

## October

By Anne Sloan

I recently ran across a quote by the author, Keith C. Heidorn and it made me realize just how special October can be:

"The hazy, cloudless skies of Indian Summer. Leaves scurrying down the street before the wind. The cold shiver from an arctic blast. The last warmth of the sun. Chilly mornings and warm afternoons. The Harvest Moon. The Hunter's Moon. Dry cornstalks clattering in the wind. The touch of frost on grass and window pane."

I believe October is my favorite month. As I look out my 4<sup>th</sup> storey window into the scarlet heart of a lovely oak tree. I think of all the things October brings. Three of our children were born in October, the eldest on Halloween.

All sorts of memories come rushing in, some good, some sad. When we were younger we looked forward to trick or treating around the neighborhood. Sometimes, if we were lucky, we would have a costume, other times, just a mask. It was "hand-out" then, in our part of the world, not trick or treat.

I remember some of the good old days when we would celebrate homecoming in October with the traditional high school football game. We were able to build a big bonfire in those days in a vacant lot close by. We would snake dance back to the school and then wander home in the crisp, smoke-filled air with dreams of victory in our heads. Before we knew it, we were off to college and a new kind of life, but October remained special.

This time of transition is an inspiration to poets and writers and lyricists. When the leaves are falling and the flowers have all but faded away, there is a certain longing for the lost summer which can represent other losses, and yet there is a sort of rekindled zest for life and sharpened awareness of the bounty of nature, and an anticipation of the joys that the autumn can bring, like Thanksgiving and the holidays.

One of my favorite poems is Keat's *Ode to Autumn*. It seems to sum up in a way I could never express, my feelings about October. The poem is too long to read in its entirety, but the first stanza is lovely and descriptive:

*Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness, close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;  
conspiring with him how to load and bless with fruit the vines that round the thatch-  
eaves run; To bend with apples the moss covered cottage-trees, andfill all fruit with  
ripeness to the core; to swell the gourd and plump the hazel shells with a sweet kernel;  
to set budding more and still more, later flowers for the bees, Until they think warm  
days will never cease, for summer has o'er-brimmed their clammy cells.*

Here's to October's bright blue weather!