

Trick-or-Treaters Face Spooky Coincidence

PJ O'CONNELL
Staff Reporter

This Halloween, trick-or-treaters across the world will face a mystifying natural event that none have witnessed before. After all of the bizarre events of 2020, we will now encounter a full moon, a blue moon, and daylight savings time all on the night of October 31.

The convergence of these three events has never happened and will unlikely happen again. Although a full moon occurs once a month and a blue moon occurs every two or three years, a full blue moon has not been seen since 2007. Daylight Savings Time, or DST, usually occurs in late October or early November. This is the first time it has occurred on Halloween since 2007. In 2005, President George W.

Bush signed the Energy Policy Act, which made all states observe Daylight Savings Time. This act benefited farmers, but also gave trick-or-treaters an extra hour during Halloween. For 2005-2007, DST in the United States occurred exclusively on Halloween night. But since then, we have not had a DST on Halloween since 2007. Another reason for this Halloween to be even spookier.

Blue moons, which tend to occur once every two to three years, are less common than DST. The last blue moon was seen on March 31, 2018 and was not a full blue moon, which we will all witness this Halloween. Some people have theorized that a full blue moon, especially on

Halloween, is prime hunting time for werewolves to emerge and find young targets to feast on. Other conspiracy theorists have tied a blue moon to a biblical significance saying "a bad omen is expected to come."

Pastor Paul Begley, an evangelical YouTuber, made a video to his 350,000+ subscribers saying "You get a Blue Moon on Halloween, in the same month of the election coming? It's a bad omen according to almost every ancient society."

He continues to say, "The fact that a Blue Moon is a bad omen - I don't want to speak it - it is a sign from heaven... God set it up so that we would have a Blue Moon on Halloween this year." Pastor Begley went on to in-

clude the unusual number of hurricanes in the Atlantic Ocean, the record-breaking wildfires in California, and earthquakes all across the globe are all signs of God's plans for humanity. He finally claims, "While all this is going on guys, we still have volcanoes erupting and we have an unscheduled Blood Moon over California. This is a prophecy alert."

It is very unlikely that a world-ending event will occur this Halloween, but with many conspiracy theories and even pastors getting involved on the unlikely signs that we will witness, we will need to make sure we say a few extra prayers this spooky season.

Classmates Count Down Best Halloween Costumes

BETHANY HARDAWAY
Staff Reporter

A tradition unlike any other, Halloween is always a great opportunity to express oneself. Classic disguises such as sheet ghosts, vampires, and witches are sure to make an appearance alongside this year's costume fads.

In a year as bizarre as 2020, Halloween costumes are bound to follow suit, an example of this being the sales of Joe Exotic and Carol Baskin outfits on the rise. Time-sensitive apparel such as a hazmat suit or a presidential candidate are also clever options for this year's All Hallows Eve.

As teenagers and children

alike figure out their attire, noticeable trends include characters of early 90's movies namely Cher from Clueless or Regina George of Mean Girls. History fans might wish to borrow a costume from "Hamilton" or create a look inspired by a beloved past figure of theirs.

Aliens and Cowboys also appear to be a popular choice, as well as costumes inspired by our generation's childhood favorites like the Powerpuff Girls or Bratz Dolls. For those that are "boo'd" up this Halloween and looking for a couple's costume, Bonnie

and Clyde are a timeless option.

Sophia Caple said this year she chose to be a doctor, and celebrating Halloween as a senior is "still fun and the excitement of candy makes me nostalgic." Sophia is not alone in her celebrations. Charlotte Catholic's 2021 class will carry on the tradition of wearing costumes the school day before the holiday.

Morgan Brady said for the senior dress-up day she's going to be Maleficent and her favorite part of the tradition is "that it's only seniors." Catholic

seniors are encouraged to wear creative and appropriate costumes that amuse students and teachers.

Whether students take inspiration from a TV show, social media, or their own genius our school is bound to have interesting wardrobe choices on October 29th.

Halloween's Haunting History

ALEX NEWELL
Staff Reporter

Every year on the last day of October, kids travel house to house in creative costumes to receive candy, and hopefully not a box of raisins. But where does this tradition originate from?

