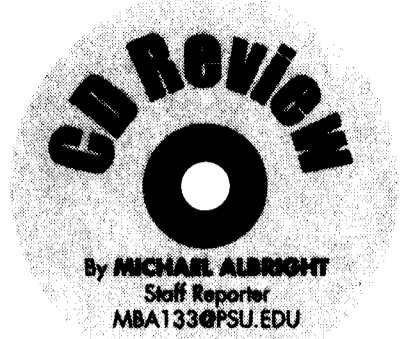


ENTERTAINMENT



Start screaming at Field of Screams

By **LAILA DIDEBAN**
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the chainsaw but unfortunately that's part of the problem. Next up was the Den of Darkness, which is just a fancy name for the haunted house. "The Den of Darkness [is] three stories and fake bodies strewn about for you to stumble over. It seems like they've made some additions since last year. Some rooms seemed to be a bit more dressed up then usual, and there

requires the use of 3-D glasses. This, in theory, could be one kick ass attraction. Especially since the idea conjures up thoughts of 3-D horror classics like the original House of Wax, Friday the 13th Part 3, or even old William Castle gimmicks like "Emerg-O" used in House on Haunted Hill. Sadly, this is not the case.

What you end up doing is walking through a pretty mundane version of the Den of Darkness that has been splattered every which way with fluorescent orange, pink, yellow, and green paint.

People, there is nothing scary about fluorescent orange paint. Along with the haunted houses and hayride,

FoS has a bandstand which features events such as a Rap battle, DJ turntable contest, pudding wrestling (OK, that one's not so bad), and the Field of Screams Idol contest.

Am I missing something here? Isn't this a horror attraction? If you run one of these things your number one job is to provide an atmosphere, get people in the mood to be frightened, and channel the spirit of Halloween.

Hip Hop showdowns and the like do nothing but drain every last shred of remaining atmosphere.

You are a *horror* attraction, please don't forget that. Although I will say that they definitely had this lady screaming.

The Street Dogs are back to remind fans they are a staple in the punk rock scene.

Even though the band is only three years old, the members of The Street Dogs are no strangers to the stage. Front man and main songwriter, Mike McColgan, began his career as the lead man of the classic punk rock band Dropkick Murphys.

Bassist, Jonhny Rioux, has been in countless underground bands, most notably playing with The Bruisers, alongside Mike Ness of Social Distortion as well as Roger Miret.

Drummer, Joe "The Kid" Sirois, is best known for his work in the ska band The Mighty Mighty Bosstones. Joining these punk rock veterans are relative newcomers to the scene Tobe Bean and Markus Hollar on guitar.

The Street Dogs' *Fading American Dream*, was released Oct. 24th on the band's own record label, Brass Tacks. As the title implies, the band has a lot to say about the current trends in the United States.

In keeping the style with McColgan's history, as a former soldier, former Boston firefighter, and current taxpayer, he tackles such issues as workers' rights, lying and deceitful corporations, and of course the ever hot topic of the war in Iraq.

The 13-track album nears 40 mins. of blasting, political-laced, real punk rock. Each song engages the listener to question that which is given to you and to not accept what is forced on you, whether it be from peers, bosses, or the government.

The album begins with the half spoken-word, half battle cry track *Common People*, introduced with McColgan stating, "I'm sick of American socialite culture, God, it makes me sick," and punctuated with a blaring declaration to those who oppress us. If this kick-off track does not set the tone for the rest of the record, nothing could.

The next track, *Not Without a Purpose, Not Without a Fight* is the first acknowledgement of the band's thoughts on the Iraq war, suggesting that it is pretty clear a civil war has broken out in Iraq after the current administration used WMD propaganda to explain the reasons for invasion.

Taking a break from political themes, the album moves into a cover of a legendary Boston punk band, Mung. The song, *Fatty*, details the schooldays of a young person who is overweight and bullied.

The song pulls at one's emotions as it explains the beatings of the young character and asks, "How many times did you want to die?"

Perhaps the standout track on the entire album is another cover. This one by the folk singer Billy Bragg titled *There Is Power In A Union*. Oddly enough, the original version is the introduction track played at shows by McColgan's former band, Dropkick Murphys. Originally performed by Bragg as an acoustic song, The Street Dogs turn this amazing protest anthem into a full rock n' roll piece with altered lyrics to add modern viewpoints.

