

Summertime Celebrations

Events across the nation give new meaning to fun in the sun

TEXT DIANA LAMBDIN MEYER

The best part of summer celebrations is that they don't have to be fancy or complicated to be a lot of fun. Just add some good fun to some good music, and the good times just naturally follow. Communities coast to coast have opened up the back yard and thrown down a picnic blanket for you and your family to come, relax, and enjoy.



Mystic, Connecticut's Melville Marathon

This literary festival celebrates the birthday of Herman Melville, the beloved American author known for penning the classic *Moby Dick*. This year is Herman's 189th birthday, and the Mystic Seaport museum celebrates with a 24-hour, non-stop reading of *Moby Dick*. Starting at noon on July 31, a costumed character representing Melville begins with those immortal words: "Call me Ishmael."

"Melville" reads the first complete chapter, and then guests are welcomed to step in and continue, doing so all night long, a chapter at a time, until all 135 chapters have been read aloud. Anyone can step up and read, and if you forgot to bring your copy, the Seaport will provide you one.

After hearing the tales of the great whaling days, be sure to tour the *Charles W. Morgan*, the last wooden whaling ship in the world. And stay for a slice of birthday cake on August 1, Melville's actual birth date. And just like the famous whale, the cake is white. Sign up for your chapter at www.mysticseaport.org.

⤴ Reading *Moby Dick* aloud by lantern light is an honor for guests visiting the Herman Melville Marathon, celebrating the author's birthday, at Mystic Seaport in Connecticut.

Diana Lambdin Meyer is a freelance travel writer based in Kansas City where her favorite summer celebration is the Rhythm & Ribs Jazz and Blues Festival.



Telluride, Colorado

There's no denying that Telluride, Colorado, is a party town.

The tiny mountain community in the southwest corner of the state celebrates at least 30 times a year—everything from balloons, blues, and beer to original film and original food.

Known as the Festival Capital of the Southwest, Telluride holds events that recognize chamber music, regional authors, and environmental resources. Jazz and something called "doo-dah," wine, technology, mushrooms, and art have their own celebrations.

But the most original festival is the Nothing Festival. Held in July, it celebrates not much at all. The event originated when some locals, delighted with a break in the many summer activities, decided they must celebrate the fact that nothing was happening. Locals, and any other willing participants, get down to their bare nothings and streak through the park, ride a bike in the buff, and otherwise wear nothing while doing nothing.

To get your party invitation, visit www.visittelluride.com.

⤴ The stage at Jazz Celebration in Telluride reflects the colors of the brilliant sunset over the San Juan Mountains of southwest Colorado.



Milwaukee Summerfest

For 11 days in a row, music reverberates off the waterfront in downtown Milwaukee in what is billed as the World's Largest Music Festival. The 2008 Summerfest, from June 26—July 6, is the 41st such festival where watching people, eating food, and dancing on picnic tables is as much a part of the fun as the good music.

This year, Rascal Flatts and Rush are among the bands that will fill a dozen stages. Those are among the bigger names that will be headlining in the 23,000-person-capacity amphitheater. Families should also mark their calendars for Children's Fest on June 30. The one-day event is free to families and highlights a number of entertainment venues appropriate for the wee ones. Get your groove on at www.summerfest.com. ■

⤴ Baby boomers and music fans of all ages groove to the live music that fills the Milwaukee lakefront for 11 days each summer.