

November 10, 2015

Dear Brent,

Thank you for responding to my letter to the editor concerning the date that Penacook celebrates Halloween.

As you probably saw in the ensuing Monitor article soon after my letter, the reason for the early celebration seems to have been lost to time. Some residents said Gate Night, another reminded everyone of the free movies given by a local resident. Yet another reason is that a former chief of police suggested in 2008 that Penacook celebrates with Boscawen. To my mind, none of these events seem to happen now, yet we continue with an outdated "tradition".

I predict Halloween Howl will continue to attract all city residents to our new downtown. This means that kids and adults in Penacook will continue to be forced to choose to go the Howl or go trick of treating. No other section of the city is excluded in this manner; it is fundamentally unfair to kids.

Adults who did stay home this year to treat kids saw reduced numbers. We live in a dense neighborhood where normally we have 100 plus kids, this year we had 29. Not much fun for us either.

Because Penacook has a separate school system, it is sometimes perceived as something different or separate from Concord, like a village unto itself. Having a separate celebration for Penacook contributes to this perception. In every respect except schools we are a part of Concord, it might be said Penacook is the original Concord. Having Penacook join in Concord's celebration makes it more inclusive, more part of a united city. So is Penacook truly part of Concord?

We celebrate every other holiday with Concord and for that matter, the rest of the United States; I don't see why this holiday should be any different, especially if people cannot agree on why we do it in the first place. I don't think it matters to anyone anymore. Tradition is fine but it should have meaning and therefore value to the community. I do not know what value Penacook gets for having a different holiday. In fact, I think we lose out.

I know it is a small thing in the course of business of the city. But I think it is a big thing for people to share the same experience. So I would ask that the City Council consider my request to change the date of Halloween for Penacook to the same day and time as Concord. Let all city residents celebrate together.

Thank you for your time and service to our city.

Regards,

Jack Shields
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