **Janet Hubbard**

Buckeye by Patrick Ryan, *The Pioneers* by David McCullough, and *London Falling* by Patrick Raddenkeefe. – **Andrew Kidd**

Currently reading *James* by Percival Everett. I loved reading *Hamnet* by Maggie O'Farrell, *Uneducated: What We Didn't Learn in School* by Joe Hinchliffe, and *Pachinko* by Min Jin Lee. – **Dianne Kidd-Ross**

Stone Yard Devotional by Charlotte Wood. It takes place in a convent in Australia during a mouse plague. Upon my return from a vacation in London, jet-lagged and exhausted, I plopped into my bed only to hear sounds of something stirring in the kitchen. The last thing I needed to hear or see was a mouse in my house! – **Geri Koblis**

I consume most of my books via audiobook. It's easier to listen while doing monotonous chores like folding laundry and washing dishes. My latest listen was *Off-White: The Truth about Anti-Semitism* by Rachel Shabi. It's part of my journey to learn more about the intricacies of the Israel-Palestine conflict, stemming from a coordinated and sustained attack my ex-partner and forever co-parent, Nathalie, suffered a couple of years ago after a speech she gave at a conference in Philadelphia. And it's also because we read it for Nat's book club. I save my physical book reading for Stephen King. After I graduated college and was psyched to not be forced to read for classes, a dear friend put King's The Gunslinger in front of me and guided me through what turned out to be the full 7-book Dark Tower series that changed my life. Since then, I have been one of King's "Constant Readers." To uphold that title, I am always in a King book. In July, I finished *Mr. Mercedes* and moved immediately to *Finders Keepers*. I have more than 50 King titles under my belt, but still have more than 20 more yet to go, and he's still putting them out about as fast as I'm reading them, so I can keep this system going for a while yet. - **Chris Marietti**



What's Your Favorite Movie Set During the Summer?

By Scott Cullen, CrossCurrents Editor

Grease or *Dirty Dancing*. – **Maria Baratta**

Mama Mia. – **Sue Busch**

Summer Rental. John Candy was amazing! – **Jen Couchoud**

Not to be pretentious, but a French movie, *Claire's Knee* from 1970. In second place is Swedish director Ingmar Bergman's *Smiles of a Summer Night* from 1955. Pretentiousness aside, *Dazed & Confused*, a movie that takes place on the last day of school in 1976. As Mathew McConaughey's character so famously says in that movie, "Alright, alright, alright." – **Scott Cullen**

I'm a big baseball fan, so I don't know if these are my favorites, but *Bull Durham* and *Major League* are movies I like and have always associated with summer. - **Mike Gianella**

Jaws. – **Kathie Chaikin, Sara del Castillo, John Fowler, Sandee Steinberg, Dan Tuft**

American Graffiti, *Some Like It Hot*, and *Miss Congeniality* (I laugh at so many lines every time!). – **Barbara Drew**

I've always preferred live theatre over cinema, but I've lost so much of my hearing that both theatre and cinema trips have become rare events for me. I would like to see *The Odyssey*, but it's three hours with no bathroom breaks. – **Michael Howe-Smith**

Lawrence of Arabia; it was very warm! – **Andrew Kidd**

Beaches. – **Dianne Kidd-Ross**

Since I came of age in the 80's and 90's, my formative years were defined by the summer blockbusters that ramped up every year. The peak of the escalation (for me, at least) came in the summer of 1996 when *Independence Day* arrived in theaters. Is it my favorite movie? No. Is it a great movie? I can definitely listen to arguments against it. But was it fun that summer? Heck yeah. And it left an indelible impact on me after seeing it many, many times that year in the theater and everywhere else as soon as it came out on DVD. It's a movie I can only watch in the summer, the same way I can't watch Christmas movies out of that season. And, in case Jakob actually reads this, no, *Die Hard* is NOT a Christmas movie. - **Chris Marietti**

Dirty Dancing. – **Lynne Molnar**

Two for the Road with Audrey Hepburn and Albert Finney. – **Anne Sears**

Goodbye Columbus (1969) starring Ali MacGraw and Richard Benjamin. – **Jane Root**

I watched the *Michael Jackson* movie and was entertained. – **Steve Saddlemire**

Casablanca. Since my teens (when I had a poster of the airport scene hanging in my room), I have been enamored with this movie and saw it on the "big screen" a few years ago. A close runner-up is *The Blues Brothers*, which is great fun with a ton of cliché lines and great music. Though these are not summer scene movies, I equate them with "summer stock." – **Joe Schenk**

Anything about the ocean. – **Lynda Shapiro**

Field of Dreams. – **Roger Shapiro**

Stand By Me (the Stephen King story). Adolescent boy brotherhood tale that reminds me of childhood adventures. – **David Thomas**



What Songs or Music Always Remind You of Summer?

