

HALTON HILLS
PARENTING
MAGAZINE

The Independent
& Free Press

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Where appropriate, professional advice should be sought.

Taming the wicked witches

The theme song in Munchkin Land goes something like: ding-dong the witch is dead, which old witch, the wicked witch, ding-dong the wicked witch is dead. Of course, we don't live in the Land of Oz and the wicked witch is long dead, except on Halloween - that awful, dreadful night where there are lots of little witches running around. I must be one of those wicked witch mothers because I really dislike everything about Halloween, and I mean everything.

Halloween stuff has been front and centre in the stores since August. Makes me shudder. I just can't get excited about hopping up and down all night, filling too large bags with too small candy nuggets (bars were much bigger when I was young). There's the costume to fret about, the pumpkin to carve, when and where to trick or treat, who to go with, how late to stay out and the biggest challenge of all - how to keep the candy safely tucked away long enough to devour the best of the bag before the dogs find it. All of this and that awful orange colour as well.

Our kids are now teenagers and with this new stage comes many opportunities to reminisce about what we miss the most about their youth. We miss cuddles on the couch and warm little bodies climbing into bed with us. There's the excitement of Christmas morning and the chaos of Easter egg hunts. There are countless more special moments to cherish but in our house, not one of them involves pumpkins, candy or costumes, even though my dress-up box in the basement is full of ninjas, magicians and fairies. I recall the year I painstakingly sewed the most beautiful princess gown but it was too cold and wet to wear it. A few years later, when the pink princess became the cave girl temptress we had the same problem. Last year I tried to ignore Halloween altogether and bought the (last one standing) pumpkin on October 30. How about the year I decorated the front door with ghosts and goblins only to find the paint

peeling off underneath on the morning after. Then there's the smashed pumpkins on the front path, the handfuls of chocolate I eat before the night begins, bags that break, masks that don't work, dogs that bark every time the bell rings, makeup that causes rashes, and lots of little ones too young, scared and overwhelmed crying at the door.

To tell you the truth, I would much rather go and buy some decent size chocolate bars and give them to the kids I know in my neighbourhood than spend the evening smiling at strange little children who look at you oddly when the candy in your hand doesn't seem really worth all the effort. I agree - it isn't.

On top of that, we (at Barbara Burrows Parenting Magazine) have come to understand from our advisors, that although Halloween can seem like fun to children, in fact, they can become easily overwhelmed and frightened - especially younger children. This seems to be one time of the year that it may be hard for par-

ents to measure exactly how their children are taking in all of the "Halloween" hype. So this year maybe you'll think about doing what I intend to do - tone things down. Arrange with a small number of neighbours and friends to do a reciprocal Halloween. Provide special Halloween treats for children who are special to you. Have the children pay a Halloween visit to people they like, who will invite them in, take the time to notice what they have chosen to wear, admire their costumes, and give the children a special Halloween treat.

Up to 7, 8 and maybe 9 years old, a small number of stops to see people who will share in the child's Halloween experience will be more enjoyable than trudging around the neighbourhood greedily collecting bags full of candy too heavy to carry.

