

# SAFAGRAM

## President's Message

By Doug Spurgeon



Welcome back to a new year! Several changes are taking place this year:

- This semester a new SAIT President should be announced.
- For the first time, SAFA has used on-line voting to elect a Board of Governors' representative
- A new negotiating team will be put in place to once again go back to the table after Christmas.

Some of the left over items from the summer have revolved around PPRs and student assessments. Yes, that dreaded SIR II report is once again raising its punitive head and has been used to prevent some faculty from receiving a "meets expectation," which also stalls them on the steps and removes any Long Service Allowance (LSA) that they may be getting. While some have grieved the use of SIRs in this manner, some have not. Those who have so far been successful at removing the "needs improvement" in favour of a "meets expectation" are once again regaining the ability to move a step and retain the LSA.

Years ago there was a course called "Teaching to the SIR," not that the intention was to influence the results. However, if the SIR II report "Q40" is so important to management, then why don't they contact those with a high "Q40" to assist and mentor those who are not meeting SAIT standards? Beside the fact that a single question is used as a basis for your whole worth without any consideration of other factors not only goes against good management practices but also is completely contrary to a harmonious employer/employee relationship. It still leaves a simple query: How do some faculty get high numbers? I know that some have their own opinions on how this is accomplished but that is not always the case. I for one would be prepared to mentor and assist any Faculty on the SIR II as last year my average was 4.9 on "Q40." I have heard that only those with low numbers complain, yet I believe that my voice has been constant on the use and abuse of this system for rating faculty. Movement has been made on the use of the SIR II and will continue, but we do need to hear from those affected by the rating. Any faculty who has been turned down for con-ed or refused PD or travel and has been told it's due to "Q40" being below 3.8 needs to come forward so this can be dealt with.

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### Editorial Board

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SAFAGRAM is published by the SAIT Academic Faculty Association (SAFA) five times a year usually closer to the end of the months of October, December, February, April, and June. Deadline for submissions is the 10th of the month preceding publication. Send submissions to SAFAGRAM, care of the SAFA office, N201 or e-mail submissions to [kathie.dann@sait.ca](mailto:kathie.dann@sait.ca). Please keep submissions under 300 words, double-spaced. Submissions may be edited for grammar, length, or content.

SAFAGRAM editorial policy, as approved by the SAFA Executive on June 14, 1995, is as follows:

1. The Editorial Board has the final say as to what is included or deleted from the newsletter.
2. Editorial Board decisions about newsletter material must be agreed to by consensus.
3. The newsletter will include a disclaimer stating that the views expressed in its content do not necessarily represent the views of the Editorial Board or SAFA.
4. All material included in the newsletter must
  - be signed by the author when submitted to the editors, but anonymity may be requested and granted for printing.
  - be based on "reasoned argument" if personal criticism is used.
  - not involve name-calling.
  - not include sexist, racist, or homophobic comments.
  - be related to SAIT, although this will be interpreted broadly.

**The views expressed in SAFAGRAM do not necessarily represent the views of the Editorial Board or SAFA.**

<http://www.safacalgary.com/>

President's Message  
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This new academic year does look promising. Further movement on the SIR II is expected, and its use will continue to be clarified. Negotiations will soon begin. A new president is going to be named soon. New buildings are now in use. This may be a good year in which to be a bargaining faculty. ♣

## For those who thought they knew everything

The liquid inside young coconuts can be used as a substitute for **Blood plasma**.

No piece of paper can be folded in half more than seven (7) times, **Oh go ahead...I'll wait...**

Donkeys kill more people annually, **than plane crashes or shark attacks. (So, watch your Ass)**

You burn more calories sleeping, **than you do watching television.**

Oak trees do not produce acorns until they are fifty (50) years of age or older.

The first product to have a bar code, **was Wrigley's gum.**

The King of Hearts is the only king, **WITHOUT A MOUSTACHE**

American Airlines saved \$40,000 in 1987 by eliminating one (1) olive, **from each salad served in first-class.**

Venus is the only planet that rotates clockwise, **(Since Venus is normally associated with women, what does this tell you?) (That women are going the 'right' direction...?)**

Apples, not caffeine, **are more efficient at waking you up in the morning.**

Most dust particles in your house are made from, **DEAD SKIN!**

The first owner of the Marlboro Company, **died of lung cancer, so did the first 'Marlboro Man.'**

Walt Disney was afraid, **OF MICE!**

Pearls dissolve, **IN VINEGAR!**

The three most valuable brand names on earth: **Marlboro, Coca Cola, and Budweiser, in that order.**

It is possible to lead a cow upstairs... **but, not downstairs.**

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## LRO Report

By Al Brown, LRO



Welcome back everyone!

