



Here Comes Summer! (Ugh!)

by Dick Emmons

UNLESS SOMETHING is done quickly, school is going to be let out for the Summer and every parent knows what that means. It means we are about to enter upon a three-month period during which the children lie around and whine, "What can we do?"

"You could whitewash the basement walls or spade up the garden," I have been known to offer brightly at such times. Whereupon the children have looked at me darkly and continued scuffing holes in the linoleum.

The only satisfactory answer to the question of what to do with a troupe of kids suddenly paroled by the School Board is to supervise and guide their activities, at least for the first couple of weeks. After that, the average parent will be willing to assume his youngsters can survive nicely by themselves.

Suggesting acceptable play ideas to a group of modern children is not quite as easy as falling off a log, but the sensation is about the same. I tried it last year.

"How about a fast game of hopscotch?" I offered one afternoon when the hammock in which I lay meditating suddenly became full of small malcontents.

"Yippee!" yelled our twins Davie and Dickie.

"Hopscotch is kid stuff," drawled Jimmy Fraser, an 8-year-old cowboy who had moseyed by to see what the boys in the back yard would have.

"Yeah," agreed Davie and Dickie, drawing themselves up to their full 40 inches and siding with the interloper.

"You be an Indian," Jimmy proposed. "You be Sittin' Bull and we'll be the good guys who are after you."

"Tell you what," I said, eyeing the hammock, "I'll be an Indian called Lying Bull and you fellows go down the block a ways and make your plans."

They were off in three clouds of dust, slapping their thighs and twirling their water pistols. "This is working out better than I had dreamed," I thought as I sank back in the hammock.

Before you could say Pocahontas, however, the gun-slingers were back, reinforced by a huge posse from neighboring ranches and firing their liquid bolts.

Showing the white feather, I dashed for the garage, slammed the door, and leaned heavily against it. Every time I peeked out, Cactus Jim Fraser and his desperadoes let me have it straight in the warpaint.

"Ugh, me want truce!" I called out a bit later, waving my handkerchief tied to a rake handle out the window. "You go away. Me ready to fight when you come back."

As soon as they were out of sight I snaked the garden hose into the garage and sat down cross-legged to await the second attack. It wasn't long in coming.

When they were in range, I slipped the hose through the window and, chortling to myself, twisted the nozzle to release the stream.

"Geronimo!" I cried. "Remember the Little Big Horn!"

A thin trickle of water ran dispiritedly out of the nozzle and then stopped altogether.

"After him, men! I turned the water off at the faucet!" I heard Cactus Jim call out. They poured into the garage and emptied their loads at me.

You'll probably never see a wetter, more palefaced Indian anywhere.



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