The celebration derives from the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain, which acknowledges the end of the summer and harvest and the beginning of the cold winter. The Celts would light bonfires and put on costumes to scare off ghosts. Poor people would also knock on the doors of the

wealthy and would be given pastries called soul cakes so that they would pray for the dead relatives of the wealthy family. This led to trick or treating, something commonly practiced today on Halloween.

The Celts believed that the divide between the living and the dead was at its weakest at this time, so they trusted that those that had died in the past year were able to communicate and interact with the living.

The following day, the first of November, was

later made a holy day honoring the Catholic saints by Pope Gregory the 3rd. Ironically, though Christians believed that the Samhain celebrations were sinful, this new holiday incorporated traditions from the Samhain. The day before All Saints Day was then called All Hallows' Eve, or Halloween.

Halloween was not a very popular celebration at the time of the colonization of America because of the strict Protestants in the northern colonies. However, by

the nineteenth century, the idea of telling ghost stories at this time of year was growing in popularity. Halloween was not nationally recognized until the end of the century, when Europeans immigrated in massive numbers to Colonial America.

El Dia de los Muertos

KARA BIVENS
Staff Reporter

The end of October brings not only Halloween, but also Día de los Muertos, or the Day of the Dead. Many people of Mexican and Latin American heritage will spend the three days from October 31 to November 2 honoring the souls of their departed family members through a series of traditions that go back nearly 3000 years.

Día de los Muertos has its origins in early Mesoamerican rituals of the Aztecs and other pre-Columbian peoples. Death was seen as a part of the cycle of life, and souls were believed to take a difficult journey to their final resting place after death. These early practices of honoring the souls of the dead took place throughout most of

August, and family members set out water, food, and supplies to help the souls on their journey. Día de los Muertos also combines European and Spanish traditions. In medieval Spain, offerings of spirit bread would be left on graves of their loved ones on All Souls Day. Spanish conquistadors brought traditions like these to the Americas, where they blended with the Aztec traditions. The sweet pan de muerto, or bread of the dead, for example, is a traditional offering based on Spanish spirit bread that is left on many altars during Día de los Muertos. Modern celebrations of the Day of the Dead include visiting the graves of deceased family members, lighting candles, and leav-

ing offerings. Some altars are built for small religious ceremonies and decorated with ofrendas, or offerings, that include marigolds and sugar skulls. Traditions surrounding the Day of the Dead vary from place to place. In some towns, if the deceased person being honored is a child, offerings can include toys that the child enjoyed, a rosary to ask the Virgin Mary to pray for the child, and other items that celebrate the child's life.

Two separate holidays make up the Day of the Dead, with November 1 being dedicated to deceased children and November 2 being the true Day of the Dead. These overlap with the Catholic practices of All Saints

and All Souls Days, respectively. Ceremonies can begin as early as October 31, and preparations can be made the entire year for the days when the spirits visit.

Honoring the spirits of deceased family members is an important part of many cultures. Día de los Muertos is a time not only to remember those we have lost but also to strengthen connections among family members that are still living.

The History of Exorcisms

MAC SIZELAND
Staff Reporter

To the secular world, exorcisms are mysterious and frightening-- a popular subject of horror movies like *The Exorcist* and *The Nun*. Most of these movies also feature Catholicism as an aesthetic, with Latin phrases and crucifixes treated as mystical and strange. These fictions have grains of truth, though, in the real Catholic practice of exorcism.

Tradition says that this custom began with Jesus instructing the Apostles to rid people of demons "in His name," and from that command comes the wealth of resources that give direction for this procedure: "De Exorcismis et Supplicationibus Quibusdam (Of Exorcisms and Certain Supplications)" and "Vade Retro, Satana (Step back, Satan)" being the two Vatican-approved texts for priests to take guidance from. While it seems demystified now, when the Church first adapted exorcisms

into practice in the 15th century they studied pagan rituals and grimoires to decide how best to attack satanic forces.

Practice varied between regions, but often priests and laypeople would invoke the names of St. Michael, Mary, and Jesus and douse the victim in holy water to strike down demons. As Protestant sects broke away from the Church, they adapted their doctrines to fit how they felt exorcisms should be performed and recommended them less often than the Catholic Church-- even permitting laypeople to carry out exorcisms after the Church ended that practice.

