

Memories of Memorial Day



Memorial Day was always a fun holiday at my house. As a kid, I remember the day to be sunny and not too cold. I'm sure that was not the case every year, but my memory holds that weather report on record anyway.

One of the other things I will always remember about Memorial Day is kittens. Spring brought a fresh batch of furry babies into our world and coincidentally, on Memorial Day they'd always be just old enough to take them out and let them play on the lawn. They were about six or seven weeks old. Once the kittens were able to eat without "mom" and use a litter box they were ready to find a new home.

We used to give away the kittens, in those days, to a good home. That's not highly recommended these days (or even recommended at all), but it was the tradition back in the '60s in small-town America. Memorial Day brought lots of folks to our neighborhood, so it was a perfect day to find new homes for the kittens. People would walk by and ooh and aaah. We'd have four or five to give away and invariably they'd find very happy families to go to. That part of Memorial Day made me sort of sad, but mostly I remember how proud we were to show off our adorable bundles to the passersby.

Why were so many people passing by our house? Because we were lucky enough to LIVE on the parade route! Oh, joy of joys! We had ring-side seats, on the curb, right in front of our house. We could “save” our spots by putting a blanket down by the curb and we could play on the lawn until we heard the bands coming down the street. How convenient for my mom, too. She could stay in the kitchen and clean up breakfast, or get some ironing done right until parade time. No having to pack the brood in the car, drive, park, and then walk to the parade. We were in parade central.

My favorite parts of the parade were the military and the bands. I hated most of the floats; especially the cars holding politicians. They were a real waste of time in my eyes. I never knew anyone in those cars anyway. I loved standing up and putting my hand over my heart every time the American flag went by. How many people do that nowadays? Seems like none.

I loved the precision of the military guys as they marched by. Sometimes a couple of army vehicles would roll by. The firetrucks were decent too; just not quite as cool as the men in military uniforms.

The bands were always fun to watch. When I got older, I even marched along with my high school band. I was part of the drill team so we’d carry placards or pompoms as we marched along with the band. Our band always had the coolest songs. We were hot!

Happy Memorial Day to all in America.