

Halloween haunts Happy Valley

Cobwebs and tombstones promote stores

Halloween window design sparks creativity

By MARCY SMITH
Collegian Staff Writer

Chester the skeleton sits poised at the piano, ready to play ghostly tunes accompanied by Mr. Big on the saxophone, while two high-fashion monsters gather at the bar to share Miller Lite and stale pretzels.

On the piano bench beside Chester is a basket where a baby and a rat lie snuggled in a blanket. This is the window scene of New World, 118 S. Pugh St.

Kim Filkins, owner of the vintage and contemporary clothing store, said New World has been creating Halloween scenes for 14 years.

"I love doing them," Filkins said.

Filkins said the display brings people into the store, where they rent and buy costumes.

"If you have a good window, it brings people inside," Filkins said.

The scene's backdrop has windows, with Jason, the deadly character from *Friday the 13th*, peering inside.

"We always do off-the-wall windows," she said.

The only difference between this window and last year's, Filkins said, is the brand of beer.

Filkins said the Miller Lite company approached her and her husband last year and offered to provide the neon light and the beer bottles for promotion.

Other local stores also are showing their holiday spirit by displaying similar ghostly scenes in their windows.

On East Beaver Avenue is a littering of tombstones surrounded with dirt, moss and leaves, with a man rising from his grave, gingerly petting a rat perched on the man's stomach.

Beside this, in another window, a witch can be found perched on a dead tree limb with a gathering of grotesquely faced pumpkins underneath.

Steve Artz, the owner of Tinderbox Gifts, 137 E. Beaver Ave., said he and his staff set up the cemetery scenes.

"We have all this creative talent running around, we might as well use it," Artz said.

Artz said the tombstones were made by three employees, the dirt and moss gathered by another two, and the dead daisies and tree stumps by a few others.

Last year, Tinderbox Gifts had a bedroom scene with ants crawling over a man lying in bed, Artz said.

"I don't know where ideas come from," Artz said. "You eat some strange food before going to bed and you get some strange dreams."

Fright Gallery, also known as Douglas Albert Gallery, located on McAllister Alley, displays a miniature Dracula that rises from his coffin to greet unsuspecting passers-by.

Daniel Pry, an employee of the gallery, said not much time is spent on the window.

"We spend much more time in the store," Pry said.

The gallery turns into a costume store during the weeks prior to Halloween.

The owner, Douglas Albert, decides the scene and characters to be placed in the window overlooking the brick path between East College Avenue and Calder Way.

Many other stores downtown created similar display windows, advertising Halloween products or just the holiday spirit.

Cindy Houser, manager of Your Fathers Mustache Family Hairstyling, 322 E. College Ave., decorated the store's front window with spiderswebs.

The Student Book Store, 330 E. College Ave., also created a display of stuffed pumpkins.



A vampire emerges from his coffin in the window of the Fright Gallery in McAllister Alley.



Is it alive? Olde Terrence finds a final resting place and in the window of Tinderbox Gifts on East Beaver Avenue.

Witches and women define spirituality

By KIRSTEN LEE SWARTZ
Collegian Staff Writer

The label "Witch" conjures up images of wrinkled haughty faces, black cloaks and cauldrons. Cackling ugly women with warts who chase little girls like Dorothy on broomsticks is the traditionally depicted myth.

On Halloween, masks with long green noses and pointy dark hats fill the costume shops and tales of evil and bubbling brews are whispered in the night.

But witches are not exclusively residents of dime store windows; and their appearances are often far different than the expected.

In Happy Valley, witches are not uncommon, and one is teaching University students.

Jo C. Searles, an assistant professor of English at the Altoona campus, visited the Center for Women Students lounge Wednesday. And she was not wearing black or a tall hat. Her shoulder length hair was greying; she wore an aqua sweater and around her neck was an American

Indian "spirit of the household" necklace.

