

Subject: Halloween Magic
November 2, 2022

I rediscovered the community core and future of Highlands this past Monday. I encountered it at the annual Halloween Main Street Celebration. This annual event had a tremendous turnout where folks were able to just have fun and enjoy one another.

We have had a rather contentious year with all the controversy over short term rentals and other issues facing the town. But I was gratified and rejuvenated to share the joy and happiness coming forth from the Halloween celebration-goers.

As a Rotarian I helped in the production and distribution of several thousand hotdogs for all the celebrants of Halloween. The Rotary Clubs in Highlands joined forces to provide free hotdogs to all, as well as having volunteers to help manage traffic in the downtown area.

I also appreciated the police and fire departments for securing Main Street for the event. In this day and age having complete security at such events is absolutely essential. Our first responders do a great job in protecting the public.

I also want to thank the Highlands Chamber of Commerce for again organizing and sponsoring this traditional event. The Highlands Halloween Main Street Celebration is a truly unique event that brings folks from all over the area to visit Highlands. I would also be remiss not to thank all the merchants in the downtown area that provided candy and favors to both our young and old kids. I say young and old because this Halloween spectacular brings out the child and wonder in all of us.

So, as Mayor, I do believe I encountered the community core and the future of this community on Halloween night. Despite all the differences we may have about the town and what directions we should follow, I suspect we all realized during this holiday celebration that Highlands is a unique and special place. Now I know across the nation other folks have the same view of their towns, but as Mayor I have to declare we are the best. (Don't tell other mayors about my assessment, they will take me to task.)

Finally, we saw the future of the community Halloween night with all the kids that were dressed up in costumes and having a great, marvelous time. What struck me was that I met so many of the kids' parents that I remember as local high school students. I went to some of their weddings and celebrated the births of their children. I found myself in a time warp of a sort on Monday night. I would see these young people with children and think, hey, didn't they just have a little baby? As a senior citizen I fail to, or maybe more accurately, realize that time moves fast. These young parents with children in Halloween costumes are the future of our community. It is not in a distant future, but very soon they all will be the core, the foundation, and the leadership of the community.

Halloween was not frightening to me, but rather uplifting and life affirming.