

Is summer too short for school kids?

By Daniel T. Mollenkamp

Published in the Virginia Gazette

08/12

"Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May, And summer's lease hath all too short a date"

"Sonnet 18," 1-4 Shakespeare

Like the immortalized lover in Shakespeare's poem, summer's beauty is a temporary spectacle. Unlike a lover's charm, summer's beauty returns every year, equally as fragile. How many times has a child complained of the boredom of an idle summer, or a parent of an idle child? Already the new school year looms, creeping ever closer. Boys and girls prepare to leave the carefree days of summer and dust off the almost forgotten homework assignments, all the while pondering how evil the word homework really is. For some the school year couldn't come fast enough. For others "summer's lease hath all too short a date," to quote Shakespeare.

I sit here wondering, what does summer reveal about life and love? Its fragility? Its brevity? If Shakespeare was right, summer serves as a good, if inadequate, metaphor for love. Still the question remains, is summer too short? The answer is no. The value of summer lies in its ability to give both teachers and students time to recuperate. A well deserved break for teachers and a time to relax and experience life for students (that is if the students aren't too busy pursuing summer activities).

The trick to an enjoyable yet relaxing summer, and thus a successful one, is quite simply: Make plans, enough plans to keep you from becoming inactive. If summer were in fact to be shortened, there would be no room for summer school or summer jobs. Yet, if it were lengthened, that pile of homework that is complained about during the year would grow, or the other breaks that you enjoy so much would evaporate. So, take the time to enjoy what you have while you have it. If your summer leaves you with the feeling that it was too short, then it may have been just long enough.