The procedure did not change much over the centuries, but the Vatican emphasized that exorcism should not be regarded "as superstition" and allowed only select priests trained in exorcism to perform the rite. Victims

must be evaluated for mental or psychological conditions before any spiritual intervention. This practice began as Church officials learned more about what caused behaviour they classified as possession.

Eventually, the Church decided to distinguish between major and minor exorcisms, with minor exorcisms being an expulsion of unclean spirits that happens at Baptism where the baptized or baptized's godparents rebuke the devil. Major exorcisms are formal ceremonies where a priest employs intense prayer lasting for hours or days to cast out a demon from a possessed person.

Famous movies featuring exorcisms have often been inspired by famous real-life exorcisms. *The Exorcism of Anna Ecklund* pulled details from the story of Emma Schmidt, a woman who underwent a 14-day exorcism

in 1928 after reportedly being possessed for 32 years. According to the exorcist Fr. Theophilus Riesinger, she "hissed like a cat, refused food doused in holy water, and... levitated" while being possessed by "Judas Iscariot... and Beezlebub." The exorcism ended successfully with Emma being released, and she died "pure" in 1943.

The spiritual roots of exorcism cannot be severed from the aesthetic. However hard Hollywood tries, they only associate the Catholic Church with superstition and obsolete ideas. Hopefully with the newfound interest in demons and the occult in youth culture, the Church can use this as an opportunity to educate the greater world about their more obscure practices.

Is Halloween Safe During a Pandemic?

ROBERT VERRIER
Staff Reporter

As the Covid-19 pandemic continues to steamroll its way through 2020, as we approach Halloween this weekend, we have to ask ourselves - is trick-or-treating safe during a pandemic?

It appears the CDC has delegated this decision to the local governments, with some forbidding trick or treating and others leaving the choice to the trick-or-treater.

Some areas around the country are limiting trick-or-treating to certain amounts of homes, or trying "reverse trick or treating", where personal goody bags are made for children and left on their front doorstep, as opposed to children going from house to house and picking up their own candy.

Another idea suggests "drive thru" trick-or-treating, where candy can be distributed to children sitting in their cars as their parents drive them from house to house, with candy-givers standing at the foot of their driveways.

"Trunk-or-treat", an idea used in the past, where families would bring their children to a safe, reserved parking lot occupied by parents giving them candy from out of their decorated trunks, is likely off the table. Trunk or treat involves cars being parked in close proximity to one another, and therefore, may be deemed unsafe. However, because it is exclusively an outdoor activity, local governments may be more inclined to favor a socially distanced trunk-or-treat as opposed to an indoor party.

The main problem people find with trick-or-treating would be the idea of children digging through a "take one" candy bowl, trick-or-treating with friends without masks, and the possibility of a candy giver having Covid without knowing and distributing it to children and their families. With all these risks considered, I find it hard to believe that trick or treating as normal, with an additional mask or face covering is not the safest way

to approach trick-or-treating in a pandemic. If just one trick-or-treater has Covid, and we proceed as normal with this Halloween, the affects may be felt by dozens, or even hundreds of people in their neighborhood.

So, if standard trick-or-treating isn't the solution, what is? I find the safest idea to be drive thru trick-or-treating.

Although ideas such as reverse trick-or-treating limit the face to face and hand to hand contact of trick-or-treating, it also takes the child out of trick-or-treating, which is at the forefront of the experience. Children sitting in their homes and waiting for candy to arrive at their front door defeats the purpose of trick-or-treating. Some of my fondest childhood memories take me back to Halloween night, and dressing up as my favorite superheroes or characters from television and movies, and removing the aspect of trick-or-treating takes the excitement away from Halloween itself.

Conceptually speaking, socially

distanced trunk-or-treat may be a safe idea. However, say for instance, someone at this event has Covid, and spreads it to various people at the event. Those people likely don't live in the same neighborhood, as they have congregated at this event in a parking lot. The people may bring home the disease and spread it throughout more than one neighborhood, all because of this event.

