

# Spooky, Great Fun In The City

Not one, not two, but **THREE** hauntings were on tap in the Windy City Friday night. It was soooooooo cool... (so maybe not the hour long wait in the line that never moved that went on and on my friends) but even that did not damper my excitement.

First stop was the Ditka Dome for the [Haunted Mansion and Asylum](#). Our group of six was divided in half and Mare, Derek, and I went in second. This was more focused on the jump out and scare you approach... been there done that, but it was still fun. A 12' man on roller blades was interesting. As we made our way through, I was once again amazed that the inhabitants kept saying my name.

We then made our way to [Eleventh Hour](#) where we had VIP tickets. There were four attractions in one: a corn maze (nothing special), and a three segment haunted house. Even outside the haunted house, we were entertained by actors being pused in wheelchairs and a crazy British woman giving orders who was unwilling or unable to take a photo of another couple who braved the terror. The haunted house was really amazing, full of actual scenes in which the actors stayed in character the entire time. I enjoyed the "Sweeney Todd"esque character who greeted us with a history of the house. The stairs then lifted a la the Munster case without Spot the fire breathing dragon. Also inside was the much mentioned little screaming girl, a walk in freezer, a live rock band, a very disorienting maze, and an elevator of doom.

Our final stop was [Evil Intentions](#). The story line for this one had to do with an old coffin factory (if memory serves that was the actual location... was it not?) This was the spot for the dreaded wait of doom. When we finally got in, we were all placed in separate coffins before being led through the terror. A locker room separation, a crawl through vents (I was half expecting a creep to come at us), and by the middle

of the haunt, 4 of us had been led away leaving Chris and I by ourselves and eventually being required to sing a song to leave the haunt.

If I had to choose, I would say that Eleventh Hour was the scariest house of horrors because the whole thing was so elaborate that we all could tell that so much time had been put into the extravaganza. Evil Intentions minus the wait was very cool, too. And while not as memorable, I'm glad we went through the Haunted Mansion and Asylum. A frightfully good time with ghoulishly cool friends.

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## **A Change Has Come**

Yes, according to our calendar's autumn officially arrived last week. Today is the first real sign that it has indeed come. The blustery wind, the grey skies, the falling, blowing leaves... AH... love it... evn if I had to put a jacket on to walk up town this morning. I had to stop at the post office and as I was making my way home, I decided to go back up (after getting my wallet) and get a can of tomato soup for lunch. Grilled cheese and tomato soup on a wonderful fall day!

The landscape also brings back wonderful memories of Autumn's past of high school football games, baseball playoffs on the tube, bonfires, hay rides, a sudden chill, and a sense of creepiness that makes its presence known as we close out September and enter the month of October. Last year was the first season for years that I have been REAL Haunted Attraction scavenging with friends. Let's hope that this continues although my next 2 weekends are once again pretty full. It's much more fun as the season progresses and more people come out to be given a fright and those that do the

frightening are more seasoned as we found out on our multiple trips to [ScreamAcres](#) (my favorite of the bunch) last year. We were there so many times that the ghouls knew we were coming as we approached and one very memorable escapade that I hesitate mentioning at the fear of becoming a real member of the walking dead.

So... whether you are 8 or 108 there is plenty to do during the fall in Northwest Ohio.

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## Just Let It Ring

AH..... HALLOWEEN HAS COME (and gone for another year by the time this post is complete). I love this time of year. Some of my cousins (on my Dad's side) actually operate a small family-friendly attraction. They charge absolutely no admission and get lots of visitors every year. At the end of the haunt, Ed and Barb have goodies as well as plates of cookies to take home. It is really neat, but they always insist upon having no money given. I believe [taylhis](#) has posted about the site on her blog. Unfortunately, I cannot find the exact post, but you can read her posts as well. I'm sure she would enjoy the traffic.

