

Community Comment Oct. 27th, 2014

By Jon Sapper

Halloween

In a few days, we're going to have witches and goblins and gremlins and superhero's knocking at our doors saying.....trick or treat. Much to the surprise of many, Halloween didn't originate in America. Its roots are in Europe, particularly the British Isles. It came from Celtic Paganism where they believed it was the time when ghosts and spirits came out to haunt and the Celts would appease them with treats. There was a little bit of Roman influence, not the Vatican or serving pizza, but rather celebrating Pomona, the goddess of fruit and trees. That must be the connection with the harvest feast and maybe why we bob for apples during this time of year. I have no idea, but it's plausible.

In America, the holiday really exploded when Irish immigrants came here and started knocking on doors asking for candy. No, I'm sure they didn't do that without warning, but others saw this and figured here's a good way to get my fix of candy for months.

Over the years, it became a children's holiday. But some people won't celebrate Halloween because of its pagan roots and their belief it's associated with witchcraft. It is interesting though, that in some parts of the world there are Christian religious observances, attending church services and lighting candles on the graves of the dead.

I remember when I was a child my grandmother didn't want to bother answering the door every two minutes. She was getting old and decided to just leave a big bowl of candy on the front porch in a nice ceramic bowl. That worked for a couple of years until she noticed a few kids taking more than the expected "one piece of candy". She complained, but continued with this practice until someone stole the bowl. "That's it", she said, "What are these kids coming to"! I thought something similar when one Halloween I went to the door, opened it up and was greeted by a six foot three quote "kid" dressed as a punk rocker and in a deep voice said, "Trick or Treat." I said, "Come on. Really? Why aren't you trick or treating with your kids?" I put a piece of candy in his Safeway bag and he said, "Thank you."

I recall my days of trick or treating with one in particular. I knocked on a door, said trick or treat and the person gave me three carrot sticks. I was polite and said thank you, all the while thinking are you kidding. I was a chubby little kid and I wanted candy.

Apparently others do, too. So, don't turn off your lights and pretend you're not there. Answer your door, drop in a piece of candy and do your part to support the nationwide 6.9 billion dollar Halloween evening. Local dentists will love you.

This has been Jon Sapper for Community Comment.