I believe this leaves drive thru trick-or-treating to be the safest choice. The drive thru system accomplishes the main goals of trick-or-treating and keeping people safe during this pandemic - limiting the in person interaction, while at the same time, being able to wear costumes (as well as a mask) and experience Halloween from the safety and comfort of your family vehicle.

However you choose to trick-or-treat this weekend, please make sure to do it safely and wear a mask, to protect both yourself and those who surround you.

The Scarlet Spirit

ABIGAIL HAHN
Staff Reporter

He first met her when he was eight years old. His mother had long since turned off the lights but he could not sleep. Strange shapes formed in his mind—if he squeezed his eyes closed, the world turned red and shapes danced before him, leaving eerie white silhouettes that followed his gaze.

It was only after he had done this thrice that he first saw the girl sitting on the foot of his bed. It did not even occur to him to be frightened—it rarely does to children at that age. The girl was wearing a white, lacy petticoat and a corset hidden beneath a long felten cape stained blood red. Most of her blonde hair was pulled back into a bun, with curled tendrils framing her face. She smiled and crawled across his bed to sit next to him.

“Good evening,” she said, in a soft voice with a lilting accent. “What’s your name? I’m Georgiana Evanson.” The boy couldn’t find the words to respond. The girl simply laughed and shifted closer to him, the rough exterior of her cape rubbing against his exposed arm. “That’s okay,” she whispered in his ear. “I already know who you are. You’re my big brother.”

“No I’m not.” The words burst from his mouth, and an inkling of fear trickled down the back of his neck. “I don’t even know you.”

“Yes, you do,” Georgiana said. Her eyes narrowed, and the boy made out a flash of blue beneath her lowered eyelashes. “Don’t lie to me. I never like it when little boys lie. What is your name, little boy?” she asked, throwing one half of her cape around his shoulders and pulling him even closer.

“I won’t tell you,” he pouted, and placing his hands on her waist, he shoved her away. She toppled over the side of his bed, but when he anxiously peeked at the floor, she was gone.

The next morning, the boy awoke to his mother’s screams. “Oh, darling, what happened to you?” she gasped, pulling his pajama shirt, now slick with blood, over his head. The boy’s shoulders and right forearm—the places where Georgiana’s rough coat

had touched—were covered in angry burns.

His parents took him to every specialist they could, but in vain. One was convinced they were because of fire, another insisted they were chemical burns, and yet another was simply too shocked to speak. The boy would bear the scars for the rest of his life.

The boy’s father was startled to find a porcelain doll lying at the foot of his son’s bed. Her curly blonde hair was loose, and her pink dress was in tatters next to her, leaving her clothed in nothing more than a tiny corset and lavish petticoat. A tiny red traveling coat was tied at her throat. “That’s strange,” the boy’s father whispered as he leaned in to examine her lovely face, “I could have sworn I’ve seen her before...”

The next time he saw Georgiana, he was twelve years old. His mother had given birth to another child, a daughter named Laura, when the boy was nine years old. Despite this, his parents remained devoted to their handsome, intelligent son and regarded their daughter as inferior in both intellect and appearance.

His eyes had just begun to flutter with sleep when Georgiana appeared in front of him. Her clothing was the same, but her hair was loose, and she was older, prettier, and far more menacing than he remembered. “Hello again,” she said in the same lilting voice as before. “You don’t need to tell me your name this time. I already know.” She leaned towards him. “It’s Walter.”

“Do you have a problem with that?” he whispered, unconsciously rubbing his scarred shoulder. She terrified him, but he wouldn’t show it—he couldn’t—not to a girl, at least.

“I suppose I expected more. Your sister on the other hand...she’s something, isn’t she?” Georgiana mused.

“I don’t care. She is nothing to me,” he sneered. “Nothing to anyone. Nor will she ever be.”

The girl’s eyes flashed with anger, but the boy was

too caught up in himself to notice. “Do tell me, Walter...what is it you value most of all? Not your sister?”

“Of course not,” he scoffed. “I like being smart much better.”

Georgiana reached across the bed and drew her index finger over his forehead. “That should help you greatly in your...shall we say...intellectual pursuits,” she purred, and as suddenly as she appeared, she was gone.

That morning, he awoke to find a porcelain doll clutched between his arms, its brilliant blue eyes staring up at him.

