

SIU shuts down Halloween

(CPS) Halloween, something of an unofficial national student holiday on many campuses, is becoming an official student holiday at one school this year.

Not all students, however, are happy about it.

"They wanted to stop the party," complained Ed Walthers, chief of staff of the student government at Southern Illinois University (SIU) in Carbondale.

In what is probably the nation's most extreme effort to halt student Halloween parties that often devolve into chaotic, violent street brawls, SIU is making all its students leave campus from Friday, Oct. 26 through Tuesday, Oct. 30.

SIU will shut all its dorms during the "holiday."

"We (the school's administrators) have discussed amid-semester break for years, but the Halloween situation has changed that," said Guyon.

The "situation" is the giant, unofficial Halloween parties that SIU students -- soon joined by students and then nonstudents from all over the Midwest -- have held annually since the mid-1970s.

As the years passed the party became progressively more

chaotic and turned into drunken brawls. Injuries and property destruction became common.

Despite the formation of a Halloween Core Committee to coordinate increased police protection, street closings and bans on glass bottles, in 1988 the celebration spun completely out of control. More than 300 people were hospitalized with facial lacerations caused by broken bottles, one person was stabbed and a woman was raped, SIU officials reported.

Frustrated SIU and Carbondale officials then announced a series of measures to wind down the party gradually, finally killing it this year by driving most SIU students out of town for the weekend.

"The Student Senate is opposed" to the forced holiday, Walthers said.

While Walthers thought the break would be good for students' studies, he thought the reasoning behind it flawed.

Moreover, Walthers asserted some students who can't go home will have no place to stay during the break.

But SIU spokeswoman Sue Davis said the school had not

heard any complaints from students who had nowhere to go, and that SIU would stick to its plan to close all its single-student dormitories.

Married housing would remain open, she added.

"This decision to close was made a long time ago," Davis said, giving students plenty of time to plan where to stay. "This is not news."

While SIU's closing is the most drastic effort to prevent student Halloween parties, other schools are trying other measures.

In mid-September, city officials in Boulder, Colo., announced a plan to make it so hard for University of Colorado students to get to the local Halloween street party, held annually since 1909, that they won't try.

Previous efforts to make the party, known as the "Mall Crawl," safe generally have failed.

Beefing up security and changing the name to the "Boulder Boo" in 1989 did not prevent 40,000 people from jamming into a three-block area, climbing lampposts,

breaking liquor bottles, trampling lawns and starting fights.

This year, city officials will surround the area with roadblocks and sobriety checkpoints to try to dissuade people from going to the mall.

Party bans have worked in the past. When the annual Halloween party at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst whirled into in a 1979 riot in which students vandalized local stores, UMass officials imposed a five-year ban on Halloween parties.

There have been no unusual troubles at the smaller parties that grew up at the school after the ban.

Yet Halloween celebrations have turned dangerous at other campuses as well.

In 1985 at the University of Illinois-Champaign campus, windows were smashed, bonfires were lit, fistfights erupted and party-goers were showered with glass from broken beer bottles.

A visiting Northwestern University student was struck in the head with a beer bottle, and lapsed into a coma. He later had to undergo brain surgery.

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A Question Of Silence

Thursday, October 18, 1990
7:30 p.m., Reed Lecture Hall

Directed by Marlene Gorris

A trio of women, all strangers to each other, meet in a boutique. When one of them is caught shoplifting, they band together and kill the store owner. A court-appointed psychiatrist is assigned to determine their motivations and their sanity, and finds out a great deal about herself and her own relationships in the process. Original, provocative, and highly controversial, this was Dutch director Gorris' debut film in 1983.

Discussion immediately following, led by Dr. Diana Hume George, Professor of English, and Penn State-Behrend student William Goodman.

Winter Tan

Monday, October 22, 1990
7:30 p.m., Reed Lecture Hall

Directed by Jackie Burroughs

A woman goes to Latin America and engages deliberately in exploring the extremes of human behavior--both other people's and her own. We travel with her through the country of her own mind by means of her journal entries and close encounters with the camera eye. What she finds out about her sexuality, her politics, and her consciousness is difficult both for the character and for viewers. The film received very limited distribution because it has been called degrading to women--but both the main character and the director declare themselves feminists.

Discussion immediately following, led by Ms. Maureen Finn, Coordinator of Student Organizations and Program Development, and Penn State-Behrend student Michelle McLaughlin.