

HALLOWEEN THRILL GUIDE



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Downtown Clovis: Home for ghosts

□ Too scary for children decades ago.

It's been decades since reports have been widespread. But for half a century, downtown Clovis was haunted by ghostly apparitions, heart-stopping screams and midnight mysteries.

Hundreds -- sometimes thousands--of ordinary, working people reported witnessing the frightening events. Newspapers documented much of them as well.

A 1935 Clovis Evening News-Journal report warned of "table raising ... ghostly spirit slate writing ... talking skulls." The ghosts, the newspaper claimed, "sometimes ... sit with you."

Most of the scares were reported between the 200 block of Clovis' Main Street and its 500 block. As with most ghost stories, the majority originated well after dark.

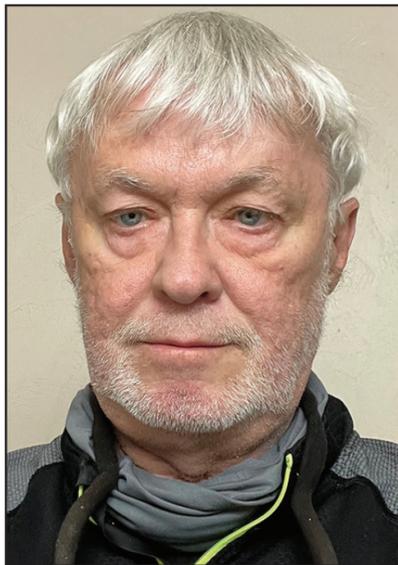
The earliest documented report of ghost activity that was witnessed by multitudes of people in the city occurred in the summer of 1929. The scares continued well into the 1970s. Sometimes, officials were so concerned for public safety, children were banned from certain locations. "It's too scary," the kids were told in printed announcements.

Not every spirit was the real thing, of course.

Those first widespread ghostly reports, which occurred just after midnight on June 15, 1929, were quickly discredited.

"In true 'Scooby Doo' fashion, our hero proves that the villain is of the Live Human variety," one anonymous scribe reported in a recent recap of the event online, which received prominent coverage in the Evening News-Journal. That hero was a man named Franklin Green, a private detective hired to help explain the odd "ghost talks" residents claimed they heard.

Patrons at the Busy Bee Café



By David Stevens

◆
Publisher

— where the "merchants lunch" cost 40 cents in 1929 — were believed to have discussed the strange event for weeks.

Other spooks haven't been so lighthearted.

Psychotic man wore woman's clothes to kill

In 1960, Clovis citizens downtown reported seeing a woman in a residence. They assumed she was the mother of a man known to live there. But it was soon learned the man's mother had died 10 years earlier, supposedly a victim of a murder-suicide.

While some debated the woman's true identity, police became curious about the sighting and began to investigate. It all ended in a tragedy some of Clovis' senior citizens today still talk about.

Turns out, there was no ghost and no mysterious woman. Police discovered the man Clovis knew as "Norman" actually killed his mother and her lover 10 years earlier. Unable to bear the guilt, Norman mummified his mother's body and began pretending she were still alive.

A psychiatrist theorized Norman recreated his mother as his own alternate personality.



When Norman would become attracted to a woman, he would put on women's clothes and become his mother.

Norman is believed to have committed multiple murders while struggling with his multiple personalities.

More murder, ghostly activity downtown

In 1966, much of Clovis witnessed the fallout from another murder-suicide.

A dispute over property resulting from the couple's death led to other crimes as well as a true ghost story.

Hundreds of local residents, over several days, said they witnessed a blood-stained organ that appeared to play all by itself.

Another ghost was reported in 1941 after a gangster was killed in a shootout with police. At least that one had a happy ending.

Clovis was pleased to learn the kind-hearted gas station attendants who, in a quirk of fate, inherited the gangster's estate did not inherit haunted property as first believed.

The gangster's friends were trying to scare off the lucky men before they could find a stash of cash hidden in a moose head. The men found the money and benefited from other fortunate events and were able to achieve lifelong goals of owning their own business.

(The gangster had been telling people for years that his money was hidden in his head. Nobody knew it was his moose head. Truth is often stranger than fiction.)