Over the course of a year, the boy’s intelligence regressed. Teachers, once astonished by his level of understanding, were forced to place him in lower and lower classes until he was struggling among classmates he had once openly mocked.

All the while, his younger sister grew in age and knowledge. By the time she was eight, she was the one blamed, by him and his parents, for his underperformance. She was distracting, she was a nuisance, she could never understand what he was going through.

Of those accusations, only the latter was true. She could not understand her brother’s cruelty, her parents’ scorn. She understood only herself and her books.

The final time he saw Georgiana, he was eighteen years old.

He had been attempting to pin a rose to his suit jacket in preparation for homecoming, but his clumsy fingers only crushed the delicate flower and poked holes in the expensive fabric. The third time the stem’s thorns drew blood from the palm of his hand, Georgiana’s face appeared in his mirror.

She looked more beautiful than any other woman he had ever seen. Her blonde curls were held back with small pearl pins. He could see that she was clothed in a pink bodice with a delicate golden chain bearing an amber cross. Her blue eyes burned with rage.

“What are you doing, Walter?” she growled, brilliant spots of red appearing on her cheeks. He was so frightened by her, he could not even form words. She let out a magnificent sigh, and reached out her hand through the glass and absentmindedly brushed her finger over his forehead. He let out a gasp as understanding came flooding back to him. “What have you done to me?” he breathed.

Georgiana ignored his question. “Who is the most important woman in your life?” she asked, her eyes fluttering closed.

“Women? None matter to me.” The words burst forth from his mouth involuntarily, and instantly knew that he had said the wrong thing.

“How dare you,” the girl in the mirror hissed. “How dare you? After all I have done to prevent this?” For the first time, her eyes looked into his. For a moment, Georgiana’s reflection faded and he saw himself. His hair thinned and lost its sheen; his eyes yellowed and dulled; his shoulders slumped, his jawline bulged, and he crashed into the vanity as his appearance changed from handsome to horrific.

“Why are you doing this?” he howled, staring in horror as his reflection faded back into the girl’s beautiful face. “I have done nothing to you! I simply don’t care for my sister!”

“Don’t you see, Walter?” Georgiana’s voice was suddenly deathly calm. “Can’t you see? That’s the point. I am every woman that has been suppressed and ignored by this family for generations. I am your sister. I am Laura. Do you not look at me and see your sister?” It was only then that he connected Laura’s golden waves and eyes like slices of the sky with Georgiana’s curls and forget-me-nots. “But why take it out on me? I haven’t done anything at all!”

“And that is precisely why. There have always been two—an elder boy and a younger girl superior in every way. But her parents have always chosen him. And today it must end. They are no better than us. Every other man in your line has been able to admit it is so. But you...well, I warned you, did I not? I never did like it when little boys lie.”

The “Man” in the Mirror

JOSEPH FLYNN
Staff Reporter

Halloween stories often center on uncanny encounters with the supernatural, from ghosts to vampires, even to haunted objects. Local Charlottean Tom Wilson claims to have recently had such an encounter. The following is from his account.

Wilson had recently moved to the area, and some of his furniture was damaged in the move, including a mirror now with broken glass. A few days later as he was driving home from work, by chance he saw a mirror sitting out on the curb of someone’s lawn. He said, “I could tell it was either meant to be picked up by the garbage, or they were giving it away. I assumed the latter and took it, but I now have a suspicion that whoever lived in that house had meant it to be the former.”

It wasn’t anything special, just a plane mirror with a simple dark

wooden frame. Wilson didn’t notice anything off about it as he looked at it, and the only damage was a little chipping in the wood in one of the corners of the frame.

He then loaded it into the trunk of his car and drove it back home. He said, “I noticed on the drive home that the mirror was upright in the trunk, facing my rearview mirror. I didn’t remember positioning it like that, but I thought nothing of it.”

When he arrived home, he decided to lean it against the wall in his bedroom. He noted that he intentionally faced it away from his bed.

The encounter didn’t happen until night. Wilson woke up in the middle of the night to use the bathroom, but when the light flooded out from the bathroom as he left it, it shined on the mirror, and he first saw his reflection in it.

