

Staff Editorial

Haunted safety

Halloween is coming up and haunted houses are a main attraction through the month of October. Several MSU fraternities host a haunted house attraction, and you too might be thinking of dressing up an old building ghoulish style and charging admission. But before you do, it is wise to think of the safety factors and possible legal problems you might encounter with patrons if you're not careful.

The most important thing to remember is to design your fright location for the worst possible situation. The hazards of a possible fire can be devastating. Some helpful fire-prevention tips include the following:

- All wood or lumber used in the haunted house should be covered with sheet rock or painted with a flame retardant paint.
- Place smoke detectors throughout the haunt.
- Avoid flammable styrofoam, plastic and foam rubber
- Prohibit the use of an open flame near the house. This includes cigarettes and candles.
- Use electrical strips with circuit breakers.

Think of how you will get people out of the haunted house if there is an emergency. Non-flammable plastic signs are available at most hardware stores. Hang lit exit signs at the entrance and exit doors of the house. Make sure these doors are open or unlocked at all times.

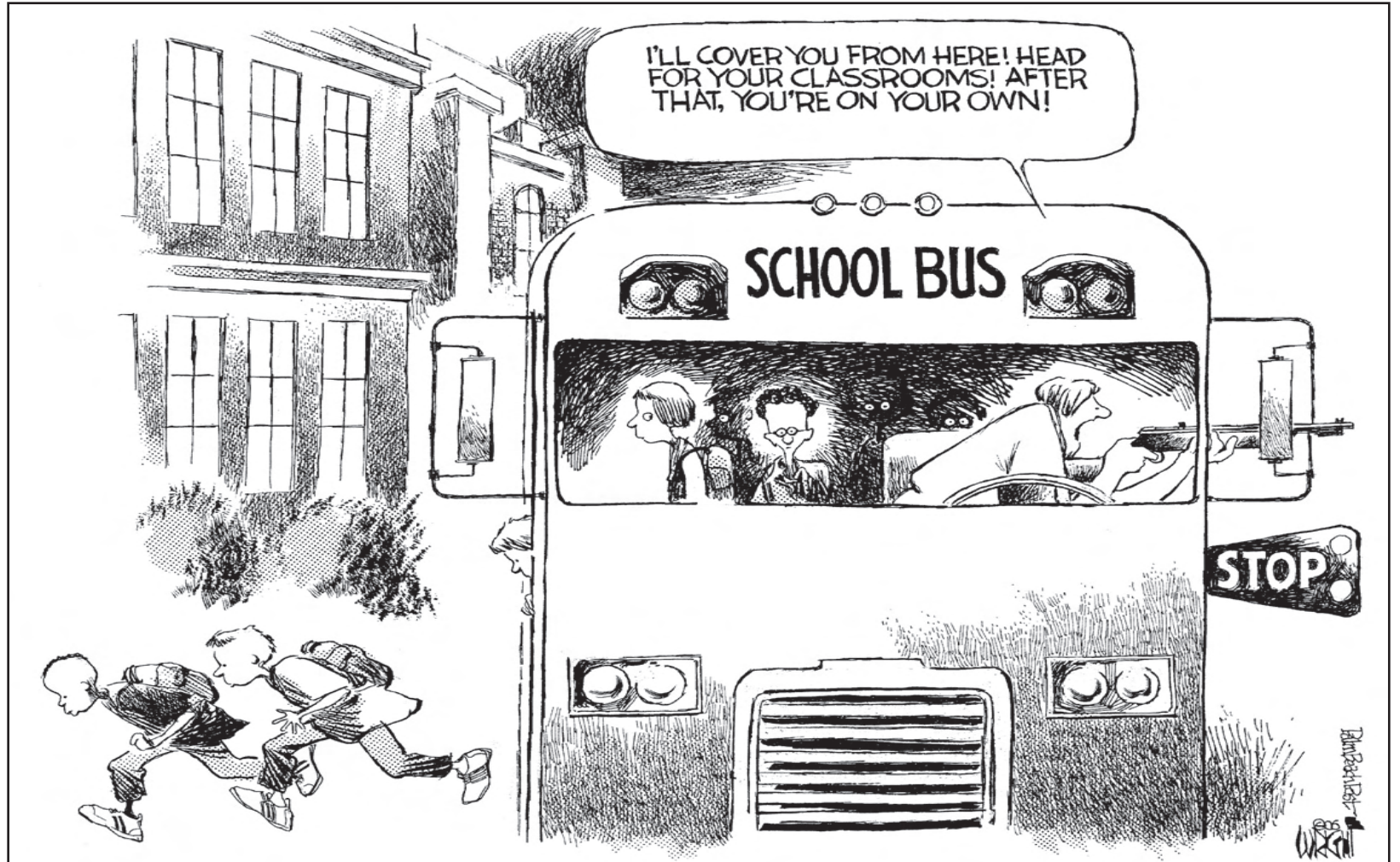
Many amusement park haunted houses have policies that require employees acting like monsters not to touch patrons of their attraction so injuries are less prevalent.

We live in an age that encourages suing anyone who might give you money. So you won't find yourself in a courthouse, the smart thing to do is remember not to grab patrons when they come through the haunted halls. Jumping out and growling is just as creepy. Remember to carry flashlights as well when you're getting situated before the house opens to the public simply to know where you're jumping.

Some haunted houses have rules for their patrons and it would be smart to write them and post them in front of the attraction so as to ensure safety. An example of these types of rules include the following:

- No running through the haunted house
- No touching the props or set pieces
- No grabbing, hitting or pushing the actors
- Stay with the tour guide at all times

Halloween is a fun holiday for children and adults alike. To ensure the greatest amount of enjoyment this haunted season, remember that safety is essential.



