

Jack-o'-lantern becomes jack-o'-money

Halloween is here. Most people know this by looking at their calendar, those of us who don't believe in such sun-based meaning devices know by looking at our Oja boards.

But for all of us, there is one definite signal of a holiday's arrival — the smell of money. Yes, Halloween is now a commercial entity.

Yes, Halloween is now a commercial entity. It might not be as blatant as the marketing orgy that is Christmas (ain't it great), but it does take an in-depth probe to see the important role money plays in this holiday.

Some people don't recognize the influence money has on Halloween, thinking instead that it's a demonic influence exists. It's right, Halloween is the time when pagans and deviants everywhere put on the mask of their fallen demon and scare the wits out of a few televangelists.

Stories surface every year detailing the crusade of some religious authority, PTA member, school administrator or other concerned party, convinced that they must prevent kids from having any fun, they turn out to be as inept as the concerned.

They are worried that by dressing up in costumes, kids are more likely to worship evil, so they look upon it favorably. The people ignore the fact that between the Celtic and the demon nor Beelzebub.



micks (pumpkins, Little Mermaids, and Power Rangers). Is a kid's behavior going to be influenced by what they dress up as? No. As a kid I once dressed up as John Belushi from The Blues Brothers, and to this day I haven't had the urge to get fat and overdose in a \$200-a-day rented bungalow.

But there is something influencing us. Every Halloween we do worship at the altar of something powerful, yet it is neither a demon nor Beelzebub.

Halloween is about worshipping a deity that's a personal favorite of mine and hopefully yours too. No, not Bon Jovi, I'm talking about the almighty dollar. The largest relative economic impact is likely felt by the seasonal "pumpkin cartels." They appear, much like OPEC, to restrict the

flow of product into our country, allowing people enough time to forget the messiness of pumpkin carving and the taste of pumpkin pie. Then, when cultural traditions create demand, they flood the market with pumpkins.

But pumpkins are small potatoes (a point some botanists dispute) compared to other Halloween staples like candy, beer and razor blades. Candy has a near monopoly on the latter part of "trick or treat." Apples and raisins both made a push for market share but were rejected by all but the health-conscious geek population.

Beer, which has had success aligning itself with every known holiday except Alcohol Abstinence Day, has used many marketing approaches for Halloween. Most of these involve Elvira, a rather buxom lady in a tight black dress who appears to be in need of both a tan and year-round employment.

The inclusion of razor blades as an effected market was less social commentary than it was a cheap, tasteless attempt to get a laugh from cheap, tasteless people.

Many other products jump on the Halloween marketing bandwagon. Some adjust their packaging. This can be done by molding an everyday ordinary Twinkie into an incredible, orange and black bat-shaped Twinkie. Others use catchy names, such as the "Jack-o-Rita" at Chi Chi's Mexican Restaurant.

And what do we do with these products? We buy them. We are a capitalist society and our consumerist tendencies manifest themselves at every possible chance. Whose fault is it? Nobody's. The marketers of these products are just loyal disciples of the dollar, and the consumers, as we marketing majors are told, can't be blamed because they are just easily manipulated sheep.

Child-care program requires full support

If the Bryan Viking of offense overpowered Texas A&M's Wrecking Crew, people would not notice a problem. No one seems to care that the local high school has a better child-development center than A&M. Apparently, football is more important than educating our young children.



Marcus Goodyear
Senior English major

University administration for dragging its feet — the child-care center isn't happening fast enough. But at least someone has finally addressed the problem.

A&M currently has no child-care options. Next fall, though, our world-class University will enter the competitive arena of child development, with its own school for little people. Unfortunately, the Texas A&M Child Care Center may be too little, too late.

Mary Miller, chair of the Child Care Advisory Committee at A&M, said the idea of a University-sponsored preschool has been around for 20 years. She said the delay was the result of previous administrations stalling. "It takes people time to get used to new ideas, to explore new possibilities," Miller said.

Miller attributes the recent development of the child-care center to the University's new president. The center wasn't a real priority for earlier administrations, but Dr. Bowen was quite receptive to the idea. Under the guidance of his administration, a child-care center should be functioning by Fall 1997. A new building will house the center in the student apartment area across from the polo field.

At first, Miller said, "it won't be anything elaborate, but it will be functional." The advisory committee plans to include state-of-the-art educational programming and, eventually, accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

than most of the child-care centers in the community." Local centers charge anywhere from \$300 to \$440 per month. No problem. Everyone can afford an extra \$350 a month for quality care, right? Besides, no one can really expect free quality child care — except young mothers in Bryan ISD. Bryan's Options Child Development Center receives funding from three sources, including the school district. It is one of two Parent Education Pregnancy Programs in the state with NAEYC accreditation, and it is absolutely free to mothers who enter the program.

