

## September NEW Artist's Almanac

*But it's a long, long while  
From May to December;  
And the days grow short  
When you reach September.*

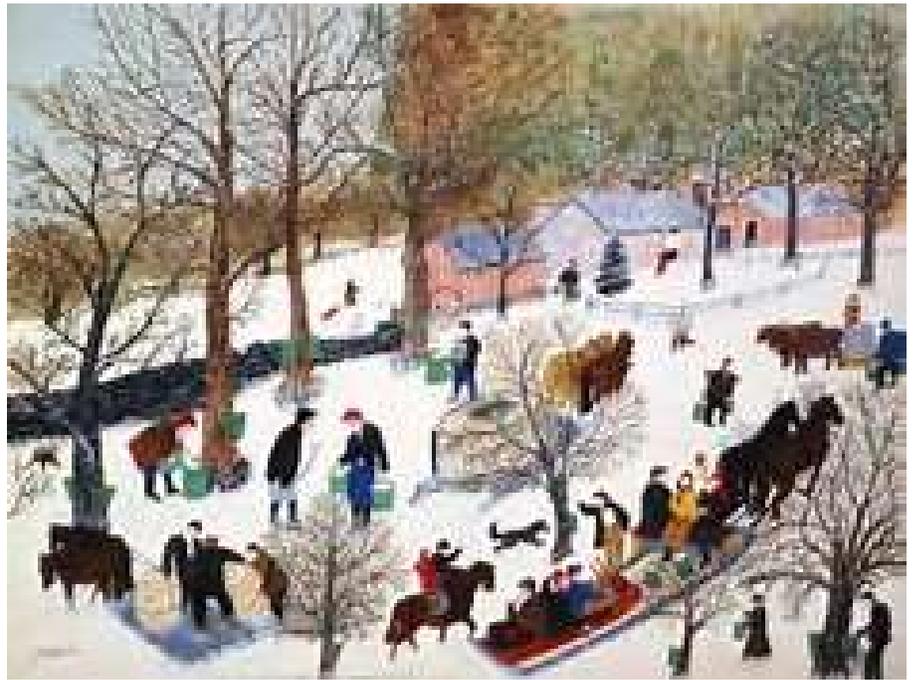
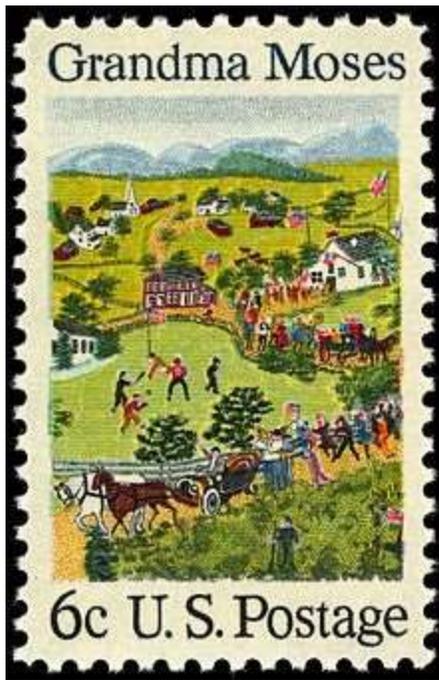
September Song, Maxwell Anderson

This is the month of change – half summer, half fall. The trees know it; the prodigal hackberry has been wasting her leaves for weeks now, frittering them away in the slightest breeze, and there is more sky - holes in the woods to our north. The towering cloud masses of August now give way to fluffy cumulus floating by just above us, and the sumptuous katydid song of summer nights goes quiet and nights grow cooler, as the spiders spin their silent webs. If we spoke Cherokee, we might call this the shielding-the-eyes against-slanting-light time. Based upon millennia of experience, we call this time of perfect balance between day and night, the Equinox the beginning of autumn. Perhaps in dark December, when the low sun sets at 4PM, we shall look back on these calm golden harvest days as the best of times. The artist should not waste them, but be out and about with his easel and palette.

