

Summer do-over

By: Autumn Poston
@_autumnposton_

The everlasting summer of 2020 was either the best summer of students' lives or the worst. From March 13th to September 8th of 2020, students were out of school and stuck in their homes due to COVID-19. This situation came with many ups and downs. A lot more free time and not having to be at school was seen as a well-needed break, but for others, online learning was much more difficult, and not being able to see friends just added more to the weight of the already pre-existing stress. Now that students are approaching the summer of 2021 with Covid still around, how much different will this summer actually be?

Last summer many students found themselves participating in Covid safe activities like video games, talking with friends, and finding other outdoor entertainment. Ben Allison, junior, is one of these students. Over the summer of 2020, Allison kept himself busy but in the end, found himself wanting to return to school. "I was very surprised that I was happy to be back in school at the beginning of the year," said Allison. The inability to do much because of quarantine ruined the sentiment of summer for a lot of kids, and even though he was originally glad to be back, he's urgently awaiting this coming summer. However, due to scheduling, that won't come until June 11th this year, much later than in years past. "It really sucks, it feels like a part of the summer is gone even though it's not that much," said Allison. Expectations are at an all-time high for this summer because of last year's sorry excuse. Students are beginning to get antsy to be out of school and have a summer the opposite of that.

Hannah Brase, sophomore, found herself in a similar position at the beginning of the year, wanting to



Summer is a great time for fun, but everyone needs some safe ideas.

return to school. Brase has high hopes in the coming months that this summer will return to the usual summer sentiment and be different than last. Many things will be different due to the vaccines continuing to be dispersed. "We won't have as many limitations just because more people will be vaccinated, but I think that it's still important to stay safe," said Brase. Even though vaccines are being administered and slowing the spread of Covid, it is still important to follow the guidelines when it comes to public safety this summer. "There are a lot of activities that you can do in the summer that are Covid-safe, you just have to be outside and keep the amount of friends you're exposed to a minimum," continued Brase. There are still many ways to have fun outside of school that put your health at a low risk.

In the end, hopes are high for many high schoolers right now for this summer to be one to remember, and we can still do that while continuing to be safe. There are many outdoor, and indoor, activities to choose from that will keep you entertained, social, and safe. Activities like swimming, bike rides, and video games with friends are all fun, Covid safe options that almost anyone enjoys. Alongside these, many more places will be open than last year, creating even more options. So go out and enjoy this much-needed break from school.

Getting back to normal

By: Emalee Feuchtwanger @emaleeaurquidez

Every year in the town's park, Marion has the Marion by Moonlight event. Due to Covid last year the event was cancelled, but after this crazy year, Farmers State Bank is bringing it back for its 25th anniversary with some new changes.

Marion by Moonlight is the highlight of many peoples' summer, and now that it's back, it comes with some guidelines and adjustments. Due to last year's derecho, the city square was damaged very badly. Construction is still happening in the space, so the event is being held at Lowe Park on 10th Street. There are some pros and cons to this location. Lowe Park is a lot bigger in size compared to the city park. If individuals have ever been to Marion by Moonlight in the past, they would know that it's a very crowded event. Since there is still a pandemic going on, the new space will definitely be appreciated. But a downside to this location is that it's not in the middle of town like it used to be. Individuals in the past could walk to events from their homes or even from work because it's so close, but now most people are going to have to drive there.

Having more people drive will cause parking to be an even bigger issue.

As far as safety precautions go, people are not required to wear masks, but are encouraged to social distance and hand sanitizer stations will be available. Their food vendors and trucks will be different as well. They will include Aroma Artisan Pizzeria, Carlos O'Kellys,

One More Bite, and Moo Moo's Ice Cream along with a face painting station. The legendary bands this year will be the Strays, Boot Jack Band, The Mixtape, and Lonesome Road. Having fun with bands and food is always a positive, but community events are just as important for different reasons: "Just helping people come together, let loose a little bit, and relax a little bit is good for their mental and physical health in a way," says Brittany Barnhart, marketing assistant at Farmers State Bank and director of Marion by Moonlight. The event is scheduled every Thursday in June from six to nine p.m, so bring some lawn chairs and blankets, eat some food, and listen to some great music.

Many of Marion's yearly events are coming back, and our town is finally getting back to normal. Although it won't be the same as years past, this event is one step closer to regaining a strong community again.



The new outdoor location of Marion by Moonlight is at Lowe Park Amphitheatre.