Both A&M and Bryan receive federal funding — so why will our quality child care cost so much while theirs is completely funded? The answer is simple. They have a Dr. Ashburn in charge, and we don't.

Options Director Maggie McGuire said "[Ashburn] is absolutely 100 percent behind early childhood intervention." A&M must not be 100 percent behind its new child-care center. It is merely exploring externally funded scholarships for students.

The faculty and Physical Plant staff, who Miller credits with pressuring A&M into action, are out of luck. The University's new center will be another expensive care option for them. Meanwhile, high school students who don't pay a General Use Fee are getting better, cheaper child care than A&M professors whose salaries are well below the national average.

Every Halloween we do worship at the altar of something very powerful, yet it is neither a demon nor Beelzebub.



Aggie honor code should be revised

Honesty is always the best policy. Or at least that is what everyone says. Honesty is such a virtue that it is included in our coveted "Aggie Code of Honor." And yet, often in Aggieland, the truth is treated with hostility. From national news right down to Wall Street, we are not discussing true honesty.



Aja Henderson
Senior political science major

ment betrays this idea. Perhaps this is because they honestly believe he is just the lesser of two evils, rather than having the makings of a great president.

The main thing Clinton is blasted for on this campus is his lack of ethics, including his womanizing. But let's be honest: Isn't it highly ironic for college men to be critical of someone for being a player? There are a lot of respectable men at this school, but they don't all sit around reading Psalms to their dates on the weekends. The same people lambasting Clinton need to look in the mirror, because they would probably die to know Slick Willy's secret.

And this pain in my leg reminds me of another thing — can Aggies just get honest about that standing up at the games tradition? Come on, we know our legs hurt. This tradition is very straining on the joints, and it is downright scary if you are standing on the third deck — a.k.a. nosebleed alley. If just one section would get honest, fight the power and sit down, I'm sure that everyone would. It'd be one huge, relieved wave.

From politics to our beloved A&M, we need to practice the precious family values that Aggies claim to hold so dear and stop running scared of the truth. Until we achieve this, the part of the honor code that reads "Aggies do not lie" will continue to be laughable.



MAIL CALL

Church relies on its past, not popularity

Regarding Heather Pace's Oct. 30 column, "Catholic Church's policy evolves slowly to present day": Here is a simple analogy. If you take the color yellow and add some blue, you get green. Green, as you know, is not yellow. Likewise, if the corrupted ideas of modern society were to be accepted by the Catholic Church, the Church would no longer be Catholic.

Furthermore, like the society in which we live, the Church would begin to fall apart. The Church's authentic teachings on preserving the dignity of all human life (including the unborn), opposing the use of artificial birth control, and encouraging families are essential elements of its existence.

It is true that many people, like Pace, are trying to coerce the Church into conforming with society. However, true Catholicism will be as it always has been: standing for something, so that it does not fall for anything. Any variation is not Catholicism. What is popular is not always right; what is right is not always popular.

Why try and book more passengers on a sinking ship? I am not Catholic but, as a Christian, I am insulted by Pace's insinuation that the apparent conflict between science and religion (which is in fact a conflict between the two religions naturalism and theism) can only be solved if Christians adopt the assumptions of the other side.

And comparing the Church's geocentric doctrine to its refusal to ordain female priests only shows ignorance of the fact that the latter has Biblical backing and the former does not.

What Christians must realize is that this pragmatic approach will never work. As the Church has become more politically correct in recent years, it has increasingly lost membership. And besides, who says God is politically correct? We must in all things strive to live according to God's will, not that of modern society. The truth does not change to suit those who would reject it.

I have picked up cans and beer bottles off our church parking lot on numerous occasions, and we are grateful for "allies against trash."

Let me encourage the businesses of Northgate to help in this effort by providing more garbage cans in their parking lots and by sending out their employees at quitting time to pick up trash.

Tolerance required for all of humanity

Regarding Charlie Johanson's Oct. 24 Mail Call, "Homosexuality has no place in world": I am not gay, but I do think homosexuals deserve at least the rights accorded to everyone else. They are no less needed and valuable to society.

Johanson's statements also resemble the attitudes toward minorities in this country years ago. This person is bigoted and a menace to the society he seeks to uphold. People who refuse to accept the fact that other people's private choices are no business of theirs are wrong. It is they, and not their victims, who should be shunned.

Jacqueline J. Miller
Class of '99

Kudos to RHA for clean up support

Regarding Wesley Poston's Oct. 24 article, "RHA adopts program to clean up church parking lots": As president of the Campus Ministry Association and as one who works at one of the Northgate churches, let me express our appreciation to the Residence Housing Association for helping clean up the church parking lots at 1:30 a.m. on Sunday mornings. We are all deeply appreciative.

Christopher Cook
Class of '99

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