



by Diana Mavetz Petrich

Miscellaneous Musings by FunGirlDi

Mine is June...

Many of us have a favorite time of year where we love everything about that treasured time, season, month, or holiday. We have our reasons of why we like that time which may be influenced by the weather, nature, sports, or hobbies. Mine is June.

June is my birthday month, and I just celebrated my 61st. Every year that passes is, of course, a celebration, but I am also stunned that I don't feel older and keep waiting to grow up or start to feel like an adult. Maybe, at this point, it may never

business walks. These are walks that allow "Swiffer" to do his business. As we tool around the neighborhood, we stop at every lamppost, tall grass clump, or tree. While my little guy attempts to leave his scent everywhere and I patiently wait for his pen to run out of ink, I gaze at the beauty of early summer around me.

We are so busy trying to do everything, we really don't stop to marvel at what is around us – especially in June. The trees are newly leafed out and their shades



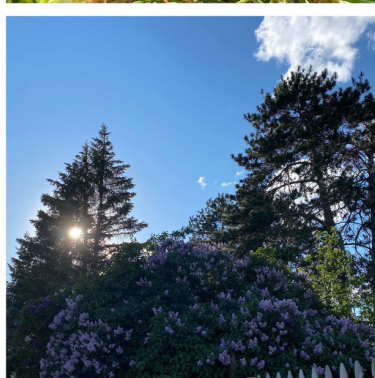
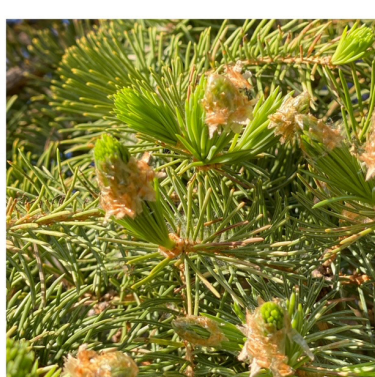
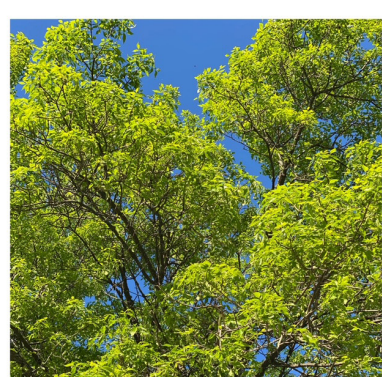
A new mama deer and her twins hanging out in a yard a block from my house. I knew it was time to move along when she started stomping her feet and snorting at me. Notice the yellow flowering weeds under her feet.

happen. I haven't written my column for a few months as I was engaged in a legal fiasco for the past four years. I'm happy to say it is in the rear view mirror and the relief is joyous. There are so many things wrong with the legal system in this country. My summation of the entire ordeal was we were forced to participate in a game of legal extortion. It's over and I am grateful.

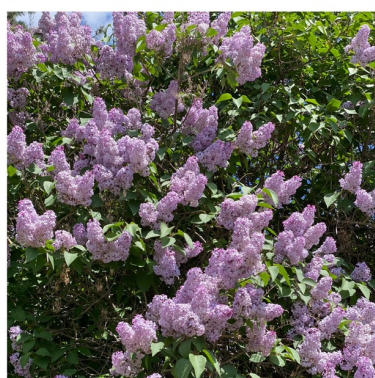
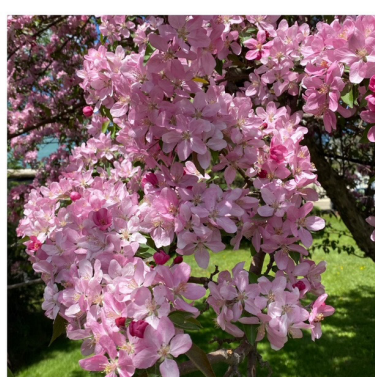
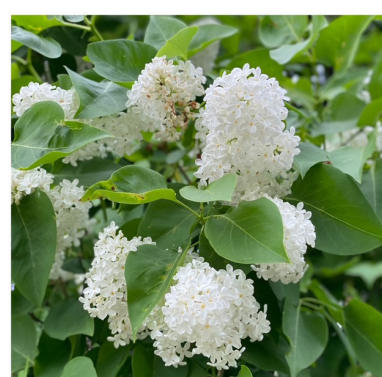
I take my little dog out for

of green are stunning against the blue skies. Our non-existent Spring led me to start thinking we were not going to have days like these. The blooming bushes fill the air around us with their short-lived fragrances.

