



News from Peef & Lo

When Did We Stop Having Summer?

I don't know when it started exactly — the moment when I realized that I would never again have a real summer vacation.

Maybe it was sometime in college, when working full-time became a necessity.

More likely, it was post-college, when there was no transition between May and June. It felt weird. You just kept going to work — no matter what.

The whole fact of the matter is this: There was no warning. There was no time to prepare. All of a sudden summer was just GONE.

There would be no more lazing about on sunny afternoons, sunbathing and reading novels. There would be no swimming lessons or Library Reading programs. There would be no more impromptu day-trips to Summerfest with a carload of friends and nowhere to be the next morning. No, there would be no picnics in the park on weekday afternoons when the only people around were grandparents and mothers with small children.

There would be no more freedom. Only drudgery. And stale, air-conditioned offices.

There would be no more shorts. No more smelly sunless tanners. Only linen pants. And



The sun is out... so, where's summer?

polos. And gradual acceptance of all things wan and pale.

There would be no more carefree existence. Only schedules. And bills. And life.

Oh, don't worry. It's not like we can't handle it. It's a bit surprising at first, but after a while reality sinks in and you begin to realize that life isn't all that bad.

After all, summer IS a bit more interesting than the DARK, DREARY Wisconsin winter. There are festivals and flowers to plant. There's fresh basil growing outside and tomatoes on the vine, waiting to be picked. In summer, Paul starts sweating again and the cats stop sleeping on the bed in favor of the cool linoleum floor.

And we DO have plans.

We have plans to get up really early on Saturday mornings and go to the Farmer's Market in Cathedral Square.

We'll probably buy lots of vegetables (some of which we've never seen before) and seasonal berries and an occasional bouquet of flowers.

We will likely get around to as many summer Art Fairs as we can. We will, of course, pay our annual visit to T. Scot — the man whose art graces nearly every wall in our house.

We'll grill lots of vegetables. And eat nice little veggie sandwiches on focaccia with pesto mayonnaise. We'll also eat an inordinate amount of tofu. Oh, yes — and probably too much custard.

We'll take evening walks around our neighborhood and plant marigolds around our tomato plants to keep the bunnies away. We might have to put out little containers of beer to ward off the slugs.

We're not taking a vacation in summer. It's too hot everywhere, we've decided. And autumn vacations are simply more lovely. Right now, we're tentatively planning to go to Kansas City in October.

So, life is pretty good. We've been blessed. And sometimes we forget about that. Who wants to lay around and read novels all summer anyhow?

So, what's new

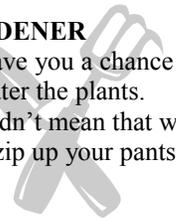
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Alright. I thought y'all needed a little bit of waking up — hence the very bright color of this here newsletter.

I also thought that some of you might need a little bit of humor in your lives — hence this silly little summer poem from our good friend Shel Silverstein...

GARDENER

We gave you a chance
To water the plants.
We didn't mean that way—
Now zip up your pants!



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We got Mobbed by Garden Moms and Lived to Tell About It

And we've started gardening again. Not in pots this time. In the honest-to-goodness earth. Where there are worms (yay!) and slugs (ugh!). Where there are ants and silt and weeds. I know it sounds slightly crazy, but we're pretty excited about all of this. Our container garden in Germantown was great fun — but this is the Real McCoy. And we're having a hay day. Or two.

First we made our annual pilgrimage to the Concordia College Wisconsin Herb Society Herb sale. Now, if you've never been to this sale, you've simply never seen the dark side of gardening.

Imagine a gymnasium filled with herb-crazed gardener women. Women in funny floppy gardening hats and tacky pedal pushers. Women with botanical gardening guides under one arm and reading glasses in the other. Women who speak in a foreign language, saying things about "Acanthopanax senticosus" and "Capsicum frutescens". They're the sort of women who'll wait in line for hours to see the first nasturtium blooms of spring. The sorts who sing to their tulips and knit sweaters for the sparrows.

Imagine then, this group of women waiting in line for the Herb sale, going completely CRAZY when the doors open and they catch sight of the tables of plants awaiting them. Imagine them racing across the gym, dirty little palms outstretched, determined to secure the prize pot of Butterfly Weed.

Imagine now, Lori and Paul standing in the middle of these crazed lunatics. Imagine us two poor souls attempting to squeeze between them, reaching out our little arms to pick out pots of basil and thyme. Imagine a woman kicking Lori when she "stole" the Thai pepper the woman had her eye on. Imagine another woman standing guard over her "customary 18 plants of Globe Basil".

We actually managed just fine, despite the insanity of it all. We ended up with a beautiful collection of herbs — fragrant Globe Basil (5 plants) for pesto; Lettuce Leaf Basil for sandwiches; Thai Basil for our experimentations in Thai cooking; lemon thyme for roasting summer chickens; edible Marigolds, Sage, fennel, parsley and cilantro...

The look on Paul's face as we were driving home was utterly priceless. "Those women were insane!" he commented, "Now I understand why all of their husbands stayed home."

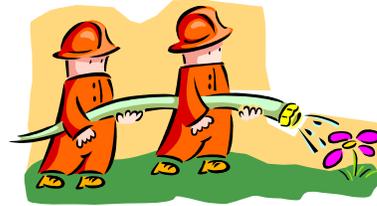
I agreed. Some of those people were pretty "over the top". I asked him if he would agree to come with me next year. He said he would definitely come — that it was worth it just to watch all the biddies fight over their plants.

I could only sit back in my seat and smile. What a funny little man he was.