“There was something else that I

saw in the reflection. It was me... but it wasn’t. It was taller, bulkier. But when I looked into its eyes, something about it scared me.” Frightened but unable to look away, Wilson continued to stare into his reflection. He began to inch forward for a closer look until his nose was inches away from the glass. The figure in the mirror began to extend a hand toward him as he felt his arm do the same.

Before his hand touched the mirror, his cat meowed at him, pulling his attention away. “I swear I saw the thing’s eyes flash from the corner of my eye when I looked away from it,” he said. He went to check on his cat, and when he returned, the mirror itself had vanished.

“I really don’t know what might’ve happened if I hadn’t looked away. I’m inclined to believe I would’ve vanished with it.”

He searched all over his apart-

ment for it, and even outside his apartment. He didn’t sleep that night. He couldn’t find it. The next morning, he returned to the house where he had found the mirror, only to be met with confusion from the residents, who didn’t seem to remember putting a mirror out.

Wilson speculates that the mirror may have moved on to someone else like him. “I know I sound like some sort of crazy conspiracy theorist, but I’m just telling you what happened.”

If he’s correct, the mirror has likely moved into its next victim’s path. It could be anywhere in the world right now. It may not even look the same. As Wilson has advised, “make sure to avoid any strange mirrors you see, especially this haunted season. They’re no good.”

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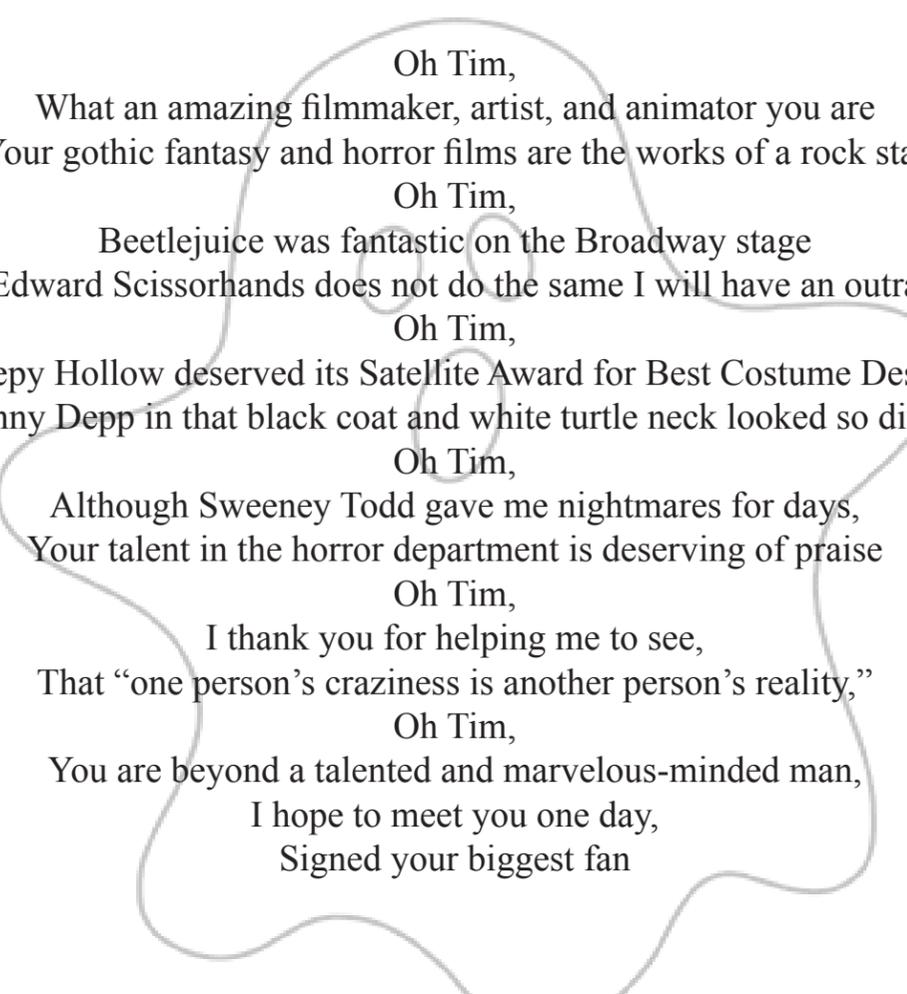
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Ode to Tim Burton

