



ALLYCE'S ATTIC

Falling In Love With Fall

by MARY ALLYCE

I've always loved fall.

It's not just the cooler temperatures, or the wonderful colors. Here in south central Texas those cooler temperatures are still many weeks away, so we try to pretend the change from triple digit temps is no big deal, even if it is. And if the color is softer and later than our northern neighbors enjoy, it's better than the way I tracked the change of seasons in Florida. If sea lice were creating havoc in the ocean and vultures were back on the road kill, we knew it was fall in south Florida.

My love of fall isn't even just the fun of Halloween, although dressing up as a witch pleases the heck out of me. Nor is it just the promise of families gathered 'round a Thanksgiving table or an ornament covered Christmas tree. Well, okay, it's partly that, too. Who doesn't love staggering away from a tryptophan laden dinner and passing out watching football or another rerun of The Sound of Music?

Even more than spring (at least for me), fall is all about anticipation. When is that first cool morning going to breathe a blessing on the day? When will the first hint of color tint the hills pale orange and gold? What goodies will the kids bring home in the trick or treat bags? The menu for Thanksgiving is never a surprise, but at my house, the number of people around the dinner table often is. And I still get all giddy about Christmas Eve when my family traditionally opens our gifts. The giddiness could also be explained by my personal tradition of sipping champagne throughout the evening, but I prefer to see it as "visions of sugar plums" and the all the gifts on my Christmas list. Here in Bandera there's plenty to anticipate, too.

Pumpkins show up at local stores and pumpkin patches where you can pick up as many as you can carry and carve. Hunters

Weekend marks the start of the season with big bands, the big barbecue and big fun. Sometime around Thanksgiving, the courthouse Christmas display appears with its unapologetically religious Nativity standing side-by-side with cowboys, cattle and snowmen. Shopkeepers put up their own Christmas lights in anticipation of "Shoppers Jubilee" – a festive night of shopping in town. Parades honor veterans in November and Christmas – complete with Santa - in December. Riverfront Park comes alive with a light show all its own, well worth a slow stroll to fully appreciate it all.

Something - or someone - also shows up in the fall. Our "Winter Texans" begin to trickle in, fleeing the potentially frozen northlands for the comparative warmth of Texas. As much as they happily anticipate coming to Texas for the winter, I happily anticipate their arrival and welcoming them like old friends and family. After all, whether you are a native Texan, a transplant or a part time winter visitor, we're all here for the same reason. We love the Texas Hill Country! There's so much to do and enjoy in "them thar hills" for everyone.

Yes, for me, fall is the best time of the year. I can't wait to dust off the witch's hat, feel a chill in the air, pick out another turkey, see the Christmas lights go up, and say, "Welcome back!" to the RV crowd. There's a lot to anticipate and love about fall in the Hill Country. Enjoy every minute!