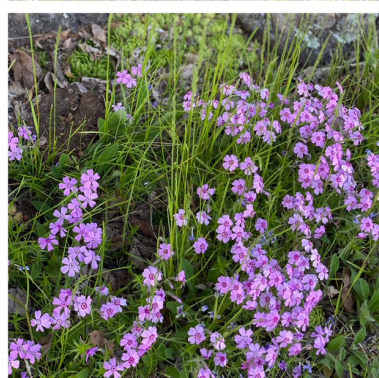
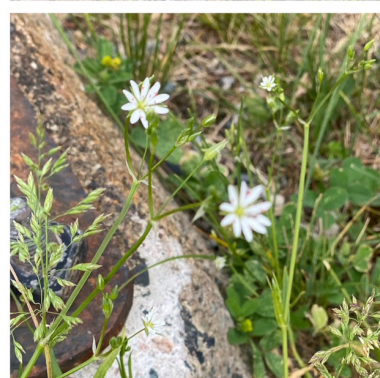
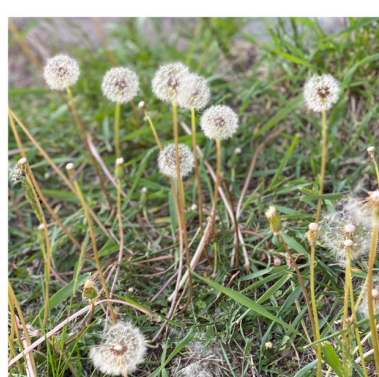
Flowering crab trees have bloomed on every block and the lucky residents with apple trees in their yards can look out their windows to see the different colors of pink and peach blossoms that hold the promise of beautiful



More beautiful things in the month of June – warm sun, beautiful lilac bushes, a strawberry-rhubarb pie, beautiful newly erupted lime green leaves against a bright blue sky and new growth on an evergreen tree.



Lilac blooms and apple blossoms. Too bad words don't convey their beautiful aromas.



Beauty in the neighborhood whether it was planted intentionally or not.

fruit within a few short months.

Flowers are in bloom – tulips, daffodils, irises, violets, pansies, and others that have been intentionally planted are showing off their gorgeous blooms. Mother Nature is showing off her green thumb as many unplanned flowers (weeds) pop up in their uninvited way. Yards are speckled with the yellow, white, purple, etc. from dandelions and other persistent invaders. For the yards that haven't been mowed, many dandelions have bloomed and are ready for a windy day to spread their seeds far and wide.

I have a respect for dandelions that many would not because my father used to pick young dandelion greens down at Semer's Park when we were growing up. Pesticides were not used much back then so it was safe to pick and consume the greens. I would accompany him many times and played on the swings, slides, merry-go-round, and teeter-totter at Semer's Park while he used his pocketknife to harvest the small dandelions from the grounds there.

He would extract the entire young plant from the ground – basically weeding the park free of charge. Once home, he would cut off the roots, wash the leaves, dry them, and store them in washed out, repurposed plastic bread bags until lunch or dinner. The washed greens would be put in a bowl and tossed with cut up hard-boiled eggs, cider vinegar, oil, salt and pepper just as his ancestors did in Slovenia.

I have a couple of patches of wild strawberries in my yard and I see others along my walks. I'm purposely not cutting those patches just to see if I can get a few of one of the most wonderfully flavored berries known to mankind. Wild strawberries may be tiny, but the intense flavor from those baby berries trump any domesticated berries I have ever tasted.

