

# Famous ghosts skip appearances

**United Press International**  
The ghost of Harry Houdini stood up a Halloween seance in Marshall, Mich., but a straitjacket that once belonged to the long-dead escape artist disappeared from a suburban Chicago shopping mall.

Police say theft rather than the occult is behind the mystery, and the culprit may have been an escape artist in his own right — having removed the jacket from a mannequin and walked out the door in broad daylight.

Lox and bagels may have been Houdini's favorite snack, but they failed to entice his spirit to return during the daylight seance in Michigan.

"I wasn't really disappointed because I didn't really expect to raise the spirit," said Bob Lund, a magic buff who organized the seance around a chain-draped milk can containing the lox-and-bagels sandwich.

Halloween in Honolulu and the island of Kauai was postponed because of constant rains and the threat of flooding.

Acting Honolulu Mayor Ed Hirata said in a proclamation, "to insure the safety and welfare of our children, it is suggested that parents delay observance of Halloween until the first night with clear weather."

Halloween pranks of 1978 ranged from the traditional to the absurd to the felonious.

A woman in Fort Worth got a call from a man who said he was with a radio quiz program. He asked what president had been impeached. The woman said Nixon, which was wrong (it was Andrew Johnson), but he told her she had won a new car or \$5,000 if she could come to a certain location.

The woman excitedly left, but couldn't find the address. When she got home, she found someone had broken into her house. The thief had taken a treat — of sorts — several TV dinners.

Costume shops reported cone-head masks, based on the popular skits from the "Saturday Night Live" TV show, were the biggest sellers this year, followed by characters from the movie "Star Wars."

Costuming was not confined to the youngsters. Clowns approved loans, witches cashed checks, and vampires and devils stood guard over transactions at a bank in the New Orleans suburb of Metairie.

Lana Floyd, vice-president of marketing, who was dressed as Raggedy Ann, said, "One little girl walked in and she saw me and her eyes got big as silver dollars. It really made my day."

Bonafide ghosts — at least according to the locals — lost out to Dave Rodgers, a 26-year-old television

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# New Jersey prepares plans for food facility

**United Press International**  
TRENTON, N.J. — New Jersey is preparing plans for the state's first major food distribution center to move food from farm to market faster and cheaper.

Hundreds of food wholesalers, processors and distributors in the Garden State have always had to rely on the only two major centers, the Hunts Point market in The Bronx, N.Y., or a similar center in south Philadelphia.

But after nearly four years of study, a cabinet-level committee is drawing up specific recommendations to be submitted to Gov. Brendan Byrne in the coming weeks, concerning the state's role in the project. State Agriculture Department officials say the committee will recommend that such a center be developed by private industry.

The center, probably located in the Hackensack Meadows near the home of the football Giants, would house a conglomerate of food-related independent and chain firms — grocery, meat, fish, poultry, fresh fruit and vegetable, frozen food, dairy product and beverage — in a large industrial park-type setting.

"We think it's a good idea. It would develop a more efficient wholesale handling system. The plan is feasible and we'd like to see private enterprise go with this," said John Repko, a planner with the state Agriculture Department.

Repko said a year-long federal study determined there was a need for such a center in the northeastern New Jersey area.

A survey of 1,600 firms in eight New Jersey counties found that many wholesale distribution facilities are modern and efficient, but others are old and inadequate.

Some buildings that presently house wholesalers are outdated, poorly designed, or were never intended for handling of food prod-

ucts. Others are in scattered locations where traffic hampers their regular business activities, and loading, parking and maneuvering areas are inadequate. These factors tend to add to the cost of distributing food.

The report recommended six possible sites where a new, properly designed distribution center could be set up. The prime location is a 500-acre site in the Secaucus-Jersey City-Meadowlands area under the jurisdiction of the Hackensack Meadowlands Development Commission.

There are some 650 wholesale food firms in 12 food commodity groups that have warehouse facilities in North Jersey. In 1974, these firms purchased more than 11 million tons of food for \$6.5 million directly from producers, manufac-

turers, shippers and other suppliers.

The study, conducted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, said 176 of those firms need new facilities if they are to improve operations and remain competitive.

Most foods that arrive in the area do so by truck. And while most meats, grains and flour come from the Midwest and citrus fruits from Florida, New Jersey farmers would see some transportation benefits by a centrally located center.

In the future, the area's expanding population will increase the demand for food and put more pressure on its related industries.

Based on recent trends, the volume of food to be handled by northeastern New Jersey wholesalers will increase by 70 percent in the next 30 years.

# Women make waves joining U.S. Navy

**United Press International**  
NORFOLK, Va. — Five young ensigns made Navy history Wednesday when they reported for sea duty aboard three repair ships.

Despite the old sea adage that women are bad luck aboard ships, all appeared well when the five women climbed aboard the U.S.S. Vulcan for a news conference.

"I'm pretty thrilled about it," said Ens. Jo Anne Carlton, 23, of Lynchburg, Va. "A few years ago I didn't think it would be possible."

Vulcan skipper Harry A. Spencer told reporters he was confident the women will make a better U.S. Navy.

"Men will work harder not to be outdone by women, and women will work hard to prove themselves. Overall it will make for a better Navy," said Spencer.

Joining Carlton at sea were Elizabeth Bres, 22, of Alexandria, La.; Linda Crockett, 23, of Patterson, N.J.; Mary Carroll, 23, of Roanoke, Va.; and Linda Day, 23, of Gallipolis, Ohio.

They are the first women to report for sea duty aboard Navy ships other than transports and hospital vessels.

Carroll is with Carlton aboard the Vulcan. Crockett and Day are aboard the U.S.S. Spear and Bres has been assigned to the U.S.S. Puget Sound.

During the next 12 months, 53 women officers and 375 enlisted women will be reporting to 21 ships in the Navy's Atlantic and Pacific fleets.

# Disaster coverage urged

**United Press International**  
WASHINGTON — If you live in areas subject to spring floods and fall hurricanes, now is the time to check your eligibility for low-cost disaster protection under the National Flood Insurance program.

To obtain such insurance from the Federal Housing and Urban Development Department, communities must be certified by HUD to be in a flood hazard area and must carry out local flood-plan management measures to protect lives, homes and businesses from future flooding.

The five-year-old program currently has more than one million policyholders and has paid more than 100,000 claims totaling over \$600 million.

Questions on community eligibility should be directed to 800-424-8872, a toll-free number. Individual homeowners can get information from their insurance agents or they can call the toll-free number 800-638-6620.

For a free booklet on the subject, write for Questions and Answers—National Flood Insurance Program, Federal Insurance Administration, Housing and Urban Development Dept., Washington D.C. 20410.

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