By Scott Cullen, CrossCurrents Editor

The Joker by the Steve Miller Band reminds me of the many parties I went to at the end of high school before heading off to college. – **Maria Baratta**

Under the Boardwalk by The Drifters – **Beth Brasor, John Fowler**

Summer Breeze by Seals & Crofts – **Sue Busch**

The Beach Boys – **Kathie Chaikin**

Theme from a Summer Place by Percy Faith and *Surfer Girl* by The Beach Boys. – **Scott Cullen**

Caravan by Duke Ellington – **Sara del Castillo**

So many songs take me back to summertime, but many from the movie *Woodstock* stand out, especially those by Sly & Family Stone, including *Hot Fun in the Summertime*. The Lovin' Spoonful's *Summer in the City, Hush* by Deep Purple, *Long Cool Woman in a Black Dress* by The Hollies, *Wild World* by Cat Stevens, and *Cherish* by The Association all evoke specific summer memories. – **Barbara Drew**

Certainly not my favorite, but the prompt instantly made me think of Mungo Jerry's *In the Summertime*. - **Mike Gianella**

You Are My Sunshine. We always sang it together when I visited Janet in memory care. – **Michael Howe-Smith**

Girls in Their Summer Clothes by Bruce Springsteen, *Summertime Thing* by Chuck Prophet, and This Summer by Squeeze. – **Janet Hubbard**

Summer in the City by The Lovin' Spoonful. – **Andrew Kidd, Dianne Kidd-Ross, Steve Saddlemire**

Groovin' by The Rascals – **Geri Koblis**

Summertime by DJ Jazzy Jeff and the Fresh Prince from 1991 stamped itself as the consummate summer song that year, and nothing has ever dislodged it. I realize my answers here are making me seem like the biggest Will Smith fan. And although I've enjoyed some of his art more than some of his personal decisions, especially lately, I wouldn't really describe myself as a Will Smith fan. But that song? No matter where I am or what I'm doing, it's summertime when I hear it. - **Chris Marietti**

Any Beach Boys song. – **Lynne Molnar**

Quite a few of the Beach Boys' songs are summer songs, and I've always liked *Summer Breeze* by Seals & Crofts. – **Chris Piatek**

I love Al Green's *Love and Happiness* for the summer. This year it seems especially fitting for the world I'm in. My home base of Hopewell, NJ is all about singing and dancing together (music together) and baking and singing together (Chubby's). - **Nicole Robinson**

Summertime from Porgy and Bess, composed by George Gershwin and DuBose Heyward. – **Jane Root**

Anything by The Beach Boys or Jimmy Buffett. – **Lynda Shapiro**

The Beach Boys—The entire *Endless Summer* album. – **Roger Shapiro**

Martha and the Vandellas' *Dancing in the Streets* says summer to me. – **Anne Sears**

All the music from the Playing for Change Foundation. There are many rock and folk classics played together by people all around the world. They are mostly in hot weather. Examples are *Higher Ground* and *Lean on Me*. And I love the movement demanded from *Body Jazz* by Gabrielle Roth. – **David Thomas**

Anything from the Beach Boys. I was never a fan, but my wife (Michele) was. *Wouldn't It Be Nice*, *Surfer Girl, God Only Knows*, and *Barbara Ann*. – **Joe Schenk**

