



Sherry Kahan

Goblin tale has lesson

I visited several haunted houses as a reporter, but wound up as a participant. A group of girls seized upon me in Garden City, Redford Township and Livonia haunted houses as their protection against the dark forces ahead of them.

They clung to me like barnacles. Very quickly I was no longer the keen-eyed reporter watching for details of gore and gruesomeness. I was a mother seeing the kids through a swamp or jungle.

Standing outside the Jaycees' haunted trailer at the Wonderland Shopping Center, I fell in with several girls about 9-12. They talked about how frightened they had been on previous occasions. At one point I made a remark. It wasn't long after that one said, "I want to go with her."

As we made our way forward in line one girl dropped out, came back, and talked about dropping out until we were on the very threshold of the haunted house.

I finally interjected my opinion. "It wouldn't hurt if you didn't go," I told her.

"My mother will kill me if I don't," she said. But, brave in another way, she finally held back.

ENTERING I found a pair of arms tight around my waist. It was too dark to see which child was holding on. I think there was another child at her waist and possibly a third behind her. I quickly understood why the girls had been arguing earlier about who would go first. I was the first person to meet a towering figure dressed all in black.

It was then heard the first of many screams from my girls. We brushed past him and soon found ourselves passing a gruesome scene I had no time to examine. Hands reached out to grab us. More screams and the first sobs.

I decided to warn my flock to watch out each time we came to a corner. That was when, with wild cries, somber figures leaped out at us. But just as I felt confident that the forces of darkness had given up their tactic of surprise, there would be a horrifying shout as an unknown force came at us. More places where people threatened us followed in a confusion of chaos. I concentrated solely on getting on with it because my girls were screaming and crying.

Finally we came to the end. There was Darth Vader to see us out. The girls greeted him like an old friend, then exited into the night.

At the Redford haunted house, a girl clamped onto me. Her father was the point man in front. I was to guard the rear. A couple of times she let go of me, and I realized I had enjoyed the company. We made it by the witch (Jan Potter), goblin (Jason Potter) wormalady (Jennifer Hopp) and Frankenstein and the mad monk (Mark Nickita and Tom Wilfong), whom I had met earlier as a reporter.

Having been backstage, I was feeling pretty cozy about this particular bunch of haunts. Other participants, however, were doing their share of screaming.

THEN IT WAS on to Garden City. Here I had in tow two girls, screaming and crying as the others had. I couldn't seem to get used to it. In this place one section was total blackness. I had to feel my way around the bends of the narrow corridor as best I could with one hand. I worried about a young child who might be there without a parent. You needed a lot of cool to get through that spot. My other hand at that moment was held by Little White Riding Hood, who at one point covered her face completely with her hood and flew only with the help of her automatic pilot, who was me. Her friend was hanging on behind.

Again there was the shattering sequence of lurkers springing out or brushing by. I was so happy when it was all over.

Like many of the kids I had seen emerging from haunted houses, Little Miss Hood pulled a metamorphosis once the danger was over. Out in the open she was no longer the clinging, screaming, sobbing child. As she, her father and her friend moved off, she capered around him asking, "Can we go again, Daddy, can we go again?"

I suspected it was bravado designed to restore her self-esteem because she gave way to her fears. But who knows. At least she seemed to be okay.

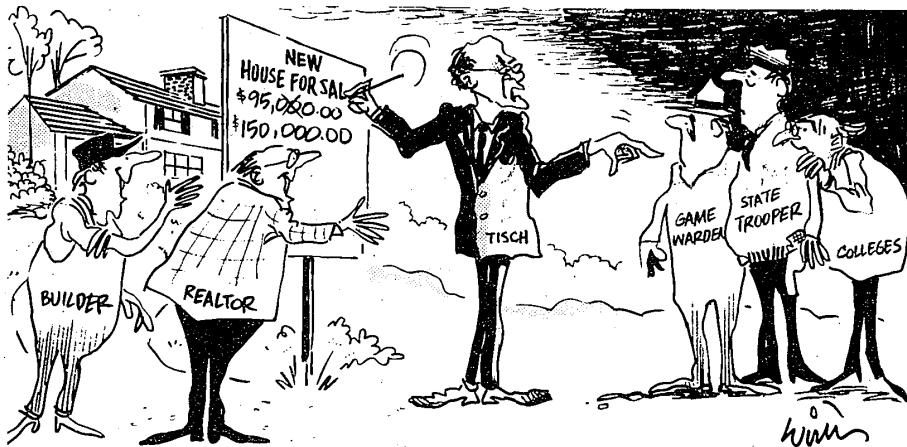
I, on the other hand, returned home a bundle of nerves, not understanding the haunted house syndrome at all.

