



ALLYCE'S ATTIC

Summertime, Summertime, Sum-Sum Summertime

by MARY ALLYCE

We're not into triple digit temperatures quite yet, but we're close. Summer 's right around the corner and whether you're a fan of hot days and sultry nights or prefer the cooler temps we've left behind, summer has something for everyone to love.

June brings weddings and brides, graduations and Father's Day. Lots to love there. With the gentler weather, outdoor events gear up and heading out for a day of riding the river, riding a horse, playing in the park or fishing is a lot more tempting than it is when you need layers of clothing to keep comfortable. Picnics and barbecues beckon and who doesn't love an all American hotdog or hamburger with all the fixin's? Add homemade potato salad, some roasted corn on the cob and you've got a Fourth of July feast. You don't even have to stress over dessert when there are marshmallows, sticks and a campfire or grill. If you want to get fancy, grab a box of graham crackers, a couple of chocolate bars and voila – s'mores!

No need to ask kids why they like summer. You'll get a slightly different reaction from their parents, but almost everyone can agree the very pace of life slows down from June through August.

Here in the Hill Country there's a lot to enjoy. Rodeos gear up and it's easy to find one every weekend wherever you are. The rivers are flowing, bringing tubing and kayaking. Hiking is popular and with good reason. Is there anywhere more beautiful than the Hill Country in summertime in which to test your stamina?

Gardeners reap the bounty of their hard work and some of them even share with those of us who are veggie patch and flowerbed challenged. I do have a couple of tomato plants in containers and so far they look quite sturdy. One even has some cute little green tomatoes popping out. I am encouraged and might try for some herbs next. My summer is going to be largely spent recuperating from surgery, so tomatoes and

herbs are about as ambitious as I'm likely to get. There are worse things to anticipate than a long, lazy summer and I'm ready to spend some serious time catching up on my reading and more important, my writing.

For those of you looking for more interactive activities, there's plenty to sample. Riverfest in Bandera is June 24th and features the beautiful Medina River as it meanders through Riverfront Park. Water activities, a car show, vendors, "Bandera Idol" singing competition and a cookoff are among the offerings. Fourth of July brings parades and celebrations in surrounding towns and the opportunity for families to gather 'round the fire pit, barbecue pit or grill and enjoy just kicking back with each other. Bandera is working hard to gear up Celebrate for Bandera over Labor Day Weekend, albeit a somewhat scaled down version. So far vendors, the parade, a cookoff and the requisite rodeo at historic Mansfield Park are penciled onto the agenda.

Those "lazy, hazy, crazy days of summer" truly have something for everyone. You can make your own fun or enjoy fun arranged for you. There's just no excuse to be bored. I would be remiss if I didn't mention the number of opportunities to volunteer during the summer and right on through the year. Every event is in need of folks to help make all that fun happen. Don't forget the opportunity to volunteer to be a judge for one or more of the cook-offs. It's hardly a burden to sample all that great barbecue, beans, potato salad or Margaritas and Bloody Mary's! Volunteering is a way to mingle with your neighbors, to give back and genuinely feel part of your community. Those volunteering opportunities are ongoing throughout the year through your favorite non profit or events like Hunter's Barbecue in the fall or Meals on Wheels year 'round.

Have a great summer y'all and see you in the fall.