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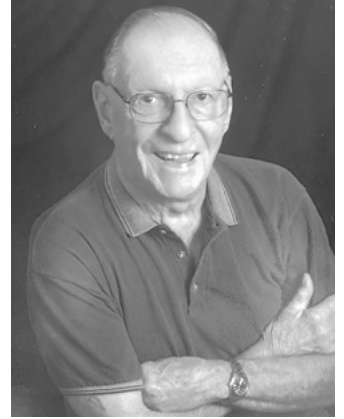
In Their Own Words

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Halloween Hijinks, by Bill Thiele

The month of October leads us to reminisce about how Halloween was celebrated in small towns in days gone by. After growing up in Eagle, Bill served many years as a Trustee for the Village. He enjoyed his retirement years traveling, golfing, wintering in Texas, and working at the Kettle Moraine Golf Course.



Halloween has forever been a time for ghosts, goblins, witches, and other scary creatures. However, it has also been a time for mischief and a variety of pranks.

When I was growing up in the 1930s and 1940s, there were still outdoor toilets which were left over from the days before running water, and in some homes, they were still being used. A popular prank in those years was to tip some of them over. They were not seriously damaged and just caused the owners the inconvenience of putting them back up.

All of the businesses on Main Street had park benches in front of their stores. One of the common pranks was to relocate the benches to various other locations such as the roof of the lumber company sheds, or up the flag pole in the village square. The morning after Halloween was somewhat like a scavenger hunt with people searching for their benches and anything else that had been left outside.

Soaping windows was another popular prank. A bar of soap was used to cover all or parts of the store windows. Bundles of corn which farmers had cut and shocked were brought to town and placed in various locations on Main Street for decorations. None of these pranks were destructive, just mischievous.

My father was born in 1896. He told about their Halloween pranks. One year they acquired a milk wagon which was a small, light duty wagon. He and his friends took the wheels and tongue off and raised all of the pieces including the main body of the wagon to the top of the grain elevator and reassembled it on the roof. I don't know the actual height of the building, but it was quite tall. Anyway, the next day the sheriff came and rounded up the boys and made them take the wagon apart and bring it down and put it back together as the people of the village watched. They were not charged with any crime.

Trick or Treat had not become the big thing when I was younger. In my time it was just a lot of tricking and no treating.