Tonight, the gang made its third and final trek to ScreamAcres. I just had to go in costume. [Justj](#) also came dressed in the very authentic attire of the world's most renowned archaeologist. If I could not be a scary clown for the theatre's PLANNED haunted attraction, then I would at least dress the part for the evening. I think I scared my own nieces more than I scared the other children I encountered. However, the makeup must have created a nice effect under the black light of the haunted maze. Some of the employees at the

farm were especially nice as they recognized us each time we arrived. Wouldn't it be fun if some of them remember us when we return NEXT season?

Following the final foray into the darkness, we returned to watch a suspenseful movie. [Phone Booth](#) stars Colin Farrell as Stu, a troubled Manhattan publicist who just happens to pick up the wrong ringing telephone in one of the last remaining booths on the isle. The rather sadistic caller makes the young man play his game or if not places the lives of Stu and others in jeopardy. I actually enjoyed the picture-in-picture motif shown throughout the film letting the audience know what was going on surrounding the main action. Very entertaining movie, but not one I would recommend to everyone. The language is a problem. But let it be noted, ifr you ever come across a ringing phone booth, be mindful or you may get someone you might not wish to speak to. There was a two-year-old lying on the floor who we thought was sleeping becoming engrossed in it. Uh,oh.

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## The Great E-Town Blackout

Today, I worked from 10am-4pm... not a bad shift at all... not too early and off at a decent hour. Everything was going well until about 11:30 when the electricity flicked on and off. It did this three times in about a five minute interval. THEN, it flicked and did not come back on. GREAT!!! How long til we get to call it a day since we could not wait on anyone and could not see very far into the store without a flashlight. I was more concerned about the meat and frozen foods. How long do we actually wait until we have to unload that? At least 3

hours, I was informed. When the boss arrived at noon, I was instructed to take a flashlight to the meat room to put some chicken in bags for sale and put them in the freezer. After that, I decided to have a bit of fun. I took the flashlight and a stocking cap that I found and pointed the light up under my chin, thereby giving my face that extra creepy appearance. I then waited for the boss to come back that way. Sure enough, she jumped like 6 feet in the air. If you can't have a haunted house then why not make do and create some frights where and when you can. Unfortunately, the electricity returned at about 1 o'clock. But, we did get to look out the window at the traffic light and see how many drivers knew what to do when the lights are not working. There were a couple close calls because some intelligent vehicle operator did not know to stop before crossing the intersection. Not sure what caused the town-wide outage (or at least on the north side of the railroad tracks) but it made for an interesting hour,

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## More Screams And Other News

Tonight, the haunted house regulars (minus one) returned to [ScreamAcres](#) following last weeks travesty of [Terror Town](#). ScreamAcres was by far the BEST attraction we have been to this year. And since a few naysayers laid the kibosh on ANY attraction site we had been planning be it a month long extravaganza or a one weekend well conceived plot, we still continue to create our own feast of fright. This time, we had more groupies with us to add to the terror. You know... the thing I enjoy most about this haunt is the fact that there were even more human actors within the corn mazes, buildings, the entire attraction. Especially if you go through more than once. Two of us made a second journey through the gallery of horror and one of us became the "go to" person for the actors

to scare and they did a good job of it. They pick up on something and then go with it and tell the other actors via well hidden communication devices to play it up... and they remember us... do we stand out that well?

When I returned home, there was a message on the machine from the director of *Don't Hug Me*. Short, sweet, and to the point. "I'm sorry to tell you and you did a great job and all but we decided to go with the other three guys who tried out." Perfectly understandable. As I told a friend moments later, two no-casts out of 10 attempts in less than 3 years is not a bad percentage... correct? I'm sure the show will be a great success. Plus, I would be worried about missing the first rehearsals and trying to memorize my lines within days of being cast because I will be in Florida with some of my best friends. Better to be a little upset after getting home from a great night rather than trying not to spoil everyone else's evening by being a bit down.

