

## Letter from the Editor - Hail, hail Halloween

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**Hollywood, MD** - It is, without a doubt, society's most maligned holiday. In fact, it's not even a holiday at all since you still have to work or go to school October 31. Yes, Halloween was an occasion that started out with good intentions that somehow careened out of control. Like the good witch and the bad witch, Halloween has good and bad aspects. This would be a great time to explore both.

On the plus side, Halloween started as a celebration of harvest and a time to remember the dearly departed. Somehow it morphed into a day of masquerading, indulging in treats and mischief. Face it, life isn't worth living if we always have to be ourselves, eat sensibly and only do good deeds. Pretending to be someone that you aren't—a clown, a magician, a magician's assistant, a zombie, a French maid, Batman, Wonder Woman, the Pope or Donald Trump—can actually help you and your friends appreciate who you really are. "I'm so glad you're not really the Pope," some might say. Additionally, many people make their own costumes, a task that allows them a chance to discover and display their creative talents. Scarfing down a couple of pieces of candy on one night—or several nights if no trick-or-treaters show up and you end up with a surplus—isn't going to kill you in the short term. Whether they are for adults or children, Halloween parties are the best. For adults, if you do something regrettable by committing a social faux pas at a Halloween bash the attendees will think a zombie or Dracula is the guilty party. Halloween has the potential to be very good for the economy. Costume shops, local bars, retail stores that sell candy, costumes and decorations; and produce stands that sell apples and pumpkins all benefit from Halloween. The places that sell eggs and soap also benefit—which brings us to Halloween's negative side.

Vandals have always been the Grinches who steal Halloween and give it a bad name. Sick people who tamper with Halloween candy have just about destroyed the grand tradition of trick-or-treating. Cruel Halloween tricks have existed for several decades. And yes, costumes that can easily catch on fire also pose a danger. Because it occurs in the dark, motorists need to be on high alert Halloween night. It is usually an evening when law enforcement needs to have all hands on deck. Certain members of the clergy have blasted Halloween from the pulpit, because of its promulgation of the reality of ghosts. Cleverly and carefully carved jack-'o lanterns often suffer a hideous fate on Halloween night, as miscreants smash them, leaving heaps of seeds and other pumpkins innards all over the roads and sidewalks.

Halloween will happen whether you are prepared to celebrate it or not. And come Nov. 1 it will all be over. At that time the Christmas decorations will start going up in stores everywhere. That should be reason enough to appreciate this schizophrenic autumnal tradition. Stay safe and share your candy with everyone! May you have a wonderful Halloween!!

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