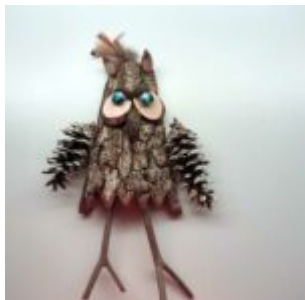


# What I Did On My Summer Vacation



When you were in grade school did you have to write a paper each year about your summer vacation?

I always dreaded the “What I Did on My Summer Vacation” report. It was not that I hated to write. I liked that part. I just felt like my summer vacations were a bit dull. I didn’t do a very good job of highlighting what happened at the City Rec Center/playground. That was all fun. Everyday. We’d play sports, games, and make lanyards out of the silly plastic roping. They kept us busy for sure. When I was six years old, I was even voted Queen of the Playground. I still carry pride from that. No idea why, really. I guess it set me up to have an achievement mindset.

Most of the time the only thing I could think to write about was our annual trip to Waukegan, IL to see my grandmother. My parents would pack us all in the big Cadillac my dad drove, and we’d head 4 hours south to see Grandma and the cousins.

Other kids in the class wrote about their trips to Paris or the Grand Canyon.

I guess I was jealous.

This year on my “adult” vacation I decided to do something different. I had not been on a vacation in 18 months due to COVID restrictions. I didn’t want to relax by reading novels. I wanted a new experience.

My husband and I decided to book a cabin in the Blue Ridge mountains for a little getaway. Before the trip, I saw an article outlining what was going on in the area the week we were going to be there. I could visit an apple orchard or a vineyard. I could even go see llamas! I picked a craft class.

I have never taken a craft class on vacation. I’m more likely the one to teach the craft class when I’m not on vacation; or the cooking class.

This was going to be different.

And you should have seen the look on my husband’s face when I told him I signed him up too!

The article featured a woman who teaches people how to make owl sculptures/wall hangings with natural materials from the forest.

On the day of the class, we headed north from our cabin and drove about half an hour to her studio. It was buried in the woods alright!

After a quick tour of her hand-built house (renovated by the craft artist herself), we settled in at her workshop to begin our project.

She did a marvelous job of prepping for us in advance. She had already completed some of the more difficult elements for us. The first thing we had to do was pick a body made from tree bark. Then we had to decide if we wanted to paint it.

Two hours later we finished our project. Here's how it went:

- First, we chose a wood-bark body.
- Then we decided on the color of eyes we wanted to have. (This was one of the only elements that did not come from the forest along with fishing wire and super glue).
- We picked eyebrows, ears, a beak, wings, legs and selected a few other options. I wanted mine to have a feather feature on the top to sort of look like hair, or a hat.
- The crafting artist taught us how to use a crafting drill. And how to wire the pieces together to make the final product.



It was really fun to choose the pieces because those put the personality into the final character. Lots of laughing took place. I was amazed at how talented my husband turned out to be in making his creation. This is a guy who normally only changes lightbulbs!

The green guy is my husband's piece. I actually like his best! I went the natural route. I still have to figure out where mine is going to hang. My husband's creation is featured in his office. Neither one of our woodland buddies have names yet.

We found our way out of the woods with big smiles on our faces. That was time well spent. Something different. Something with a memory attached and a whole lot easier this year than wearing a mask on a flight to Paris.

Cheers,