Main Street ghosts are all gone now

We don't hear much about those strange goings on in downtown Clovis much anymore. They pretty much stopped in the late 1970s -- about the same time the Lyceum, State, Mesa and Sunshine theaters had all closed and area residents started watching their scary ghost movies at Hilltop Plaza, and then at the cinema at the mall.

Sorry. Did you really think all that stuff actually happened on our quiet little Main Street?

But those were some exciting times, if you believe the newspaper ads that began with "Ghost Talks" in 1929 at the Lyceum, continued with Alfred Hitchcock's "Psycho" in 1960 at the State theater, "The Ghost and Mr. Chicken" in 1966, also at the State, and Abbott and Costello's "Hold That Ghost" at the Sunshine theater in 1941.

Oh, and there was the "Spook Busters" that played at the Mesa theater in 1949, which sounds a lot like the more recent "Ghost Busters."

In the "Spook Busters," a group of friends set about trying to remove ghosts from an old abandoned mansion. Clovis watched as those fictional characters soon learned the "ghost" activities were actually the work of a mad scientist conducting illegal experiments.

The "table raising" and "talking skulls?" That was in a 1935 Clovis Evening News-Journal advertisement promoting a "Spook Party" at the Lyceum.

Children were not allowed.

"No children's tickets sold ... It's too scary," the newspaper ad reported.



Hundreds of Clovis residents were horrified by this image in 1929. (Newspaper Archives)



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Halloween candies

Talk about spooky. Earlier this year, there was talk of a Halloween shortage, but candymaker Hershey says it's got more than enough candy to meet demand despite milk prices and ingredient shortages. Here's the lowdown on latest in Halloween treats.

New This Year

The Mars family of brands will release three new products for Halloween — ghoulish green bars for Snickers and Twix, and an M&M's Mad Scientist Mix. The M&M's mix brings together milk chocolate, peanut butter and peanut M&M's in one bag. Look for the new products this fall. Red Vines is debuting a candy corn flavored candy this year in a special autumn-patterned bag. This limited-edition candy is available only for Halloween. Nerds Candy Corn isn't your grandma's candy corn. Each Nerd Candy Corn kernel has a candy shell with a soft and chewy inside. Flavors include strawberry/grape, strawberry-lemon/blue raspberry and orange/cherry-watermelon.

Tricks And Treats

Skittles Shriekers bring a super sour punch to jack-olanterns. These Fun Size Skittles contain the flavors you know and love with a secret

super sour Shrieker. Flavors include Shocking Lime, Spine-Tingling Tangerine, Citrus Scream, Rattled Raspberry and Ghoulish Green Apple. Hershey's Vampire Kisses have a blood-red center that's really gooey strawberry creme. The bat-festooned foil is a great touch, too. Perfect for candy bowls everywhere on Halloween night.

Favorites With A Twist

KitKat always breaks off the fun for Halloween. The Witch's Brew flavor is a KitKat wafer wrapped in green, marshmallow-flavored cream. Hershey's cookies 'n' creme goes fangtastic with fun-size fang bars. You can find them in bags on their own or as part of a Halloween shapes assortment with Reese's pumpkins, Reese's ghosts, and York peppermint patty pumpkins. Alternatively, Reese's dresses up its peanut butter cups a green bottom, calling them Frank-Cups. Add those to your Halloween mix this year for a different take on the perfection that is the peanut butter cup. M&M's gets in on cookies 'n' creme, pardon, cookies 'n' scream. Halloween-colored candies get a chocolate sandwich cookie center. Also look for Twix Cookies & Creme in a fun-size offering to fill up this year's pumpkins.



Cats, bats and rats, Oh my!

You can hardly have Halloween without black cats, hordes of black bats and a legion of scary rats. Why are these creatures so associated with spooky season? Let's find out.

Black Cats

Black cats are often considered the bringers of bad luck and were associated with witches in the medieval world. Because of that association, black cats are often used as a Halloween symbol to add another level of scary to decor. However, in some countries, such as Japan, they're considered good luck. In ancient Egypt, black cats were even worshiped as sacred.

