

**Heather
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Not sold on holidays

Who needs meaning? Money's to be made

"Trick or treat, smell my feet, give me something good to eat."

Here we go again. Another year's passed, and tonight I'll spend another evening passing out chocolate



confections to dozens of little Power Rangers on sugar highs.

You've got to love a pointless holiday.

In the United States, we have a lot of

pointless holidays. At one time, most of them probably weren't trivial. But if it will make a buck, we'll risk losing meaning.

Take Halloween, for instance. Most people have no idea where Halloween came from. Halloween to Americans means an evening of watching bad B horror movies while polishing off the remains of the candy corn.

Our modern celebration of Halloween comes from the ancient Celtic fire festival called "Samhain." Samhain was the feast of the dead in Pagan and Christian times, signaling the close of the harvest and the initiation of the winter season. Not one mention of plastic Richard Nixon masks — who knew?

Trick or treat did originate from Samhain. People used to imitate fairies and go door to door asking for food. If the people refused to give food, the fairies would play tricks on them.

So, in the true spirit of Samhain or Halloween, if someone refuses to

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give you treats tonight, it would be historically acceptable to coat their homes with eggs. When you're arrested by the police, just tell them you were celebrating your ancient druid religion.

Halloween isn't the only holiday with historic roots that have been butchered in the quest to merchandise. In their crusade to sell heart-shaped boxes of candy, edible intimate apparel and cards inscribed with bad poetry, big business has glossed over the history of Valentine's day.

In ancient Rome, February 14th was a holiday to honor Juno, the goddess of women and marriage. The following day began the "Feast of Lupercalia." During the festival, boys and girls, whose lives were normally kept separate, were paired up to dance and play together. Each boy would pick a girl's name from a vase and they would be paired up. Sometimes the pairing lasted an entire year, and often, they would fall in love and later marry.

Imagine if we celebrated Valentine's day the same way the Romans celebrated Lupercalia. It would end the hopeless torture of single people desperate for a Valentine's date. It would also end

the suffering of husbands who forget to buy their wives flowers and try to make up for it by buying them a griddle. (A little FYI to men: kitchen appliances have yet to be considered romantic.)

Another foreign holiday that we've twisted to fit our capitalistic mold is St. Patrick's day. It's the only day of the year when people are willing to disguise their heritage to drink green beer and frantically pinch people who aren't wearing the jaded color.

Last March 17th when you slid up to the bar to order that \$2 green foamy beverage, did the bar owner who took your money tell you about St. Patrick? Patrick was a missionary who in the 400's converted the Irish to Christianity.

To honor Patrick, any food that can be dyed is turned green, and people named Pierre and Juan become Irish for the day. If every nationality had a holiday involving pinching and beer, wouldn't we all get along better?

We've turned holidays that we know the meaning of into upturns for the economy. When celebrating the birth of Christ, some of us also celebrate a portly man in red clothing who breaks into people's homes and

leaves dolls and train sets. Cookies and milk, the birth of a Savior, naughty and nice, the birth of a Savior, Barbie and Ken, the birth of a Savior, cash, check or charge, the birth of a Savior. Oh yes, they coincide.

The last time I heard the Easter story, I don't remember an oversized rabbit hopping up to the women at the tomb and giving them marshmallow chicks and caramel eggs.

Lastly, I'd like to mention the other various holidays that companies with names that start with "Hall" and end in "-mark" must have had a hand in inventing. Boss's day? Secretary's Day? Grandparents' Day?

Don't get me wrong, I love my grandparents, but can't I tell them that without sending them cards and candy? And what butt-kisser decided to coin Boss's day?

Since we're on the subject of inventing holidays, I think College Student Day would be a nice addition to the calendar. It would be a national holiday honoring college students. It would mean showering them with gifts and baked goods and giving them pardons on their student loans.

And of course that would mean a day off for College Student Day Eve and then several days off following the holiday so students could fly home and visit their families.

Hey Mr. Chancellor, how's next week sound?

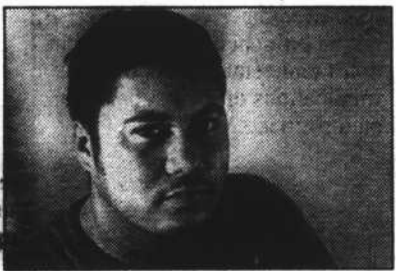
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**Brent
POPE**

Tales from the dip

(Please picture ominous flashlight face . . .)

When I was younger, and probably wiser, Halloween was the night that my friends and I would get together in a dark room with only a flashlight and our imaginations, and



tell spooky stories. We still do it to this day, but nowadays beer is involved and that greatly diminishes the quality of storytelling.

Anyway, I don't think I could show my face in public if I didn't take a stab (The Daily Nebraskan in no way endorses that very bad pun) at my own Halloween story. And here's the kicker: there are three endings. One for those happy people out there, one for the sad people, and one for demented people like me. So step onto the train, this ride will take about five minutes: **THE DIRT ROAD or STEVE AND HIS AMAZING TECHNICOLOR CAR KEYS**

Bad luck followed Steve Inking around like a three-legged dog in heat, always had. It started when he was 5 and his mom ran away with that silverware salesman. "I like a good fork," she told him. Bad luck always followed him, and tonight was no different.

"I don't think I could show my face in public if I didn't take a stab (The Daily Nebraskan in no way endorses that very bad pun) at my own Halloween story."

Tonight was Halloween, and it was dark out. Dark enough that even the full moon that peeked out from behind long skinny clouds like Orson Welles in a bikini couldn't illuminate the sky; it was that dark. It was also dark enough that he couldn't find his car keys that flew from his coat pocket when he spun around to see what had made "the noise."

Steve only stopped to take a pee, and wondered why he had even taken his keys out of the ignition on a lonely dirt road. Whatever made "the noise" appeared to be gone, but the air it left behind smelled like death, or Richard Simmons' underwear, he couldn't decide which. Probably just some dumb animal. A frantic search of the ditch that held his keys left him empty-handed and as dirty as two vultures sharing a buffalo. Did I mention it was raining?

There were no traces of civiliza-

tion in sight, probably wouldn't be for at least two or three miles, if he remembered the drive correctly. With few other choices, he started walking, feeling very much like Beaver Cleaver when he was stuck in that big bowl of soup, for some odd reason.

"The noise" still bothered Steve, but he was more concerned about finding someone with a flashlight to get his keys. He mumbled angrily about the shortcut he took that was now a huge pain in the ass. Clyde's Halloween party couldn't be more than a mile from the highway, if he could find the highway. That's when he saw the light.

It didn't appear to be a normal light, but anything other than pure blackness in front of him was nice at this point. It started at the ground and was several feet high, more a sliver of light than anything else, like the

reflection of a cat's eye turned sideways. When he reached the source of the light, what he found was intriguing . . .

HAPPY ENDING

It was a gateway to the land of the Smurfs. Steve lived there the rest of his life under the nickname of Ugly Smurf, married Smurfette and helped the Smurfs slay Gargamel; he even got to eat the heart.

SAD ENDING

He reached out and discovered too late that it was not good to grab an unprotected bug zapper. He electrocuted himself, making that annoying buzzing sound, only on a much grander scale. "The noise" Steve heard was the shriek of a drunk guy at the party he was looking for. He died in Clyde's backyard — still a virgin.

DEMENTED ENDING

It was the portal to an alien spaceship filled with horrible alien creatures that looked like Kathie Lee Gifford without makeup on. They slowly killed Steve by forcing him to listen to hour after hour of stories about their grotesque alien children; they were all named Cody.

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