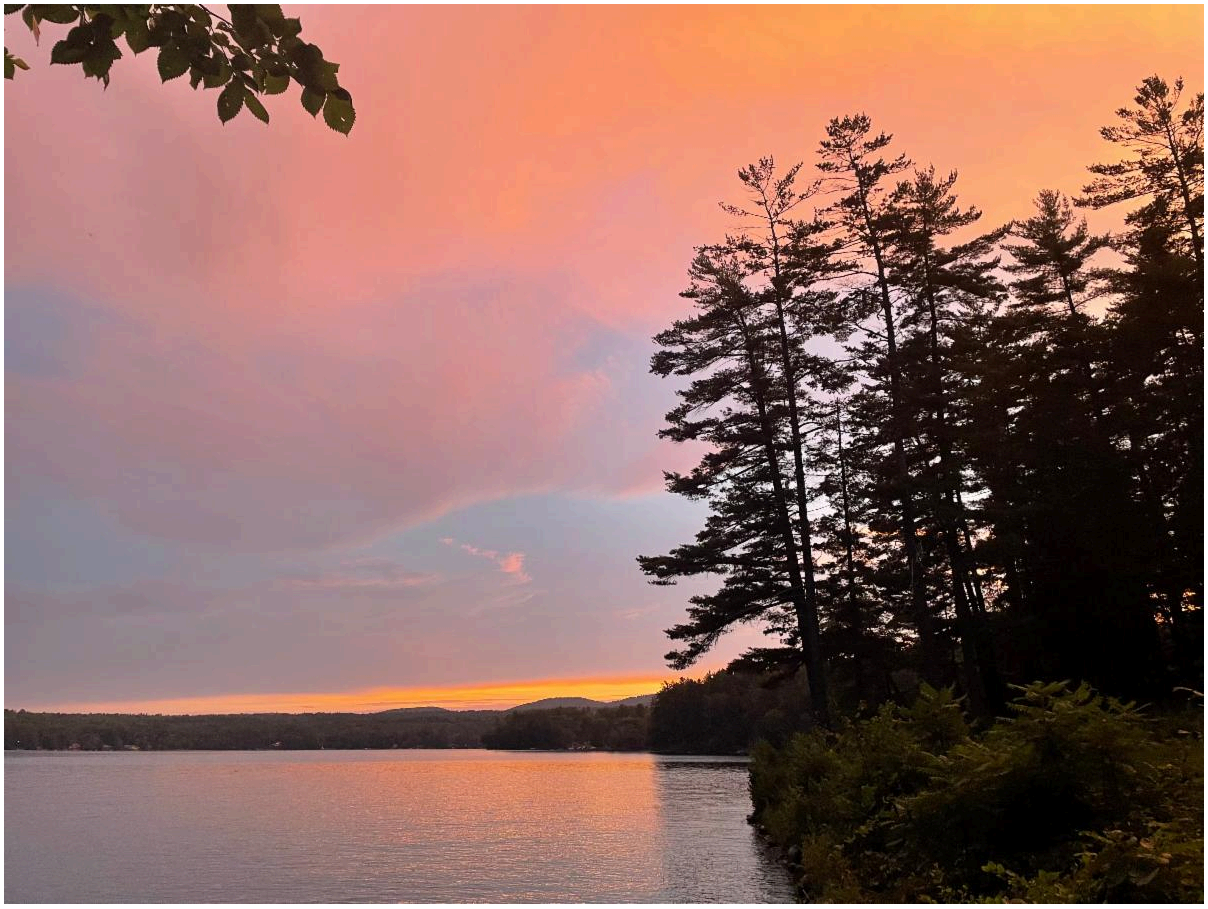
Chelsea Morning by Joni Mitchell. I also like the many versions of *Summertime*, including Sublime's Doin' Time version. – **Sandee Steinberg**

A Summer Song by Chad & Jeremy. – **Jayme Trott**

My favorite summertime song of freedom, *If You Want to Sing Out, Sing Out* by Cat Stevens from the movie *Harold & Maude.* - **Brian Tucker**

These Are the Days by Van Morrison. – **Dan Tuft**

The Beach Boys - **Susan Vigilante**



Above: Barbara Drew's perfect summer day location--the lake in New Hampshire.

If You Could Spend One Perfect Summer Day Anywhere, Where Would It Be?

By Scott Cullen, CrossCurrents Editor

At home with friends and family, enjoying a day by the pool, with picnic foods and cold drinks, followed by a visit to a local ice cream shop. – **Maria Baratta**

Almost anywhere in France. – **Beth Brasor**

Yellowstone National Park – **Sue Busch**

John and I love going to Spring Lake at the Jersey shore, and we're planning to go in September. – **Kathie Chaikin**

I started thinking about the perfect summer day and realized that if I pinned it down, it would tell me that those days won't happen anymore. But I loved when the kids were in elementary school, and we went to the family beach house in South Carolina. It was oceanfront so you could go in and out whenever you felt like it. There would be a canopy on the beach so you could have shade if you wanted. The kids were young enough to play in the tide pools and ask you to help them build castles or to go swimming with them. The water is warmer down there, so one could spend hours riding the waves. You could go in to get a snack or lunch on tomato sandwiches and peaches and sit on the screened-in porch with a beer if it was too hot or later after you had enough of the beach. Reading a great book on or off the beach. Many different games being played. Always a good seafood dinner out. Out

on the beach again at night to look for crabs, watch the moonlight on the water, or look at the stars. Alas, the kids are bigger, and the beach house is sold. - **Parker Cohen**

We had a great trip to Switzerland in early September a few years ago, so I would go back in a heartbeat. Surprisingly, it was quite warm! – **Scott Cullen**

On a private beach with zero flies and zero jellyfish. – **Sara del Castillo**

At the lake in New Hampshire. The lake where we camped as a family when I was a kid and where I have returned for a week with my siblings the past six years. – **Barbara Drew**

