

People often ask me, “How are summers in Saluda?” I can answer in a word, *mild*. I have come to know July as having comfortable overnight temperatures, perfect for restful-healthy sleep. We have yet to need the air conditioning. Recent guests from Florida pulled their blankets from the closet to insure a cozy slumber.

The days are warm and rarely humid. Daytime temperatures linger in the 80s. We have gotten some rain this season – unlike previous years, where we have spent the majority of our summer months, like most of the country, under burn bans and water restriction. When the rain comes, it is usually gentle and when it falls overnight, it contributes a sedative-like effect. Before the raindrops make it to the ground, I have learned recognize the familiar percussive clatter as they play upon the leaves of the giant trees that surround us.

This past Independence Day will stay in my memories forever. We expected a moderate crowd at the inn – a mix of old friends and new. After enjoying a lavish breakfast, some guests headed down to Main Street, while others relaxed on the veranda.

An impromptu cookout materialized late in the afternoon and while the burgers sizzled, guests gathered to enjoy the perfect summer day. The highlight of any Independence Day celebration would be the fireworks. Many of us have witnessed

massive fireworks displays in major metropolitan areas.

Some, where mirrored skyscrapers reflect the flash of the rocket's red glare and the explosions resonate through the buildings.

Some with symphonies and operatic accompaniment.

Here in Saluda, the event is planned and executed by the local firefighters. Just before sunset, guests gather as Donna passed out the comforters and blankets.

We join the procession of vehicles that make their way up Greenville Street to Orchard Lake and find our place on the grassy hill by the lake.

Family and friends laugh n' chat as children tumble like gymnasts. Fireflies and sparklers interrupt the darkness competing for attention.

The event begins with a brief invocation, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment to remember and recognize those serving in the military.

From one end of the lake, torches ignite and fireworks take flight. It is relaxing and beautiful. The pops echo off the surrounding pine draped mountains as dazzling colors fill the nighttime sky. Our guests offer nothing but complements and praise calling event "impressive".

The **Saluda Firefighters serve up a superb slice of Americana every Fourth of July**. They spend their time and money so that we may celebrate the nation's birthday and honor our Armed Forces.

For this we say a special "Thanks" to Shane Bradley, Daryl Russell, Zak Pace and all the dedicated personal of the Saluda Fire Department.