The album continues to touch on a few personal issues from a band member's alcoholism to taking on issues of heroin addiction.

The album later returns to political views with the title track *Fading American Dream* and the song *Final Transmission* where a soldier's last letter home is recounted.

The record is finally punctuated with *Katie Bar The Door*, a song that speaks out against the current popular move of large corporations, outsourcing to foreign countries.

So do yourself and your mind a favor and pick up *Fading American Dream*. Throw out any other mainstream CD you own because this one should keep you singing with your fist pumping in the air for a long time to come. Check out The Street Dogs at <http://street-dogs.com>.

Check out some of Pennsylvania's Hayrides and Haunted attractions next Halloween season and visit The Field of Screams in Lancaster.

It has been an old standby of haunted attractions for awhile now, and we always enjoyed our trips into the Amish laden depths of Lancaster. But this time we had to be critical, was FoS a worthy adventure?

Set in farm country, Field of Screams boasts 3 attractions; 2 buildings and a hayride, and they keep with the "carnival" atmosphere that we have come to expect (and enjoy!) as part of the modern haunted attraction. Several food carts offered a small variety of foods, and from the picnic tables one could find a number of entertainment choices.

So myself and about a hundred Penn State students took on a night of horror. Read on for the full story...

First up was the official FoS Haunted Hayride. "Each skit in the hayride has a special "scare" designed to get the old ticker ticking at a good clip," says the Lancaster Intelligencer Journal. I agree with this remark, however, there are a few issues I have with the hayride.

Problem number one is that, to our knowledge, the hayride hasn't changed in a long time. Same as last year, same as the year before.

The second problem is you are essentially just driving through a path cut through a cornfield, which in terms of atmosphere doesn't compare to other hayrides that take you through the woods.

You get eye level corn stalks and wide open sky, sometimes you can even see neighboring houses and corporate buildings that dot the area.

The production is pretty standard with billowing fire, actors that hop on the wagon, and what hayride would be complete without

