

St. Francis de Sales Parish

All glory comes from daring to begin.

St. Francis de Sales



Meanderings...

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Unstructured Summers

SUMMERS were unstructured times. My first authentic memory of summer vacation was waking up on a fresh summer morning, with a beautifully cool and refreshing breeze wafting through the window screen that was inserted into the push up window. This was before we ever had an air-conditioner, we survived with a fan, and sleeping on the floor.

It was a lot cooler than on the top bunks. I remember the song playing on the radio, Gordon Lightfoot's *'Steel Rail Blues'*. Every time I hear that song, it brings back a sense of peace and contentment. After breakfast, we would head outside, (with only two television channels—this was before we had cable), morning television was not a temptation, and it goes without saying, all the computer and video games were mere flashes of ideas in the minds of scientists.

Outside meant riding bikes or heading over to the vacant field by the big pine tree to join other newly sprung neighbours. There was the sand pit to build sand city, or the tree to climb to watch the clouds roll by, or the long grasses where the milkweed was attracting monarch butterflies. As we got a bit older, we would walk down to Anchor Park where the recreation department would host activities. We would pack a peanut butter sandwich and hike down so that "Buttons" and "Fifi" could lead us through arts and crafts. We didn't pack drinks because we could hand pump cold, fresh water from the well at the Park. The 'camp' would culminate with a long scavenger hunt through the woods, looking for clues that would lead us around the vast Park looking for hidden treasure. Buttons and Fifi were decked in pirate costumes, and the teams had names like the Jolly Rogers, or Blackbeard's Ghosts.

All trails led back to the fire pit where we had marshmallows, and hot dogs, and heard stories of pirate adventures from times past. Then, with faces decorated and eye patches on, we would walk back home, armed with stick swords, and paper pirate hats.

The summers were pretty undefined. They were mostly for just hanging around, and being with friends, and inventing ways to pass the time and amuse ourselves. That is how we energized our batteries, by creativity and relationship. Our trophies were finding a butterfly cocoon, or zapping ourselves with the electrified fences on the farms. Through it all, we were re-created into carefree, and contented kids. Happy Summer, Be re-created!

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