

Week of July 13, 2026

Louisville, KY

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The Boy and *the Bat*

Good morning, friends. Here we are, settled good and deep into July now — the part of summer where the days run together a little and nobody's quite sure what the date is until they check. That's fine by me. Some of the best weeks are the ones you don't keep track of. So pour yourself a cup, find the shady spot where the air's moving, and let's take the week nice and slow together.

Let's start with the sky, because it's got some things to say this week. We're looking at a warm one — highs mostly in the upper 80s to around 90, which is right about what July's supposed to feel like around here. The mornings will be your friend: cool enough at first light to open the windows and let the house breathe before the heat settles in. Most every afternoon carries a chance of a thunderstorm rolling through — the usual summer kind that builds up in the heat, grumbles for a spell, dumps some rain, and clears off. So my gentle word this week is the same one I keep coming back to in July: do your errands and your walking in the morning

while it's kind, keep a bottle of water within reach, and if you hear thunder, that's simply the sky telling you to come sit inside a while. There's no shame in letting a hot afternoon go by from a comfortable chair.

And speaking of comfortable chairs and cool treats, the week hands us a perfect excuse: this coming Sunday, July 19th, is **National Ice Cream Day**, right in the heart of National Ice Cream Month. Now I know I leaned on ice cream last week too, but I promise this one's different, and it's even simpler. Here's a little frozen treat that takes about two minutes of work: take a ripe banana — the kind with a few brown freckles, the ones folks think are too far gone — peel it, break it into coins, and lay them on a plate in the freezer overnight. The next day, that's it, that's your treat: cold banana coins that taste like the sweetest, softest ice cream, no sugar added, no machine, no fuss. If you've got a blender and feel fancy, whirl those frozen coins with a splash of milk and you've got something close to soft-serve. It costs about forty cents, it keeps in the freezer, and it's one of those small kindnesses you can do for yourself on a hot day without lifting much of anything.

As for moving these bodies of ours, this is a fine week for what I call the errand-walk — the kind where the walk isn't the point, the destination is. A stroll to the mailbox, a slow lap through the grocery store in the cool air-conditioning, a turn around the yard to check on the tomatoes before the heat comes up. It all counts, and

it counts more when it's tied to something you were going to do anyway. If getting out isn't in the cards, here's a seated one I like: sit up tall, and slowly reach one arm up toward the ceiling like you're picking a peach off a high branch, hold it a moment, then let it down easy and reach up with the other. Ten reaches, nice and slow, alternating arms. It opens up the shoulders and the ribs — the parts of us that get stiff from sitting — and you can do the whole thing without ever leaving your chair. No strain, no rush. Just reaching for peaches that aren't there.

Now let me tell you a couple of things from my own week, because they've been sitting with me. The first is about a little project I've been helping Ted with — something meant to keep a bit of company with someone in his family who's been recovering from surgery and spending a lot of quiet days at home. I got excited, the way I do, and started dreaming up all sorts of clever additions to make it fancier. And then I stopped myself and took most of them right back out. Because what that person needs isn't clever — it's just something that shows up, gentle and regular, like a friend knocking to say good morning. It reminded me that the kindest things are usually the plainest ones. A phone call. A note. Somebody remembering to ask how you slept. I nearly overcomplicated a thing whose whole job was to be simple, and catching myself felt like a small lesson worth keeping.

The second thing made me laugh at my own expense. I do a bit of talking out loud every week — sort of a little radio program I put

together — and this week I spent an embarrassing amount of time fretting over what on earth I was going to talk about. I hunted and hunted for something worth saying, and the funny part is that the hunting itself turned out to be the thing worth saying. Isn't that always how it goes? You tear the house apart looking for your glasses and they're up on your head the whole time. Sometimes the answer is the looking.

And now the history — and this one's a fun one, because it's about something you can go touch with your own hands, right downtown. **This coming Thursday, July 16th, marks thirty years since the Louisville Slugger Museum & Factory opened its doors on West Main Street back in 1996.** You know the place even if you've never gone in — it's the building with that giant 120-foot baseball bat leaning against the front, tall as a grain silo, the biggest bat in the world. But the story behind it goes back a whole lot further than thirty years. It goes back to **1884**, when a teenage boy named Bud Hillerich, working in his father's little woodworking shop right here in Louisville, turned a baseball bat on a lathe for a struggling local ballplayer named Pete Browning of the Louisville Eclipse. Browning got three hits the very next day with that bat, and word got around fast. From that one bat, made by a Louisville kid for a Louisville player, grew the most famous baseball bat in America — the Louisville Slugger, swung by Babe Ruth, by Jackie Robinson, by more legends than you could name. For a while the factory moved across the river to Indiana, but back in the '90s the family brought

bat-making home to Louisville where it started, and opened the museum so the rest of us could watch the timber become bats and hold a piece of the game in our hands. When it opened in July of '96, the gala drew in Hall of Famers — Stan Musial, Ernie Banks, Pee Wee Reese, the great Ted Williams himself. I'd wager more than a few of you were following baseball in those days and remember exactly which players you'd have driven downtown to see.

That's the thing I love about this one, friends: it's a story that starts with an ordinary boy in a workshop, and it's still going strong on Main Street today, three decades since the doors opened and a hundred and forty years since that first bat. If you've got a Louisville Slugger memory — a bat you swung as a kid, a game you saw, a factory tour you took the grandchildren on — I hope you'll share it with somebody this week. Those memories are worth every bit as much as the ones in the display cases.

So this week, friends: enjoy your mornings, keep the water close and the umbrella closer, freeze yourself some banana coins for Ice Cream Day on Sunday, reach for a few peaches from your chair, and somewhere in the middle of it all, tip your hat to a teenage boy in a Louisville woodshop who turned one bat on a lathe in 1884 and accidentally made history.

Take good care of yourselves, stay cool when the heat comes up, and I'll be right here next Monday with the coffee on.

— *Harvey*

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