

I think I remember Halloween in Argos.....

Most Argos children back in the fifties and sixties, divided the town up into four primary areas for trick or treating. The areas coincided with Monday through Thursday during halloween week. On each of the four days, a section of town was targeted for treats and/or tricks. This insured that the maximum benefit was obtained for the gathering of treats in the time allowed. If someone experienced a home that was exceptional in the size or desirability of a treat, that home was visited more than once during the week, usually very early in the evening on Friday. Schoonovers on north Michigan street was one of those homes.

On the official date for Halloween celebrations, which I think always fell on Friday, all kids went downtown to line up for a Halloween parade. Every child was given a noise maker as a Halloween gift and it made the parade very noisy. The parade went through the main block of the business district and ended up at the fair grounds for judging of costumes and numerous games were offered as well for enjoyment and prizes. Those games included a "greased pole". The pole was about ten foot tall and was completely covered with grease to make it slippery. At the top of the pole was pinned a five or ten dollar bill that was the prize for anyone that could climb that pole without help and retrieve the prize. I think that smaller children were offered first try and they rarely, if ever succeeded. Many tried different clothing, addition of sand paper/sand to clothing, etc. There was also a "greased pig" event that yielded a prize for anyone that could enter the pig pen, catch the pig and remove the prize.

At the end of the evening there was always the "penny scramble". A truck filled with sawdust would spread the sawdust in a straight line about two-three inches thick, six foot wide and about fifty foot long. Mixed within the sawdust was a significant amount of money (change) in all denominations from pennies to silver dollars. All kids of a certain age, when the whistle blew, dove into the sawdust to find all the money that they could gather and hold, as quickly as possible. There was much mayhem, but loads of fun.

Tricks back then included soaping of windows (cars), rattling of windows with a homemade (spool/string/pencil) "rattler" that broke nothing but made lots of noise. Any outhouse still in existence, were subject to getting "tipped" over as well.