

All rational minds reject the “sex offender-Halloween” connection

written by Sandy | October 15, 2019



By Sandy . . . We are at an interesting crossroads in regard to the craze that started sweeping the country around 2008 (see <http://with-justiceforall.blogspot.com/2014/11/sex-offenders-and-halloween-will-it.html>).

As with almost everything I write, I wake up around 5:30 or 6 with the opening text, or the heading, or a few times the ending, being written in my head. This morning it was the opening sentence, and I knew the first thing I had to do was find my old blog post, referenced above, about when this all started.

In reading through all the Halloween-related posts looking for it, I found a lot of really good stuff. There is what I call my “[Official Halloween Article](#)” (2013). There are links to several pieces published by well-recognized researchers and

journalists, including [Jill Levenson's excellent piece](#) (2014), [Lenore Skenazy's iconic Halloween piece](#) (2010), [Emily Horowitz's 2014 piece](#), and also in 2014 [Andrew Extein's piece](#) which puts the sex-offender/Halloween myth within the context of the centuries-old legends of the bogeyman.

It is now 2019. Has there been progress in dispelling this dark remnant from urban legends and shining a little light of reason on it?

Yes and no.

For the past several years, the predominance of NARSOL's Halloween activities have been two pronged: a yearly Halloween marathon/"cop-watch" call-in radio session and a focused, online vendetta via emails, comments, and articles targeting **Patch** and other online media that are pushing the "Halloween safety maps" and other precautions against those on the registry.

[Our marathon continues, this year extending to six hours.](#)

We have seen a definite shift in the material put out by **Patch** starting last year and much more prominent this year. They still print the "know where the sex-offenders are" nonsense, but many then print the facts, the research, "[telling the whole story](#)," and many link [NARSOL's official statement](#) sent to their editorial staff in 2017.

Wonderful new pieces have come out, continuing the barrage of scientific data supporting that this is a total waste of resources on something that is not only not an issue but is also a joke among those willing to read and think for themselves.

Last year Skenazy, above all a champion for children, was incensed at a publication in the **Boston Herald** quoting a "children's advocate" who said, "Halloween is like Christmas for sex offenders," and fired off [this retaliation](#). Also last

year *Psychology Today* published [this piece by Marty Klein](#). And Elizabeth Weill-Greenberg, writing for *The Appeal*, published [the human-interest piece](#), “When handing out candy to trick-or-treaters means risking arrest,” about the ridiculous and useless laws in many jurisdictions governing the required behavior of persons on sexual offense registries at Halloween.

New this year are two excellent resources. NARSOL affiliate Texas Voices for Reason and Justice, under the leadership of Mary Sue Molnar, produced a [“Halloween Fact or Fiction” flyer](#) available in a downloadable PDF.

And Sage Research Publications [just published this piece](#) by the Association for the Treatment of Sexual Offenders – ATSA – about the mythical connection between Halloween and sexual offending.

So, is all well? We can’t say that yet. I have seen an up-tick in self-serving and promoting press releases and articles issued by law enforcement and community advocates touting the heroic efforts to keep the children in their communities safe come Halloween evening. How? By increasing traffic patrol? By initiating or increasing foot-patrol of officers in heavy trick-or-treat areas? By opening up intoxicated-driver checkpoints Halloween evening? By cautions about flame-retardant costumes, carrying flashlights, and trick-or-treating in pairs or groups?

Nothing so sensible as any of that.

Quoting from several of the pieces:

[“The Newton County \[GA\] Sheriff’s Office](#) and the Department of Community Supervision will host their 13th Annual Sex Offender Halloween Shut-In on Thursday, Oct. 31, from 6-10 p.m. . . . The goal of this event is to closely monitor sex offenders in a controlled environment while children are celebrating this festive occasion.”

[“Allen County \[OH\] Sheriff Matt Treglia](#) is urging area residents to use caution during the approaching Halloween trick-or-treat season by signing up for free email messages that will alert citizens of individuals who are featured on the county sex offender registry.”

[“In Marshall County \[AL\],](#) there are approximately 230 registered sex offenders, and the Marshall County Sheriff’s Office (MCSO) wants the community to know where they reside, so they can choose to avoid those houses when trick-or-treating. ‘We do the best we can in making sure sex offenders live where they tell us, so it is crucial that our citizens visit our website to see who the registered sex offenders are and where they are living,’ Sheriff Phil Sims said.”

[“\[MI\] Halloween warning.](#) Before you take the kids to ‘the best ‘neighborhood for trick or treating, check the sex offender registry to make sure they will be safe.”

And so it continues. And those are just a few, a sampling, four among many with many more to come.

It’s like the mythical beast Hydra who, when one head was chopped off, grew two more in its place.

Except the insidious myths of the dangers of those on the registry at Halloween aren’t something we can enjoy and put aside, knowing it is totally the stuff of fairy tales. These myths cause harassment, disruption of family activities and relationships, and breed unconstitutional practices.

We remain vigilant.