

# Hospital will X-ray treats to detect harmful tricks

## Program 'puts fun back into Halloween'

By Janet Goode  
Reporter

An eerie excitement is in the air as Halloween arrives bringing costumed children, greasy makeup, sticky fingers and, in the aftermath, sick tummies.

Droves of wide-eyed children hidden behind masks and makeup will threaten tricks and gather treats as usual. But instead of going straight home, many parents will break the excitement for a while to have their children's candy X-rayed.

St. Joseph Hospital will screen the candy for metal objects tonight from 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

The program was started in 1983 by Carol McDermand, director of radiology at the hospital, who says she wanted to put the fun back into Halloween.

It was prompted in part by press releases and reports of people in metropolitan areas finding pins, razor blades and other objects in Hal-

loween candy, says Rees Stuteville, assistant director of radiology.

There are too many frightening stories — even if they're not from this community — that parents just don't forget, McDermand says.

Because the X-rays can only detect metal objects, Stuteville says, parents are asked to accompany their children and sign a permission slip showing that they understand the screening is not foolproof.

The hospital workers throw away all unwrapped and suspicious-looking candy because it can still contain undetected chemical substances, such as drugs or poisons, Stuteville says.

Some of the children get upset when you take away their candy, he says, but it's a lot better to have them upset than hurt.

Stuteville says the hospital has been lucky in past years and hasn't found any objects in the food.

But although no harmful candy has been found, McDermand says,

she still feels the project is a worthwhile.

"If nothing else, it gives parents peace of mind," she says.

Stuteville says it takes only 15 to 20 seconds to X-ray a large bag of candy and relieve worried parents.

"You hate to see a holiday lose importance because of a few warped minds and strange people who want to hurt a kid," he says.

He says this program helps continue the tradition of Halloween, but trick-or-treating safety should begin earlier. Parents should have a good idea of the neighborhood their children will be in, and be familiar with the people they will be visiting, he says.

Stuteville says he expects a lot of people to come to the screening tonight since the last program in 1984 had a surprisingly large turnout.

"The first time we set (the program) up, it was for only one hour and we had more kids than we could handle," Stuteville says.

# Mexican press supports protest against U.S. anti-drug measure

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Mexican newspapers Thursday staunchly backed the government in protesting the United States' new anti-drug law, charging that the singling out of Mexico revealed U.S. ignorance or even a plan to undermine the government.

The new law, signed this week by President Reagan, "implies improper interference in our affairs and shares in absolutely false and slanderous assumptions," the government newspaper *El Nacional* said in its editorial.

*Excelsior*, a respected Mexico City daily, said sections of the law "smack of hiding other aims, namely that of taking advantage of the drug-trafficking problem . . . to make the country more penetrable by foreign interests."

A State Department report issued

last week said Mexico in 1985 was the largest single-country source of heroin and marijuana imported into the United States and also a conduit for South American cocaine.

Mexico's Foreign Ministry on Wednesday protested to the State Department about parts of the new law.

They cited a provision urging the president to formally warn Americans of the dangers of Mexican travel "unless substantial progress is made in the near future" in the investigation of the kidnap-murder of one U.S. drug agent and the alleged torture of a second.

Another section, which does not mention Mexico but could create problems for the heavily indebted country, would end U.S. support for loans to drug-supplying countries from international development banks.

State Department spokesman Charles Redman said Thursday the Reagan administration did not support the sections of the legislation mentioned in the protest note.

Justice Department officials have expressed displeasure with the pace of Mexico's investigation of the February 1985 kidnap-murder of Enrique Camarena, a Drug Enforcement Administration agent.

*El Nacional* criticized the "neighbors to the north" who judge and condemn Mexico's judicial processes according to the U.S. legal system.

"The United States (has) the goal of assigning us the responsibility for a phenomenon that is not ours but is entirely theirs: the . . . growing consumption of narcotics, which is not an effect but a cause of the trafficking carried out across our territory," the newspaper said.



Photo by David White

## Good Sax

On the porch of the Victoria House, Tammy Knox, a junior business major from Madisonville, plays a tune. The house is a state historical landmark on 29th Street in Bryan.

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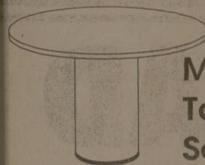
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