Spring Lake on the Jersey Shore. - **John Fowler**

I'm more of a mountains than beach person, so it would be somewhere in upper New England or upstate New York, a cabin with a beautiful view, far enough from the hustle and bustle so that I wouldn't hear traffic or "city" noises but also somewhere where I could get to at least one decent restaurant 20-30 minutes by car. - **Mike Gianella**

I'd stroll along the promenade at Maldon, Essex, looking at the Blackwater estuary, where I learned to sail. I'd turn round at the statue of the Anglo-Saxon warrior Byrhtnoth and continue along the wharf looking at the Thames sailing barges, still plying their trade. Since this is a perfect summer's day, **the Morris men** will be dancing, and I'll watch until the smell of fish and chips draws me into one of the local pubs. And, yes, this is the same Maldon that makes the Maldon Salt you see on your grocer's shelves. – **Michael Howe-Smith**

Greenwich Park, London. – **Andrew Kidd**

In the mountains on a lake, taking in the views, hiking, and enjoying the crisp, cool air. – **Dianne Kidd-Ross**

Swimming laps at the pool. – **Geri Koblis**

There are so many beautiful places I've been and so, so many more I've not yet experienced. I think I'd spend my perfect summer day pretty much anywhere. There are wonders all around us. What would make it perfect is having company with me who's also open to receiving that wonder. Mountains, rivers, forests, beaches, cities, suburbs, traffic, stuck in an airport. Beauty can be found in all of it. But I would need some shade, wherever I'm at. I need to preserve the "vampire chic" aesthetic I've cultivated over the years. - **Chris Marietti**

Mostly, I do not enjoy summer. I really dislike heat and humidity. If I could spend one perfect summer day anywhere, it would be in the Adirondacks. I would be in my kayak at dawn, paddling through the mist, listening to the loons, and watching the day begin. I would enjoy breakfast with blueberries I picked on yesterday's hike. After breakfast, I would pack my lunch and head out to hike one of the local peaks. On the way home, I would stop for fresh produce at one of the many roadside stands. After a refreshing shower, I would prepare dinner and eat on my deck, overlooking the lake. If I still have energy, I might get back in the kayak for a sunset paddle. If not, I would curl up with a good book. If it is nice and chilly, I would build a fire and sit outside, listening to the night creatures come out. – **Loren McAlister**

Reading on the beach, an uncrowded beach with no radios allowed! – **Lynne Molnar**

Probably at a beach somewhere with a good book. – **Jane Root**

Banff and Lake Louise. – **Steve Saddlemire**

The Amalfi Coast with a dip in the brisk Mediterranean and a glass of wine overlooking the sea. – **Joe Schenk**

So many places to consider, I can't pick one. Martha's Vineyard, the Eastern Shore, Cornwall in the U.K. come to mind. – **Anne Sears**

In the woods, by a lake or river with a good bottle of wine and Roger. – **Lynda Shapiro**

Magens Bay, St. Thomas. – **Roger Shapiro**

At this stage of life, location doesn't matter as much as who I am with. And number one is my wife, Jackie. Walking in the woods, helping in the flower and vegetable garden with her—these bring me peace. And number two is being with family and friends. Playing pickleball, golf, and looking at the sky and the trees, rabbits, squirrels, and birds in our backyard. – **David Thomas**

Probably in Maine. We spent many years there while my daughters were growing up—a very special place on Mt. Desert Island. – **Dan Tuft**

At the beach. - **Susan Vigilante**



Above: Scott Cullen's favorite place to get ice cream, especially chocolate pudding ice cream, Herrell's in Northampton, MA.

What's Your Favorite Summertime Food or Treat?

By Scott Cullen, CrossCurrents Editor

A flurry at the local dairy treat place in northern Michigan. **Bob Alt**

A grilled hot dog, macaroni salad, ambrosia salad (no Jello), and soft-serve ice cream. – **Maria Baratta**

That's easy – ice cream! I'm not big for sweets generally, but that creamy-cold-sweet-and-flavorful concoction is unbeatable on a hot day. I remember being surprised and pleased to discover that ice cream, that mystery treat, is just custard frozen while being mixed with air. From such simple things do wonders come! – **Rab Bell**

Creemies, only available in Vermont. NOTHING like them in NJ. – **Beth Brasor**

Ice cream and watermelon. – **Sue Busch**

Watermelon, ice cream, and a NJ home-grown tomato sandwich. – **Sara del Castillo**

I love fresh summer fruits like watermelon, blueberries, and peaches in particular. I am also a fan of seafood--that always reminds me of summer and beach vacations. - **Parker Cohen**

