

Halloween sparks childhood memories

by Charolette Klinger

Did you ever notice how, when you stare at a doorknob long enough, it begins to turn? Or that, if you stare into the dark, there's always

toads. Our Halloween treats were traded, auctioned, and used for bets on games of Fish and War until all that was left were a few broken butterscotch balls and some boxes of raisins that

Wake Me When It's Over

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something there that you don't remember seeing when you turned the light out? It's as though we are saying to ourselves, "I dare you to open the door and see what's behind it," or "I bet ya' can't go to sleep without turning the light back on to see what's staring at ya'." When it comes to things that go bump in the night, we never grow up. We love being frightened by imaginary beasts. Maybe, as author, Stephen King suggests, it is because it makes it easier to forget the real beasts.

My brothers and I loved Halloween and had certain traditions that were faithfully kept each year. Dad would have to read us "Little Orphan Annie" by James Whitcomb Riley and Poe's "The Raven" at least half a dozen times. When the lights went out and we were tucked into our bunk beds, we would try to outdo each other with tales of ghosts and goblins. My specialty was a pleasant little number called "Bloody Bones." The story, about some creepy thing that lived at the bottom of a floor furnace, was made all the more delicious by the fact that we had a floor furnace that groaned when the fire was lit. I wonder if Mom ever guessed the reason for the dark circles under our eyes at the breakfast table the next morning.

A sweet old man, who, guessing from the myriad of powder and liquid filled bottles he kept in his front room, was probably a retired chemist, lived on our street. He would give us toothpicks soaked in peppermint or cinnamon oil, and, any other time of the year, his crinkled eyes and long white beard made him look like Santa Claus. On Halloween, though, we were certain he turned into a sorcerer. We had to run past his house so that he wouldn't turn us into bats or warty

someone was thoughtless enough to pass out.

When we grew too old to go Trick or Treating, we had fun passing out the candy. One year, I brought my hair forward and put on sunglasses so that I vaguely resembled a distant cousin of Cousin It of the Addams Family. Another year, I smeared my face with my mother's green facial mask and stood out front with a cauldron of dry ice. As I gave my best witch's cackle and emptied the perspiration from my plastic nose, two of my fellow eighth-graders walked by, one whispering to the other, "I'm glad my mom's not that crazy!"

The Crane garage was a cemetery one year, complete with werewolf, and a laboratory for Doctor Frankenstein the next. We became legendary in our neighborhood, and there were many disappointed youngsters when we kids finally moved away from home. What Mom and Dad spent on decorations, they probably saved on candy. Most kids were either too frightened to come up or were too

fascinated by what was going on to remember to ask for their treats.

This year, I'm back to my old tricks, working on Vernonia's 'Legion Hall of Horrors,' which opens tonight and runs through Saturday night. I hope my readers will forgive me for giving it a plug, but we've all worked hard and we need your support to

Next Week:

My Neck Of The Woods

make it worthwhile. If you enjoy a good scare, you won't be disappointed, and your donations will go to maintain the Rock Creek swimming pool. Please use discretion in bringing your children, and be prepared to have a good time. See you there!

Info center closes

It has been announced that the 4-C office will no longer be able to have the information and referral for day care service due to budget cuts.

Community Action Team will be furnishing this service to all persons living in Columbia County.

For information and referral for day care the number to call is 397-3511 or if you live outside the St. Helens area, you may call toll-free by asking the operator for Commerce 9882.

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