It's been a busy time since the last SAFAGRAM! As you are all well aware, we received the arbitration award just prior to the summer break (June 26). Over the summer I received many questions regarding the implementation of the wage package contained in the award. Since then, I have worked with SAIT Employee Services to assemble a list of FAQs that has been posted on SAFA's website—[safacalgary.com](http://safacalgary.com). If you have any questions, please feel free to e-mail or call me.

We're back into collective bargaining again this coming February as the current collective agreement—the one we just finalized through arbitration this past June—expires next June 30. The SAFA executive has selected the Negotiations Committee members for this next round and we will begin preparations this fall. The SAFA executive and I met before the summer break to review the previous round of bargaining and to “brainstorm” for the next round. This fall, we also held a “Town Hall,” open to SAFA membership, to discuss the arbitration award. In addition, SAFA will be asking for your input into the bargaining proposal via a survey sometime this fall.

During the summer, I worked with several instructors who had received a “requires improvement” on their overall performance review evaluation. Section 18.01 (b) of the SAIT/SAFA Collective Agreement entitles any academic staff member whose performance review is determined to be unsatisfactory to receive the reasons in writing and to appeal through the grievance procedure. This is because there is a significant financial penalty attached to a “requires improvement” performance review. I was able to work with Employee Services and several of the schools on campus to reach a mutually satisfactory outcome for most of the complaints.

While on the topic of representation, please remember that you have the right to have a SAFA representative with you during any return to work meeting. If you have any questions regarding these meetings, feel free to contact the SAFA office or the SAFA Disability and Return to Work Coordinator—Tracey Fawcett. Also, please keep in mind that there is counselling help available via the Employee and Family Assistance Program. This confidential, professional assistance is free and available to all academic staff members—just stop by the SAFA office to pick up a brochure or call 403-777-1272.

The “Know your Collective Agreement” contest continues!

### The rules for the contest are as follows:

The **first** SAFA Member who **correctly** answers the question, **quoting the appropriate section and subsection of the SAFA Collective Agreement**, via e-mail to me at [al.brown@sait.ca](mailto:al.brown@sait.ca) wins a PRIZE!!! Prizes are located in the SAFA Office (N201) for the prize winner.

In case you do not have a Collective Agreement handy and you would like to answer the question, please click the following link

<http://www.safacalgary.com/collective%20agreement%202007%20-%202010.pdf>

to receive an electronic copy to help you in your search for the answer.

### TODAY'S QUESTION

The employer can assign work from **when** to **when** during the work day?

Hint: The “start” time isn't obvious! You will have to search the agreement—and give your rationale for your answer! ♣

# SAIT Emergency Response Plan

By Barry Cochran, Manager, SAIT Security Department

When an emergency happens, our first thought is: how will I be safe? If that emergency is at SAIT, you naturally wonder – what plans are in place to keep campus safe?

We must all be alert to our surroundings and help ensure our own safety. SAIT is proactive in providing a safe environment for its students, employees, and visitors, and in responding effectively when an emergency does arise.

The starting point is SAIT's Emergency Response Plan. This plan is designed to be flexible, so we can quickly and effectively respond to a wide range of potential situations. Along with the Emergency Response Plan, we have a growing number of tools to help keep the SAIT community safe and secure:

- Paladin Security works closely with Facilities Management, Health, Safety & Wellness, Information Systems, and the Calgary Police Service to monitor and enhance safety on campus.
- Video cameras provide our security team with the ability to monitor SAIT's grounds as well as select areas of all buildings on campus 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- SAIT has emergency contact stations located at strategic spots across campus grounds to provide instant contact with security. As well, hundreds of alarms across campus can be triggered in an emergency to move students and employees to safety.

