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Around the Table

Chef's Apron

Contact Susan Nye at

susannye@tds.net

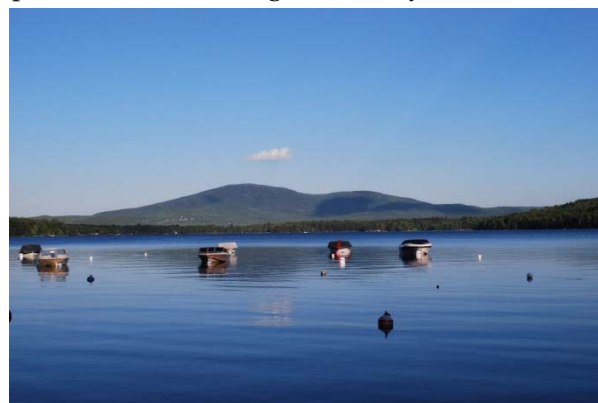
or 603/526 7319

More information the web at

www.susannye.com

Memorial Day might not be the first day of summer but it is a sure sign that it's coming. Throughout New England, it is the traditional weekend to open the cottage. A time to evict the squirrels from the attic, sweep out the kitchen and get rid of any cobwebs in the living room.

I still remember my first Memorial Day weekend on Pleasant Lake. We'd rented a house the summer before and bought a lot on the last day of vacation. Building had progressed throughout the fall so we got a taste of the fall foliage. The house was finished in early January and we enjoyed a wonderful winter of skiing at King Ridge. In late March we locked up and the house sat empty until Memorial Day weekend. Blessed with beautiful weather and my parents' need for some follow-up with the builder, we headed north.



On Saturday morning, I was given a few chores. The house had not been empty long enough to attract a lot of dust or critters so before long I was free to head down to the beach. With one small hitch, I had my little brother in tow. The contractor was coming and my parents wanted us both out of their hair to meet with him in peace.

I think I was twelve, just old enough to be trusted with daytime babysitting. My mother gave me a long litany of do's and don'ts. Don't let your brother go in the water. Watch him when he's over at the boat basin. Slather him with lots of sunscreen, repeat every hour. And on and on, it was your typical mom talk, the kind that passes in one 'tween ear and out the other. Undoubtedly, I mumbled some reply that suggested I was listening.

Down on the beach, I slathered Johnny with sunscreen. He's John now but was Johnny then. I might have given him some vague instructions to stay out of the water and to keep away from the boat basin but I wouldn't swear to it. I then artfully arranged myself on a beach towel with a pile of *Seventeen* magazines and whatever book I was reading. Within minutes I was immersed in teen fashion and Johnny was doing his five year old boy thing.

A few hours later, my parents showed up. My mother was shocked to discover her baby boy was covered in large red, bloody welts. Of course it was the black flies. Flatlanders from the Boston suburbs, we knew virtually nothing about black flies. Okay, my parents probably knew of their existence but I was certainly clueless.

Mom did her horrified mother routine. How could I have let this happen? Why didn't I bring him home? I'm sure I mumbled some retort or whined some protest. After all, she was the one who told me to take him to the beach in the first place. And stay put until they came to get us.

So what if he was a little bit the worse for wear? At least, he hadn't drowned and I'd made excellent progress on my tan. To top it off, Johnny's soft little kid skin and fragrant sunscreen had attracted the black flies like bees to honey. I was virtually bite-free. Overall, I'd call it a pretty successful morning.

Enjoy a fly-free Memorial Day weekend with family and friends.

Bon appétit and enjoy!

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or just look like one!

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Contact me at

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Feta Walnut Spread

Before you put the burgers on the grill, relax on the deck or on the beach with a glass of wine and watch the sunset. This delicious and easy spread is a great addition to any cocktail hour.

Enjoy!

Juice of 1/2 lemon

2-3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

Dash (or to taste) of your favorite hot sauce

1 clove garlic, minced

8 ounces feta cheese, crumbled

1 tablespoon fresh oregano, chopped

2 tablespoons fresh flat leaf parsley, chopped

Freshly ground black pepper

1/2 cup chopped walnuts, toasted

Crackers or pita bread

1 European cucumber, peeled, seeded and cut into chunks

1 red bell pepper, seeded and cut into chunks

1 yellow bell pepper, seeded and cut into chunks

Put the lemon juice, olive oil, hot sauce and garlic in a food processor and process to combine. Add the feta, oregano, parsley and black pepper and process until the spread is smooth.

Add the walnuts and pulse to combine.

Transfer the spread to a serving dish and let sit at room temperature for about 30 minutes or in the refrigerator for several hours or overnight to combine the flavors.

Serve the spread with crackers or warm, lightly toasted pita wedges and chunks of cucumber and bell pepper.

