

# The Artist's Almanac

## July 2009

*Summer afternoon - summer afternoon...  
the two most beautiful words in the English language.*

- Edith Wharton

Like Spanish Galleons the clouds float across the azure yawning of the sky. Below them, endless fields of corn roll to the horizon, leafy stalks stretching skyward, near now to tasseling. The round bales of this year's hay crowd the fields to bursting, abundant beyond all memory. July is upon us.



Barren County, Kentucky is anything but barren and belies its name by being today the most agriculturally productive county of the Commonwealth. I have come here to celebrate the abundant years of a beloved aunt whose 100<sup>th</sup> birthday falls today.



Judge and Mrs. Henry Wilhoit, with the author, celebrate their Aunt Bernice's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday in Glasgow, Kentucky July 10, 2009

She is overwhelmed by the crowd that fills the dining room of the nursing home, the mayors and judges reading proclamations and presenting her with the keys to their cities. Someone produces a 20 year old tape of her singing a duet in church and her fine alto resonates once more. She asks me whether her corsage is on straight and worries that she is wearing bedroom shoes and not her best leather pumps. The cake is cut and served, the minister says a prayer and it is over. The flowers and gifts are collected and she is wheeled back to her lonely room.

Afterwards at the lodge we three male cousins share a bottle and memories of the life of a young widow who worked to support a household for her only child and our elderly grandmother. She did so cheerfully and we recall the gatherings there and the happiness of a large family at Christmas each year and wonder now how so many of us could crowd together even in so a large house. We recount the good old times and by the time we carefully descend the stairs to dinner we are very cheerful ourselves.

July is when high summer begins. The Smithville Fiddlers Jamboree celebrates the Fourth of July and we keep time with our feet. Back home that night the unseen katydids fill the night with mysterious chant as the littlest grandchildren catch lightning bugs. The first homegrown tomatoes are ripe and we try in vain to get enough of them. As hot as July is, we get some days with a north breeze and clear views reminding us that fall will come if we can just survive August's languor.



Then the children are home from their camps and there is required reading, school clothing to be bought, and calendar entries. Suddenly, there is not enough time.

To a child just out of school in June, the definition of eternity is *all summer long*. Yet there is never enough time for us children here, where all things, including our bodies, are seasonal and wear out. Time is not eternal; we are.

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## Venues

**Fall into Art – Third Annual Art Show benefiting Hendersonville High School’s Academic and Arts Program, October 2-4, 2009**

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