How do you feel about the terrorist acts that have taken place in America?

Josh Worth
"Some people are just mentally disturbed."

Mike Maki
"It was a deeply disturbing action that will change the way everyone in the world acts for years and years to come."

Josh Kumrits
"I think that the New York tragedy brought the unity that America always had but lost sight of because of our changing values and society. Now, America needs to keep it."

Chuck Tetzlaff
"Depressed."

Adam Birk
"I feel that the attacks on America were very selfish and extremely cowardly on the part"

Amy Navarra
"I feel badly for the people who have lost loved ones in the"

Are We Being True To Tradition?

JENNIFER WEBB
Managing Editor

Halloween's origins date back to the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain (pronounced sow-in). The Celts, who lived 2,000 years ago in the area that is now Ireland, the United Kingdom, and northern France, celebrated their new year on November 1st . This day marked the end of summer and the harvest and the beginning of the dark, cold winter, a time of year that was often associated with human death. Celts believed that on the night before the new year, the boundary between the worlds of the living and the dead became blurred. On the night of October 31, they celebrated Samhain, when it was believed that the ghosts of the dead returned to earth. In addition to causing trouble and damaging crops, Celts thought that the presence of the otherworldly spirits made it easier for the Druids, or Celtic priests, to make predictions about the future.

The American tradition of "trick-or-treating" probably dates back to the early All Souls' Day parades in England. During the festivities, poor citizens would beg for food and families would give them pastries called "soul cakes" in return for their promise to pray for the family's dead relatives. The practice was eventually taken up by children who would visit the houses in their neighborhood and be given ale, food, and money.

The tradition of dressing in costume for Halloween has both European and Celtic roots. Hundreds of years ago, winter was an uncertain and frightening time. Food supplies often ran low and, for the many people afraid of the dark, the short days of winter were full of constant worry. On Halloween, when it was believed that ghosts came back to the earthly world, people thought that they would encounter ghosts if they left their homes. To avoid being recognized by these ghosts, people would wear masks when they left their homes after dark so that the ghosts would mistake them for fellow spirits. On Halloween, to keep ghosts away from their houses, people would place bowls of food outside their homes to appease the ghosts and prevent them from attempting to enter.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, America was flooded with new immigrants. These new immigrants, especially the millions of Irish fleeing Ireland's potato famine of 1846, helped to popularize the celebration of Halloween nationally.

Taking from Irish and English traditions, Americans began to dress up in costumes and go house to house asking for food or money, a practice that eventually became today's "trick-or-treat" tradition.

In the late 1800s, there was a move in America to mold Halloween into a holiday more about community and neighborly get-togethers, than about ghosts, pranks, and witchcraft. At the turn of the century, Halloween parties for both children and adults became the most common way to celebrate the day. Parties focused on games, foods of the season, and festive costumes. Parents were encouraged by newspapers and community leaders to take anything "frightening" or "grotesque" out of Halloween celebrations. Because of their efforts, Halloween lost most of its superstitious and religious overtones by the beginning of the twentieth century.

By the 1920s and 1930s, Halloween had become a secular, but community-centered holiday, with parades and town-wide parties as the featured entertainment. Despite the best efforts of many schools and communities, vandalism began to plague Halloween celebrations in many communities during this time. By the 1950s, town leaders had successfully limited vandalism and Halloween had evolved into a holiday directed mainly at the young. Due to the high numbers of young children during the fifties baby boom, parties moved from town civic centers into the classroom or home, where they could be more easily accommodated. Between 1920 and 1950, the centuries-old practice of trick-or-treating was also revived.

Does this mean that we've gotten away from what Halloween was originally intended to be or, have we just evolved with the times? Halloween has become the second largest commercialized holiday, only to Christmas, with Americans spending $2.5 billion annually. Most of this money is spent on or for children. I believe Halloween has gotten away from what it was meant to be. It has become a holiday for children to play in the streets. How many adults do you see each year at your door, trick-or-treating?

I think that if we continue to use Halloween as a night to let kids get dressed up and try to out do each other, just to wander around the city streets in the dark, we should renamed it. The word and holiday Halloween has great meaning in many cultures, we are exploiting it, tainting the tradition. It is not the same as the Halloween of yesteryears so why call it the same thing?