Chocolate pudding ice cream from Herrell's in Northampton, MA. Actually, I can eat that any time of the year…and I have, especially when visiting my daughter while she was a Smith College student. – **Scott Cullen**

Watermelon, potato salad, root beer floats, and ice cream. And, for nostalgic kid-stuff: s'mores and Fluffernutters, for which once a summer is enough! – **Barbara Drew**

The Farmer's Market in Newtown has a food stand where you can get some of the best milkshakes you'll ever have. I get chocolate, and you get an extremely buttery pretzel for free with it. - **Mike Gianella**

English Trifle. It's a spectacular dessert that I enjoy making. Despite its English name, trifle is a **Scottish invention**. Making a trifle is a work of art. Layers of Jelly create a pattern by holding slices of fruit against the walls of a glass container, and the top surface is decorated with fruit laid onto whipped cream. – **Michael Howe-Smith**

The produce: peaches (not this year, though), corn, tomatoes, basil. And ice cream! – **Janet Hubbard**

Ice cream—really all year! – **Andrew Kidd**

Watermelon! I eat a whole watermelon a week by myself. – **Dianne Kidd-Ross**

I love the bounty of locally sourced summer fruits and veggies, especially Kirby cucumbers, my favorite! - **Geri Koblis**

I don’t really have a favorite food or treat that I look forward to having in the summer. But, something I don’t tend to have during the cooler months that I do like to have when the chance comes up is a black and white shake, which I think is just a vanilla shake with chocolate syrup. I try not to ruin the magic by watching folks make it when I order, so I can’t say for certain how it comes about. Just that it’s usually pretty incredible. Frankly, though, my favorite summer treat is air conditioning. - **Chris Marietti**

Watermelon and corn on the cob. – **Lynne Molnar**

There's nothing like fresh Jersey corn and tomatoes in the summer. And who doesn't like going out for ice cream on a hot summer night! – **Chris Piatek**

Home-grown tomatoes! This summer I'm growing a cherry tomato called 'Bumblebee' in a large pot on my apartment balcony, and they are delicious! – **Jane Root**

I make a mean steak salad. – **Steve Saddlemire**

Corn from Kerr’s Farm Stand in Pennington with fresh tomato salad, basil and garlic, and a nice grilled steak. – **Joe Schenk**

A caprese salad with fresh tomatoes, buffalo mozzarella, and basil, accompanied by corn on the cob, freshly picked in the morning, makes it perfect! – **Anne Sears**

Seafood paella. – **Lynda Shapiro**

New Jersey corn. – **Roger Shapiro**.

Strawberry shortcake with fresh whipped cream on homemade biscuits. – **Sandee Steinberg**

Ice cream, although that could be any season. Corn on the cob. Potato salad. Coleslaw. Grilled vegetables and chicken with BBQ sauce and anything that can be grilled. – **David Thomas**

Ice Cream. Hard stop! – **Jayme Trott**

Ice cream!!! – **Dan Tuft**

Barbecue, corn, watermelon, tomatoes, and peaches. - **Susan Vigilante**



What Was Your Favorite Summer Activity as a Child?

By Scott Cullen, CrossCurrents Editor

There were a couple of local church festivals and local farm shows that we would look forward to for months. Rickety rides, junk food, and no parental supervision for a couple of nights were absolute bliss for me. – **Maria Baratta**

Making up plays in my basement. Only place to stay cool! – **Beth Brasor**

Going to Hershey Park. – **Sue Busch**

Rocking and playing in the rope hammock out back or riding bikes with my friends and reading in the hammock too. We also had a great time going to my grandmother's beach house in SC where we built lots of sand castles, rode waves, and played LOTS and lots of card games. - **Parker Cohen**

I remember spending my summer reading. They used to sell *The Babysitters Club* books at the grocery store, and my mom would pick them up for me. When I got older, I read through all the Stephen King novels. I have fond memories of lying on the couch reading the day away. – **Jen Couchoud**

Playing baseball with my friends and other kids who lived by the Little League baseball field at my old elementary school in Norwalk, CT. If we didn't have enough for two full teams, which we usually didn't, we'd play half-field games. Also, riding our bikes up and down the hills at Riverside Cemetery and running wild among the gravestones and mausoleums. – **Scott Cullen**

Camping in the Pine Barrens, swimming and diving at Pennbrook Swim Club, climbing trees, playing outside (cops and robbers, etc.). – **Sara del Castillo**

Can't name just one: swimming and waterskiing. At least once a summer we would have a greased watermelon "fight" in the water – lots of fun! – **Barbara Drew**

Summer camp in Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia, Canada. Going barefoot all summer on our family farm in Blue Anchor, NJ – **John Fowler**

