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A Look At The History of Halloween

Halloween has become the second most anticipated holiday for children after Christmas and Chanukah. Although we celebrate it with candy and Halloween parties, it wasn't always that way. In fact, Halloween has its roots in pagan traditions dating all the way back to nearly the dawn of civilization. Is Halloween about God and the Saints, or Satan and his demons? How are witches involved, and what's up with that carved pumpkin. Join me in look back to the beginning of Halloween.

"Halloween" is a relatively new word to describe our favorite holiday. It is a contracted form of the phrase "All Hallows Eve", also known as "All Saints Day", which is a Catholic religious holiday honoring all Saints. But historians believe that the Catholics concocted that Holiday in an effort to draw attention away from the pagan holiday which Ireland's Celtic people called Samhain (sow-en).

2nd, All Souls Day, asking for tasty morsels known as "soul cakes". The deal was, the "the more soul cakes you give me, the more prayers I'll say for your dead relatives." This was a fair trade because the belief then was that souls remained in Limbo until they atoned for their sins, but they could earn an "early release" if God received enough prayers from the living.

Gradual changes in the way the holiday was celebrated continued to occur over the centuries and now we find ourselves in 1840's America. Irish immigrants are fleeing the potato famine by the boatload and they're bringing their holidays and traditions with them. One of their most cherished traditions was sneaking out on October 31 to unlock

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Back in the 5th Century BC, Samhain fell on October 31 which was the last day of summer on the Celtic calendar. The people celebrated that day as we do New Year's Day. The Catholics had a problem with the Celtic version of the holiday which taught that the spirits of the dead would return to possess the bodies of the living for just that one night. Not wanting to be possessed by spirits, people in the Celtic villages would dress up as ghouls and demons to keep the returning spirits at bay.

Around that time, the Romans came on to the scene and adopted the holiday of Samhain for themselves. They soon grew tired of celebrating a holiday that their own Gods had not invented, so Samhain celebrations were blended into the holiday celebrating the Goddess Pomona who had dominion over the fruits and treats. Her symbol was the apple, and it was considered good fortune if one were able to pluck an apple from a barrel of water using only their teeth on that special day.

As the centuries passed, Halloween began evolving towards what we know it to be today. In the 9th century AD, European Christians would go door-to-door on November

Kingdom Calendar

October 2009

- 10 **Fall Crown List**
- 17 **Panhandle Skirmishes**
- 17 **Unchained Doom**, Shire of Au dun Theine
- 24 **Danelaw**, Barony of Bryn Madoc
- 31 **Knight's Gambit**, Shire of Brantestone
- 31 **Gatalop 26**, Barony of Osprey
- 31 **Silver Hammer** Barony of Thorn's Mountain
- 31 **Res Equus II**, Shire of Tir Briste

November 2009

- 7 **Legends**, Shire of Sol Haven
- 7 **Christmas in Sherwood**, Shire of Loch Cairn

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their neighbors' gates and tip over outhouses. One could avoid falling victim to these tricks if they left some treats outside for the pranksters to devourer.

In addition to introducing that little twist to the holiday, they are also credited with introducing the Jack-o-lantern. According to Irish folklore, a drunkard named "Jack" was able to trick Satan into climbing a tree. Jack then quickly carved a cross in the tree trunk and Satan was trapped. Jack cut a deal to free Satan in return for Satan's promise never to tempt Jack again.

Things went fine for Jack until he died. St. Peter denied him entrance to Heaven, and Satan denied him entrance to hell. Satan was kind enough to give Jack one burning ember to light his way through the eternal darkness. Jack placed the ember inside of a hollowed-out turnip to protect it from the wind.

The Irish celebrated Jack's heroic deeds by placing candles inside of turnips. Once the Irish arrived in America, they found turnips to be in short supply, but there were plenty of pumpkins!

And as far as the witches go, you can thank the people in Salem, Massachusetts for adding that footnote to a long line of tradition that ends with what we know today as Halloween.