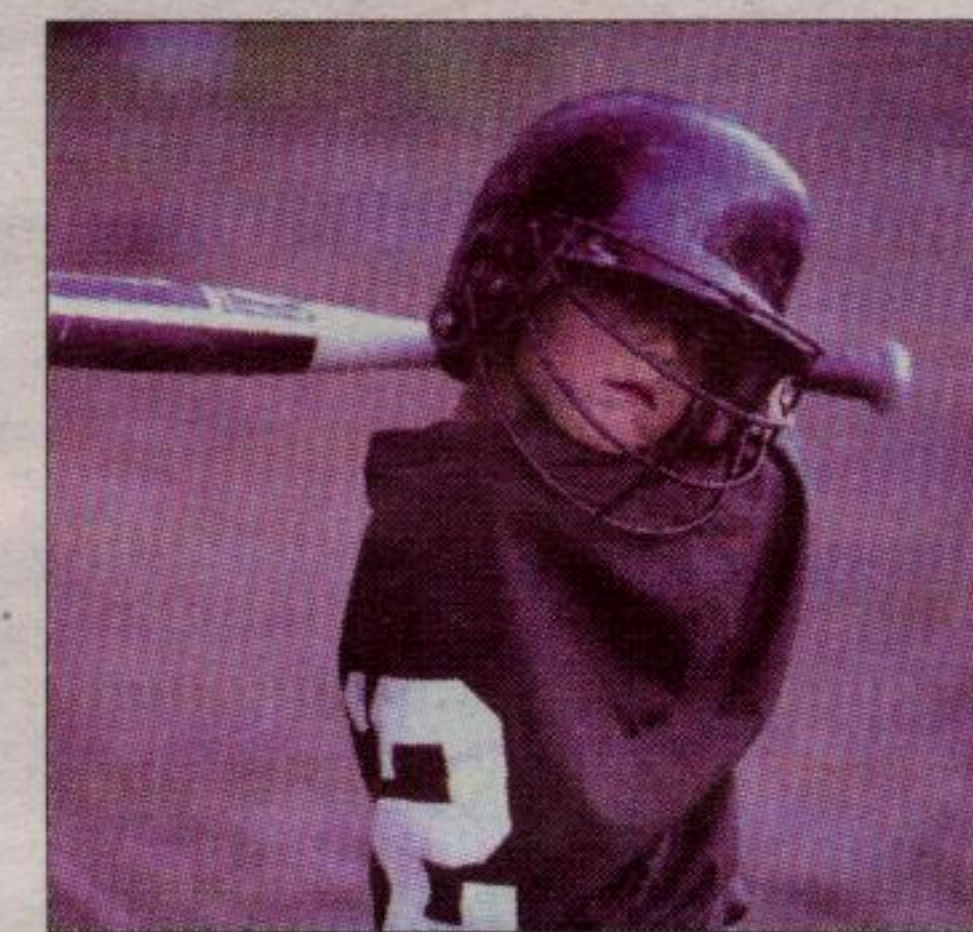
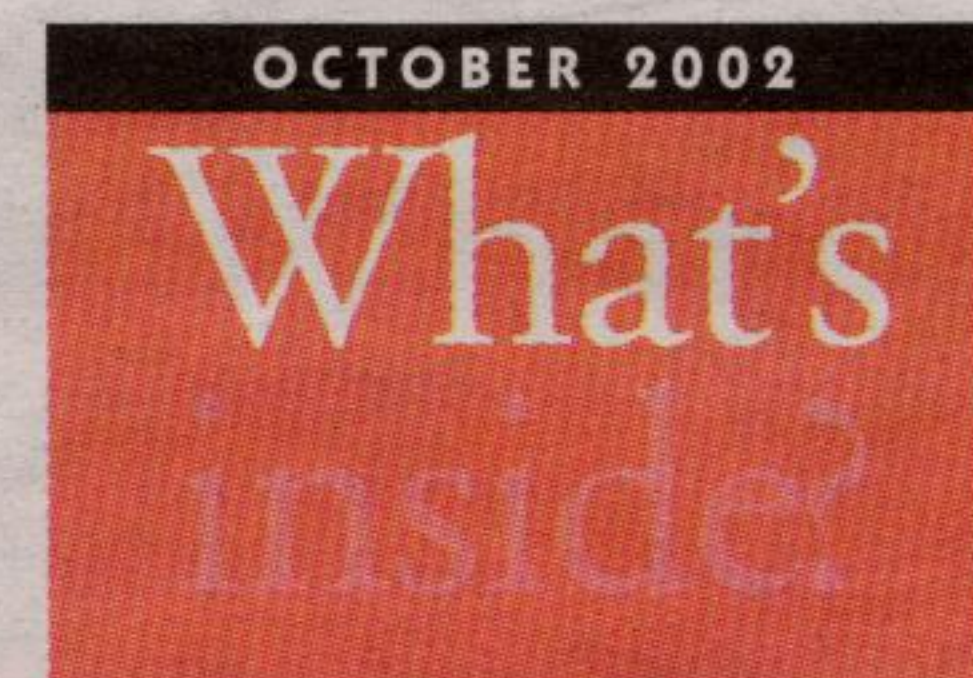
I'm betting that if you tone down "the wicked witches" this Halloween as I intend to do, your whole family will enjoy it more.

What's Up?



ANGELA GREENWAY

...although Halloween can seem like fun to children, in fact, they can become easily overwhelmed and frightened...



