

A Halloween tale

Young ghost in the north woods

By GUNDELLA

Ghost stories go with Halloween, but the spirits know no season.

This tale describes events of the hunting season last fall and was related to me earlier this year by a regular reader of my column "Witch Watch." It was in November of 1979 that Mike, a 37-year-old resident of Redford Township, went deer hunting in the northern part of Michigan's lower peninsula.

He and his two companions had rented a cabin at Oscoda and were hunting daily in the woods between that city and Harrisville. Both communities are on the shore of Lake Huron.

One of the trio had the good fortune to get a six-point buck on the first day out, and the second bagged his deer the following day.

Each continued to go out into the woods with Mike each day, hoping to help him so he would not have to go home empty-handed.

But luck was not with them. SOON THEIR week's vacation was over and it was time to return home. Mike still had not sighted anything that even resembled a deer.

On the day they planned to leave for home, he arose very early and told his friends he was going to give it one last try. They said they would stay behind this time and load the van.

Mike promised to be back by noon so they could get an early start toward Detroit, avoiding the heavier traffic later in the day.

It was a cool, crisp morning, and there had been a very light snow the night before. Not far into the woods, Mike discovered fresh deer tracks. Excited, he followed them.

But as the morning wore on the sun melted the snow and he lost the trail. Feeling dejected and ready to give up all hope of success for the year, he started back toward the road.

He couldn't find it. Soon he realized he was lost.

MIKE HAD promised to be back at the cabin by noon and it was 1 p.m. already. He began shouting, hoping that by this time his friends were out looking for him.

After an hour of shouting with no response, he gave that up and tried again to retrace his steps. It was to no avail.

The forest was dead quiet. There was no sound to be heard, not even a bird chirping in the distance.

Feeling totally alone in the universe, Mike did something he seldom did. He began to pray.

No sooner had he uttered his plea to heaven than he heard something, a crackling in the bushes. He looked up to see a young woman standing before him.

When he explained his situation, she



Gundella the witch, an area resident, writes a weekly column for the Observer. This ghost story burst the column format and fits the spooky season now upon us.

told him to follow her and she would lead him to safety. She said her father owned a farm not far from there and she was well acquainted with these woods.

HE GLADLY followed her, and she was good to her word. It was not long before they were in sight of the road.

He thanked her profusely, and as she smiled in return she began to disappear. First her image seemed blurred, and then he could see right through.

Then suddenly she disappeared completely. Mike rushed to the road and back to the safety of the cabin. His friends had just returned from searching for him and did not know whether to rejoice that he was all right or be angry with him for what had happened.

It was late and they were tired, so they decided to wait until the next day to return home.

The three headed for a nearby bar and grill, where they could have supper and call their wives and explain.

AFTER DINNER and a few beers, Mike decided to tell them about the girl who had saved his life.

When he finished his story, his friends stared in disbelief, wondering if Mike's mind had been affected by his ordeal in the forest.

But the bartender didn't seem at all surprised. "That's Leona," he said. "Her family used to own a farm back in there, but they're all gone now."

Leona was shot nearly 50 years ago by a hunter who mistook her for a deer. Since then she has helped many people lost in these woods.

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