



TASTE

October 29, 2003 ■ C SECTION



Thai-ing things up
Asian kitchen to be expanded into a full-fledged restaurant.
See page 2C



Matthew Moore, 10, of Auxvasse, stares at the wide variety of Halloween masks available at Spencer Gifts in the Columbia Mall.

JEFF THOMPSON/Missourian

Elements of Fright

Ghoulish get-ups and decorations add to the fun of Halloween

By TRACY LEE
news@columbiainmissourian.com

As October draws to a close, ghosts and goblins will descend on Columbia and eager children will impatiently await the creepiest night of the year. The tradition of Halloween began in early Celtic Ireland, celebrated on the last day of summer. Celts believed that the disembodied spirits of people who had died during the year came back to search for new bodies they could possess during the upcoming year. To protect themselves from being possessed, people dressed in ghoulish costumes and paraded noisily around their communities to scare away spirits.

Halloween might not hold the same spiritual meaning today, but it still provides an opportunity for all ages to have some ghoulish fun. Columbia residents, including Angie Huhman, owner of Made by Creative Kids, 106 Corpportate Lake Drive, and Dan Felton, supervisor at Spencer Gifts in Columbia Mall, share a few ideas on decorating, costumes and safety tips.



JEFF THOMPSON/Missourian

A beheaded vampire fountain is one of several items on display at Spencer Gifts.



Associated Press

PUMPKINS

Although carving pumpkins may be too dangerous for small children, there are a number of alternatives for transforming that plain orange squash into a masterpiece while keeping kids safe.

Huhman suggests decoupage. Decoupage is a process of using glue and water to adhere magazine cutouts, tissue paper or festive paper napkins directly onto the pumpkin. Huhman said it's easy and fun for all ages.

"If you have an 8-year-old, they will make it more intricate," Huhman said. "The younger kids will just glue and have at it."

Painting pumpkins with acrylic paint or using markers to draw on faces is also a good way for small children to decorate, said Lisa Crouse, a floral designer at Michael's Arts and Crafts who teaches classes on pumpkin decorating.

"Painting preserves the pumpkin a little longer," Crouse said. "They won't shrivel in the cold or rot in the heat."

If kids insist on having a carved jack-o-lantern, Huhman suggests having them draw or trace shapes on the pumpkin and having an adult do the actual carving.



LINDSAY REAGAN/Missourian

Beverly Boren built a miniature graveyard on her front lawn on Oakland Gravel Road.

HOUSE DECORATING

"Kids like to trick-or-treat at houses where there are decorations," William LaChance said.

For that reason, LaChance and his family decorate their house and yard for Halloween every year, a process LaChance said only takes a few hours.

"It's how we show how we feel about the holiday," he said.

He and his family like to get a bit more extravagant for Halloween, but just a few creepy decorations can make any house a little more fun for trick-or-treaters.

LaChance suggested using outdoor lights to decorate porches and front doors so they can be seen from a distance. He also advised scattering objects in the yard rather than clumping them to make the decorations easier to see.

Huhman suggested using Crayola Window Markers to add festivity to the house. The ink washes off with window cleaner.

Huhman also suggested making a scarecrow to set on the front porch, using a flannel shirt, old jeans and burlap sack. For scarier decorations, Felton suggested a number of props. Coffins, hanging spiders and even a guillotine can create a more haunting environment.

Felton also suggested tapes of Halloween music, shrieks and screams.

COSTUMES

Sometimes all it takes to make a great costume is just a few simple accessories and a little creativity.

Felton suggested using masks to vary costumes this Halloween. He said masks from the movies "Scream" and "Scary Movie" are very popular with kids this season.

"Kids like the 'Scream' costume — they get a mask, get a robe, get it done," Felton said. "Kids generally don't want to go through all the effort to put all that makeup on, and often moms don't want to go through all that effort either."

Caitlin Moriarty, sales clerk at Halloween Headquarters in the Columbia Mall, said that simple black robes are versatile and can be used for a number of costumes.

Small animals make good costumes for younger kids, including infants, Felton said. One-piece suits can transform children into giraffes, lions, unicorns or crocodiles.

Kids can also dress up as their favorite TV or movie characters, including the Incredible Hulk, Harry Potter, Spiderman and Bob the Builder.

Moriarty said pirate costumes have been popular with kids and adults this year after this summer's success of the "Pirates of the Caribbean" movie.

For adults, costumes of characters from "The Matrix" have made an appearance this year, as have costumes from "Underworld" and "The Lord of the Rings." Costume sets for couples, such as a plug and socket, are also available.



JEFF THOMPSON/Missourian

Visiting Iowa State students, Joe Craig, 23, left, and Justin Ruhge, 18, try on hats at Spencer Gifts.

■ **MORE INSIDE:** For safety tips and ghoulish foods, please see page 2C