Bats

Bats, as creatures who largely hunt at night (as those who eat mosquitoes often will), are associated with death and darkness. Plus, they often live in caves, which known for being, well, spooky. Then there's the vampires. In Bram Stoker's "Dracula," perhaps the best-known vampire, the count could turn into a bat at will. But as you hang up your bat decor this Halloween, make sure to point out that bats really do help humans out. According to the National Wildlife Foundation, they save us several billion dollars a year in pest control

just by being themselves and noshing on bugs. They also help pollinate more than 700 plants, including bananas, peaches and mangoes.

Rats

Like bats, rats are largely nocturnal, giving them an aura of fear. Rats are also known to occupy abandoned places, ruins and other places where that other spooky season favorite lives — the ghost. Also, there's the association with pestilence and plague that makes them

Spiders

First of all, they have eight spindly legs. Then they live in dark corners on webs that are hard to see, making it look like they're floating in mid air. They also, like rats, frequent abandoned places where ghosts like to hang out. Lastly, there's the poison part. Before modern medicine (and, in the case of the Brazilian wandering spider, even after it) spider bites could be deadly. Again, though, while you're draping things in fake webs, point out that most spiders are harmless unless you're a bug. Spiders commonly feed on pests such as flies, moths, earwigs, roaches and mosquitoes. Real spider web silk is also stronger and tougher than steel, making it a miracle material.

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Halloween Recipes Ghouls Love

CAKE POPS

STEP 1

Break the Madeira cake and biscuits into the bowl of a food processor, pour in the melted milk chocolate and whizz to combine.

STEP 2

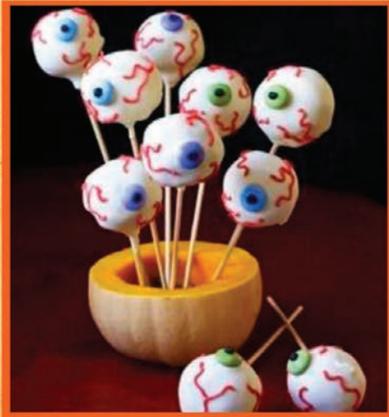
Tip the mixture into a bowl, then use your hands to roll into about 10 walnut-sized balls. Chill for 2 hrs until really firm.

STEP 3

Push a skewer into each ball, then carefully spoon the white chocolate over the cake balls to completely cover. Stand the cake pops in the pumpkin, then press a chocolate bean onto the surface while wet. Chill again until the chocolate has set. Before serving, using the icing pens, add a pupil to each chocolate bean and wiggly red veins to the eyeballs.

YOU WILL NEED:

- baked cake
- chocolate sandwich biscuits
- bar milk chocolate, melted
- bar white chocolate, melted
- few sugar-coated chocolate beans and icing pens, to decorate
- 10 wooden skewers
- ½ small pumpkin or butternut squash, de-seeded, to stand your pops in



GHOULISH CHOCOLATE BARK

STEP 1

Line a baking tray with baking parchment. Melt the white chocolate in a heatproof bowl over a pan of simmering water, making sure the bowl doesn't touch the water, or microwave in 5-second bursts until smooth. Stir through the orange food coloring and set aside.

STEP 2

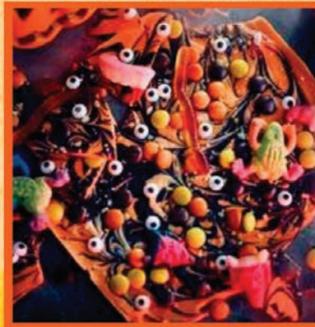
In a separate bowl, melt the dark chocolate using the same method, then mix in the black coloring.

STEP 3

Pour the melted orange colored chocolate into the lined tray and spread to the sides to an even layer. Drizzle over the black colored chocolate and swirl it with the end of a skewer to make a pattern. Evenly sprinkle over the colored sweets and edible eyes. Chill for 1-2 hrs until set, then break into shards. Will keep for up to two weeks in an airtight container.

YOU WILL NEED:

- white chocolate
- 1 tsp orange food coloring
- dark chocolate
- 1 tsp black food coloring
- orange, yellow and brown sweets, such as sugar-coated chocolate balls, popping candy or chocolate-coated peanuts
- store-bought edible eyes



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