TESS VALKOVSKI
Staff Reporter



Oh Tim,
What an amazing filmmaker, artist, and animator you are
Your gothic fantasy and horror films are the works of a rock star
Oh Tim,
Beetlejuice was fantastic on the Broadway stage
If Edward Scissorhands does not do the same I will have an outrage
Oh Tim,
Sleepy Hollow deserved its Satellite Award for Best Costume Design
Johnny Depp in that black coat and white turtle neck looked so divine
Oh Tim,
Although Sweeney Todd gave me nightmares for days,
Your talent in the horror department is deserving of praise
Oh Tim,
I thank you for helping me to see,
That “one person’s craziness is another person’s reality,”
Oh Tim,
You are beyond a talented and marvelous-minded man,
I hope to meet you one day,
Signed your biggest fan

The Skeleton That Remains

TESS MULLIGAN
Staff Reporter

The sticks cracked beneath Natalie Cormen’s boot as she ventured through the forest. The sun was about to set. This was her favorite time to be in the woods. While most people found the forest at night to be mysterious and unsettling, Natalie found it calming and still.

The farther she continued, the denser the trees and brush became until she found herself staring into the mouth of a massive cave. Natalie suddenly felt an insatiable curiosity to explore the dark, mysterious den. She pulled out the flashlight she carried in her backpack, flicked it on, and ventured into the abyss. Immediately, she felt an intense temperature drop, the hair on the back of her neck standing upright. She shivered and carried on.

Natalie’s light flashed against the sparkling rocky walls glistening with water. Her boots crunched the rocks and gravel beneath her feet as she descended. She felt like she walked for miles until she found herself at the open of a hollow cavern.

Natalie breathed out in awe. Her breath fogged in front of her, which she thought was strange given that it was June, but after her initial concern, she pushed it out of her mind. Stalactites stretched down from the ceiling and stalagmites grew from the ground like the teeth of the jaws of a monster.

On the sides of the wall, Natalie noticed strange figures drawn with what appeared to be red dye. As she drew nearer, her excitement grew. They were cave paintings, almost

certainly authentic ones. She ran up to them to get a closer look. They were unlike any depictions she had ever seen in her studies of history in college. These showed humans hunting beasts that she had never seen before. Beasts with horns, beasts with wings. One even looked humanoid, but it couldn’t have been. It had gangly limbs and a hollowed skull with tusks in the head. Its arms and hands were outstretched as if it were casting a spell.

If these findings were genuine, they would be a massive archaeological find. Natalie backed up from the wall, her feet skipping in jubilation. Her heart raced. Just as she moved to turn, she suddenly crashed to the ground.

Natalie hit the dirt and hissed as gravel bit into her palm. She brushed it off of her hand and looked down to see what she tripped over. For a moment, all she saw was dirt until her flashlight began reflecting bits of white. Natalie’s brow furrowed as she reached forward to grab the object.

From the dust emerged the bone from a foot. Natalie screamed, dropped both the foot and her flashlight, and frantically scrambled backwards. Her heart pounded, and she breathed in short, panicked gasps.

For several moments, her heightened senses focused solely on the bone in front of her, but slowly, as she regained her bearings, she was able to clear her mind and quell her fear. She stood tentatively, almost like she

was afraid that if she moved too quickly, the skeleton would rise and attack her. But that didn’t happen. She stood and the foot did not.

With a gust of courage, Natalie inched forward and reached down to pick up the flashlight she had dropped. Next to it, she spotted the outlines of a skull. She grimaced in disgust and backed away quickly. For a few moments, her curiosity overpowered her fear. She looked at the skeleton intently and then began scanning the cave once more.

Natalie’s heart began to race again. Her senses were heightened at the sight of bone, and now she was seeing it everywhere. In the ground, in the walls...in the ceiling. In the back center of the cave rested a skeleton, completely uncovered. It was positioned on a rock, almost like it was sitting on a throne. Its head was tilted back so that Natalie couldn’t see it. How had she not noticed it earlier? She could have sworn she looked over there.

