

Spooky story It happened one night

By ANNE DOHERTY

Editor's note: Last month, The Hermiston Herald put out a request for your scariest tales. Among the excellent submissions, Anne Doherty's story stands out for first place. This is her story.

I had heard tales of the Ghost of Armand Larive, though I'd never encountered it... until that night. I was working late with some students and their parents. After they left, I heard someone speak just outside my classroom door.

"What did you say?" I called. No one answered. I hurried to the door, but no one was there. "Hmm, must have been my imagination!" I reasoned, as I gathered my things and checked to make sure all the students had left. The closest exit was firmly locked.

Returning, I passed one hall that was dark, pitch black. Rumor had it that the Ghost of Armand Larive sometimes appeared there. I didn't believe it. But as I walked on toward the office, the hall lights started turning off behind me— one by one. Something creepy was happening. Someone was going to jump out and scare me. Or worse! So I devised a plan. As soon as I reached the office, I set the school alarm, then rushed out to my car.

"Whew! Safe and sound!" I relaxed and waited for the alarm to go off and the police to come. But no sound. Nothing.

The next day, I tracked down the lead custodian and explained what had happened the night before. He assured me the hall lights worked fine and that no one could have turned them off. Also, the alarm system had been successfully set, but obviously no one was in the building after I left.

But I knew what happened. A ghost cannot trip the alarm. The Ghost of Armand Larive was there playing tricks on me.

I taught at Armand Larive school for many years, but never again stayed alone there after dark. I had met the Ghost of Armand Larive once, and that was enough!

Local youths enjoy a bit of normalcy with fun at Hermiston's Bellinger Farms

By ERICK PETERSON
Hermiston Herald

Dressed as a pair of mermaid princesses, 5-year-old kindergarteners Mia and Mallory Martin were among 60 Rocky Heights Elementary School students who took a field trip Thursday, Oct. 28, for hayrides and pumpkin picking.

The Hermiston children and their classmates went to the pumpkin patch at Bellinger Farms off Highway 395 on the south end of Hermiston. Throughout October, children from local towns have been enjoying the same field trip.

For the Martin girls, twins, they were happy about having an actual Halloween season with activities, family members said.

After she picked out her pumpkin, Mallory said she was happy and was looking forward to trick-or-treating later in the week. She was especially excited for Sour Patch Kids and other candy. Her sister, Mia, said she was also excited about the season. She likes scary things, she said.

Witches, according to Mia, are the scariest.

Their great-grandmother, Sue White, joined the children on their field trip, as did their mother, Karisa White.

"We're pretty darned excited," Sue White said.

She recounted times recently when she would take family walks with the girls.

"They would take a walk around the block and say 'GG, this looks like a good house to trick-or-treat at.' So, yes, they are happy," she said.

Karisa White agreed, adding the girls were disappointed last year. Two years ago, they got to



Ben Lonergan/Hermiston Herald
Kindergarten students from Rocky Heights Elementary School in Hermiston clutch their pumpkins Thursday, Oct. 28, 2021, during a class trip to the Bellinger Farms pumpkin patch, Hermiston.



Ben Lonergan/Hermiston Herald
Rocky Heights Elementary School kindergartener Ema, 5, struggles to pick up a pumpkin Thursday, Oct. 28, 2021, at the Bellinger Farms pumpkin patch in Hermiston.



Ben Lonergan/Hermiston Herald
Rocky Heights Elementary School kindergartener Ruby, 5, carries a pumpkin Thursday, Oct. 28, 2021, during a class trip to Bellinger Farms' pumpkin patch in Hermiston.

trick-or-treat for the first time, walking house to house. They loved it, their mother said. Then, when they could not repeat this tradition the following season due to the coronavirus pandemic, they were crestfallen.

As they love makeup and costumes, Halloween is suited to them, their mother and great-grandmother said. To finally be able to have Halloween

activities, such as trick-or-treating, they planned and the hayride they did Oct. 28, they were pleased.

This is the sort of experience Stefani Wyatt, Rocky Heights Elementary School principal, hoped the young students could enjoy.

"We have worked very hard to provide experiences for our students in a year that is not so typi-

cal with limitations," she said.

She expressed the importance of living with joy and normalcy, despite the pandemic. In sending her students to field trips, they could live a more regular life. In addition to having fun, she said, students also could incorporate the trip into their academics. Older children did science and math on their trips, according to the principal, learning about agriculture by seeing growing things and practicing measurements by measuring pumpkins.

Wyant said other activities, such as costume parties at the school, also add to the children's happiness.

"It's something we've done in the past and we are glad to do it this year," she said.

Meanwhile, people at Bellinger's said they also are pleased to help children get some enjoyment out of the season. Marleaux Scaggs, the restaurant manager at the Bellinger Farms Gourmet Shoppe, was just one of the happy people at the store.

Scaggs said she saw around 60 or more schoolchildren each day visit the shop for hayrides during October. Some days, she would see 90.

"Jack likes to give back to the community, and that's how he does it," she said, referencing Jack Bellinger, owner of the shop and farm.

The hayrides were free to the children, Scaggs said.

She added the shop will have more events. It will host wine events the first Thursday of every month. It also will have Christmas cookie decorating activities and photos with Santa photos as it had in the past.

These activities are important, and she is glad to have them, Scaggs said.

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