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## Terror In Terror Town

This weekend saw another tour of the area haunted fare. Since our haunted theatre was nixed by the local bureaucrats (something about the theatre not being coded correctly... whatever), it has been great to visit the attractions within reasonable drives. However, this weekend's extravaganza was a little weak. Let's just say that I think that the fearless four-year-old who was part of our group just might have enjoyed going through it. [Terror Town](#) at the Lucas County Fairgrounds is a four attraction for one price haunt. In the first building, the thrillseeker is treated to a display of freaky paraphernalia throughout history (Sasquatch, the KFC trio, the lampshade from [Ed Gein's](#) house of horror, and other

oddities). The next was a slaughterhouse in which our group traveled with the use of a flashlight. The problem being, the light was controlled by an unseen force. The third was entitled The Beast which was a tunnel of fun. fINally, came the House of Horror. Let's just say the smell was the scariest part of the whole attraction.

My biggest problem with the site was the ratio of animatronic devices to live actors. You can only stand and watch a mechanical prop jump out at you before it becomes not only UNscary but lame. the actors (no more than 5 in the 4 buildings) just did not have their heart in it. There soul purpose seemed to be to direct the traffic created by the audiences. WAY too many "pop-up" scares and WAY too few human actors feeling their parts created very few chills and spills. So few in fact, that the three of us who usually are psyched and ready for more were hesitant to venture 10 miles to another attraction. Also, the miniature golf course was not yet complete. The let down of the terribly un-terrifying Terror Town led the group to return to watch the [Cubs game](#) which was also a let down. But the Buckeyes won and are now 5-1 overall and 2-0 in the Big Ten.... GO BUCKS!!!

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## **An Entity Unto One's Self**

Once again, a group of close friends gathered together tonight to venture to another haunt. This time it was the [Leader Family Farm](#) outside Napoleon. Earlier, we traveled to Sandusky's Ghostly Manor (which is nationally recognized and year-long). The Leader Farm is locally owned and run seasonally. In fact, this was the opening weekend for the attraction. Although many of the workers commented that they were not at 100% (a few bugs to work out), this was sooooo

much more entertaining. The area was actually more of a complex, there was a play area for the smaller children; a LARGE corn maze to walk through, and [ScreamAcres Haunted Corn Field](#). C, [justj](#), and I were the only three who dared to take on the ghouls.

What I enjoyed most about the experience was that most of the frights were done by actual people, not too many big scary, animated devices to jump out and startle. Some of my favorite scenes were a tunnel room which was immediately followed by another equally disorienting room (to two of us, anyway). There were plenty of other nifty frights throughout and it lasted over a half-hour as opposed to the 15 minutes spent in Ghostly Manor.

The three of us went through the gallery of terror three times. Once again, it was really fun to see the actors attempt to do different things as we made our way through each time. Especially during our final crusade, when two of us became slap happy with either fatigue, euphoria, or something that was placed in the tall stalks of corn. Before we left the complex, we were given four passes to visit again later in the season when they had more people visiting and they became more accustomed to the atmosphere. I hope to once again visit before the season ends if it only gets better.

I think it would be fun to go through the corn maze. Our other companions attempted to do just that but did not seem that they enjoyed themselves quite as much as the three of us self-appointed "professional haunted house aficionados." If there is such a job, SIGN ME UP!!! Or just get me into one as an actor. That would be so cool. Aren't friends the greatest?

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# Dead Acres Is The Place To Be

Tonight at our weekly haunted house production meeting, those of us who ventured to Ghostly Manor discussed our satisfaction with the experience and evaluated what we thought could be done with our fright fest. We were advised to check the website for another well-reviewed house of horror in Ohio, just considerably farther than Sandusky. It seems that a location just east of Columbus in Pataskala, Dead Acres is a high ranking house dealing in the macabre. On its [website](#), it has a list of warnings that apparently should be heeded. For instance, if you are in the least bit skeptical about whether or not to bring your children, you should LEAVE THEM BEHIND. There is an addendum that states that the actors involved may occasionally come into direct contact with the visitors (something that our group was warned against doing) but that they should not try to become aggressive in return. One aspect of this house that caught my eye is the haunted hospital wing. So, as the month of ghoulish happenings, creepy things that go bump in the night, and other horrifying spectacles approaches, be sure to visit your area house of horror.