

That quest for THE best costume

There's a tattered cardboard box in our house, and it's been around probably 15 years or more.

It's full of clothes, which have been collected, borrowed, purchased, and even rescued from the garbage, all in the name of creating a costume.

You see, this is 'the costume box.'

It has every get-up ever worn by any member of the Brown family in the past decade, and includes such things as a mouse outfit, loin skins, a pumpkin costume and a plethora of different bits and pieces of old clothing found at local second hand shops.

And with this being the haunting weekend, there has been particular interest shown in this box during the past few weeks, as youngest daughter embarks upon her yearly quest to create THE best costume for Halloween.

Now, if Jennifer had her way, she would begin this project around mid-July, but members of the Brown household have been a little less tolerant lately, so we hold her to about a two-week lead time.

You see, when Jenn decides to put together her costume, she feels compelled to include every member of the family, to see if it meets with our approval.

It can be a tad trying, I'll tell ya.

Her first choice was a hippie, complete with an Indian cotton blouse and a long skirt, long wig and love beads to top it off.

"Hey, that's a great costume, Jenn," I said.

It didn't pass inspection with the others, cuz they basically ignored her. Okay, back to the box.

This time, she emerged with a full-length backless black halter dress that has been worn by all five female members of the family, beginning with my wife. (I recall her aunt Barbara slipping a coat over her shoulders at a family event...)

After adding a long black cape made of material I once used as a seamless background for a photographic project, and a long black wig with a few well placed white streaks through it, she re-entered the room.

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Ted Brown

"Whatcha think, Dad? Morticia Addams!"

"Hey, that's a great costume, Jenn," I said.

However, it wasn't good enough, cuz one of her sisters wore that exact same costume years ago, when they went trick-or-treating. She wanted something new and original.

Morticia Addams could be adjusted to become a witch, by adding a pointed hat.

"Hey, that's a great costume, Jenn," I said.

But it had been done before, too.

There was the usual display of futility and frustration as THAT costume failed to materialize—until she found the white dress.

It was a full length white gown Daughter Number Two had purchased from the Salvation Army shop to use for a school play. I suspect it was a bridesmaid's dress, or some very special evening dress, with long flowing material, making the wearer look somewhat like a Vestal Virgin on her way to the forum.

By adding a pair of wings and a big wig, Jennifer had the perfect angel's costume.

"Hey, that's a great costume, Jenn," I said.

"Yup," she agreed, "And when I get the wings and wig, all I need is a little tub of Philadelphia Cream Cheese."

"A what?" I questioned incredulously.

"A tub of Philly," she repeated. "You know Dad, every angel has a little plastic tub of Philly."

I nodded in agreement, quietly filing a thought away in my mind.

I think that kid watches too much TV.

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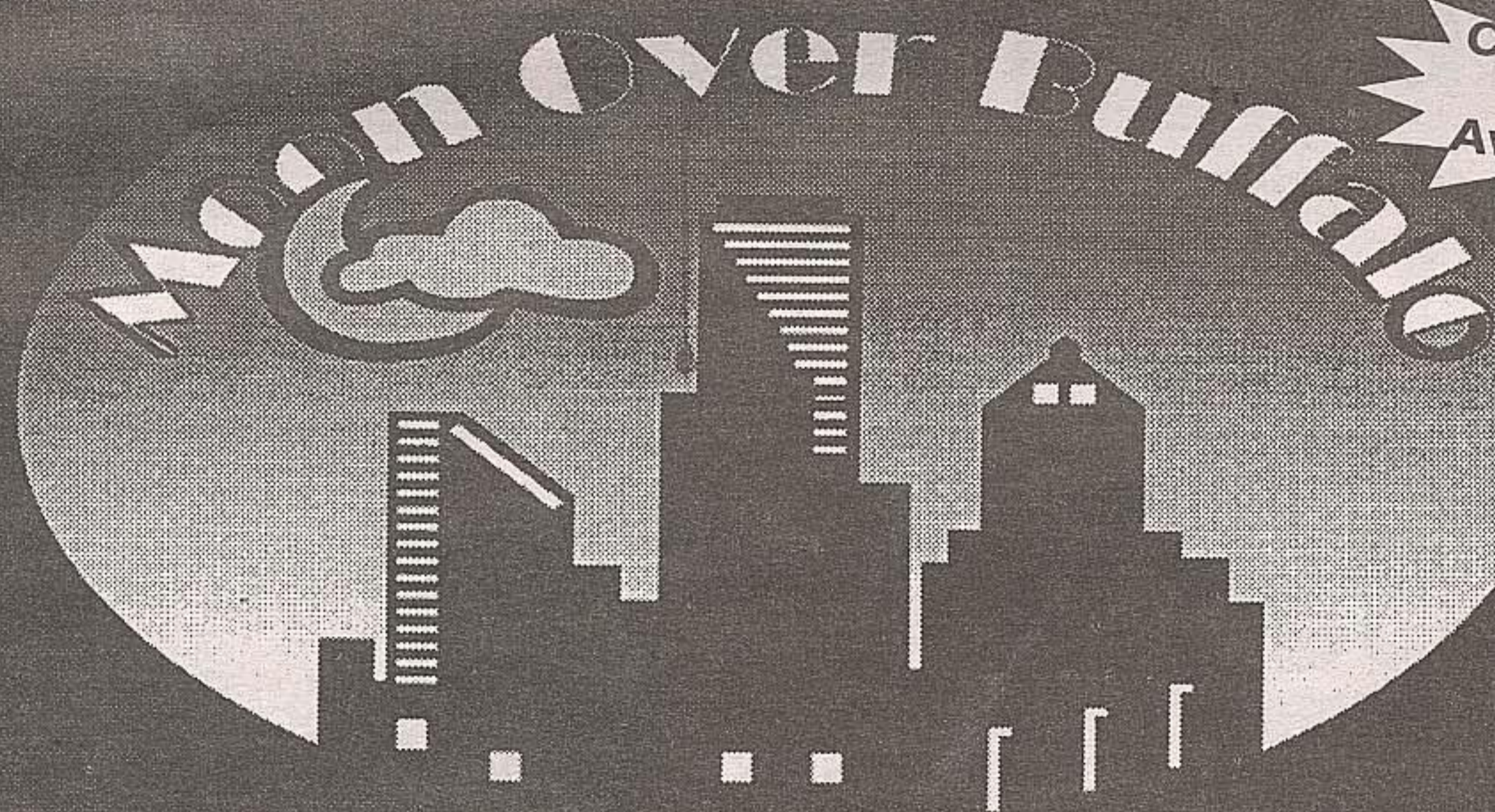
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