I lived on a court, so I loved going outside and playing pretty much whatever sport the other kids were playing. There was also a park about a mile from my house with tennis and basketball courts, and I loved going there and joining in games or even hitting/shooting the ball by myself. – **Mike Gianella**

Going fishing with my brother. – **Michael Howe-Smith**

Biking through the woods. – **Andrew Kidd**

Playing with my neighborhood friends. – **Dianne Kidd-Ross**

My original thought was "being in air conditioning" because that was a serious contender. Growing up in the 80s, summer meant daytime at home was spent with parents forcing us to stay outside. So I used to have a much higher tolerance for being in the sun. Which came in handy because my actual favorite summer activity, by far, was playing baseball. We played in the backyard. We played in the front yard. We played a block over, where three backyards coalesced into a shape that we were able to fit a nicely sized, shaped field into, complete with outfield fences. We played in a couple of different cul-de-sacs. We played at actual baseball fields. There were about a dozen scattered around the town of Middlesex, NJ, where I grew up. And I'd search them all to find a place to play. And if they were all taken, we'd make a place ourselves. Looking back, I was fortunate to have a decent number of friends who also liked playing enough to give me an opportunity to play as much as I did. As did growing up in a family, in a time and place that afforded me the socioeconomic advantage to have so many options to play. - **Chris Marietti**

Riding the Wild Mouse roller coaster in Seaside with my grandmother and cousin Donna. – **Lynne Molnar**

Playing badminton with my twin sister in the evenings until it was too dark to see the shuttlecock. – **Jane Root**

Building forts and playing baseball. – **Steve Saddlemire**

Beach days which occurred with some frequency. Rockaway, Jones or Breezy Point Beaches in NY. – **Joe Schenk**

Watching the stars at night. – **Anne Sears**

My father and grandfather built a bungalow in Ortley Beach, NJ. My grandparents would be there all summer, and my older sister and I would spend weeks there with

them. We were just two blocks from the ocean and a block from the bay. I loved going crabbing with my grandfather. – **Lynda Shapiro**

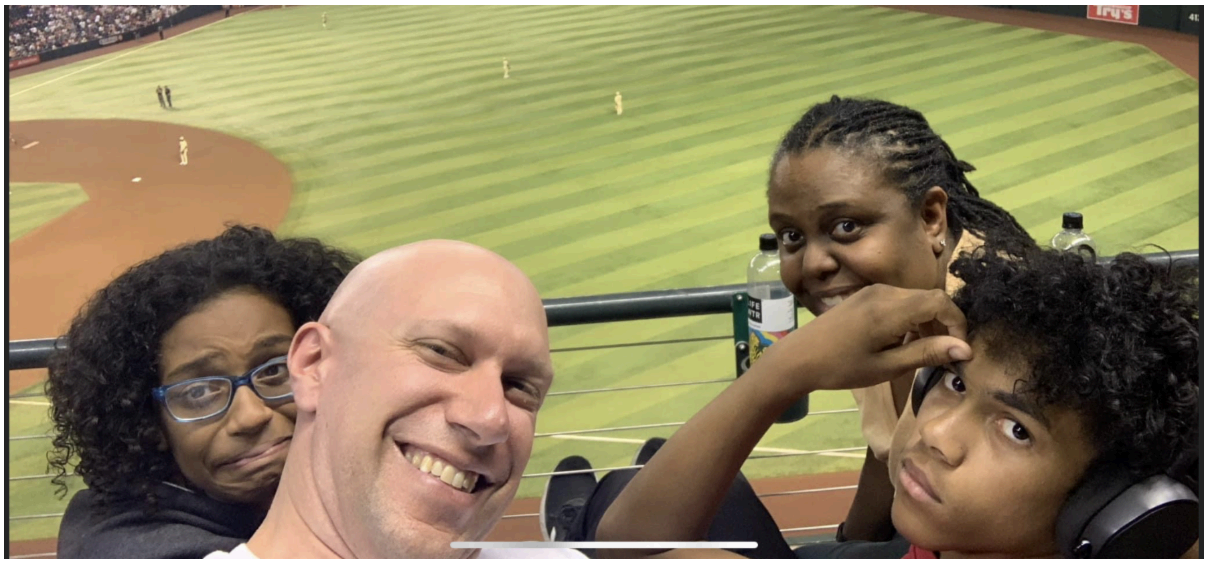
My brothers and neighbors would play ball all day long. Baseball, soccer, and others. We were rarely inside during the summer. – **Roger Shapiro**