- Emergency Evacuation Wardens and Building Captains are trained and ready to help colleagues evacuate quickly and safely. This plan is tested each year.
- The SAITALERT emergency notification system allows SAIT to rapidly send emergency messages to registered users via voice or text messaging in the event of a potential or real threat on campus. The system is tested twice each year. If you are not currently a SAITALERT member, I encourage you to register: <https://saitalert.sait.ca/>
- Our digital signage network gives SAIT the ability to flash emergency messages, including video and sound, to students and staff on video displays across campus.
- Online tools such as e-mail, SAITNOW, and SAIT's website can provide crisis communications to all members of the SAIT community.
- In an emergency, members of the SAIT community can contact Security directly by dialing 403-284-8000 or Calgary Emergency Services by dialing 911.

If you would like to know more about the safety plans and procedures in place at SAIT, check out the [Security department pages on SAITNOW](#). If you have questions or comments about safety at SAIT, we'd like to hear from you. You can reach us at 5021. ☛

*For those who thought they knew everything  
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A duck's quack, ***doesn't echo, and no one knows why.***

Dentists have recommended that a toothbrush be kept at least six (6) feet away from a toilet to avoid airborne particles resulting from the flush. ***(I close the lid before flushing and keep my toothbrush in the living room now!)***

***And the best for last....***

Turtles can breathe through their butts. ***(I know some people like that, don't YOU?)***

So..... ***Now you know everything!***

— • — • —



*Drive carefully. It's not only cars that can be "Recalled" by their maker.*

## Library Report

By Jessica Norman, MLS



### Helping Students Achieve Success with Library Instruction

When you work on your lesson plans, don't forget that the Library offers instruction classes that will help your students to succeed academically!

The staff at the Reg Erhardt Library wants our faculty to be aware of the value of Library instruction and student orientation. The instruction team in the Library has been busy over the summer months developing tutorials and workshops for your classes. Specialized research skills sessions have been prepared to meet your students' needs. Tours and orientation sessions are also available.

Library instruction can teach your students to:

- Find and evaluate online and print resources
- Refine research topics and receive knowledgeable research assistance
- Avoid plagiarism and cite sources of information

We are now taking Library classroom bookings for the fall semester. To access the new online booking form, go to: <http://library.sait.ca/libraryinstruction.asp#> or contact **Jessica Norman, the Coordinator of Instruction via e-mail at [library.instruction@sait.ca](mailto:library.instruction@sait.ca)**

Welcome back and have a fantastic academic year! ☛

## News from Articulation – October 2012



*Kim Frayn and Karen McDaniel share information about Transfer Options*

*Have a diploma? Now choose a degree...*

### **SAIT TRANSFER OPTIONS FAIR**

**9 AM - 3 PM, Thurs., Nov. 15, 2012**  
**Stan Grad Centre (Heart) Atrium**

*Meet with recruiters to learn about your transfer options!*



*Kim Frayn talks to parents about degree opportunities at Parent/Family Orientation*

Welcome Back SAFA members! With the opening of the TTC, it is an exciting year for everyone on campus and Transfer Options is no different. We have already participated in three events and interacted with over 400 students! Please mark this date in your calendar and watch for more information about the annual Transfer Options Fair on November 15 in the Stan Grad Atrium from 9–3.

Over 38 universities, colleges, and organizations from the USA, UK, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia plus the USA and UK Consulates will be sending representatives to talk to students about degree completion opportunities. There will be booths, break-out sessions, and one-to-one advising times available. Also, there will be opportunities for interested faculty to discuss degrees of their own if they are applying for the Credential Enhancement Program.

We are pleased to announce that there are over 700 transfer options on the TO website. We know that 20 percent of our graduates are completing degrees, so why don't you see where they are going at [www.sait.ca/transferoptions](http://www.sait.ca/transferoptions)? If your program has a Facebook page, you can "like" us for regular updates. Follow the link on the TO website or search for us at Transfer Options at SAIT.

Thank you for your continued support and many fine suggestions for future transfer options. We are also being approached by receiving institutions for transfer agreements because our graduates have applied there. Please contact me or encourage your students to do so through [transfer.options@sait.ca](mailto:transfer.options@sait.ca) if you would like more information.

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*Following is a Message to Faculty — originally submitted too late for the June newsletter:*

## Message to My Fellow Faculty

*By Tom Vernham, Power Engineering Instructor, MacPhail School of Energy*

My name is Tom Vernham. I am an instructor here at SAIT and I work in the energy department; or rather I work for the MacPhail School of Energy. I am on the SAFA executive and while I don't often contribute to the SAFAGRAM, I feel that I have something to say and I hope that some of you, at least, will take the time to read this.