About 70 eager community members squeezed into the lounge eating the apples and nuts Searles passed around in a little black cauldron.

"People are interested in witches," Searles said after the workshop titled "The Work of a Common Witch: Sweeping Through The Ages."

"There's a whiff of the unknown," she said. "People are always fascinated by that."

Searles said, "Witches are empowering women who give off a sense of their own worth and beauty and joy."

She said a witch was an untamed, angry and joyous female.

During the Middle Ages, Searles said nine million witches were burned at the stake.

In her book *Gyn/ecology*, noted feminist author Mary Daly writes that women accused of witchcraft were those who rejected patriarchy.

"The witcheraze focused predominantly upon women who had rejected marriage (spinsters) and women who had survived it (widows)," Daly says in her book.

Susan Pappalardo (senior-general arts and sciences) said. "A lot of times the people burnt as witches were just unattached from men . . . or were healing women."

Pappalardo said the healing women were often killed because they were a threat to men in the medical profession.

"Patriarchy just couldn't deal with them," she said.

"The inquisition is going on today, just in a different manner," Pappalardo said. "Witches aren't being burnt at the stake but women in general are treated in the same way . . . raped . . . and used as property."

According to Margo Adler's *Drawing Down the Moon*, American witches today do not recognize authoritarian hierarchy nor accept the concept of "absolute evil" and the devil as defined by the Christian tradition.

"We acknowledge a depth of power far greater than that apparent to the average person," Adler writes. "We recognize that our intelligence gives us a unique responsibility toward our

environment. We seek to live in harmony with Nature."

Witches practice rites that attune them to the rhythms of life by the Phases of the Moon and the Seasonal Quarters and Cross Quarters, Adler writes.

"Most (witches) are goddesses or nature oriented," Pappalardo said.

"It's mystical," she said. "But power comes from people or something here (on earth). Things aren't explained away as an act of God. It makes a lot more sense."

Jean Guertler, a witch "out of the broom closet," as she puts it, said being a witch means spiritually connecting with and being aware of everything around her.

The word wicca, from which witch is derived, means flexibility, Guertler said. During the witch hunts they were looking for heretics. Heresy, Guertler pointed out is derived from the word choice.

"People are always so busy doing what they call surviving, they miss lots of things going on around them," Guertler said. "Everything is sacred."

Halloween Stories scare State College

By MAUREEN QUINN
Collegian Staff Writer

An accused murderer who proclaimed his innocence until his death was buried in a cemetery in nearby Millheim just before the turn of the century. Shortly after his burial, gravekeepers noticed a lump in the shape of a dagger growing out of the side of the man's granite tombstone, and a rust-colored liquid — some said it looked like blood — oozed out of the dagger.

Gravekeepers continually cleaned the "blood" from the gravestone, but it returned time after time.

Stone masons filed the dagger shape from the granite several times, yet this too came back. By this time, all the people from Millheim and surrounding towns knew of the eerie occurrence and filed past the grave to see it for themselves. This publicity so upset the accused murderer's family that they had the dagger shape cut from the stone one last time — and covered the area with a steel plate. To this day the dagger has not reappeared.

Joan Long, cook at Delta Chi fraternity, 424 E. Fairmount Ave., said this story is the most famous supernatural occurrence in the area. Long's

grandmother lived near Millheim and observed this case of the bloody dagger.

An uncommon occurrence? No, said Bill Ellis, assistant professor of English at the University's Hazleton campus.

"If you go up to people on the street and ask them what the strangest thing that ever happened to them was, one out of every four will have something really bizarre to tell you," said Ellis, who teaches folklore classes.

A sociological study by the Rev. Andrew Greeley showed that 25 percent of the U.S. population believe

they have seen a ghost or have had contact with the dead, Ellis said.

Many supernatural instances are said to occur when older houses are renovated and the unhappy ghost of its former owner, angry that his home is being changed, is awakened, he said.

