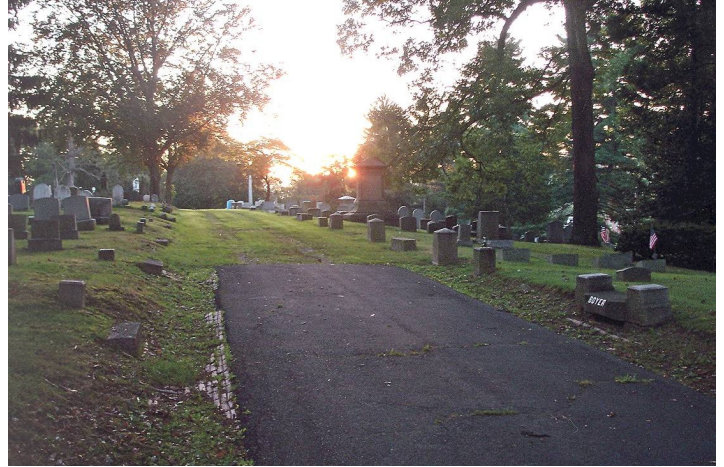


A Sultry Summer

The cold winds and piles of winter snow have long ago melted into a rainy spring, birthing budding flowers and unfurling new tree leaves. The heavy rains of the spring season saturate the soil in preparation for the hot, dry summer months. And now, the sultry summer has arrived with the trees, shrubs, and grass dressed in their finest greenery. The daylight hours have lengthen and reached their zenith in June at the summer solstice. Their length wanes each day ending in the shortest daylight hours in December. If you want to catch the sunrise you have to get up early between 5:00-5:30 AM to welcome in the new day. The early morning, with the dew glistening on the grass, is quiet and fresh.

The dew rapidly dries up as the sun begins its march across the sky. Its rays heat up the ground and air. By July and August, the weather has become hot and humid outside my gates on Market Street. But walk inside and feel the benefit my trees provide in the form of shade and coolness. Some paths in my older section, called Mt. Laurel, and along the 12th St. property line are very cool because they are shaded by tall old evergreens.



My early summer started with the school children passing through my grounds, but during summer vacation they are seldom seen on my property.

However, now I have more parents and grandparents pushing baby strollers or walking with children on bicycles or in their miniature motorized cars. My paved roads are a favorite place for the parents because there is very little car traffic and because it is so nice and cool here. And for this reason, I also have plenty of joggers and lots of dog walkers. The dog walkers seem like a friendly bunch. They are required to clean up after their pets; and their pets must be on leashes.

Summer church services have started at the Chapel of the Resurrection. On a Sunday morning, with the chapel doors and windows open, the musical notes of the organ and the reading of the liturgy can be heard as it is carried on the gentle breeze through the trees and along the paths. The

cadence is soothing, and I sometimes think the service should be held outdoors. At the 8 AM service, two red-tailed hawks, visiting the grounds, can be heard calling to each. Occasionally, a hawk can be seen perched on the cross on top of the chapel's bell tower. At other times, the hawks glide in lazy circles high overhead on the hot air currents. There is a pileated woodpecker on the property that can be heard infrequently pecking away, but it is very illusive and no one can catch a photo shot of it.

By late July and into August, the summer really heats up. Temperatures climb to the high 90s or may nudge over 100, but here on the grounds, with all the deciduous and evergreens trees, the air is cool and fresh and clean. Visiting my grounds to walk, sit, or jog, is a welcoming respite from the high heat and drenching humidity.



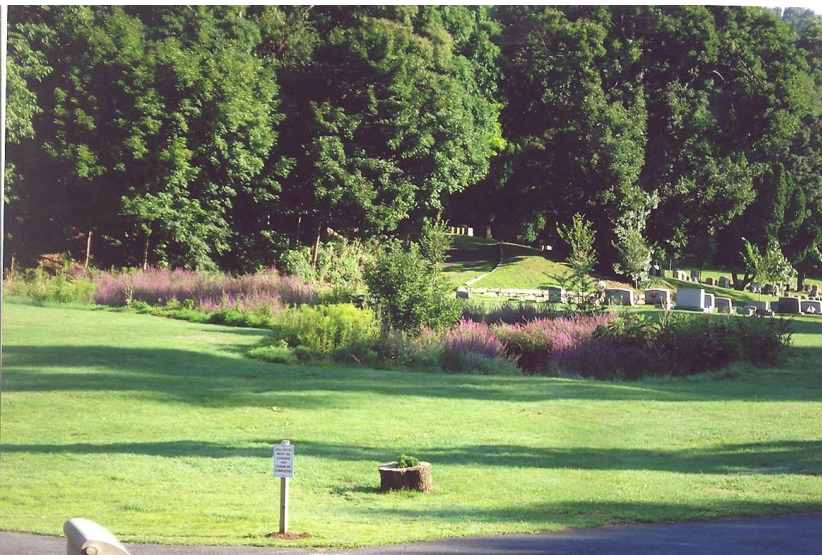
The springs that cross my property and feed my pond have dried up. There is talk of a drought, and there are forest fire warnings in the county. The ten new trees that were planted in April on Arbor Day need to be watered twice a week. It is a task that must be performed by volunteers or the cemetery laborers. A large plastic barrel of water with a hose is placed onto the back of the Gator and driven around to feed each thirsty tree.

Even with the heat, the grass grows and grows. The workers no sooner cut one section and move onto the next when the grass seems to shoot up over night in the recently cut section. Perhaps it is the shade from the trees that entice the grass to grow in the hot, rainless weather.

While the workers have zero radius lawn mowers that allow for tight turns, the upright grave markers coupled with visitor's placement of flowers and other favorite items at the burial plots makes the job more challenging and takes a longer time for grass cutting. Some places can only be cut with weed whackers. If I am fortunate, the state funded Career Link program



will continue this summer, and they may send two young persons to help with the ground care and maintenance. The program is only for six weeks, but it is a great help with all the lawn mowing and weed whacking.



My pond is an exciting place to visit during the summer months. There is very little water in it, but the water depth is sufficient to support several frogs that can be heard croaking throughout the day and evening. The wild growth at the sides of the pond and some flowers, like tiger lilies, support butterflies and hummingbirds. If you bring a folding chair you can sit a spell and enjoy the activity.

One of the events of nature that is seldom seen by anyone on my property is the sizzling display of energy that occurs during a late night storm. The lightning zigzags across the sky usually followed quickly by a tremendous burst of thunder that seems to shake the whole ground. Luckily during this electric display of nature, my trees are seldom struck by the lightning. But sometimes the sudden and heavy rain brings down leaves and branches, and my workers have a mess to clean up in the morning. And sometimes the deluge sends torrents of water from the 16th St. hill down the gully behind the carriage house and across the gravel road. The gravel is gouged up and spewed across the grass to become lodged against grave markers. This also requires a clean-up to rake the gravel off the grass, shovel it back on the road, then tap it down. Asphaltting the road is a project, like the pond restoration, that will require financial help from outside sources.