I see yard after yard with rhubarb growing ever so faithfully and are bigger than I remember them to be last year. Tonight, I baked a strawberry-rhubarb pie and can't wait to have a slice for breakfast in the morning.

Even though it isn't officially summer, everything that surrounds us screams it is so. Restaurants and businesses in town, that are boarded up in the cold months, have opened their doors to the tourists that are flocking to our beautiful north country. Some locals hate the influx of said tourists, but it has turned out to be our town's lifeblood.

School is out for the summer and every year the song by Alice Cooper plays in my mind – "School's Out for Summer." I found myself singing it out loud on June 1 when I saw a bunch of kids running out of the front doors of Washington Elementary.

The sound of neighborhood kids playing outside is music to my ears. Seems these days you see very little of this unless it is

an organized sport. Little ones are learning to ride their bikes without training wheels and even though there are frequent cries and tears, the sound of a father running after his baby and cheering her on brings a smile to my face. Oh, the memories of my own conquering of riding a pedal bike and teaching my sons that skill makes the breath catch in my chest when I think of how many decades ago it all happened.

My entire life I wanted a hammock in a tree, and I finally bought one a year ago on clearance. I have two big old pine trees in my backyard that are perfect for my new gift to myself. I put it up one day when there was no rain and enjoyed every



A Monarch Waystation in my neighborhood. The milkweeds are growing strong and vibrant and are awaiting the return of the Monarch Butterflies.

second I was lying in it. I kept one leg on the ground so I could push myself to swing back and forth. My hammock debut was enriched more when I put on some old tunes from the 1970s. Contentment truly comes from the simple things in life.

This June has been a bit cooler than last year. The bug population has reached a level of insanity – especially the sandflies. I have killed over 200 blood filled sandflies in my house one evening and I think they piggybacked into my house hiding in Swiffer's fur coat. The infestation this year brings back 50-year-old memories of massive bloody hairlines on my siblings and I that were caused by sandfly bites. It's too bad they drive us

inside once we finally have arrived at our long-awaited warmer weather.

A block away from my house is a Wayfair Station for Monarch Butterflies. Last year I was amazed at how many hung out on the milkweed stems. After a little bit of research of the milkweed plant provides all the nourishment the Monarch needs to transform their caterpillar into the adult butterfly.

Last year I was fascinated watching the butterflies. They laid their eggs, the eggs hatched caterpillars that consumed the milkweed. I was impressed as to how many caterpillars were hatched. This year when I was walking by this Wayfair Station, I was getting nervous because it didn't seem like the milkweeds were coming back. I was thrilled to see them slowly popping up and at last count there were over 35 stems growing strong thanks to our warmer weather. Now we wait patiently for the beauties to fly back here.

I planted a garden for the first time in many years. I figured it was getting to be necessary to have another food source since the grocery stores are having trouble keeping the shelves full. With the price of gas and diesel, trucking companies are going out of business left and right and if this is any indication of what's to come, we all will be gardening, canning, blanching as our parents and grandparents did many years ago. I guess it's true that the more things change, the more they stay the same.

To close, I wrote a poem that sums up much of what I have been thinking over the past two weeks. The best part of the first three weeks of June is that it isn't even summer yet – we have so much to look forward to!

*Simple is the life
I've chosen for me,
Back home in Ely
where I love to be.
The trees have new leaves and
out are their blooms,
Colors of a rainbow
or the strawberry moon.
Children are playing
and summer is here,
School is out for the year
and so are the deer.
Fragrance from the
bloomers is fresh all around,
Lilacs and others
are easily found.
Just walk down the street
and the colors are bright,
Pink, yellow and peach
are a few in my sight.
The weather is great
and my fave time of year,
The evening serenades
are a treat for the ear.
We waited so long
for this weather so fine,
Chilled Chardonnay
is a fine summer wine.
At a nearby lake
hear the call of the Loon,
I'll repeat it again,
Mine is June.*

~Diana Mavetz Petrich~



My long-awaited hammock in the top photo and a neighborhood young boy chilling in his in the front of his home on Harvey Street.