A close friend of Ellis' was sanding the dining room floor of an old Ohio inn he was renovating when he heard footsteps walking by a nearby buffet table. No one was visible, yet he felt the boards move under his hands. The footsteps then left the room and re-treated up the stairs of the inn.

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Spell book stews on Pattee shelf

By SEAN WEAVER
Collegian Staff Writer

Pattee Library contains a book, written in Durianic and read from right to left, that allegedly possesses the formula for evil spells.

Seances, black masses, and human sacrifices are only a few of the *Necronomicon* (a name meaning "death chronicle") can teach its readers.

The book is believed to have been written in Damascus in the eighth century by the mad Arab Abdul Alhazred.

"The Necronomicon magic is nothing to fool with and it may expose you to psychological forces with which you cannot cope. Remember, if you tinker with the incantation, you were warned," according to *Fate Magazine*.

Since its original printing, the *Al Azif* — meaning the nocturnal sound of howling demons — has been translated numerous times and today is printed in four versions. The title, *Necronomicon*, was given to the book by philosopher Theodoros Philetas and translated into Greek in 950 A.D.

The *Necronomicon*, with its history and reputation, is believed and its eerie contents practiced.

The Durianic language, in which the book was written, was probably the creation of horror fiction writer H. P. Lovecraft (1890-1937), said Charles Mann, head of special collections of university libraries. The 800-page book is actually only 16 pages repeated in the falsified Durianic language.

Lovecraft said this about his work in 1930: "No weird

story can truly produce terror unless it is devised with all the care and verisimilitude of an actual hoax."

Lovecraft was the author of many science fiction novels, essays, and poetry. One of his best and most convincing works was called *History of the Necronomicon*.

"Lovecraft prepared an imaginary bibliography of a book which appeared in a collection of his stories, *Beyond the Wall of Sleep* in 1942," Mann said.

Lovecraft wrote the bibliography in such a manner as to promote an actual practicing occult.

"Others went along with the intentional hoax and provided versions of the work in pseudo-scripts and as collections of spells and incantations in the manners of Aleister Crowley," Mann said.

Crowley, an early twentieth-century occultist, took Lovecraft's mythical book and modeled a religion after it. The Beast 666, as Crowley was called, believed himself to be the reincarnation of a god.

In 1904 he claimed to receive a message out of space that contained the formula for a New World Order. Crowley used the *Necronomicon* as a tool to utilize his new order.

"Lovecraft created this book. It is fiction; non-existent," said Dr. Robert F. Lima Jr., professor of spanish and comparative literature.

In the time period that Lovecraft wrote his fiction, people were infatuated with occults and devil worshiping, Lima said. Crowley was just one of the true believers of the book.

Jason for a day? Only on Halloween

By VALERIE DU PONT
Collegian Staff Writer

State College will be filled this weekend with Jim and Tammy Bakker and horror movie characters Jason and Freddie as Halloween party goers take to the streets.

Local store owners agree those are among this year's most popular costumes.

At New World, on the corner of Calder Way and South Pugh Street, some other popular characters include the Saint Pauli Girl, Star Trek crew members, flappers, cans of beer and Top Gun pilots, said owner Gary Filkins.

"It's hard to believe but sheiks and gangsters are still popular," said Filkins, whose store rents out 160 different costumes.

Freddie and Jim and Tammy Bakker masks also are among the

top sellers at the Fright Gallery, owner Douglas Albert said. Goddesses have been popular, too, but Douglas said no costume in particular seems to be the most popular.

Freddie Kruger from *Nightmare on Elm Street* and Jason from *Friday the 13th* have also been popular at Tinderbox Gifts, said owner Steve Arntz. He said people come into his store, which sells accessories, because they need the finishing touches for their costumes.

Albert said many people come into his store looking for more serious costumes.

"I personally like the gooney costumes," Albert said.

Lance Mountain (senior-finance) tried on a black and orange, long-haired wig and said he is going as Jon Bon Jovi.

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