

Old Haunts Beckon Visitors as Halloween Approaches

By Julie Anderson

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Beware!

A host of Midlands haunted houses, jails and theaters have gathered ghouls, grisly monsters and horrid heroes of 1980s horror movies.

But the fear created by shuffling Frankensteins, mad doctors grasping gory limbs, grinning goblins and the famed Freddy Krueger of "Nightmare on Elm Street" is all in the spirit of Halloween fun and fund-raising.

Bob Sullivan, a volunteer at Mystery Manor, 716 N. 18th St., said this year's spook houses have undergone some changes to address a very real fear — that of fire or accidents.

Volunteers have devoted the last 10 months and more than 40,000 work hours to revamp the manor's scary chambers.

Owner Wayne Sealy said each group of visitors is led and trailed by guides to ensure safety, and resident spooks are not allowed to grab members of the public.

But safe need not mean boring. The manor features a floating coffin, a cave lined with fire-resistant foam, a squishy swamp-like floor, illusions of ghosts dancing with skeletons and a chamber where spooks climb the walls.

Special effects include a working waterfall, a "bleeding" cave, a strobe room with hand-drawn murals, a monster hall of fame and a hall of coffins that soon will be home to a talking skeleton.

The doctor's lab features a talking head that pleads for a body and Frankenstein's monster on a slab.

And the Phantom of the Opera has his own authentic 1860s organ, which the staff bought for about \$10 and restored to working order. In-house makeup artists spend from two minutes to 1½ hours a night on each character's makeup. Most of the masks are hand-painted.

But for Mystery Manorites, spooking and haunting are more than just a part-time pastime.

Sullivan and other volunteers said scaring becomes addictive. "Once you have your first scare, really put someone on the floor," he said, there's no halting the haunting. Volunteers have an average of four years experience, he said.

About 20,000 visitors walked the manor's halls last year, with proceeds going each year to the Nebraska Special Olympics.

Following are some of the haunted attractions for the stouthearted and timid. Proceeds go to local charities.

Scream in the Dark: Lite 96 and Youth Guidance Organization, 120th Street and West Dodge Road in Western Crossing shopping plaza.

Hours: 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. Sunday through Thursday, to 12:30 a.m. Friday and Saturday; children's fun house 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

Admission: Adults, \$3; children, \$2.

Features mad doctor's room, guillotine, Freddy Krueger room, maze and a graveyard. Matinee features magician, face painting and The Great Pumpkin Patch.

WOW Radio Mystery Manor: 716 N. 18th St.

Hours: 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. Sunday through Thursday, to 1 a.m. Friday and Saturday.

Admission: Adults, \$4; not recommended for children under 12. Free parking.

KQKQ Haunted Hotel California: 15th and California Streets.

Hours: 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. Sunday through Thursday, to midnight Friday and Saturday.

Admission: \$3.50; group rates for 20 or more people.

KOIL Radio Stone Castle of Terror, Part 4: one block south of 14th and Leavenworth Streets.

Hours: 7:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. Sunday through Thursday, to midnight Friday and Saturday.

Admission: Adults, \$4; not recommended for children younger than 5.

Features Freddy Krueger's dream room, snake pit, doors of doom, strobelight maze, killer semi, terror train and haunted forest.

Cox Cable and Omaha Federation of Labor Nightmare on Leavenworth Street: 1510 Leavenworth St.

Hours: 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. Monday through Thursday, to midnight Friday and Saturday.

Admission: \$3.

Features Freddy Krueger, Texas chain-saw massacre, spider room, mad scientists "very gory laboratory," torture chamber, brain room and morgue.

Social Settlement Association of Omaha 10th Annual Haunted House: 4846 Q St.

Hours: 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. Oct. 28.

Admission: Adults, \$1; children, 50 cents.

Appropriate for children. Includes guillotine, dungeon, witches' coven, haunted cafe and cemetery.

Millard Merchants Association annual "Witch Walk": Millard Plaza, 139th Street and S Plaza.

Hours: 8 p.m. to 8 p.m. Oct. 27.

Admission: Free.

A "wicked witch" will give rides on Ollie the Trolley. Prizes and treats for children, costume parade.

Academy of Terror: 11000 N. 72nd St.

Hours: 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. Sunday through Thursday, to midnight Friday and Saturday.

Admission: \$3 donation.

Among the other haunted houses open in the Midlands are:

Historical Society of Pottawattamie County and Council Bluffs Jaycees Haunted Jail: 226 Pearl St., Council Bluffs.

Hours: 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. Sunday through Thursday from through Oct. 31, open to 11 p.m. Friday and Saturday.

Admission: Adults, \$2; children age 12 and younger, \$1.50.

Features illuminated skeletons, coffin, electric chair, Freddy Krueger and an ax murderer.

Boys Club of Omaha and Laker Keystone Club Haunted Forest: 4101 N. 17th St. at Henry Ogram Boys Club in Carter Lake.

Hours: 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. Wednesday.

Admission: \$1; second trip, 50 cents.

Certain sections acceptable for young children. Includes cave of doom and graveyard of the living.

The Spook Station: fire station at 2907 N. Ninth St., Carter Lake.

Hours: Open today and Saturday, closed Sunday, open Monday through Oct. 31; from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. on weekdays, later on Friday and Saturday.

Admission: \$1.

Appropriate for children. Features a witch, swamp angel and werewolf.

Jaycee Haunted House: Columbus, south of swimming pool in Pawnee Park, west of Highway 30.

Hours: 7 p.m. to 11 p.m. today, Saturday, Oct. 27, 28, 29, 31.

Admission: Age 13 and older, \$3; children, \$2.50.

Attractions include a swamp monster, jail scene with electric chair, guillotine and Freddy Krueger.

Jaycees Haunted House: Grand Island, Grand Island Mall, 2228 North Webb Road.

Hours: 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. today through