Not too long ago, the arbitration award for our co-workers in AUPE came out and there was a message from President Irene Lewis about it. I am happy that the award finally came out, but I was disturbed and I am still disturbed by the tone of the president's message. It seemed to me that the executive was pleased that they could finally give the workers what they deserved and that the executive of SAIT was waiting breathlessly to do just that.

Don't get me wrong, I like working here. I even like the people on the executive. I respect them for doing their jobs to the best of their ability. On the other hand, they never had to wait for an arbitrator to tell them how to treat their employees fairly. We had more than a year of negotiations and collective bargaining to figure out what was fair and how to compensate SAFA employees, but the SAIT Executives chose to hold up the process as long as they could before it finally went to an arbitrator and a solution was determined. In fact, we at SAFA were warned to take what was offered or the process would go to arbitration on a number of occasions. Obviously, the SAIT executive saw arbitration as a weapon in their arsenal rather than a way to treat their employees fairly.

It seems to me that one of the problems with working here is that communications often get spun in a way that distorts the truth. As a result, many of us don't know what, or who, to believe. We turn to our president for leadership and truth and fairness, but we get a nicely spun version of what has really happened. In fact, it seems to me that the workers and the executive just don't understand each other very well at all.

At the beginning of our last round of negotiations, we were told over and over again that there was little, or no, money available. So, we didn't ask for very much. Instead, we asked for some changes to contract language and a small increase in the second and third years. We wanted to be reasonable and we wanted to acknowledge the economic climate of the time. Certainly we realized, as did the SAIT executive, that our disposable income was shrinking and that it was becoming more and more difficult to manage personal finances for many of our members. However, rather than simply help us to quickly develop a new collective agreement, SAIT chose to offer and counter-offer solutions that went from minimal to ludicrous to insulting.

Ultimately, it seems to me that our problem continues to be miscommunication. We ask for salary increases and it seems that SAIT thinks we are being greedy. We ask for prep time, fewer contact hours, and smaller class sizes and it seems that SAIT thinks we are being lazy. We ask for better benefits and stronger contract language and it seems that SAIT thinks we are trying to run the place. And when we ask that all instructors who work at SAIT be covered under our collective agreement and be members of our association, it seems they think we are radical unionists.

