

STUDENT LIFE

Festive ideas for Halloween

By Aaron J. Amendola
Staff Writer

October 31: Halloween. Every other day on the calendar is just a normal day but this particular day is not. It's the only day that we're actually encouraged to be someone we're not, sometimes forking over money just to immerse ourselves in different personalities. Strangers lurking in doorways willingly give children candies and other treats. Instead of watching regular shows and movies, many people submit themselves to gory films filled with horror and grim tales.

Free candy? Horror movies? Costumes? Count me in.

So what is everyone doing for Halloween this year? Like every other year, there's plenty to do and tons of places to go, you just need to know where to look. For starters, there are a few good scary movies out in time. "The Grudge," starring Sarah Michelle Geller and Bill Pullman, stands as the token horror flick for the holiday. Meanwhile, "Saw" (which opens in theatres today) provides more of a gross-out, creepy, serial killer type of horror film, if you prefer that type. Don't think you're interested in either of them? You could always rent a classic like "Evil Dead" or take a selection from Freddy Krueger or the Friday the 13th series. If you're feeling really brave, try watching "The Exorcist" with all the lights off alone in the middle of your room. Never makes for a bad time.

Feel like getting out of the dorms instead? Never fear, while this is still Erie, there are plenty of places to go. If you're feeling adventurous, you could always travel to one of the haunted corn mazes or ghost houses. One of the more popular ones is Borecky's, just about 25 minutes away. Borecky's, located in Fairview, costs only \$10 and lets you investigate over 40 rooms and locations all while being scared out of your wits.

Some students take matters into their own hands when it comes to ghouls and ghosts. Ed Falk and a squad of Almy Hall residents took it upon themselves to inspect an eerie old bridge with ghost detection equipment.

"We went to a bridge that was haunted by the ghost of a donkey," says Falk 03 ME. "We have no shame. We make no claims that ghosts exist, we are merely researchers investigating paranormal phenomenon."



HECTOR CASANOVA/KRT

Costumes are the favorite part of Halloween for people of all ages.

Its expeditions like Falk's that really make Halloween a great excuse to have fun.

"Several unidentifiable orbs and objects in captured photographs leave our team hopeful of something out in those woods," says fellow Almy Hall ghost explorer, Tom Zimjewski 03.

Interested in capturing a ghost with your own two eyes? All the bookstores in the area carry "Ghosts of Erie County" by Stephanie Wincik and assorted other books that hold all the reported strange tales that pop up in the district. Why not research a ghost story and go find out for yourself if it is real?

In the end, every activity boils down to one thing: costumes. From the very start, Oct. 31 has been all about the costumes. This year's most popular outfits are Spider-Man for guys and fairies or devils for girls. Who says you need to limit your options to store bought ensembles? Plenty of great ideas are out there ripe for the picking! "Why not go as something just crazy? Like a pimp with an ax?" says Jesse Stimpson 01. There are tons of original ideas out there. Mix and match costumes to come up with an idea all your own. There are plenty of combinations.

So what will your Halloween bring you this year? Tricks or treats? It's only a few days away and time is running out.

Third time charm for 'Grand Theft Auto'

By Jeff Smen
staff writer

It's the game where stealing a sweet ride is a good thing. It's the game where beating up people on the street to steal their money is ok as the cops don't see you. It's the game your mom doesn't want you to buy because it's your Christmas present. It's "Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas," and it's available now.

"Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas" is the third game in the series on the Playstation2 and definitely the best game of the series. The game takes place in 1992 in an area known as San Andreas. San Andreas itself consists of three cities, Los Santos (Los Angeles), San Fierro (San Francisco) and Las Venturas (Las Vegas).

Carl "CJ" Johnson is the main character in San Andreas. CJ has lived in Liberty City for the last five years, but must return home after his mother is murdered. CJ immediately gets caught up in the gang warfare and all hell breaks loose. The game of course plays like previous GTA games, gamers can choose to do the missions, or just go around, beat up and steal cars.