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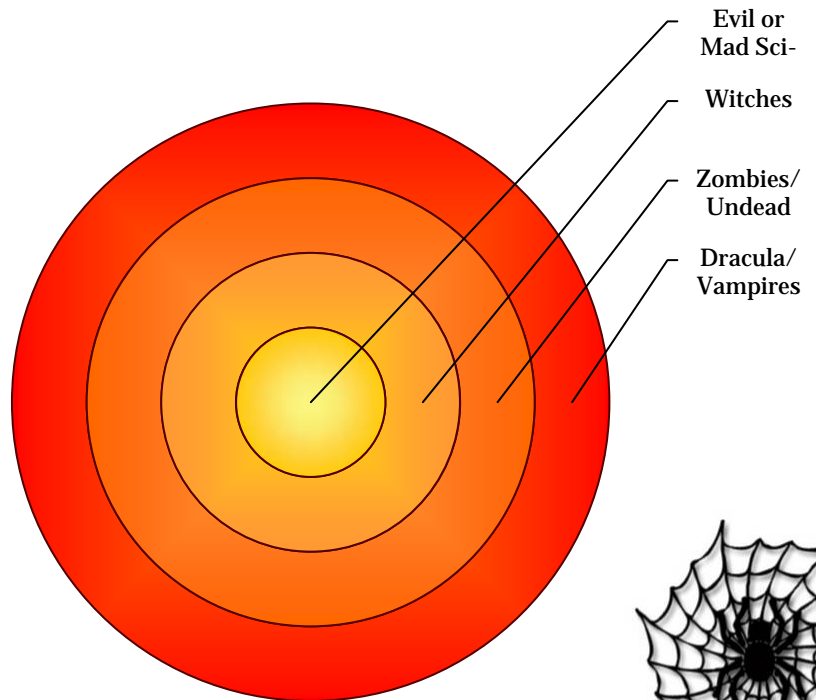
BBS Survey

The results are in!!!

The Shire's favorite Halloween Character is Dracula or Vampires!!! Maybe that is why Twilight, True Blood, Vampire Diaries, and the Vampire's Assistant are all so popular.

No matter which way you look Vampires are cool this year.

Happy Halloween!



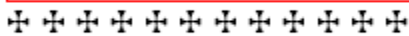
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Coming Soon!

That is correct something new is coming to the next issue of the Oracle!

Cassandra Tyfainne de la Rose will be treating your taste buds and challenging your culinary skills with her NEW column

Culinary Corner.

If you too wish to have your very own column in the Oracle please contact your friendly local Chronicler...(me)

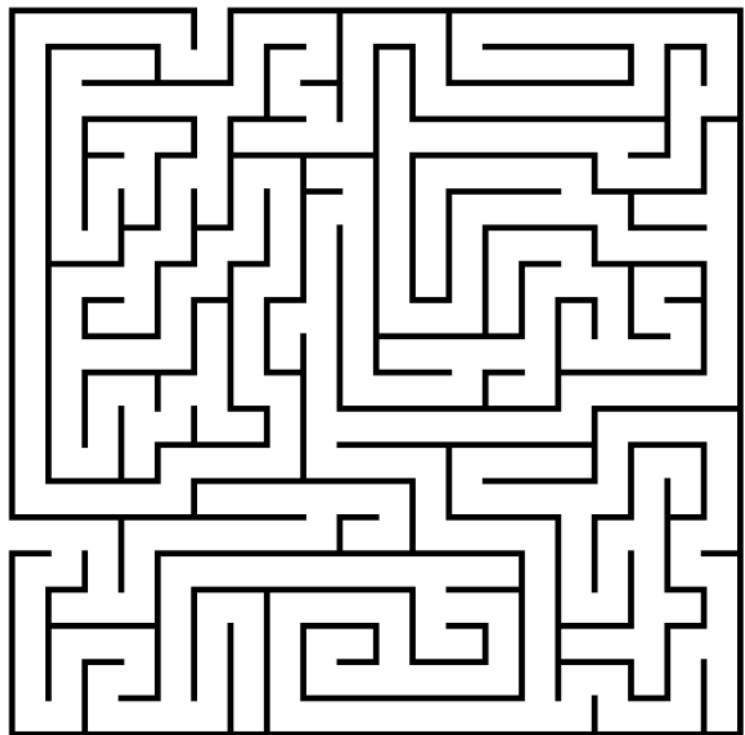
I can not wait to see what tasty treats Cassandra has planned for us next month.



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Puzzle Fun

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The Oracle

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