

Happy Halloween from This Week

By Sarah Sobanski

It's just about that time of year again. Eleven-year-olds are dying their hair. Parents are buying animal print cotton onesies for their one-year-olds. The teens who turned out of their preteens this year, who probably shouldn't be trick-or-treating anymore, are taking after those of us who used masks to do it until we were pushing 15 ? guilty. Must be Halloween.

This Halloween falls on a Monday. I can't remember that having happened since I was young enough to trick-or-treat ? so I'm not going to type away and spout nonsense about Halloween tricks and tips. I will ask however, why can't Halloween be the last weekend of every October? Some of us have school in the morning, or day care or day jobs.

I digress ? I have a hard time getting behind Halloween any day of any year. Jump-scares get me every time. It can be a groundhog coming out of a hole in the ground and I will scream like I'm the one behind the shower curtain. I once had a friend come in through the basement door with a mask on. I looked at him, deadpan, then registered what was happening moments later and jumped so hard I landed flat on my butt. Honestly, I go to Halloween Haunt and run past the front gates (where the monsters are) so I can go on the rides without waiting in lines, because everyone else goes to the haunted houses. The list of reasons why Halloween is a no-go for me goes on, and on.

One tradition that I do get behind, however, is pumpkin carving. Even that I'm more of a spray paint and glitter pumpkin-carver, not the chop and pull the insides out to make it look like it's vomiting type. I bought a white pumpkin this year and did little sheet-ghosts all over it. They even had pink pumpkins at the patch this year. But while I was researching cool pumpkin ideas, to try and participate in some small way, I came across teal pumpkins.

Teal pumpkins are a part of a project to help children with food allergies participate in Halloween. What it means to have a teal pumpkin out on your front step is that you have food-free treats to give out to the kids.

Now I know what you're thinking, because I thought it too. Food-free treats? What kind of blasphemy is this? What about the chocolate, and the sugar rush, and those little straws filled with powder that they give to the kids on *Toddlers and Tiaras* like uppers? I can't be sustained on no-food treats.

According to the Food Allergy Research and Education (FARE) Teal Pumpkin Project website however, one in 13 children have a food allergy. That's a lot of kids who wouldn't get to participate if no one was painting their pumpkins teal. What's worse, getting candy in your pillowcase and not being able to eat it, or getting a food-free treat and never knowing the dream of an Oh Henry. Food-free treats can be glow sticks, stickers, small toys ? I went to a house where a woman was handing out crocheted boxes, to this day it keeps all my nail polish together and is collecting dust somewhere in my apartment.

So paint your pumpkins teal this year and join the colourful array that is including everyone for our sweet but scary day this year. Have a food-free treats available for those little zombies who can't have peanuts, or gluten or dairy.

In the meantime I'm going to shut this editorial down. As I'm sitting here typing away a spider just descended from the ceiling and landed on my computer. You laugh, I cry ? all my problems with Halloween summed up. I have to go shake off the heebeegeebees. Happy Halloween from everyone here at the *Bancroft This Week*.