My dad didn't work during the summers because he was a school psychologist, and my mom was a stay-at-home mom when I was young, so we did a lot of camping in upstate NY. I grew up in Spencerport, NY, outside of Rochester. My favorite spot was Rollins Pond in the Adirondack Mountains. The campsites are on a lake, and we spent the days canoeing and swimming. Camping was so much fun as a child. I only realized as an adult that it was so much fun because my parents did all the work—cooking, packing, cleaning, etc.- **Sandee Steinberg**

As kids in my family and neighborhood, we just got on bikes, rode all over the place, played baseball in the park, played wiffleball in the yards, had adventures in the woods, and swam at the local pool. We had wonderful independence to follow our curiosity anywhere, sometimes to our detriment. – **David Thomas**

Playing whiffle ball in our large backyard with my siblings and neighborhood friends for hours and hours and hours. – **Dan Tuft**

Biking and making ice cream. - **Susan Vigilante**



Above: Chris Marietti continues his quest to visit every MLB ballpark. Here he is with his family in Arizona at Chase Field watching the Diamondbacks.

What's Your Favorite Summer Memory?

By Scott Cullen, CrossCurrents Editor

When our kids were very young, they liked lying in a hammock with me and looking up at the sky. We would all speak softly, watch birds and clouds, and just enjoy the respite from a hectic summer day. It's one of my most cherished memories. – **Maria Baratta**

Tucking my children into bed in Vermont after a long trip and listening to my husband play the piano. – **Beth Brasor**

Time at the beach with my family – **Sue Busch**

Staying in Ocean City, NJ, with my kids when they were little at a rental, riding the rides with them, and spending the day on the beach. – **Jen Couchoud**

Can't think of one, but there were many camping trips to Bass River State Forest—singing around the campfire, picking wild blueberries, and canoeing. There were also many memories at the Jersey shore. Seaside Heights was my favorite place to be as a teen—go early, have breakfast on the way, sunbathe and swim, shower, and walk the boardwalk—boardwalk fries and pizza, great games (where you could actually win great prizes), and rides. Summer meant freedom, with carefree days and lightning-bug nights. – **Sara Del Castillo**

Watching and listening to the fireworks with my family at Weirs Beach on Lake Winnipesaukee in Laconia, New Hampshire. We could see the fireworks reflected in the water along with the boat lights and hear the boats toot their horns when there was a really great burst of color or a loud boom. Seeing the aurora borealis one late summer night was an unforgettable spectacle. – **Barbara Drew**

Spending two weeks at Ship Bottom on Long Beach Island, biking and hiking. - **John Fowler**

My dad's Argentine, so my favorite summer memories are of visiting Argentina for Christmas, the juxtaposition of spending the holiday in 90-95-degree weather and getting extra time off from school for these visits. It felt like getting "bonus" summer in those years. – **Mike Gianella**

May 8, 1945 (VE Day). I was eleven years old. I rode around on my bicycle waving a Union flag, celebrating the end of the war in Europe. – **Michael Howe-Smith**

Never you mind! – **Janet Hubbard**

Many. One is a lazy day at our former lake home in the Poconos with friends. – **Andrew Kidd**

In my 20s and 30s, I would windsurf and hang out with friends on the lakes in Minnesota. – **Dianne Kidd-Ross**

I fell in love with baseball in the mid-80s. Living about an hour outside of Manhattan, I became a rabid Mets fan as that franchise was experiencing what turned out to be one of the precious few upswings in their history. While that upswing was going, I was glued to the TV on as many nights as the Mets were on broadcast TV, since we didn't have a cable package that showed the Mets much of the time. I absorbed as much as I could, not just about the Mets, but about any major league baseball I could see anywhere—Yankees, Phillies, Braves—any game on ESPN. I got to know MLB stadiums really well through these broadcasts, noticing the details that set each apart. And starting in the late 80s, I had the opportunity to visit some that were within day-trip driving distance. NY, Philly, Baltimore. As we entered the 90s, my father and his buddy hatched plans to visit multiple new stadiums every year on a week-long trip.

The two families piled into a van and spent long days commuting between cities and action-packed nights seeing games in locales that, at the same time, seemed both familiar and new in so many ways. These trips solidified my love of the game, my love of travel, and my love of family and community. I was so glad to be able to continue that tradition in my marriage and eventually with our own kiddos. Now, Jakob and Daphne didn't seem to harbor the same feelings their parents had for the baseball component of the trip, but it was a beautiful experience to have them with us as we saw the home game for the Arizona Diamondbacks, the last franchise whose home stadium we hadn't yet been to. – **Chris Marietti**

I love summer weather. Throwing on a summer dress and my straw hat and I'm ready for any summer event! – **Lynne Molnar**

