

Extracted from St John Vianney September 14, 2008 Bulletin

Paint a Picture by Carl E Beyer

I grew up in the countryside in NY. I cannot think of a bigger blessing that my childhood received. If a car drove by we would run out to see who it was. Step outside and within two minutes you were in the wood with the wonder of nature surrounding you. Many a day I would go for hours walk exploring those wondrous woods. There was the hardwood forest with the clear forest floors perfect for walking and seeing for long distances. There was the evergreen forest which require climbing around all those braches but gave you best chance at seeing wildlife. If you wanted to travel fast you would go down into the creeks and then follow the river.

No cells phones, so just the sound of nature without someone calling you home. With this came the responsibility to ensure you kept yourself safe. We had dogs but they would wander off pretty quickly. After all they were responsible for getting their own food since we didn't feed them unless the winters were too bad for them to go hunting. So not just the wonder of nature but the learning to take care of yourself. I did once walk too close to the side of a cliff during winter and went for a ride down about 50 feet but the hard winter gave me about 10 feet of snow to ride down and cushion the fall. In retrospect it was fun but not advisable to do. I kept my distance back from the cliffs during winter after that.

I had one place in particular that I would love to visit. It was where two creek joined to create this V shaped peninsula high above the valley below. Here God painted the most beautiful picture. A mass of nature with just barely visible below the river running down the center. And as with all God creations he would paint a different picture based on the season and each was breath taking.

Why bring this up? Because I'm going camping. I wish I could say it was out of cell phone range but that is harder and harder to come by these days. None-the-less it is time to be with the family. Time to build a good campfire and spend time with the kids without distractions. Time to play cards. Time to be updated on the kids every changing values and lives. Time to tell stories and share experiences away from the daily hustle of life. And from the kids' viewpoint it is a time to make s'mores.

When the kids were younger it was a good time for truth or dare but they don't like telling the truth anymore to the inquiring questions I would ask. We take the dogs and let them run wild and they remind us that they are our best friends and hang around us. We have city dogs; they don't have to hunt for their food.

So I will be off to breath both the fresh air of nature and the smoky air of the campfire. Off to walk in the woods to see if we can spot that Elk we seen before. Off to enjoy the beautiful pictures that God creates for us.

God Bless you all, go forth and camp.