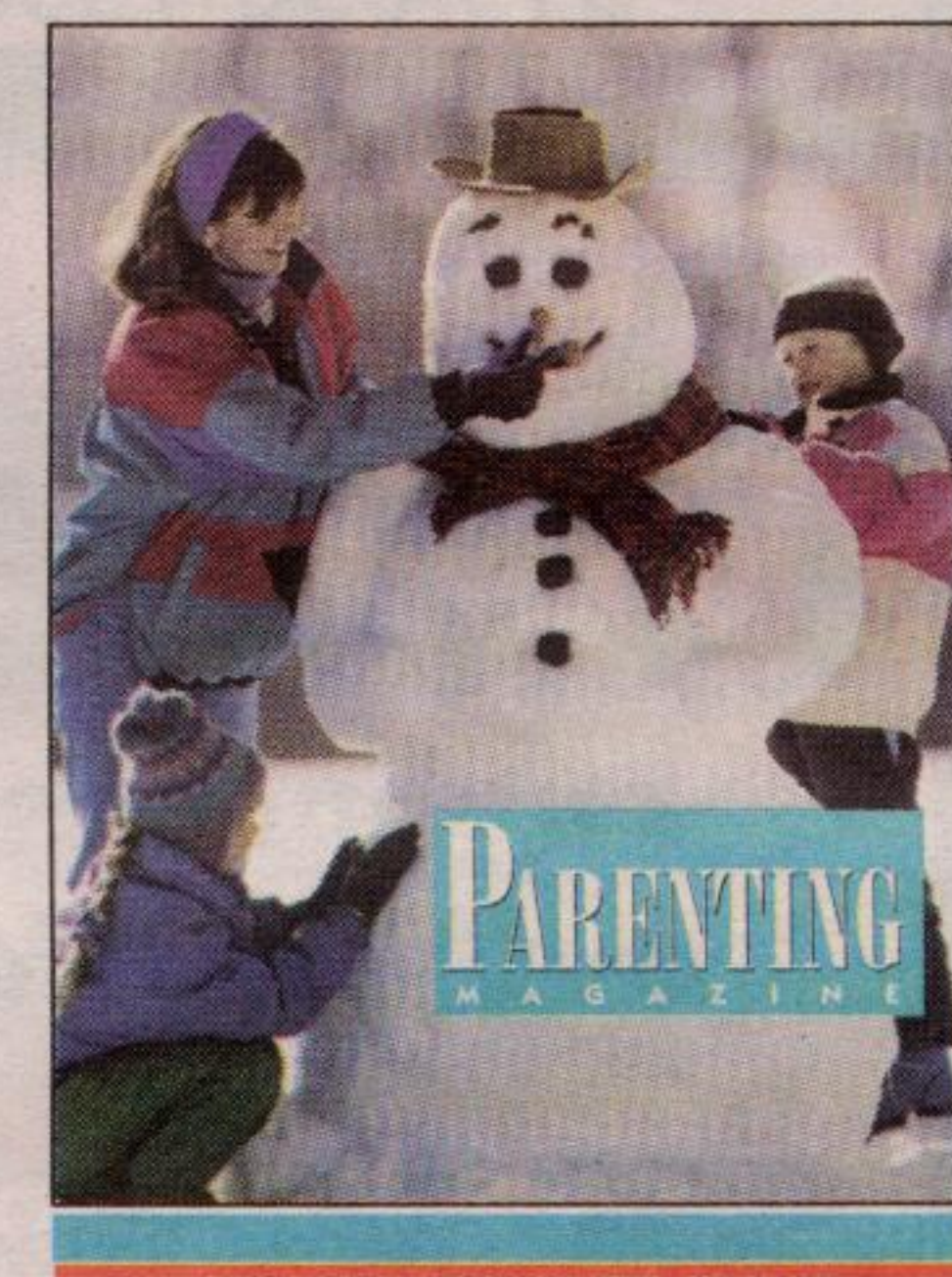
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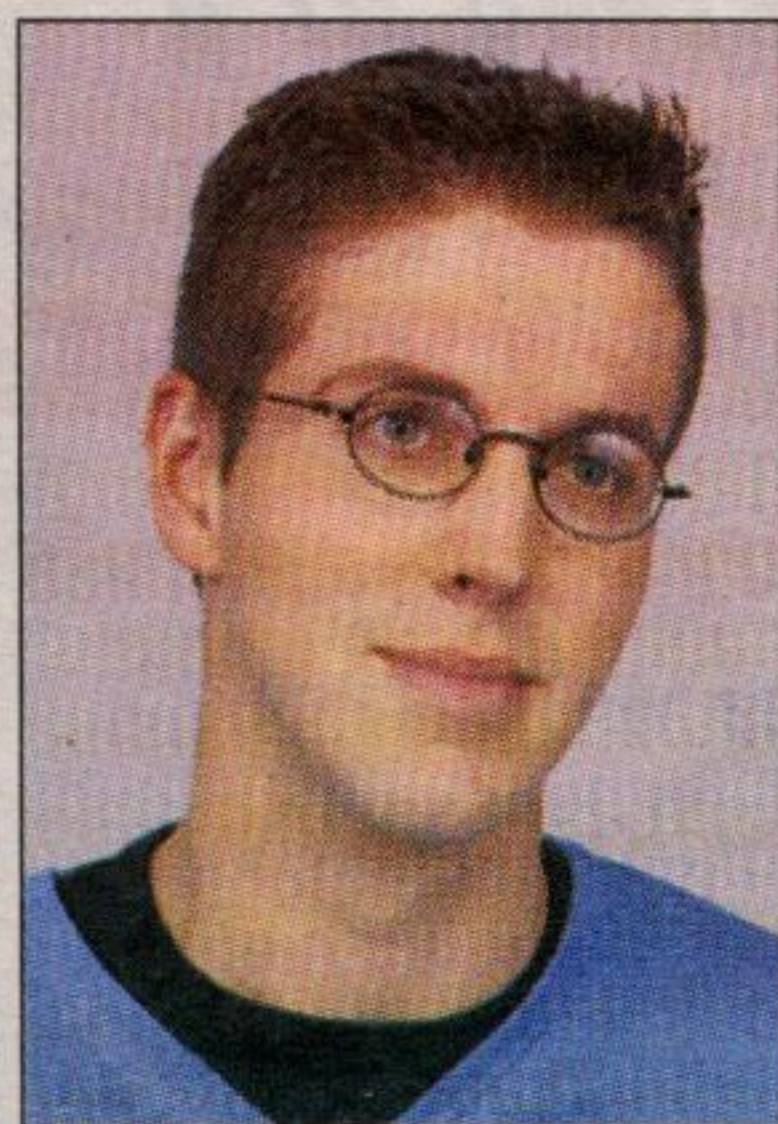
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