A trip my parents, sister, and I took to New York City in the summer when my sister and I were about 12. Our great-uncle lived in Manhattan and, at the time, was about 75 years old. He took us all around Manhattan—walking! When he dropped us back at our hotel, he walked home. We could barely move. – **Jane Root**

Camping with my family in the Adirondacks and along the St. Lawrence Seaway. – **Steve Saddlemire**

Sailing the Saranac Lakes with my then-girlfriend, Michele, at the end of the summer season. – **Joe Schenk**

Sailing on Menemsha Pond with John, my late husband, at the helm. – **Anne Sears**

Summer days in Ortley Beach. – **Lynda Shapiro**

Lynda and I usually block the July 4 week for camping in Cape May. We do the beach, the wineries, eat unlimited crabs, and meet with old friends. It's always a relaxing escape. – **Roger Shapiro**

As a child and adolescent, huge family picnics. I have about 50 first cousins. Both my mother and father had big families. Lots of food, fun, and only a few minor injuries. – **David Thomas**

Swimming at Pacific Beach in San Diego, CA, where I grew up until age 15 (Mom always had amazing sandwiches ready for me and my brother after body-surfing and exploring the tide pools). - **Brian Tucker**

One of my favorites was the summer Keziah and I had to be home for work obligations, and on a spur-of-the-moment, I suggested we drive to Mt. Desert Island for the weekend. That was so crazy—10 hours each way—but we made it back in time for her Monday 3 p.m. shift at the coffee shop in Lambertville. – **Dan Tuft**

Catching frogs in Jacob's Creek with friends. - **Susan Vigilante**



If You Could Attend Any Outdoor Summer Concert (Past or Present), Who Would You See?

By Scott Cullen, CrossCurrents Editor

Woodstock. – **Maria Baratta**

Edgar Meyer – **Sue Busch**

I think that I would love the Newport Folk Festival, in the past when Bob Dylan shocked everyone by going electric, but also now. I just need to find someone to take the trip with me. - **Parker Cohen**

Even though I've seen them numerous times over the years with and without founder Brian Wilson, the original Beach Boys lineup with Brian Wilson. – **Scott Cullen**

I wish I had known about Stevie Ray Vaughan when he was still alive. I would have gone to see him anywhere. We have two friends who host jazz outside, and we go every chance we get. – **Sara del Castillo**

Bonnie Raitt. We were lucky to see her last year at Bethel Woods, a beautiful outdoor venue (site of the Woodstock concert) on a perfect summer evening – fantastic! I would go to her concerts every year if I could! – **Barbara Drew**

The Woodstock Festival. I attended the original in 1969. – **John Fowler**

I'd love to see someone like The Who in their prime. – **Mike Gianella**

I prefer baroque music, so the outdoor requirement is very limiting. Bach didn't draw crowds, but Handel did. So, I'll go back to July 17th, 1717, and proceed down the Thames with King George 1 listening to **Handel's Water Music**. - **Michael Howe-Smith**

The Makaha Sons of Niʻihaʻu in Hawaii, featuring Israel Kamakawiwoʻole. – **Janet Hubbard**

For many years, the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra has played outdoor summer concerts at a venue in this area called Conner Prairie, which is a large, nationally acclaimed outdoor history museum that offers immersive, hands-on experiences of Indiana's history and includes a Lenape Indiana Camp. – **Jane Root**

Santana at Woodstock. – **Andrew Kidd**

Seeing live music such as John Prine and Santana gives me such joy. Hearing a concert at Red Rocks is on my bucket list. – **Dianne Kidd-Ross**

Going to Tanglewood in Lenox, MA to see YoYo Ma—doing this August 7 & 8. – **Lynne Molnar**

Simon & Garfunkel. – **Steve Saddlemire**

I just saw Santana perform in his farewell. I wish I had seen him when he was younger—maybe Woodstock! – **Joe Schenk**

The Philadelphia Orchestra, conducted by Yannick Nézet-Séguin. – **Anne Sears**

Definitely Jimmy Buffett. It was always a fun-filled day! – **Lynda Shapiro**

The Doors. – **Roger Shapiro**

Bruce Springsteen. He is a great entertainer. I have seen him a few times, and I always enjoy his concerts. – **Sandee Steinberg**

Always Bruce. Great but long summer concerts in the Phillies Stadium. Probably too long for me to stay awake nowadays. – **David Thomas**

I would love to go back in time to the Kerrville Music Festival in Kerrville, Texas and hear The Righteous Mothers and The Austin Lounge Lizards again! – **Jayme Trott**

Cat Stevens. - **Brian Tucker**

The Kruger Brothers – **Dan Tuft**

Shania Twain. - **Susan Vigilante**

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