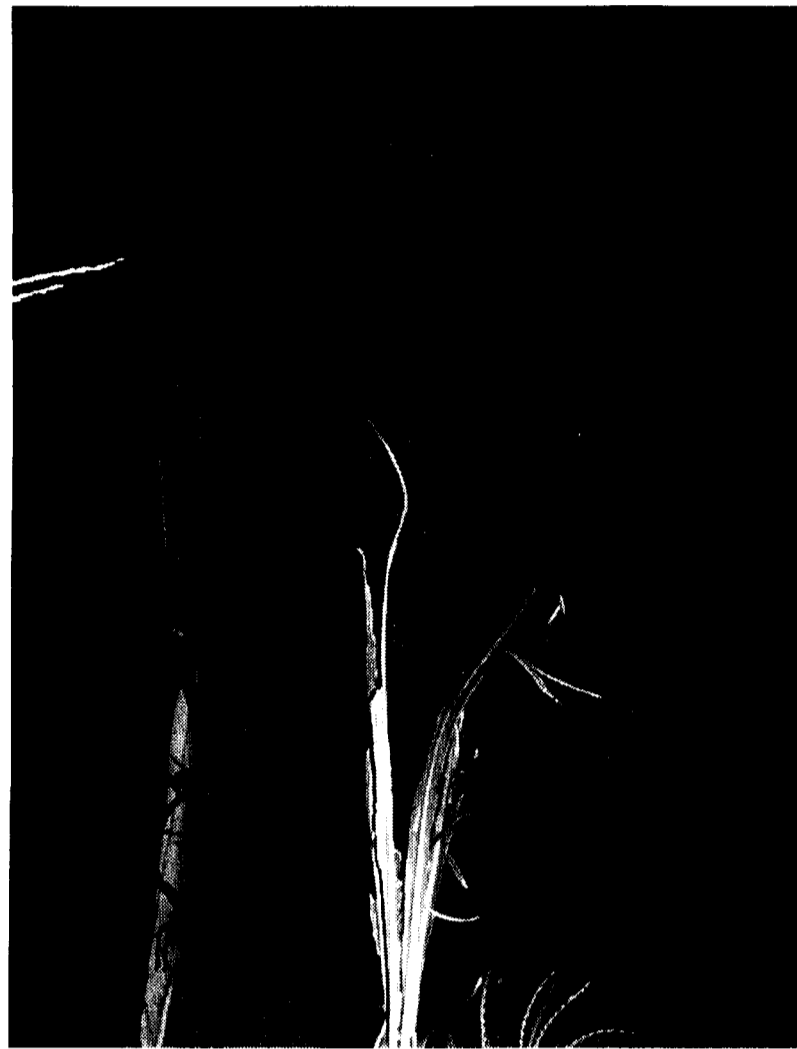


Photo courtesy of Google Images

One of the scarecrows in the cornfield riders are taken through on the hayride. The hayride is one of the three main attractions at Field of Screams.

twenty-five minutes of grabbing my friend's sweater!" wrote the York Daily Record.

I do have to give FoS credit though, their Den of Darkness has always been one of the better ones in the area.

One of the coolest things is when they make you get down on your hands and knees and crawl through a fireplace to enter a pitch black crawlspace, which has some

were not as many "actors" randomly popping out of the walls for pure shock value. It's not re-inventing the wheel, but the Den of Darkness is the best thing FoS has going. I only wish they had caught us on film. It had to be better than any of those awful pictures theme parks take of you on their roller coasters.

Another thing to check out is the Nightmare Asylum in 3-D, which you astute readers will notice

◀ GEEK'S CORNER ▶

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'Tis the season. Or at least that is what the Christmas decorations the stores have started selling and decorating with inform me of.

I will spare you my rant regarding Christmas coming into season before Thanksgiving.

I will even spare you the tirade about people going into Christmas mode before Halloween has even been enjoyed to its sugar-high twitchy goodness.

I like holidays, I really do, and we are most definitely approaching the holiday season, but all this holiday cheer got me wondering, what about geeky holidays? What holidays do the geeks of us out there get into?

When I looked into this, I was actually a little surprised at what I found.

There are actually several holidays out there, both big and small, that geeks enjoy along with the rest of the population.

Holidays such as Talk Like A Pirate Day or its derivative Swear Like A Sailor Day, are some of the more amusing, though less well-known, examples of holidays that many geeks celebrate.

Pi day, Day of the Ninja, or Hobbit Day are other examples of vague holidays with geek themes to them in some way, shape,

or form.

These days are often some of the strange ones out there, depending on how far the celebrators decide to go, but they are definitely unique.

What is perhaps one of the biggest geek holidays of them all is Winter-eeen-mas. Being a webcomic devotee, I have known about this one for quite a while, but I can understand if some of you out there still haven't heard of it.

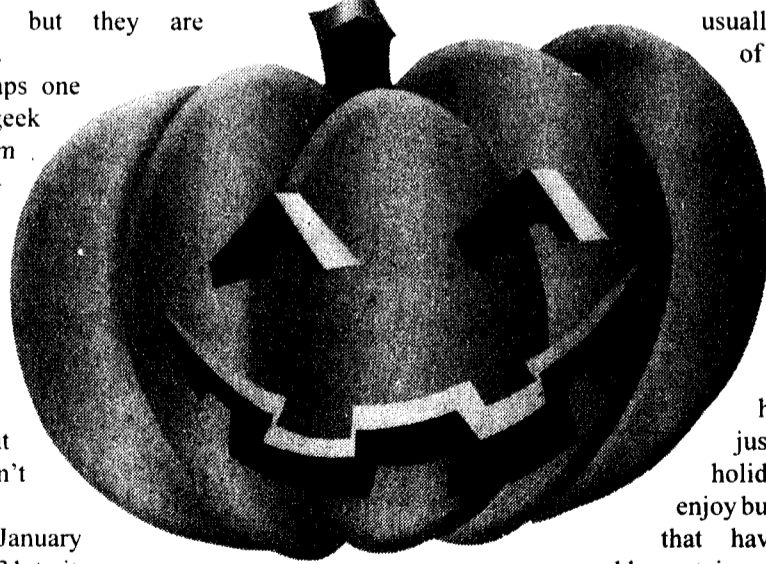
Celebrated January 25th - January 31st, it was started by Ctr-Alt-Del webcomic writer and artist Tim Buckley. It is a celebration of video games in all their glory.

