**LET’S BE “FRANK”**

“Halloween is almost here. Witches will be straying. But you do not need to fear. They are only playing.”

That little ditty learned in grade school reminds me of the great times we had at Halloween trick or treating. I’m sure you never did this as you were much older than me (love reminding you of that). We would start out in the late afternoon before the sun went down and go on our Washington Avenue route. Our first stop would be Washington Florist where we would get a rose for mom. Then we would continue. An apple from the vegetable guy Mr. Baldino. The guy at the hardware store would give us a little trinket and Ruley’s Novelty store would give us a smoke bomb, or fake cigarettes or the “loads” to sneak into the old man’s cigarette and they would pop went he lit it up.

Further down we would get a fresh out of the oven hot roll from Marchegiano Bakery. They were so good you didn’t need butter. We would end the tour with a bottle of soda from the package store and finally Marzulo Bakery where we could choose an Italian ice or a pastry.

Then it would be off to Aunt Tess’s house where we would have a bowl of lentil soup (she insisted it would keep us warm all night), and off to the neighborhoods in Foxon. We didn’t have designer Halloween bags, we just used pillow cases. We didn’t have store bought costumes but rather homemade ones from something in the house. Often it was something mom made from Uncle Albert’s old army mutande(or as mom would pronounce it moodans).Those would be excellent for a hobo costume, a clown costume or just to keep us warm.

Back then, many of the neighbors would decorate the homes and let us in for hot apple cider or cocoa to warm us up. Between that and the lentil soup sometimes we had to make pit stops to visit the bathroom. There were no offers of miniature candy. There were full candy bars either hershey, snickers, peanut butter cups, milky ways, mars bars and a variety of others. If they gave us apples, we would toss them in the woods (the animals needed some treats too).

Mom was pretty strict about our bed times but back then Catholic Schools had off Holy Days of Obligation so we were able to spend the entire day after Halloween home. I would give some of the stuff to you and Mary, (did I mention you two were both much older than me). Mom and dad were both diabetics but mom would justify it by telling us they could have sweets on special occasions, I don’t know if she was referring to Halloween or All Saints Day.

It was fun back then. Now to protect our children from a sick society we have to have “Trunk or Treats” Church Halloween parties or anything else that will keep them off the streets. It’s a good gesture but it’s sad that today’s children will never know the independence and trickery we so proudly enjoyed.

As you read this letter you will be celebrating your fourteenth anniversary of your joining mom and dad. it seems like yesterday, I got the call from Mary that you were on the way to the hospital. I never really got to say good bye. I think the night before we were disagreeing with some plans for the Diamond Club dinner and your final comments to me were something like “why do you always have to be such an a...hole.”

You are probably happily looking down with a smile knowing that your wife and two sons are still carrying out your desire to foster the game of baseball with some of these dinners honoring people who have really dedicated themselves to sports especially for the children. They have also continued acknowleding some of the special high school athletes. Not just the best players but the best teammate.

I miss all the things we could have done together. As we got older it seemed as though we became closer in age and we always looked forward to sporting events and dinners. Holiday dinners haven’t been the same as very few still eat the traditional holiday goodies. Gluten free, fat free, dairy free and taste free.

Well that’s it for now. This month is also birthday month for my kids as our baby will be 34 and Gina 37. The time just flies.

As the say in Tennessee, “have a blessed day.” Say hi to the family and I’ll see you soon.