

Feasting on crabs and peach cake, decorating with flyswatters, and other summer fun (7 Quick Takes)

~1~

You can almost taste the end of summer. I can no longer complain about the ridiculously early back-to-school sales, even though I have yet to buy a single No. 2 pencil or accordion file. I'll drag my feet on that for as long as I dare—or as long as my children will let me.

You can certainly make it through a whole summer without attending a crab feast, but we were excited to be invited to one at John's parents' house last weekend. It was great to be with family and crack and pick our way through more than a bushel of crabs. They were meaty and delicious.

School isn't quite a month away, but we are going to squeeze every last bit of summertime out of the next few weeks.

~2~



When the email arrived listing what we were each bringing to the family crab feast, I was so pleased to see that next to my name was: "Famous peach cake."

Fifteen years into our marriage, my husband's relatives have apparently learned my abilities and strengths. I brought a peach cake, an apple pie, and lots of whipped cream for both.

We have cousins visiting this weekend, so I will almost certainly be making another peach cake. 'Tis the season, after all.

~3~

My brother-in-law and his family brought an orange watermelon, and I was so surprised when I saw the inside. I couldn't wait to try it, and it exceeded my expectations.



I like watermelon, and the orange version seemed a little sweeter. It was delicious.

I'm suddenly realizing that these Quick Takes are all about food! This is the risk in blogging while hungry.

~4~



Earlier this week I had the chance to present with a friend at a conference for administrators at Jesuit colleges and universities. We talked about storytelling in college magazines—and in other ways—to help build a greater connection between alumni and their institutions.

I am perfectly happy to sit in the back of a room and never talk, but somehow I wasn't nervous because I know my co-presenter well, and the topic is such a fun one. Who doesn't love talking about storytelling?

Afterward I was thinking about how I didn't talk for my first few years of elementary school. One day my first-grade teacher yelled at me in front of the class for not speaking—which didn't help matters at all. Fortunately my second-grade teacher,

Sister Suzanne, was perfectly lovely and by the end of second grade I was talking. Now I often have the reverse problem and talk too much. But I still prefer writing to presenting in front of a group of people.

~5~

I've been decorating my office, and one night I asked our 9-year-old to help me. He took the hammer and nails and did exactly what I asked him to do. He even had some ideas of his own. We had a great time working together to produce a creative display that incorporated some of my favorite flyswatters.



Because I collect flyswatters—and have hundreds of them—I've found a few ways to display them over the years. This was my first time collaborating with my son to create something artistic, and I'm really happy with the results.

~6~

Our sons have become stronger swimmers this summer, and I have to credit my lack of involvement. When I watch them try to swim, I am anxious and encourage them not to go in too deep. But leave a sitter in charge, and they push themselves to try new things. They have grown in amazing ways this summer.

Now if we can just line up a great afterschool sitter for the fall, I can sit back and relax.

~7~



My supervisor and a former colleague and I go to lunch three times a year to celebrate our birthdays. We've been doing this for about 12 years now, and I always look forward to our lunches. We met this time, for my birthday, at Petit Louis, which is our standard spot.

The meal is always excellent, and the conversation is even better. I love a good birthday celebration, and the lunch offered the perfect closing to all the wild birthday celebrating.

I read that you make almost 400 friends in your lifetime, but you keep only around 40. Friendship is such an extraordinary gift.

Have a terrific weekend!