

## VOICE of the CHIEFTAIN

## Halloween: Taming our fears and honoring our ghosts

It's a scary time of the year. We don't just mean Halloween. This year there's everything from our recently-arrived property tax bills to the folderols ongoing in the nation's capitol. If that's not enough, there's the angst of finding (or not finding) things in Safeway (Thank you, Jon Rombach), getting tires changed, and living with kids on a sugar high for a week.

But if you are going to be scared of something right now, it might as well be sort of fun. Laughing at our fears is one way of addressing them, although perhaps not the most effective in the long run.

As psychologist Alex Lickerman has noted in Psychology Today, fearful laughter actually represents a denial of fear. He notes that "being able to laugh at a trauma at the moment it occurs, or soon after, signals both to ourselves and others that we believe in our ability to endure it."

Whether chuckling at the goblins that arrive on our porches or at Trunk or Treat, or reveling at Halloween parties where we make merry while often costumed as fearsome unworldly beings, we would seem to be making merry amidst our fears, and in a way, fortifying ourselves against them.

Halloween's origins are obscure, but likely come from 10th century Britain and Ireland. Most scholars and folklorists point to ancient Celtic rituals: the Festival of Samhain, which, in Old Irish is the name for the end of summer, and Calan Gaeaf, an archaic Welsh name for the arrival of winter. While the Irish were mourning the passage of summer on or about Oct. 30, across the Irish Sea the Welsh and Britons were celebrating the arrival of winter on or about Nov. 1, a date which is about halfway between the solstice and equinox. To these cultures, says University of Bristol historian Robert Hutton, this



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date marked the boundary between a world of light and productivity (summer), and a time of gloom and discomfort and often death (winter). It seemed a time when the boundaries between the here and the hereafter blurred, when darkness invaded the light, and when the souls of the

departed might cross into the world of the living for however brief a time. These medieval customs gradually morphed into Christian traditions known as All Hallow's Eve or All Hallow's Tide.

To forestall the migration of spirits into the world of the living, to

ensure an abundance of Christian prayers for lost souls, and also to ante up a bit of food if you were among the multitudes of impoverished Britons, the tradition of "souling" arose in the early 15th century. Households baked "soul cakes" and when a group of callers arrived at the door, they were given the cakes in an exchange for prayers for the departed who might, that evening, return briefly and invisibly to the dinner places set for them. Hutton also notes that soul cakes would also be offered for the souls themselves to eat, or the "soulers" would act as their representatives when they ate the cakes.

The very old and plaintive English folk song "a Soulin'" made popular in the 1960's by Peter, Paul and Mary was actually sung by "soulers" making their rounds on All Hallow's eve (not Christmas eve) in Britain. (<https://video.search.yahoo.com/yhs/search?fr=yhs-Lkry-SF01&h-simp=yhs-SF01&hspart=Lkry&p=peter+and+mary+soul+cake+song#id=1&vid=aab51eb73dc5dfeeb10bdcfb2c911ecc&action=-click>)

It is said that British "guising, or trick or treating evolved from souling. Yet despite the long, storied history of Halloween, souling, and guising across the pond, trick or treating did not begin in the U.S. until about 1911, and did not become completely candy-sodden until about 30 years ago.

As we reach that tipping point when summer is finally overtaken by winter, and souls are unfettered for a brief romp through the summery world of the living this Halloween, remember to make merry and laugh at or with those outrageous and fearful costumes. And as your youngsters dive into their seemingly bottomless bags of sugar-powered energy, consider the candy bars and other treats as the soul cakes of the modern era, with good will for spirits everywhere.

## Another Pendelton Roundup in the books

For the first time ever, I failed to last the full week of the Pendelton Roundup. I arrived Tuesday morning for slack but by Thursday afternoon I had ruined my health and was headed for home. While there I ran into John Miller, now living in Arizona, who I hadn't seen since college days. We were having a good visit and I asked him about George Carter who had gone to college with us. John replied that George, who lives in Oklahoma, was at the Roundup to watch his son in the team roping. So we called him to find out where he was sitting. We located George who was sitting with Pake MacIntyre, Reba's brother, and we had quite a reunion.

