



Ned Hickson

Emotionally scarring your children for Halloween is the circle of life

Though it's been 15 years, I still remember my youngest son's first Halloween costume. Because he was too young to walk, the choices were limited to things that could be carried under one arm and then planted on the doorstep.

Eventually, I narrowed the options down to the following:

- A pumpkin.
 - A legless pirate.
 - A meteor.
- When considering the merits of each costume option and which elements should be

incorporated into them, parents really have only one consideration:

"How do I get the most candy out of my child?"

To me, the sympathy factor for the legless pirate made it a no-brainer. However, I couldn't overlook the power of cuteness — a quality that was missing from the legless pirate and meteor concepts.

I eventually settled on "The Pumpkin, which I'm sad to say, fell short of my candy-yield expectations for that year.

To make matters worse, that was also the year my oldest daughter became an active member of Young Advocates for Keeping Kandy (YAKK).

I realize for some parents, Halloween is an exciting time

that allows them to bond with their child by making their Halloween-costume dream come true. For the rest of us, it means actually *making* something, and therefore putting our child's emotional wellbeing at risk by creating a costume that could potentially scar them for life.

After nearly 40 years, I still remember my mother carefully wrapping me in layer after layer of tissue in order to turn me into a frightening replica of The Mummy — and how it took less than five minutes for a light drizzle to turn me into the considerably LESS frightening Soggy Toilet Paper Man.

Things weren't much better the following year, when I dressed up as a pirate and

missed out on all of the good candy after spending 45 minutes with my plastic hook stuck in the car door.

By the time I hit the streets all that was left were Sweet Tarts and half-opened rolls of Roloids. However, as Count Dracula the following Halloween, I knew it was going to be MY year. Aside from maybe swallowing my own fangs, there wasn't much that could go wrong.

I remember leaping from the porch and sprinting into the night with my long cape flapping behind me; I remember the sound of my polished shoes clattering across the pavement, and the eerie,

greenish tinge of my glow-in-the-dark teeth — particularly as they flew out of my mouth

after my cape caught on the neighbor's fence.

Granted, these situations weren't entirely about design flaw. In fact, I'm willing to accept the small role my own flawed coordination skills might've played in all this.

However, that only adds to the pressure of coming up with a costume that can be safe, functional and, if necessary, used as a stretcher.

Fortunately, my son was still too young to remember when, a year later when, the cardboard robot costume I made him cut off the circulation to his arms, rendering them unresponsive for a full two minutes.

This was discovered on our third stop of the night, when he tried to lift up his plastic

jack-o-lantern for candy and, instead, fell headfirst through the screen door.

Now that my kids are in their teens, I no longer have to worry about creating costumes for them that could prove embarrassing or leave an emotional scar.

Then again, my wife and I are now free to create our own costumes — which, for our teenagers, could be even more frightening.

Ned is a syndicated columnist with News Media Corporation.

His latest book, "Pearls of Writing Wisdom: From 16 years as a shucking columnist" is available online at Port Hole Books.

Talented crew play, direct 'Pirates'

Last Resort Players of Florence are bringing Gilbert and Sullivan's classic comic opera "Pirates of Penzance" to the Florence Events Center the weekends of Nov. 4 to 6 and 11 to 13.

By now you've met the cast — Sean Abplanalp as Frederic, Hilary Roach as Mabel, Sandy Vaccaro as the Pirate King, Jim Wellington as the major general, Dana Rodet as the sergeant and Crystal Farnsworth as Ruth — but the all-star cast is led by a talented and versatile directorial team.

Leah Goodwin takes the helm of "Pirates" as director. Often taking the role of stage manager, Goodwin was last seen on stage of Last Resort Player's "25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee" in 2015. She also directed "Les Misérables" in 2014.

Goodwin's assistant director and stage manager is the organized and efficient Mary Conley.

Laura Merz is the "argh-tistic" (artistic) music director.



COURTESY PHOTO

Last Resort Players' "Pirates of Penzance" has a hard-working directorial staff: Laura Merz, artistic music director; Mary Conley, assistant director and stage manager; Leah Goodwin, director and Jen Weier, music director and conductor.

She is joined by Jen Weier as music director and conductor.

Annie Schmidt, a founding member of Last Resort Players, and Sally Wantz are producing "Pirates." Not only that — they both play pirates, too.

Filled with boisterous songs, glib lines and an all-star cast, this production is not a show to

be missed.

Last Resort Players will play "Pirates of Penzance" at Florence Events Center, 715 Quince St., the weekends of Nov. 4 to 6 and 11 to 13, with 7 p.m. evening and 2 p.m. matinee performances.

Tickets are \$20 each and available at 541-997-1994 or www.eventcenter.org.

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Voting YES on 20-266 renews the current levy of \$.45 per \$1000 of assessed value per year and would cost the average home owner less than \$7 a month.

Western Lane Ambulance District provides Emergency 911 Response as well as critical care transports from Peace Harbor Hospital to Regional Medical Centers such as Riverbend.

Since the passage of the 2012 Tax Levy the districts call volume has increased over 20% averaging over 3000 calls annually, and Medicare rates are on the decline, so the levy renewal is critical in order to maintain current levels of service.

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