Remember how in previous games, jumping in water was bad, not anymore. CJ can swim, being able to go underwater and swim on the surface. CJ can now go to the gym to work out, making him stronger and raising his stamina allowing him to run longer. CJ can also buy different clothes, get his hair cut, jump over walls to avoid cops and spray paint graffiti. Eating food is also required, otherwise CJ will become more tired more often and lose muscle.

Stats play a big role in San Andreas. CJ has to level up in order to play certain missions and thus play through the game. Your stats are fat, stamina, respect, lung capacity, sex appeal and muscle. While these stats do help you in the game, they

never really become an annoyance and to raise your stats is never that hard. There is also driving, flying and bike skill which helps control these vehicles.

Now that the game has three cities, games can also pull off missions in the country side. Well, there aren't as many as these missions, these missions are still really fun. There are even special vehicles that can be found in the country side, like an ATV off-road quad, plows and lots more. The pedal bike, which is new to the series, is also a ton of fun to play with, even just to do stunts. Of course all of the cars are back from the previous game and the ability to play a plane or helicopter.

The graphics in the game are solid, and about as good as the previous games. Rockstar North, who made the game, have a few extra details like if it's a hot day, the screen will become slightly wavy indicating it's hot, or if you're going fast in a car, the game pulls a Need for Speed-like feel, where all the buildings go by real fast. The game has no loadings except at the beginning, so gamers will never be delayed in between cities.

The controls are slightly better than the previous games. The aiming system is now similar to that of "Manhunt," where you press a button and a square comes over the cop/person you want to shoot. The voice acting is top notch with appearances from people like Samuel L Jackson and Ice T.

So, is San Andreas really worth the money? Yes. This game is by far one of the best of the Christmas season, may even be game of the year, but it might have it's hands full with "Halo 2," and "Metroid Prime: Echo." Beating the missions is only half of the game. There are a ton of extra mini games that gamers can play, like pool and gambling. This game is worth buying, or at the least a renting.

Matchbox Players present spook of a show

By Kara Schmiemann
staff writer

On Sunday, Halloween night, save some time and energy and come visit McGarvey Commons at 8 p.m. until 10 p.m. The Matchbox Players will be sponsoring an improv night to thrill and entertain. It is guaranteed to be a howling good time. What is it, you ask?

"Halloween improv is just our typical improv show that we have every Friday night, only it is on Halloween, and we will have Halloween themed movie dub games and such," said President of Matchbox Players, Steven O'Donnell. "For those who don't know what improv is, it is like 'Whose Line is it Anyway' but there are no real actors. The audience entertains the audience."

Naturally, all are welcome to show up at any time and come and go as you please. Like always, improv night is free. Those are words all of us Behrend students can appreciate.

There is nothing better than laughter, and not to mention free food and Halloween treats. Who can turn that down? Well, maybe if your stomach is already turning from Halloween candy, you can!

To start the night off right, we have our own Behrend Beacon staff writer, Aaron Amendola, hosting the improv night.

"I hope to introduce a couple new games to complement the old staples the Matchbox Players have played every improv night," said Amendola.

Don't forget, when you show up, please be dressed in style. Be dressed in your most creative costume because there will be an all too entertaining Halloween costume contest. Remember, creativity is key since that is what you will be judged on. How can you go wrong when you will get a prize, which will unfortunately remain a surprise until Sunday?

This particular improv promises to be unique in that this would be the first Halloween Improv for Behrend. Let's recap; you get food, candy, music, games, fun, laughter and prizes for free with a cool Halloween theme.

"It's fun to be crazy for two hours while other people are being crazy too," said Louise Van Mook, DUS 01.

It's an opportunity for upperclassmen who have already participated in improv nights to step in and do what they do, and for new comers to see what it's all about!

"When I went to the Friday improv nights, the Matchbox Players involved everyone in the crowd," said Morgan Hansen, CENBD 05. "It is funny but not exactly like the television show because you learn a good deal about the art of improv, not just the entertainment aspect."

Have a story idea? E-mail us at
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