



Costumes and Trick-or-Treating

I'VE HAD A SMALL LOVE AFFAIR with the Dave Matthews Band for the last 15 years. His music first fell upon my tender ears in college, and it has stuck as my favorite. In addition to its great sound, Dave utters a few thought-provoking lyrics. One such line is from his song *So Much to Say*. He says (or, sings, actually), "I find sometimes it's easy to be myself; sometimes I find it's better to be somebody else."

Do you ever feel that way? That it might be better to be someone else or at least to experience something else for a while? I think we have all, at some point, been swept over with a wave of believing the grass is greener on the other side.

How nice would it be to jump into a costume and be someone else for an hour, a day or even a week. That is one of the greatest things about Halloween; it is a free pass to dress up as something completely different from your everyday life.

I slipped into a few fabulous Halloween costumes back in my day. For the first few years of my trick-or-treating career, I donned the go-to witch costume that had been worn by both of my older sisters before me. By the time it got to me, the look had been fine-tuned to perfection. We had the black pointy witch hat and a black cloak in storage in the closet at the bottom of the basement steps. I eagerly pulled them out the week before Halloween, trying them on over and over during the week. My mom had become a pro at concocting

the perfect shade of green face paint that made me look oh-so-witchy, without turning my skin green (FYI, the key is to apply a thin layer of Crisco to the face before putting on the green paint. It is great for maintaining skin tone, probably not the best for the pores). I knew the importance of accessorizing, and finished off my costume with the small wooden and wicker-bristled broom that usually rested near the fireplace. For 364 days a year it was a decorative piece, but for one magical night a year it was my broom on which I would fly off to gather goodies in the neighborhood. Face completely green, cloak flowing behind me, a plastic pumpkin in one hand and a groovy broom in the other, I was ready for my dad to take me trick-or-treating.

After a few years of being a witch, I outgrew the cloak, and was ready for a new look. I moved on to my cousin's turtle costume, complete with a padded shell on my back; a mad scientist with an orange wig followed the next year; and fourth grade was my crowing glory – or so I thought – when I went as Dr. Who, from the popular BBC science fiction/time travel show. I had a wig, tweed jacket, hat and a crazy scarf, just like Dr. Who. Although I don't think anyone else knew what I was supposed to be, I felt so cool being Dr. Who for a day.

One Halloween my cousin Russ, having upgraded from the aforementioned turtle costume, went as a giant present. Made out of a huge cardboard box outfitted with armholes on the side, and a hole for his head on the top, it got rave reviews. He cut the bottom out for his legs, and wrapped the entire box in wrapping paper and ribbon. It was a brilliant costume, but there was one glitch. Crossing a street, and not able to see his feet because the box cut off his line of vision to the ground, he missed the curb, tripped and fell to the ground. With the box encasing him, he avoided getting hurt, but he also managed to high-center himself. With his legs flailing in the air and his arms unable to reach the ground to push himself up, he was stuck. He was probably very happy to get out of that costume.

Sometimes, after putting on a costume, being somebody else, or trying on a different reality, it is nice to go back to being ourselves, slipping into our own clothes, our own lives and our own spot in this world. When the grass looks greener on the other side, sometimes a quick trip over the fence makes you realize how great you have it on your side.

We are very lucky here in Spokane. Sure those big cities with their glitzy lights, world-renowned restaurants, famous landmarks and frequent celebrity sightings have their appeal, but after getting stuck in the traffic, unable to get in at that restaurant, or being overwhelmed by flocks of tourists, it is nice to be back on this side of the fence and realize the grass is pretty green. Need specifics showing what makes life so great here? You're in luck, because this issue has our annual Best Of awards. Our readers (that's you!) voted, and here are the results, the best of the best, the things that make Spokane such a great place to live; the things that make us realize the grass is greenest on this side. Take a look, and you'll never want to be someone else, or live somewhere else, ever again.

Living here isn't a trick, it is a treat – no matter what costume you wear!

Blythe