In 1960 John and George and Charlie Whitehorn abandoned life in Pawhuska Oklahoma and headed west to Oakdale California. John's uncle, Ben Johnson the movie star, owned a ranch there and told the trio they could stay there while they went to college. We referred to the ranch as the reservation, George and Charlie were purebred Osage, John was half Cherokee and Ace Berry, whose Dad ran the ranch, was half Delaware. They arrived driving a 1941 buick that looked more like a tuna boat than a car. George referred to it as the beast that wouldn't die. They had pooled their money and paid \$75 for it and over the years it carried them back and forth to Oklahoma seven times. I recalled that it was like the latter day Grapes of

## OPEN RANGE

Barrie Qualle



Wrath. While in college we became friends and I remember the boys doctoring yearlings for five bucks a day which kept them alive through the school year. The following spring John and Ace Berry scraped together enough money to enter the team roping at the Salinas Rodeo. John was 18 and Ace was 13 and they won a go round that paid \$1300 a man. This was a fortune in 1960. John went on to become a world champion like his uncle Ben and Ace is one of two people who have won the average at both ends of the arena at the NFR.

George Carter returned to Oklahoma, became successful and served on the Osage tribal council for years. I mentioned to George I had recently read a book, Killers of the Flower Moon, about the Osage. It appears that when the government gave the Osage their reservation they slipped up and let them have the mineral rights. About 1920 the Osage hit oil and for a while the Osage were the richest people in the world per capita. It didn't take long for a number of them to be killed in order for others to acquire those rights. George and

John recalled working on the ranch of one of the killers. They found out years later that the old guy that used to turn out calves for them when they practiced had spent 30 years in prison for some of the killings. I recommend the book.

I want to congratulate the parents in this county for doing such a great job in raising some of the greatest kids and young people. I know a lot of these young guys and there isn't a cull among them. They are polite, will look you in the eye, have a sense of humor and you could let them play in your money vault and not have to count it afterwards. Not only that, but they are a good looking bunch, girls and boys. Tragically we recently lost one and another was severely injured. The whole county has been in shock and mourning. To the rest of you young people, please be careful. You have no idea how dear you are to all of us, even people you don't know well.

I found a poem that I think applies to this time of year here in Wallowa County.

## Autumn

*Autumn is an old brave, loping along  
In beaded moccasins.  
The mischievous winds  
are tearing down his painted teepee;  
but he is headed south,  
long braids flying  
and the sun glinting on his gaudy  
head feathers.*

## LETTERS to the EDITOR

## Oppose permitting ATVs on Enterprise streets

Dear Editor:  
"It is unlawful for any person to create, assist in creating, permit, continue, or permit the continuance of any loud, disturbing, or UNNECESSARY noise in the city of Enterprise (emphasis added)."

So states the existing city noise ordinance. I grudgingly condone the use of ATVs for such "necessary" tasks as "plowing snow or mowing lawns", be they operated by teenagers or chimpanzees.

What I can't - and won't - abide is the UNNECESSARY noise of ATVs joy-riding thru residential streets and roaring around backyard racetracks, destroying the tranquility of my Sunday afternoons.

If you agree that ear-splitting gas-powered boy-toys belong in the woods and not in our neighborhoods, join me at City Hall on Wed., Nov. 6, 6 p.m. and take a stand for civility.

C.M. Sterbentz  
Enterprise

## CORRECTIONS

The Chieftain's Oct. 23 story about the upcoming city ordinance governing ATV operation within city limits, incorrectly reported that City Recorder Lacey McQuead would read only three letters into the record. She plans to read all letters into the record. Also, in the story on the city helping to fund the new clock on the courthouse grounds, Councilman David Elliot was incorrectly identified as Public Works Director Ronnie Neil.

## WHERE TO WRITE

## WASHINGTON, D.C.

**The White House** — 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20500; Phone: 202-456-1111; Switchboard:

202-456-1414.

**U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden, D** — 516 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington D.C. 20510. Phone: 202-224-5244. E-mail: wayne\_kinney@wyden.sen-

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**U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley, D** — 313 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington D.C. 20510.

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**U.S. Rep. Greg Walden, R (Second District)** — 1404 Longworth Building, Wash-

ington D.C. 20515. Phone: 202-225-6730. No direct e-mail because of spam. Web site: [www.walden.house.gov](http://www.walden.house.gov) Fax: 202-225-5774. Med-

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Suite 112, Medford, OR 97501. Phone: 541-776-4646. Fax: 541-779-0204.

**Pending Bills** — For information on bills in Congress, Phone 202-225-1772.

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