

On The Road...

Much Chagrin over a strange pumpkin-covered event

by Melody Sherosky
contributing writer

When I reached Ohio last weekend, I intended to write a basic article about the goings-on of a town southeast of Cleveland. With little chagrin, I was pleased to find that Chagrin Falls, Ohio, had much more to offer than one article could hold. Because I got caught up in the spirit of this area's seasonal activities, I plan to return there in the future to get the big picture of this often-unusual place.

As we speak, the residents of Chagrin Falls are preparing again to dispose of their Halloween pumpkins in a controversial manner. In fact, some students and families have been saving hundreds of pumpkins for the annual event that has sent some to the hospital and almost always brings out the Chagrin police. Hundreds of pumpkins will be thrown, rolled and destroyed on the steep Grove Hill in the heart of Chagrin Falls. Then, everyone will grab their cardboard or sled and slides down the hill on the slippery pumpkin innards.

You can imagine what a mess this might cause, and also how many risks are involved. Businesses on Grove Hill are concerned about property damage and some parents are concerned about the welfare of their children as they slide down slippery concrete. But the annual Pumpkin Roll, now in its 33rd year, is a well-attended community event.

The Pumpkin Roll started in Cha-



Here is where Chagrin Falls townspeople let the good pumpkins roll.

grin Falls in 1969, when teenagers rolled 69 pumpkins down the hill while other residents attended a basketball game. A few years later, sliding down the hill on the pumpkin sludge became common. Now, some families and many teenagers save their pumpkins weeks in advance. All of the jack-o-lanterns left on Chagrin porches after Halloween usu-

ally get commandeered, as well.

The event has no set date, but always happens during the week after Halloween. One resident explained that a few of the families who collect the most pumpkins are responsible for deciding when it happens. Junior and senior Chagrin Falls high school students, who are the major attendees of the Pumpkin

Roll, then spread word of the event the night it begins. The spontaneity seems to be important to the residents, since several people are concerned about talk that the event might become sanctioned by the city. The lack of a set date also prevents out-of-towners from attending and keeps the Pumpkin Roll a relatively closed community event.

In the past, police were notified on the night of the event because the event has no set date. Until recently, the police have turned their heads while the potentially dangerous event took place. The city also picked up the bill for the massive clean up. In the past few years, police in Chagrin Falls have become more concerned about the Pumpkin Roll. Injuries in the past have mostly consisted of bumps and scrapes, but a few broken bones have also been reported. Worried about a lawsuit against the city, last year the police asked for waivers and proof of insurance from attending students and families. The police never followed through, though, and the Pumpkin Roll went on without a problem.

This year, there has been discussion about police trying to block off the roads to Grove Hill. The mayor and councilmen have discussed charging attendees for the clean up, or turning the Pumpkin Roll into a city-sponsored event. Several residents worry that if it became a sanctioned event, the rules and safety precautions would be oppressive and that the spontaneity and decades of tradition would be lost. While the debate may go on for years to come, city-residents will put on the Pumpkin Roll this year even if it means sliding down Grove Hill into a pumpkin-splattered police car.

Of course there is more than the pumpkin roll going on in Chagrin Falls. That is why I will return, and of course I will tell you all about it. Until next time...

Hot Spots in Erie

Wal-Mart



PHOTO BY KARL BENACCI

by Karl Benacci
features editor

Stores seem to be getting bigger and bigger, trying to outlast one another. However, only one store may claim the title as "king." This store is Wal-Mart. There are a number of local Wal-Mart's, including locations on 4950 West 26th Street and 1900 Keystone Drive (Near Peach Street next to Kohl's Department Store.) Wal-Mart has nearly every-

thing one could want, for it is much like a K-Mart store on steroids. Wal-Mart has what many stores stock, including a clothing section, food, sporting goods, and books; however, it has much, much more! Wal-Mart also has many unique items such as fish, toe socks and barking cookie jars, which brings many smiles to one's face. Smiling faces may also be observed throughout Wal-Mart's stores.

As is seen in commercials, a smiling yellow head is displayed on many price signs, denoting low prices on certain items. One can go into Wal-Mart not expecting to buy anything at all, yet can leave the store with many items. Vast selection and great prices definitely go hand in hand, making Wal-Mart a definite *Hot Spot in Erie*.

Cold Erie weather brings Penguins



PHOTO BY JEFF HANKEY

by Karl Benacci
features editor

On Thursday, The Distorted Penguins invaded Bruno's, performed before a large crowd. The band sang new songs from its upcoming CD, old favorites and even threw in a few covers. The Distorted Penguins started with the theme song from "Rocky" and added to the enjoyment with their versions of "Who Let the Dogs Out" and "Ice Ice Baby." The crowd responded to the music with positive actions. Some danced with such items as glow sticks, while others cheered. The band is often classified as ska; however, the band disagrees, stating it's a bit of everything. The Penguins feature six members,

Derek Shank (vocals/guitar), Ben Dettinbum (guitar/vocals), BiG-NiK (bass/screams), Derek Green (drums), Steve Amtower (trumpet/vocals) and Jamie Durst (trombone/vocals). The Distorted Penguins began in the Morgantown/Pittsburgh music scene and have been together since early 1996. The band is influenced by the Beastie Boys, the Beach Boys, Reel Big Fish and Green Day. The Penguins have had great success with their second album, *Magic*, which includes "Cloud 9," "About You," "Drawn" and "Mr. Thompson." They have performed with such bands as Reel Big Fish, Less Than Jake and Buzz Poets to name a few. The Distorted Penguins' new album will be out this spring. For more information check out their website at www.distortedpenguins.com