I do, however, have some comments. Parents of young children would do well to try a haunted house themselves before they send in their children. I think also I would set an age limit for admission at around 12. This might raise the age when children start challenging each other to prove their courage by placing themselves in a situation where they are jumped at, roared at, grabbed at and otherwise spooked.

One psychologist I talked to about this situation said at first that children 1, 2, and 3 should not be allowed to go to a haunted house. As I described what goes on there, he escalated the figure to 5 or 6. By the time our conversation was over it was up to 8. In my opinion, if he went through one of these houses with a group of children, he might raise his estimate again.

Some believe the impetus to go through a haunted house is to prove our ability to conquer the unknown. But it might be better for kids if they could postpone this until they were older.

'Price controls for YOU'



Truth revealed: Tisch is liberal plot

My newsroom colleagues have been having a giant laugh. Howling supporters of the Tisch minority-rule plan have been calling the office to fume about our opposition to Proposal D and calling me a "liberal."

Can you imagine that? Me — a liberal! If there is anything on the ballot that can be called "liberal" in political philosophy, it's the Tisch plan doctrine.

First, Tisch panders to the "vote yourself a living" crowd. It proposes that we vote ourselves a local property-tax cut and b) raid the state treasury of \$2 billion to pay for our tax cut.

It is precisely the same mechanics that liberals use when they say, "Elect this congressman because he will vote aid for your city, aid for your ethnic group, aid for your teachers' group."

SECOND, TISCH is liberal because it seeks to impose price controls. Price controls are advocated mostly by liberals who have a childlike faith in government's ability to control the economy.

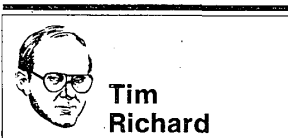
The Tisch proposal calls for rolling back one set of prices (assessments) to 1978 levels, then cutting them in half. Then it would limit future price increases to 2 percent a year.

Thus, one element of the economy would be frozen, but everyone else would be free to jack up prices and wages and rents.

Actually, the Tisch amendment would be a backwards way to accomplish the control of rising property taxes. There's a better way to control property taxes. Look at it logically:

WHY DO ASSESSMENTS rise? Because house prices rise.

Why do house prices rise? Because builders raise them.



Tim Richard

Now, that's OK if you are living off property taxes or if you are in the business of selling houses. But if you are a taxpayer or home buyer, it's murder.

So the logical thing to do would be to roll back housing prices to their 1978 level, roll back building-trades wages to their 1978 level, roll back materials prices to their 1978 level, and roll back real-estate commission rates to their 1978 level — then cut all of them in half.

We would not only cut our property taxes every bit as much as Tisch wants, but we would also open up the purchase of homes to young couples who have been forced out of the market.

As it is, Tisch does nothing but play into the hands of the people who sell houses. And that is why his best-financed group of supporters are real estate agents.

Actually, that solution is only theoretical. Not being a liberal, I will not advocate price controls, and I do not advocate the Tisch assessment-juggling scheme.

THIRD, TISCH would mean more of our money would go to Washington and the bureaucrats there.

Figure it out by looking at your income-tax returns. You get a nice break on your income tax through your property tax. If you save yourself \$500 or \$1,000 by voting for the Tisch property-tax cut, you'll pay a portion of that back in your income tax.

Liberals like that kind of government finance. Then do you know what will happen? All the local and state teachers and bureaucrats whose salaries are hurt because the state treasury is \$2 billion short will run to Washington and "demand" more federal aid.