Natalie’s eyes were glued to the kingly figure. Suddenly, she was overcome with an urge to leave this place. An overwhelming need to run. So she did.

Natalie tore her eyes from the skeleton, and began sprinting away before she even had the chance to fully turn.

She raced back through the path she came, the uniform rock walls whipping by her, too fast for her to even comprehend. It was a straight shot in, it would be a straight shot

out.

The wind whistling in her ears sounded like high pitched laughing. Her lungs screamed with adrenaline and terror. Tears pricked at her eyes as she felt a soul-crushing panic and fear consume her. Natalie needed to get out of here now. She felt like she was being followed, but she knew in her heart of hearts, that if she turned to check, she would surely die. She continued running until she came to a dead end, another tunnel to her right leading her down a second path. She didn’t remember ever having to turn, but she had no choice. She blitzed down the new hallway until she came to a dead end once again.

New panic began to creep into Natalie’s heart and mind. What if she couldn’t get out of this cave? She didn’t have the strength to go back to the cavern. She quickly weighed her options but it was no use. Natalie fell to her knees in despair. This was the exit. It had to be and there was nothing but a hard wall of rock and stone in front of her. Natalie sobbed. She felt hopeless, lost, and terribly scared.

Her crying suddenly stopped when she felt a cold gust of wind. She sensed a deeply evil presence in the room.

Natalie did not have the courage to turn around. If she did, she knew, for a fact that she would see a human-like figure with gangly limbs and tusks in its skeleton jaw. She closed her eyes and accepted her fate.

Horror Movies Haunt *Us*

BILLY HICKS
Staff Reporter

Normally, if you wanted to find the best or most popular horror movies, all it would take is a simple google search: “Most popular horror movies.”

You would next pull up the Rotten Tomatoes page, where it would tell you.... *Us* (2019) is the best horror film of all time? That can't be right. I doubt most people who say they saw the movie even remember what it's about. In fact, I had to remind Nicholas Shallal, who had seen the movie last year, what *Us* even was.

“A family returns to an old beachfront home and, after some foreshadowing, four masked figures force them to fight for survival.” After a few seconds, some recognition began to show on his face. “Oh yeah... that movie.”

I refuse to accept a reality where *Us* is hailed as the best horror film, so naturally I set out to find the opinions of real people regard-

ing the best horror movie.

Also, it is universally accepted that horror films pre-1990 are in an entirely different class than modern horror films, so I made sure to ask everyone their favorite from each category.

With a sample size of 15 people, hopefully we can usurp *Us* from its throne on Rotten Tomatoes.

In the pre-1990 category, there were two clear favorites. *The Thing* (1982) received six votes, while *The Shining*, a close second, received four votes.

At first, I was a bit confused by the results. I knew that *The Thing* was a decent horror film, but I was surprised that it had managed to surpass *The Shining*, which is held in high regard by critics and has received awards for its performances and storytelling.

Then it struck me. Recently, the game “Among Us” has surged in popularity, matching and surpass-

ing even that of “Fortnite.”

“Among Us” is a game with up to ten players, where an “Imposter” disguises as a crewmember and attempts to kill everyone before being found out.

Sound familiar? It is very similar in concept to *The Thing*, with several jokes already being made about the inherent similarity between the two.

To draw even more parallels, one of the “Among Us” maps takes place in the Arctic, which may be a direct reference to *The Thing*. Without a doubt, this game is responsible for the surge in popularity in a film that would generally place second or third on this list.

Regardless, *The Shining* coming in second place is to be completely expected, as it has been a horror classic for several generations.

And now for the good news. For the modern horror film section, *Us* received only one vote, proving

Rotten Tomatoes wrong.

Admittedly, they did nail second and third place. The movie *Get Out* received five votes, with someone even calling it an “underrated masterpiece”. *A Quiet Place* received four votes, putting it in second place.

Both of these movies are undoubtedly really good modern horror movies, and they may even hold a candle to the classics.

In fact, Matthew Schmidt, a Charlotte Catholic Junior, claims that they even surpass the classics in some ways. And hey, with the lackluster horror movie releases this year, now would be a perfect time to catch up on any of the movies and form an opinion for yourself.