Personally, I highly enjoyed the idea when I first came across it, so at the very least my family gets to look at me oddly each January when I begin wishing them a Happy Winter-eeen-mas.

Then, of course, there are those unofficial holidays, the ones you and your friends make yourselves. It can be something as small as your weekly gaming group or something as big as a huge Magic Draft Tournament, but they are something special to

you, something you approach with a certain mindset.

So doesn't that in a way make them a



stores for their Black Friday sales. My geeky strike force and I make similar plans, but they usually consist of a single store raid, usually involving some form of electronics.

This is then followed by a long afternoon of enjoying the new item and playing some computer games. Almost every geek I know can describe a similar set of family activities on the holidays. So it isn't just the new, strange holidays that geeks enjoy but the old favorites that have enjoyed a certain geeky twist.

So, I guess it all comes down to what makes a holiday? Are these geeky holidays valid? Personally, I think so.

If holidays such as Boss Appreciation Day or Groundhog's Day can make it onto the holiday list, then I definitely don't see anything wrong with celebrating holidays such as Talk Like A Pirate Day or Winter-eeen-mas.

If holidays really are all about

honoring an event or the spirit of something, then why not? Video games are definitely something, and I can tell you there are some friends I have that I would never have met if it wasn't for games in one of their many shapes and forms or some other geeky hobby or habit I have.

In the end, I decided to sit back, quit my whining about Christmas coming so early, and enjoy the ride. After all, enjoyment is what most holidays are for aren't they?

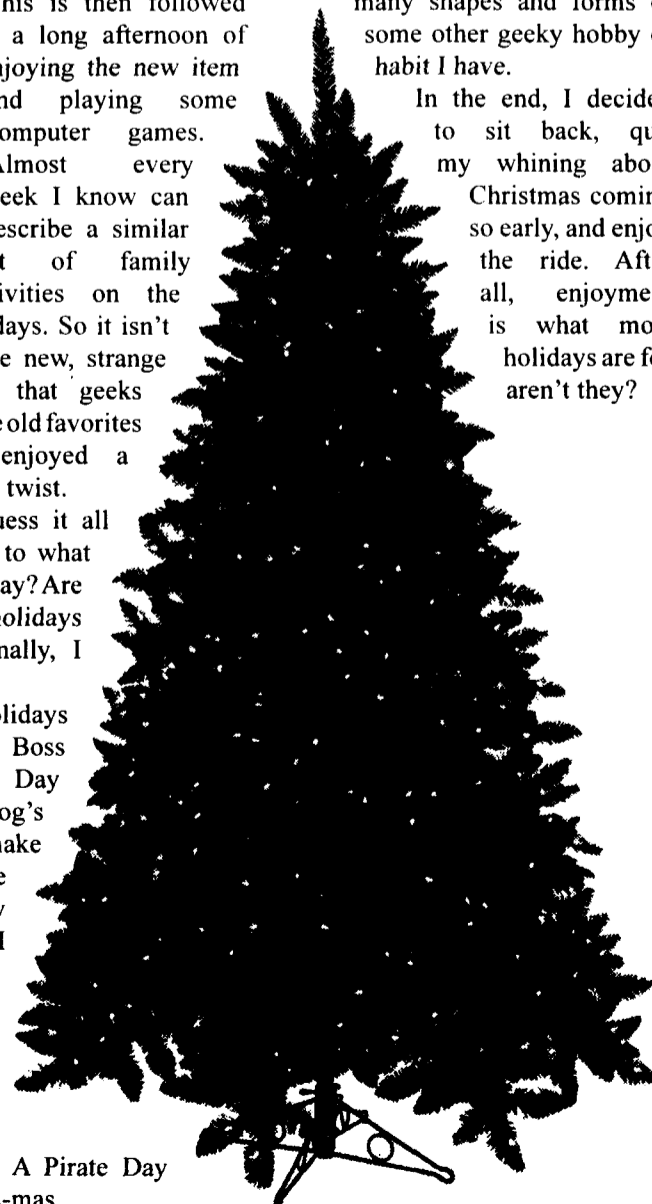


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