

Mark  
ALBRACHT

# Ringling in the night

*Halloween memories linger for years, but gremlins disappear*

When I was very young, I watched a movie on TV in which a baby-sitter, just after putting the children to bed, began to receive phone calls from a stranger who had a few baby-sitting tips for her. Actually, it was just one tip: "Go check on the kids."



At first, the baby-sitter was not too interested in the stranger's

suggestion as she was busy doing algebra. But this was a persistent stranger, so after the third phone call, the baby-sitter became somewhat annoyed by the caller and perhaps even a bit frightened. She decided to call the police to snitch on the busybody.

The cops told her that the next time the person called, she should keep him on the line and they would have the phone company trace the call. When the person called again, the two engaged in a polite conversation in which the stranger told the baby-sitter that he wanted to cover himself in her blood. Not interested, the baby-sitter hung up the phone only to have it immediately ring again.

Extremely aggravated, the sitter started to lay into the caller about phone etiquette, but this time it was the police on the line who told her that the caller was calling from inside the house and that he was probably there to kill her. Going against the baby-sitter's Hippocratic oath to never leave the children unattended, the sitter laid rubber out of the place

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just as the busybody's shadow descended the staircase.

As it turned out, this was no normal busybody. This was a busybody that also murdered children in their sleep, which happened to be the situation of the kids upstairs.

I have never seen the rest of this movie because just as the police were carting two tiny body bags out of the house, my baby-sitter informed my brother and me that it was time for us to go to bed. The irony of the situation was not lost on our young selves.

We shifted our eyes frantically, looking for an escape route, but none would be had. It was apparent we'd have to brush our teeth, go to bed, and assume our grisly fates, which we didn't take very well. My brother and I spent the subsequent week awake, and every night carried sounds that, no matter their source, resembled all too much a ringing phone.

It is fond childhood memories such as this one that make me love Halloween so. I like it when things go bump in the night. The older one gets, the less mysterious the world becomes. Unexpected creaking of

doors and other unexplained household clamoring, at times, keeps life mildly interesting. But even they eventually surrender to the unamused wind-bagging of wise old age. Wisdom is the curmudgeon who pulls back the curtain on the Wizard of Oz and reveals our poltergeists to be drafty air vents. How miserably boring.

Whatever happened to the prickly, gray porcupine beast who lurked under my bed? Where did his boil-covered, bloody-fanged gremlin pal who festered in my closet go? I miss those guys. I miss the days of cowering beneath my covers, ultra-fetal-like, knees to chin in a tiny child ball as a knobby green finger poked at my bed springs. No getting up to go to the bathroom or to get a drink from the refrigerator, no moving until the sun came up. As I think about it, maybe the creatures had an arrangement with my parents so mom and dad could stop parenting at night.

Violent crime and research papers are the monsters that scare me now. Exorcising Linda Blair has given way to exercising my gut. An ever-growing student loan bill is "The Blob" of my life and another four

years of Bill Clinton as president has become my Cujo. Somehow the monsters have lost their appeal.

Thursday, the sweets-hungry ghouls will mecca about their neighborhoods, hiding their alter egos as mild-mannered grade-school children. They will brave the spooky night for a bag full of loot, unbeknownst to them that they will soon grow up and have to stay mild-mannered. They will discover that the wonderful, multicolored trees of Halloween season are actually scaffolds for thousands of little leaf corpses that earmark the coming of cold weather, difficult journeys to work, and the winterizing of one's car. Jack-o-lanterns will become less sinister and more messy. People will stop handing out free candy.

Thursday night, I'll be sporting my Bumble Bee costume (which is not to be confused with Blind Melon album covers). My version of a bumble bee involves silver pants, a brown leather "Shaft" jacket, sun glasses and a handgun. I'll probably do something that involves a pumpkin in some way. I'll probably be drunk. And when the evening winds down, I'll probably watch one of my favorite horror movies that will, in some part, bring the scariness back to Oct. 31.

And at some point in the evening, the telephone will probably ring. But alas, in keeping with the monotony of adulthood, it will probably only be my mom.

Albracht is a junior philosophy major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

Nick  
WILTGEN

# Vote Libertarian

*Presidential candidate vows to cut big government*

In six days, we Americans vote for the next president of the United States.

Don't waste your vote. If you believe government is too big, don't waste your vote on Bill Clinton or Bob Dole, because despite what they say, neither will deliver a government that is actually smaller than the one we have now.

But there is one candidate who will deliver a dramatically smaller government, and I will vote for him on Nov. 5. His name is Harry Browne, and he is the Libertarian candidate for president.

Browne, an articulate 63-year-old author and financial adviser, has never held elective office. He has been a lifelong Libertarian and earned his living entirely in the private sector.

His brilliant proposals to deflate our ballooning federal government are detailed in his latest book, "Why Government Doesn't Work." In the book, Browne writes about his specific plan to not only eliminate the budget deficit, but also to eradicate the federal government's \$5 trillion debt.

Here are his proposals:

— Immediately eliminate the

"Browne is the only presidential candidate who truly advocates the end of big government and a return to the free society America once enjoyed."

personal income, estate, and gift taxes, as well as the corporate income tax and the Social Security tax, and replace them with nothing.

— Sell off the government's assets over a six-year period from 1998 to 2003. Browne estimates the value of these assets — which include 29 percent of all the land in America and more than 441,000 buildings — to be about \$12 trillion.

— Use just under half of the \$12 trillion to buy private annuities for everyone dependent on Social Security. That way, our retirees are not left out in the cold, and future generations can plan their own retirements instead of surrendering 15 percent of their incomes to government bureaucrats.

— Eliminate most federal government programs, including the massive welfare bureaucracy and burdensome regulatory agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency and the Food and Drug Administration. These programs and agencies cripple indi-

viduals' initiative to better themselves and impose draconian restrictions on businesses' ability to produce better products and to function in the global marketplace.

— Balance the budget immediately in 1998 and end deficits for good. Browne's budget shows a \$1 billion surplus in 1998 — which grows to a \$2.2 trillion surplus in the year 2000 as the annuities purchases wind down and the asset sales continue. By 2003, the national debt will be wiped out, and by 2004 the budget surplus will drop to zero as the government settles into its small, constitutionally defined role, with \$100 billion in revenue and \$100 billion in spending.

Of course, if the asset sale comes up short, it will not be possible to eliminate all taxes. But if the government has more liabilities than assets, then it is bankrupt. Browne suggests a 5 percent sales tax to pay off the rest of the debt; certainly it

would be more fair than the income tax that allows the IRS to pry into every American's private life.

Browne will also end government's massive intrusion into our personal lives.

— He will immediately end the costly, failed war on drugs and will pardon anyone convicted of a nonviolent drug offense. This will free up valuable prison space for criminals who actually hurt people — murderers, rapists, robbers, etc.

— He will put an end to asset-forfeiture laws that allow police to search and seize your property.

— He will fight for an end to gun-control laws that leave law-abiding citizens defenseless against criminals.

— He will end all affirmative action programs and the racist quotas and set-asides that such programs inevitably produce.

If you really believe government is too big, don't waste your vote. Bill Clinton won't shrink the government. Bob Dole won't shrink the government. Ross Perot won't do it, either.

Even though Harry Browne is unlikely to win, the more votes he gets, the more the establishment will recognize that Americans are ready to drastically change the system.

Vote your conscience.

Wiltgen is a junior broadcasting and meteorology major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.