

View from Menzies Mountain, summer 2013

By Bruce Menzies

Summer's Ready When You Are

What does summer mean to you?

As we get older, some of us will think back to our childhoods with fond summer memories of jumping rope, picnics, outdoor baptisms, fishing, bugs, swimming off of the old bridge, camping with our friends, homemade ice cream, or weekends at the cabin with our family. Yes, it was good to be young then and close to the earth. Perhaps these are not your memories. But warm passing breezes are still filled with memories associated with summertime.

What did you once do each summer that is now simply a memory? What summer traditions do you still celebrate? What do you hope your future summers will have in store for you? Are you living your dreams now or waiting?

Being a Boy Scout as a youngster meant lots of camping in the summer. It's a funny thing about the forest at night. It's a time of mystery, for with darkness will come sounds never heard at any other time. A deer can walk like a mouse and a mouse can sound like a deer. You can never be sure and there are always new noises to make you wonder. The days of July and August are long and sunny and what was once a spring breeze becomes a slow hot wind, which gives all the insects a chance to make life in the woods miserable for man and beast.

As a teen, my favorite summer was the summer of 1966. I was seventeen; I had just received my high school diploma; I owned a red Corvette convertible; and had a pretty good job. Weekends were spent at my trailer on Table Rock Lake at Compton Ridge. Summer nights were spent cruising and listening to the swinging sounds of radio station AM 1340, K.I.C.K.

After researching the article about the Honor Flight Network program I could see it was a labor of love on the part of founder Earl Morse. It was also an answer to prayer for the hundreds of Veterans that have made the flight to Washington, D.C., to visit the World War II Memorial and other landmarks. Mr. Morse' dreams to make the Honor Flight a reality became a dream with wings.

You know, that's how things often happen. An idea begins with a dream, a doodle on the back of a napkin, or an inward "unction" down in your gut about what might be

possible. It was Mike Dennison that said, “It is better to have tried and failed than to have failed to try.” Maybe you won’t build something as big as the Empire State Building or the Brooklyn Bridge. Maybe it won’t be you that discovers a cure for cancer or AIDS. Maybe it *will* be you that invents a better latch on the farm gate or an easier way to do a chore. You might even have an idea how to make more money.

I have a friend from childhood whom I’ve known for 58 years. He had a dream about building a first-class sporting goods store. My buddy, Johnny Morris, followed that dream and built his store. Can you say Bass Pro Shops?

One of the oldest success stories is Harlan David Sanders, well known as Colonel Sanders. He was 65 years old when he started Kentucky Fried Chicken. Grandma Moses was 75 when she began painting. At 70 years old, Golda Meir became the fourth Prime Minister of Israel. Ronald Reagan became President of the United States sixteen days before his 70th birthday. I think you get the picture. If you are older—go for it—knowing today is your day and just maybe we’ll see you at the top!

I’m just saying; before you disregard an idea at least explore the possibilities. Maybe you’ll fail—but maybe you’ll win. Let’s redefine the word failure as simply a plan that didn’t work the first time around. Dreams have no age limits. Listen to your heart. Many people have achieved their dreams in later life. It was Mark Twain that said, “Age is an issue of mind over matter. If you don’t mind, it doesn’t matter.”

Volunteering and community service is simply embedded into the culture of the Ozarks. I once attended a meeting of the Kimberling City Amateur Radio Club. The president asked for volunteers to help out with the upcoming Christmas Parade. Almost every hand was raised for service. Opportunities for service abound in the Ozarks. My time invested with Global University, Springfield Visitors and Convention Bureau, and Springfield Police Civilian Review Board is very important to me. The author Elizabeth Berg said, “There is incredible value in being of service to others.”

I’m continuing the series on Resolve to be Ready in this summer issue. It’s so important for us to be prepared for disasters. Preparedness begins with planning and summer is an excellent time to get ready for whatever comes next. Planning begins with a pencil and paper and brainstorming with others to plan your work and then work your plan. Now is the time. You can do it!

Finally, before we begin complaining about the heat let's ask ourselves a big question: would you rather be shoveling snow or mowing grass?

I hope you can take the time to enjoy summer in the Ozarks. Like painted kites, the days and nights will go flying by. Summer Solstice this year was 1:04 a.m. (EDT), June 21st—the longest day of the year. Days following have begun to shorten.

Does it seem to you that life is moving at the speed of light? As a young person I could never had imagined living in the year 2013. Where has it all gone? Our life has been described as like sands of time through an hourglass (some say Shakespeare said that, others say Socrates). St. James said it this way, "For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a short time and then vanishes (James 4:14). Fortunately we still have time to make the ultimate preparation—for eternity. The Old Testament prophet wept and said, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved" (Jer. 8:20). Don't let that be your lament. We can be ready for eternity. Now is the time—we can do it!

Until fall arrives and we meet again on this page, keep an eye on summer.

—**Bruce Menzies**

SENIOR MOMENTS