

Jeff Lumby's view from the country

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Lojinx

My hometown of Saskatoon was in the news last week. No, it wasn't for something novel like building the world's largest fudgesickle. Apparently over the past few years the Saskatoon Humane Society has noted an alarming increase in abused black cats around Halloween. It prompted Society officials to cease black cat adoptions through the period leading up to fright night. First, the City of Bridges was honoured with the highest crime rate in the country, now this. I wonder what the new 2006 tourism slogan for the city will be. *Saskatoon... What are you lookin' at?*

Obviously a lot has changed with Halloween since my days as a trick or treater. There's no question that I enjoyed the tricks more than the treats when I was a kid, but our deeds were far more mischievous than they were malicious. Nothing was ever destroyed and no one or thing was ever injured during our nefarious activities. The worst it got from the Sutherland boys was egg chucking.

"Ok guys, here's the plan. We buy a dozen eggs, make our way over to the drive-in, and start winging em' over the fence." I admit this wasn't exactly the Thomas Crown Affair, but what do you expect from a bunch of prairie morons, one of whom just got his drivers license. Besides, that was the second part of the plan. The night began with a heist of epic proportions. Since this was our first Halloween with a car, we vowed we'd make the best of it. Quite simply, we needed a skull.

After extensive research (we asked a guy), it was determined that the only place that housed real human skulls was the Health Sciences Building on the University of Saskatchewan. Somehow we even figured out which room they were all kept in. Our intent was not to steal the head, only to borrow it for Halloween and return it the next day. As with all plans of this nature I was the one who would actually execute the job while the others "stood guard" quivering in the car. To this day I don't know if that was due to my desire for adventure or their aversion to soiling themselves. My sense is a little of both played roles. That and the fact that they did way better in school.

My biggest fear was not getting caught on the premises, but running out of the building to find my chicken @#%& friends driving away without me. Thankfully, everything worked out like clockwork. Our night of hijinx had begun.

The first hour of life with our new friend consisted of driving up and down 8th street, the cruising area of Saskatoon, with Yorick sitting on the dash. Good

times! Then it was time to introduce him to some people. We pulled in to A & W and took our little buddy inside. Before the waitress came by, we made sure he was perched at the head of the table with a lit cigarette in his mouth. That'll sure freak her out. "Ok fellas, very funny with the skull, now what do ya want?" Wow, that gag bombed. I wonder if this is how Steve Martin got started.

So we pounded back some burgers, tossed the skull into the back seat and headed to the drive-in on the southern outskirts, of the city. We'd seen enough Streets of San Francisco episodes to know that you turn your headlights off if you want to approach undetected. And we were right, not one person in the drive-in saw us. But with the lights off, it also prevented us from seeing the R.C.M.P. cruiser sitting off to the side. I guess we didn't invent the egg-toss-into-the-drive-in-prank. Before opening the car doors, we each armed ourselves with two eggs, then quietly snuck outside and readied ourselves for the gorilla attack. Ready? One, two, three... throw. Six eggs were dispatched within seconds. Coloured, flashing lights were dispatched seconds later.

"You boys don't have any eggs with you, now do ya?"

"Ah, no officer."

"Then you don't mind if I check the car." As the Mountie found each of the remaining 6 chicken grenades, he tossed them at our feet breaking the eggs on our shoes. After that we sang like canaries when he asked us about the skull.

In the end, no skeletons were damaged during our romp. Yorick was returned to his rightful place in the cupboard. I believe it was the last egg I ever used outside of the kitchen, and I learned a valuable lesson that night. The Streets of San Francisco suck.



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