Broken memories of death in October



Jessica Coody
FOR THE WICHITAN

Ten years ago today, I buried a friend. Ten years ago today, as my friend Daniel was driving me home from the cemetery in Fletcher, Okla., it hit me that I would never see her smile again. Memory is a funny thing.

I remember Oct. 14, 1996 as if it were yesterday. At the same time, I have forgotten so much. I don't remember the weather that day. To me, it will always be dark and gray. The sun may have been shining. I don't recall. It doesn't matter.

I will never be able to grasp all that she has missed over the last decade. She missed getting her driver's license. She missed her graduation.

She missed her little brother's. She missed mine. Her 18th birthday and her chance to find Mr. Right.

And the lessons that go with finding all the Mr. Wrongs.

The world itself is a different place. She wasn't here to experience the emotions of 9/11. The word "terrorist" was never in her vocabulary. She has missed out on 10 years of technological advances and Hollywood gossip.

Father Time has kept going. He'll keep going. He doesn't care that she isn't here to keep up with him.

I remember time standing still that October day. I don't remember the preaching or the praying or the words that were said during her funeral.

All I remember are the songs that played, and the gentle sobbing of over 800 grieving souls.

I remember people releasing red and white balloons into the sky as she was lowered into the harsh October ground. I remember I couldn't let go of mine.

I still haven't let it go.

I remember watching her father grasp her petite pink casket as he wept for his baby girl. I remember being amazed that his arms almost reached all the way around the box. I remember thinking about how much she loved being hugged by him. I remember this as their last hug.

I don't remember anyone's faces from the grave site. I just remember her family.

I recall getting a run in my dark pantyhose. I remember not caring.

I remember walking back to the car through what felt like a mile of headstones, only to realize that we had left our headlights on and our battery was dead. I remember cursing under my breath, utterly exhausted by the thought of another thing being dead.

And I remember being pissed that with two cables and another vehicle our battery magically came back to life. I remember thinking I would give anything to be able to do that for her.

I recall stopping on the way home to eat at Pizza Hut. My friends tried to behave as they always would, being goofy and risking humility for a laugh. I remember them trying to be silly.

I don't remember cracking a smile. I don't remember getting home or the days immediately after.

But more importantly, I do remember the days and weeks and months before. I remember the way her house always smelled so good. I remember her flare for dramatics. I remember her braces. I remember how she couldn't wait to get them off. I remember the phone conversations, the notes in the lockers and the hours of practicing cheers before cheerleading tryouts. I remember the crushes and the heartaches and enemies and the friends. I remember her laugh. I remember her eyes. I remember her spirit.

And no one, including Father Time, can ever take that away from me.

Haunted house incites memories of Satan



Jason Kimbro
ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR

I am scared of a random collection of things: fat guys with skinny girlfriends, religious zealots with funding, cottage cheese and rotting clown corpses to name a few.

The thing that probably scares me the most, though, would have to be my cousin's old house back in Olney. This building supplied many freakish occurrences and though I am not particularly fond of expressing an over-abundant interest in the supernatural, I feel I must give an account of:

THE SECOND TO THE LAST HOUSE ON THE LEFT, OR RIGHT, DEPENDING ON WHERE YOU ARE!

Actually, if you look at it from the right then it would probably be

the second to the first house on the right but then the title would have just been a little TOO ridiculous.

Anyway, it all started the evening my brother spent the night in this domicile of doom. He slept on a waterbed that sat beside the refrigerator.

I know what you're probably thinking, a waterbed beside the fridge? Yeah, we be redneck folk.

My brother had a terrible nightmare about a demon coming from behind the large appliance with wickedly long, curvy horns and hooved feet. We're not talking Puck here folks, were talking about a truly demonic figure.

Now a dream is a dream, even if it's a nightmare, or something and that usually wouldn't be a big deal, but when he awoke from this horrific vision, our cousin was sitting next to him with a drawing pad and some colored pencils, drawing an exact picture of the same demon.

The episode turned from freaky to downright, well, even more freaky the day we were all sitting in the living room watching one of our favorite nighttime dramas from the

90s, "Sweating Bullets."

Brandy, my cousin, poked me on the arm and told me to look in the adjacent room where the waterbed and the fridge resided. A shadow of a tall manly figure was up against the wall.

We looked at each other and proceeded to walk into that room to see who was in there. Nobody was to be found. When we looked at the wall again, the shadow remained and then walked away, back to the fridge.

We ran to my house down the street.

Reports of floating items, such as bullets and rolls of tape, began to arise from various individuals in the home.

At one point I was there all by myself and the doorbell began to ring. Oddly enough the front door was wide open, I could see outside, and nobody was there. Even stranger, the doorbell hadn't worked in that house for years.

One day we discovered that the home was built on the site of an old graveyard from back in the 30s.

After doing some research, we

also discovered that when they moved the graveyard, they only moved the headstones, not the bodies.

We decided to stay there one more night for the hell of it, even though our midget neighbor told us the house was clean after she squirted the front porch with some Dawn dishwashing liquid and chanted some versus from Harry Potter, even though the books have not been written yet.

My brother, Jody, was almost sucked into the closet by some weird sausage-like tongue, a toy clown attacked my cousin Brandy and I fell into a non-existent pool full of rotting corpses from the 30s.

Okay, okay, I know what you're saying, that is if you have any knowledge of classic horror cinema from the 70s and 80s. I got the last half of the story from Poltergeist.

Well, I have space to fill here folks and the real parts of the story, though somewhat embellished themselves, was not quite exciting enough. Anywho, hope you all have a fun and freaky Halloween! May Satan bless thee well! BOO!