The liberals' hearts will bleed, and the money will be voted. And there will be nothing the voters can do about it because federal appropriations and taxes aren't subject to referendums, the way Michigan and local actions are.

FOURTH, TISCH is liberal because it would allow an elite minority to control tax actions.

Proposal D requires future tax actions to receive a 60-percent vote of the public and an 80-percent vote in the state legislature. That would mean an elitist 41 percent of the voters and 21 percent of the state legislators could call the shots.

That kind of government by an elite is typical of liberal rule.

Fifth, Tisch is liberal in the way it grants total exemption from property taxes. All persons over age 62 are exempted, a provision that applies to Henry Ford II, Tom Murphy, Max Fisher and Walker Cleser. It's typical of a liberal solution that it indiscriminately applies to those who don't need help as well as the persons it is supposed to help.

I plead emphatically "not guilty" to being a liberal. And the Tisch proposal is raging, flaming, undisguised, elitist, minority-rule liberalism.

Election '80 is a different animal



Voting booths will be the center of attention tomorrow as millions of America's registered voters punch, pull and mark ballots for candidates.

There are only a few shopping hours left before the big election.

You still have time to pick a candidate. But it appears there'll be a host of last-minute shoppers in yet another race in which — as election day dawns — voters are still deciding between the "lesser of two evils."

This is reminiscent of the 1972 election when Democrats were singing "It's too late baby" for George McGovern early on in the election. And political wags were making jokes about the Richard Nixon doll who talks and talks and runs and runs and runs.

The attitude now seems to prevail that Jimmy Carter is a known who has done an underwhelming job and Ronald Reagan is an unknown who could screw up America's on the firing line, but the campaign lacks any real firepower.

The 1976 runoff was a lot more fun. Among dominant issues were lust, adultery and affairs both foreign and domestic. You didn't need a Mary Cunningham and William Agee to make for lively reading. Voters four years ago may have been undecided, but they were seldom bored.

When you were alone with your conscience inside the sacred voting booth, you might have been thinking "lust in my heart," or "ethnic purity."

In retrospect, the Watergate era spawned a language of its own. Those now-overworked terms were common in the daily press or news magazines.

IN ELECTION year 1976, for the hottest info on Jimmy Carter your best bets were "Playboy" and "Penthouse" magazines. In "Penthouse" you read that the peanut populist from Georgia may be the latest reincarnation of Tricky Dick. And of course, all that lust and adultery stuff was in "Playboy."

Gerry Ford might have made the centerfold of "Sports Illustrated" as he stumbled, fumbled and fell on golf courses and tennis courts. But he was still the All-American boy who did nothing except pardon Nixon to generate the wagging of tongues.

For the infamous words of Earl Butz, former secretary of agriculture, you might have read



Jackie Klein

"Rolling Stone." And you could peruse almost any publication to find the latest gossip on Don Regie and his female friend. That didn't stop voters from putting him in the U.S. Senate.

The language of election '76 made Watergate seem like Sesame Street. But the juicy, lurid, lascivious graphic details splattered all over the front pages didn't persuade many voters to abandon their favorite candidates.

AS ONE VOTER put it, "If you want to make a big deal about every politician who ever fooled around, we'd have self-government for sure."

But 1980 is an elephant and a donkey of a different color. Reagan and Carter aren't lusty in their hearts or anyplace else — at least not verbally. It's Mr. Clean versus Mr. Clean. Carter has Billy and Reagan has B movies but the skeletons aren't rattling now.

You can be sure neither Carter nor Reagan would put a Fanny Fox or a Virginia Ray in the White House or the Supreme Court. That's one of the few things that could stop Rosalyn and Nancy from smiling.

Carter and Reagan, as well as their spouses, keep on grinning through a crucial election campaign. But voters don't think there's very much to be happy about. They have to make some pretty tough choices Nov. 4.

The 1980 campaign is scandal-free. The sham of 1976 has been stripped away. But the undecideds are still around and their numbers are soaring. The theme song is, "Every silver lining must have a cloud."