And so we planted our precious herbs on the side of the house, just below our back porch. We intermingled our herbs with large plots of daisies, and everything is doing remarkably well.

I've already picked my first sprigs of basil and tossed them with vegetables, balsamic vinegar and pasta. We've sampled the cilantro and eaten our fill of Marigolds. And every time I breathe in the fragrance of our little plot, I think about those crazy women.

And how we made it out alive.



Our Latest Acquisition

When we found out in April that Mom Francis had kittens — AGAIN — we decided to drive over and take a look. Paul fell in LOVE with the kittens and we began to discuss the possibility of adopting another little runt.



We figured that Elmo would appreciate a new little "friend" — someone to scheme with and to whom he could teach all of his bad habits. So, we indulged ourselves.

We brought home a kitten. And things

have been a "zoo" ever since.

Paul is having fun raising a kitten for the first time. He can't get over how tiny the little creature is, and how many things it learns to do every single day.

Elmo is similarly amused. Although he wasn't fond of the kitten at first, he's adjusted admirably and now they're getting along swell. Really, the kitten is full of more energy than Elmo can handle. They chase around and around the house at extraordinary

speeds, eat one another's food and play odd little hide and seek games behind our backs. Overall, I think the whole situation has had a positive impact on his demeanor. He was getting to act a little bit like an old codger — and all this action has rejuvenated him to some extent.

We're similarly rejuvenated. With a little critter around who might climb up your bare legs at any given moment, one can't help but be a bit more spry and bright eyed :)

In Our Kitchen

In our kitchen right now we have a variety of things.

We have some of your typical kitchen-type items. A blender. A toaster. A waffle iron. We have a kitchen table with two chairs. A stove, a sink. And a microwave.

And a coffee pot... you can't forget about the coffee pot. It's a bit like forgetting the lifeblood running through one's veins.

We have a bread machine in which we've never actually made a loaf of bread. We only use it to make pizza dough.

We have a leaky faucet that we can't seem to fix. It's not the washer, cuz I think we tried to replace that once and it didn't work. Our landlord says he'll fix it one of these days, but that we shouldn't worry cuz we don't pay for the water anyhow. I'm more worried about the annoying dripping

sound it makes.

We have a garbage can which sometimes begins to stink if we throw away something smelly and then leave it there for a day or two longer than we should have.

We have an old Kenmore refrigerator that refuses to stop working, but keeps leaking all over the floor. Which explains the repairman who's living at our house — also in the kitchen.

We have a cordless telephone with a built-in answering machine on which we keep getting creepy messages that sound like they come from aliens. Some of them might actually be from aliens. Some of them are from my sister.

We have two cats. Two cat bowls. Sixty-four thousand cat toys. And a brown paper bag that used to be a cat



toy, but now just sits there looking suspiciously like a piece of garbage.

We have old, cracked linoleum from the 1960's that looks suspiciously artistic. We kind of like it, but realize that it's probably in need of being replaced. It's so old that scrubbing it makes no difference in how it looks.

We have a vase of peonies which will soon be dead. The petals are already dropping off of some of the flowers. Frankly, they look a little bit sad.

We also have a new pot rack hanging next to the fridge. It's something we've wanted for a long time and finally bought cuz it was on sale. It has a couple of pots hanging on it along with our grill tools. It doesn't look too bad, considering how crowded things seem to be getting in here.

What About BOB?

Once we decided to take one of the kittens from Mom, we spent a great deal of time contemplating what sort of name might be appropriate. It appeared that a couple of the kittens might be male, so we chose one and began thinking about boy names. At first, we thought something a bit unusual might be in order. We pondered names like "Sushi" and "Mahler". We rolled things over on our tongues and occasionally asked Elmo for his opinion (he wasn't much help). We even went so far as to look in a BABY name book (yes, we know... it's sick). But nothing seemed RIGHT.

Until one night.

The name hit us like a lead balloon. What about "Bob"? Certainly it was a bit different, as cat names were concerned. It wasn't a name which would embarrass him, and it was easy enough to spell... backwards AND forwards. We

repeated it to ourselves a few times:

"Bob, BOB, bOb, bob, BoB..."

Yes, yes. It had a ring to it. It was the sort of name a cat could be proud of.

So, "Bob" it would be. And we were content in our choice.

That is, until a few weeks passed.

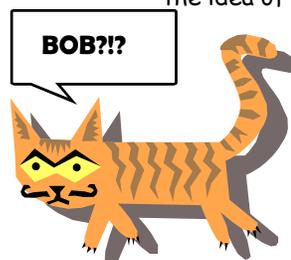
It was a few days before we planned to pick up the kitten. We got the dreaded phone call from Mom one evening before drifting off to sleep. She apologised for the inconvenience, but said she had to tell us something about our kitten.

She paused, and we began to panic. What could be wrong with the kitten?

"BOB is a girl," she said.

Oh, tragedy!

Now granted, it's only a cat. But neither



Paul nor I were terribly thrilled with the idea of a little girl cat running around our house with a name like "Bob". We discussed the situation at some length, and we decided that we'd definitely have to think of another name.

And so the adventures began again.

We pondered. We mulled. We rolled names around on our tongues like hard candies. And still nothing came.

And then the hippies within us awoke. They came to us in our dreams and revealed a name: Zoë Moonpool. A great little cat name. A great little girl name... a lot better than Bob anyhow. Even Elmo Puddleby seemed happy with the choice.

So, "Zoë" it was... and fortunately, still IS.

So, what's new
with you?

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Amore Sitis Unit!