This is a month for all to be outdoors: painting, boating, dove hunting, fishing or watching football. Tailgating is so much fun that fans with portable televisions may never enter the stadium. Fans that stay home and watch on their wide hi-definition screens have the best seats, and except for the ads, have the advantages of instant replays, commentaries, and close ups of the crowds, coaches and cute cheerleaders. Football has improved dramatically in recent years, with stronger, faster, and more skillful players, as well as more open play. Quarterbacks can place the ball in the hands of fast-running receivers 65 yards downfield and a good receiver hauls it with one hand and holds onto it, despite a bruising tackle. Or he steps out of bounds to stop the clock. These are often last minute game winners, as in the recent Tennessee – Florida game last Saturday. But soccer threatens to replace football, as children to learn to kick a ball around from an earlier age. My grandson just signed on with a pro team in Australia.

But for those whose playing days are past, there is one outdoor activity in sunlight and air which lasts 'til the end of the day, or almost to the end of the day. Let him take easel, paints, and canvas into the open air and create flowers that bloom after digging days are over or memories that never fade, pictures projected onto canvas through the prism of paint.

Never say it is too late to begin. Grandma Moses began at age 77, and the joy her paintings of early days made her famous and kept her lively until 101. When her art was typed as “primitive”, she responded, A primitive artist is an amateur whose work sells, and once said If I hadn't started painting, I would have raised chickens.



Painting, like fishing, is a sport which takes you completely out of time and self, and you never come home empty-handed. Like fish, you can always throw back the ones you don't like. Good wife Claudia inspired me with her drawing of Churchill, and I thought if she could, I could try. Turning a kitchen chair backwards I mounted a small canvas and painted a scene based on a beach I had visited while at an army base on Eta Jima, Japan. I entered it in the Sumner County Fair between the pumpkins and home-canned goods, and it won the blue ribbon for art. After that I never looked back.

Unfortunately, that painting is lost to time, but here the scene that inspired it. In hindsight, it wasn't that bad. With volcanic mountains, backed by an azure sky and fluffy cumulus, the ultramarine Japanese Inland Sea, with bathers enjoying a sugar-



white beach, this amateur's first effort didn't look too bad to the judges. Note the contrast of the dark blue and green shadows on the beached boat's hull make the sand even whiter, as the foreground shadows and the sparse grasses, which lead the eye into the picture and point toward the same vanishing point on the left frame as do the strong diagonal of the mountains and the gaze of the central figures.

If I can't find this, my first effort, I may have to paint it again.



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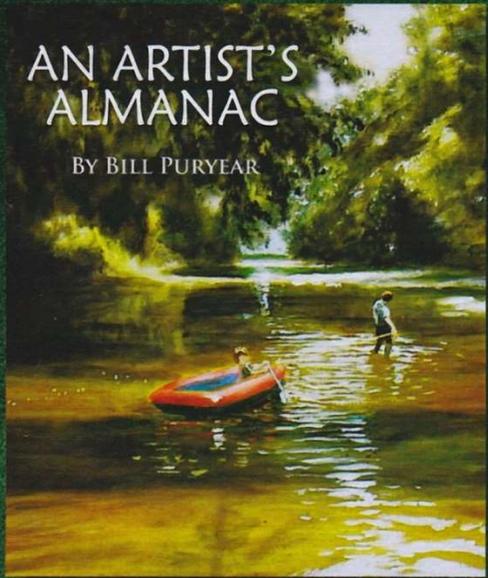
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 Main lobby of Gallatin Public Library, on the square  
**Noon to 2pm**  
**Friday, September 29**  
*Free public parking behind and next to the library building.*



**AN ARTIST'S  
ALMANAC**  
 BY BILL PURYEAR

**I**n this, his fifth book, artist-author Bill Puryear celebrates the scenes and seasons of Sumner County and Middle Tennessee. He includes his own observations, poetry, and paintings, but also those of other poets, writers, and painters whom he particularly admires. In all these he discovers to us the rhythmic beauty of everyday life and its patterns that we often are too busy to see in our hurried, distracted lives today.

**HE COVER SUBJECTS AS VARIED AS:**

- art, why it matters / how it is made;
- seasonal reflections / holiday celebrations;
- music as metaphor / poetry and doggerel;
- tornadoes and floods we have experienced / the rich culture of our area;
- finding and recognizing old pioneer structures, roads, and traces in your area;
- Middle Tennessee / The American West;
- gardening, favorite flowers, and trees / our rapidly changing way of life;
- the cause of the 2008 market bust / sleep and dreams;
- fish and wildlife / the beauty and moods of nature that surrounds us here;
- Literature / Love;
- Faith / Time.

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