

Beacon Hill Byline by Mary Rogeness

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The lazy, crazy days of summer are now upon us

It is summertime! Time to take a day off here and there to enjoy the sun, heat up the barbecue or, if you happen to be an elected official, find a parade. This year has offered a heavy parade schedule, one that might wear out another pair of my shoes before it is over. But I will continue to be there.

The season started with Long Meddowe Days and Our Town Parade. There were not many spectators on that particular Saturday because most of the town seemed to be marching up Longmeadow Street. The whole town turned out and we proceeded to have a great time, even though we had to spend some time dodging showers or hunting umbrellas: The sun finally came out on Sunday, and Memorial Day was honored on a beautiful Spring day.

The next parade opportunity came on Memorial Day when East Longmeadow scheduled their commemoration of the town's casualties of the nation's wars. As often happens to those of us who represent several towns, East Longmeadow meant that I had to miss the Hampden parade, which took place at the same time. I had to settle for Hampden's barbecue at the fire station.

Since this year marks the 100 year celebration for East Longmeadow's Fire Department, that town scheduled one more parade, a procession last Saturday night of firefighting equipment of different eras from all over the region. Among all of the equipment, wearing my own version of a fire hat, I was there. The biggest parade day, and the one that provides the biggest challenge to me personally, is the Fourth of July. I have marched in the East Longmeadow parade since I first campaigned for office, but I am now torn between that tradition and the request of Monson officials to be part of their festivities. This is how I have worked out that dilemma. Monson begins the town celebration with a pancake breakfast. The whole town attends this early morning event, convening at 6:30 a.m. I will have plenty of time to eat breakfast, talk with people in Monson and still drive over the mountain for the 10 a.m. East Longmeadow parade.

Although that means I will miss the Monson parade, which sets off at the same hour, I can zip back to Monson from the East Longmeadow reviewing stand in time to participate in the post-parade program on the Monson Town Green.

And after all that celebrating is over, I think I will take a day off.