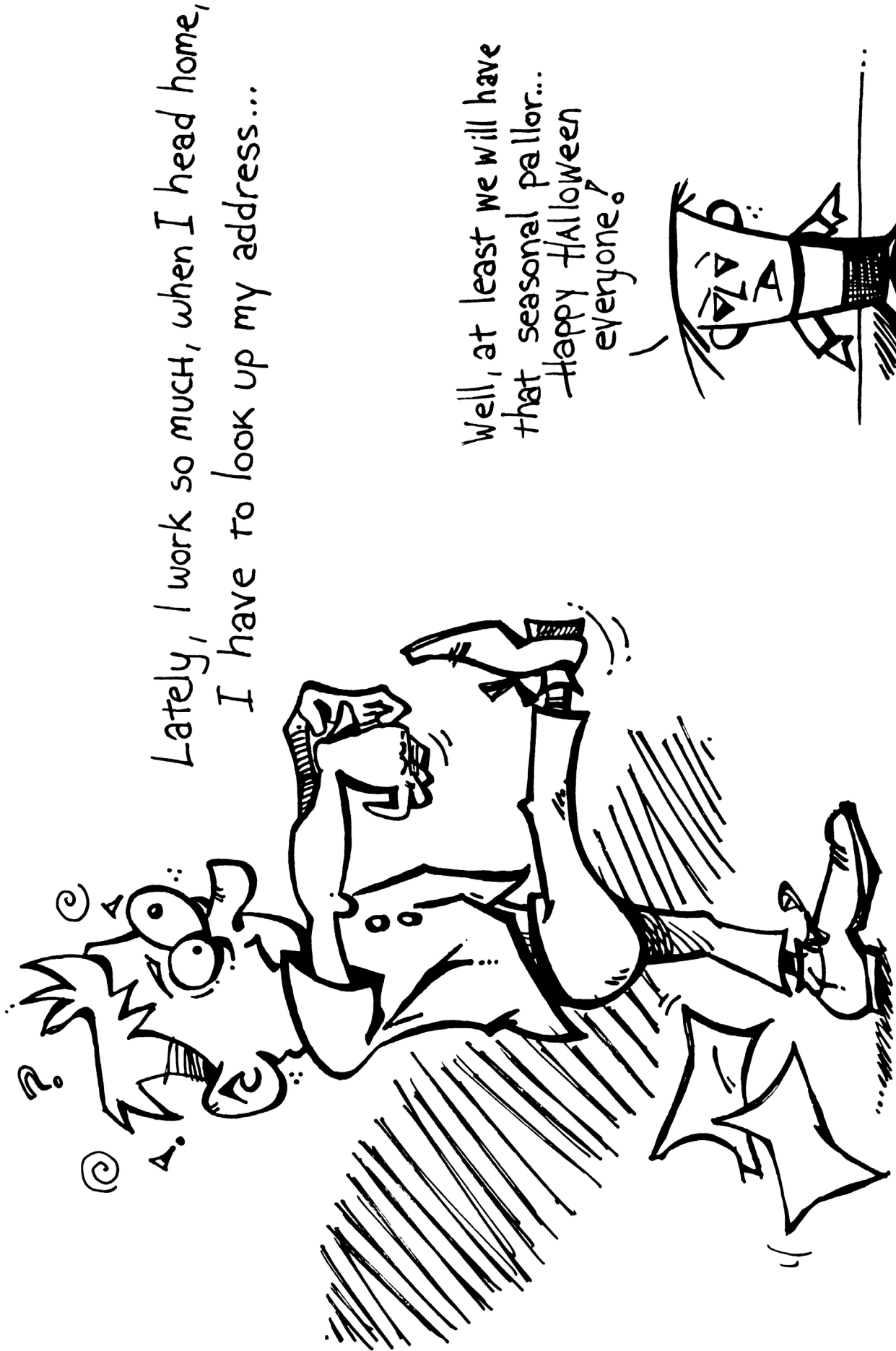
To be clear, when we ask for more money through salary increases, we are trying to ensure the future viability of this institution. We all know that the costs of living in Calgary have been climbing steadily for years. Enmax is up about 30% over last year alone. Groceries are up about 20% over last year. City property taxes are up by 6% and city council was working hard to hold that down. Even parking at SAIT goes up year after year. So, unless our employer can help us to maintain our standard of living, and if we continuously see our disposable income drop, they will not be able to keep the best instructors or the best people. Instead, they will become like BCIT which is an institution that cannot get faculty with industry experience but must rely on recent university grads to teach things that they only have "book" knowledge of. It isn't just our future at stake. It is the future of an institution that has provided service to the community for more than 90 years.

When we ask for prep time and fewer contact hours, we are trying to prevent the overwork and burnout that so many faculty face. We know, and studies have shown, that the high workloads and the stress that results from prep time covered at home, can result in mental illness like depression and debilitating stress. Our employer even brings in experts to tell us that. They just refuse to accept it when we say it.

When we ask that all instructors be a part of our association, we are asking for an even playing field for everyone. We are asking for transparency in the way SAIT treats the people who work here. How can we know if the compensation for faculty members is equitable if we don't really know what the compensation packages for some are? We need an even playing field so that the high quality people who work here will know that they are appreciated and so that they will not find themselves in a competition with each other for fair treatment like children at their mother's knee.

I sincerely hope that future collective bargaining will go better. I don't expect that our employer will ever just hand over everything we ask for "carte blanche." What I hope is that at some point they will listen to what we say without the extreme bias that they have demonstrated in the past. I hope that for the sake of the future of this institution, they will really try to hear what we are telling them. That is that we care about this place as much as they do. I hope they understand that we want to see it grow and flourish. After all, our children need to be able to attend this institution, or maybe our grandchildren. We want the education and training that they receive here to be as valid and valuable as it ever was. Many of us believe that can only happen if SAIT is able to keep highly trained, experienced, and committed faculty in place.

Ultimately, there is no fairy godmother, or Great White Mother, dispensing goodies to her children. We are all professionals working for a solid future. Instead of working as enemies, we should be working as colleagues. ♦♦



Lately, I work so much, when I head home,  
I have to look up my address...

Well, at least we will have  
that seasonal pallor...  
Happy Halloween  
everyone!

