

## **Donut Robberies, Cinema Voting, and The Halloween Parade**

By Michael J. Atwood

Parenthood changes your priorities. Just five years ago on All Hallows's Eve, you'd find me at Sonny Maclean's Pub or out to dinner with my wife in Beverly Hills; there was no need to stay around because we had no kids! Our rent-control apartment in Santa Monica was not exactly a haven for trick-or-treaters unless you counted the drunks from J.P.'s, a bar next door, trespassing on our front step. There was no need to pass out candy either.

However, just one presidential term later, my life is much different. I spent this past Friday night trick-or-treating with my kids since I am a father of two now. By 4:30 p.m. my son was dressed as Superman, ready to move faster than a speeding bullet and collect candy from the entire neighborhood.

My assignment for the night was simple: pull the kids in the red wagon and take photographs to commemorate the evening for the West Coast grandparents. Although we were not equipped with live a video feed, the plan was to email them the minute I arrived home, around 5:00 p.m. their time. It would as if they were with us the entire time.

Around 7:00 p.m., we met our neighbors Ann and Glen with their daughters, Madeline and Charlotte. It was a warm Autumn evening, warmer than recent Halloweens. Our Halloween parade route was fairly easy: stops on Ash Street at the Sandlands and then over to our backyard neighbors, Tom and Monica. We made the usual visits to the old Victorian mansions of South Washington Street, stopping to say "Hello" to the Roches and then meandered over to the pristine neighborhood on Hunting Street. When the oldest child of your crew is just four years and ten months, you tend to stay local. I

was privileged to be enjoying this evening not only with Superman but also a fairy princess (Madeline) and a white-furry kitty cat (Megan).

Most neighbors were out in full force. Still there were some houses that remained dark, not a trace of light to be found, which seemed a bit anti-Halloween. Maybe everyone was out with their own kids or perhaps their grandkids or maybe just had enough of Halloween with the recent dip in the economy.

Other neighbors transformed their homes to magical haunted mansions to the joy of the kids. One couple on Hunting Street won my vote for scariest house. They not only made their home look haunted but also scared the heck out of our crew when we realized the witch on the front step was real and actually the homeowner. And I can't forget Bev Pini's effort. Her house on South Washington is always, always perfect on Halloween. I imagine they all spent hours doing this for the kids.

My daughter, Megan eventually had enough and a meltdown ensued so dad and daughter retired early. I put her to bed and greeted about five more trick-or-treaters at our door, kids I didn't recognize, who grabbed candy and jumped back into an out-of-town car idling outside. William came home and dumped his candy on the living room floor and eating some before heading up to bed. There were tears when we limited him to one piece and stored the rest away for tomorrow. But nevertheless, it was truly a wonderful Halloween for all on Colburn Street.

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Earlier in the week there was a failed robbery attempt at the Dunkin' Donuts on Route 1 and Park St. that I go to most mornings at about 6:50 a.m.. Apparently, an employee was

lining the trash when he was accosted by a man with a weapon, fought back, and made the culprit subsequently flee. I'm not sure exactly what that criminal was looking for beyond trash bags, discarded donuts, or maybe the employee's tips...for about an hour's worth of work. I'd have fears that our town was going south but I know what I'm like when I don't get my coffee in the morning so maybe that was his motivation. Thankfully the employee was unscathed but the coffee bandit is still on the loose. The N.A.P.D. are investigating

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By the time you read this, I'll have cast my vote for John McCain...at the Showcase Cinemas. Come again? Did I read the notice correctly? I'm casting my vote for the leader of the Free World at a movie theater? I understand people want change in this town, to make things more modern, but how am I supposed to respect a process that takes place in the same venue that Saw V and High School Musical III are playing? Call me a conservative, but there was something much more American casting my vote in the auditorium at Amvet or at the gymnasium at North Attleborough High School.