

## How Much Longer 'Til The Picnic?

I've put this task off long enough, it's time to stop procrastinating,  
And to put some words to paper, and to stop this hesitating.  
This attempt at a rhyme, about a long ago time, what does it really mean?  
Like the colors of my memories - the different shades of green.  
You know, time is such a mystery, so difficult to measure,  
As we harken back to a way of life, it's the memories we treasure.  
It's a mystery that to solve, will require no detective,  
But eventually we understand, as we gain years, and gain perspective.  
The rocks we picked in May, and some years, we picked in June,  
Our minds were often wandering, to The Picnic coming soon.  
The hay bales we lugged and stored, as the hands turned on the clock,  
And the heat, sweat, and chaff, washed away at Murphy Rock.  
The money we earned, and tucked away, "don't spend it all at once!"  
It was May, then June, then July - the slow passing of the months.  
To pass the summer days, we fished – earthworms pushed onto the hook,  
Beside Craig Brook Falls, by Mike Keenan's Mill, alongside Cuffman Brook.  
An alder branch freshly cut, a line wound around one end, hoping for a violent  
tug, that would make that alder bend.  
Cans of pop (and beer) cooling in the water, left by Dad and Uncle Ray, a cold,  
sweet drink to savour, to wrap up an epic day. Tired, sunburned, fly bites, a day  
of fishing done - and to the unenlightened, this was our idea of fun!  
As it always does, every year, August finally rolled around, and for the first  
Wednesday, then for the first Saturday, much anxiety was found. What's the

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forecast?, what's the outlook? For Johnville Picnic Day? Pray a decade of the Rosary – or hang it on the clothesline- to keep the rain at bay.

But some years, it did rain on Picnic Day, and we all persevered - but if the rain didn't soak you, the Dunkin' Machine did, so the dreaded rain was never really feared.

Now, here's a number for you – 142!! - in years!! Wow, THAT'S a lot of time!!

And the question is the title, of this amateurish rhyme.

How many times - over the years, the generations – has this hopeful question been asked? And the more you watched the calendar, the slower this time passed?

Even the grown-ups among us, this same question they have often pondered – forget their age, they are just as anxious, as so often they have wondered.

Every year, they will appear, and love it here, in this place so dear, to their hearts so near – this place of vivid greens, antique machines, and air so clean – we knew they were here, because they were seen - and for others, not seen, but their presence we can feel – imagined? Or real?

It may seem different this time – due to COVID one-nine, but our friends will be older, our beer will be colder, and like a friendly hand upon the shoulder, the presence of our forefathers, will make us feel like we are home. But, why? The smiles, the music, the stories – and the taste of lemon pie.

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