Happy Halloween Memories

Taking on the Wolf Man

WHEN I WAS in third grade, in the late 1950s, I was trick-or-treating with a group of kids from our church. Betty Douglas was driving us, easing down the streets slowly as we went door-to-door in Crockett, Texas.

We didn't encounter any elaborate decorations until we started down Bell Street. A local accountant, Harold Walker, had turned his carport into a mini haunted house. From the street to the house was a row of cardboard headstones. Jack-o'-lanterns placed between each pair cast a pale light along the path.

There was a red lightbulb in the carport that gave the entire area a spooky look, and eerie music was coming from a hidden record player. It was enough to scare this 8-year-old boy senseless.

All of that was nothing compared to the man sitting in a chair and wearing the most realistic Wolf Man costume I had ever seen. He was growling and panting as he hunched over a pot of candy on the ground in front of him as he watched us approach.

We were about to chicken out and make a run for the car, but the Wolf Man must have sensed we were a bit too scared. He lifted the lid of the pot and stepped back.

My friends Paul and Ray Craycraft and David Douglas had moved over to one side to see if I was going to be attacked. I took a deep breath and reached for the pot.

The Wolf Man suddenly sprang forward with a roar, slamming the lid on the pot. My buddies were frozen in their tracks, but I knew what to do—run! Unfortunately, in the dim light, I didn't see the iron post in my escape route and hit it dead-center.

When my head cleared, I saw Harold Walker, minus the Wolf Man mask, standing over me with a frightened look. Mrs. Walker arrived with ice cubes wrapped in a rag to hold against the knot on my head and my bleeding nose.

Everything was a blur. Betty wanted to take me home, but I wanted to continue my rounds. I was helped to the car, and my buddies brought my bag. Harold had put more candy in my bag than I could have possibly received the rest of the night.

As we looked back, Harold had returned to his seat in front of the iron pot of candy, but the lights were on and his costume was gone.
—Jimmy Beasley, Colorado Springs, Colorado

Tricksters Got Tricked

ON THE MORNING of November 1, 1918, my father awakened my two teenage brothers about 4 a.m. and told them to go get the milk-delivery wagon out of the nearby creek bed and check it for damage.

The wagon belonged to our neighbor, Mr. McClure, who owned a dairy. It turned out that my father had bought the dairy from Mr. McClure on Halloween night.

My two brothers and two of their friends were the pranksters who put the wagon in the creek bed in the first place, something my father suspected. The milk had to be delivered house-to-house, starting at about 6 a.m.

The trick definitely was on my two brothers and not Mr. McClure.
—Elizabeth Cantrell, Bonham, Texas