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MY MOST MEMORABLE FOURTH OF JULY

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What is your most memorable Fourth of July? For me, the answer will always be the summer that Port Huron, Michigan, turned one hundred—and my braids were part of the show.



Freckles, red hair, and pigtail contest, Port Huron, Michigan, July 1949

It was July 4, 1949 — Port Huron, Michigan's centennial year (the year it was incorporated as a village). The city celebrated with the Blue Water Festival, a community tradition already tied to one of sailing's great events: the Port Huron–to–Mackinac race, billed as the world's longest continuously run freshwater yacht race. First sailed in 1925 and organized by Detroit's Bayview Yacht Club, the race sends boats 260-some nautical miles north up Lake Huron to Mackinac Island every July. Port Huron always turned out to cheer the fleet on, but for the centennial the whole city added some extra fun.

Along with the parade and the sailboat send-off, the Blue Water Festival added contests for kids. My mother entered me in the longest-pigtail category — other categories included most freckles, reddest

hair, and curliest hair. (What a mid-twentieth-century oddity! Who would do it today?)I came in runner-up.



Runner up for "longest pigtails"

Almost more fun than the contest itself was the prize: a ride in an airplane — my very first. My young nephew Bob came along to watch the take-off, and I still remember waiting on the airfield, looking at that little plane, impossibly shiny and important.

I loved flying!



Anna and nephew Bob waiting for the plane

Beyond that centennial summer I have other fond July 4th memories — singing patriotic songs with extra enthusiasm one year when we were in Europe and were the only people around doing it, and the volley-ball games and neighborhood dinners on Bel Aire Court in Cupertino, with Gillian and her friends deco-

rating their bikes for a private parade up and down the street. But that Blue Water Fourth still shines the brightest.

Happy Fourth of July, everyone!

1949 2026