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BEYOND THE GRAVE

Holiday celebrated in many ways

All Souls' Day, festival of the dead predated 'Halloween' of today

By David Ryan
Freelance Reporter

According to Encyclopedia Americana, Halloween started thousands of years ago as a Druid "festival of the dead" that celebrated the deceased and their keeper, Samhain, Druid god of the dead. When Christianity came to England, the missionaries incorporated the festival into Christian rituals.

During the 800s, Nov. 1 was designated as a feast in honor of the saints, then commonly called "hallows." Two centuries later it was changed to All Souls' Day, and the date was moved to Nov. 2. This feast took place for all the dead, especially those who had died in the previous year.

During the Middle Ages, supernatural creatures such as fairies, elves and witches were believed to roam around on All Hallows' Eve, and village people lit bonfires to keep them away.

When the Scots and Irish emigrated to America, they brought Halloween with them. They carved grotesque faces into pumpkins, called jack-o'-lanterns, and the Irish played tricks, such as overturning small buildings. In the morning they would blame little green men they called "lep-

rechauns".

As time passed, Halloween traditions changed into those we know today: little children in the United States dress in costumes and trick-or-treat.

In Eugene, there is much more one can do. There is a costume ball at the Eugene Hilton, "The Rocky Horror Picture Show" performance at Agate Hall or The Witches' Ball at WOW Hall, where you can delve into forgotten Druid rituals.

On campus, there will be many non-alcoholic events: a costume ball in the EMU Ballroom, a Haunted House in the Earl Complex for residence hall students and other planned parties.

Trick-or-treating is done not just by children, but by college students as well. Junior Adam Richardson went trick-or-treating during his freshman year with his friends.

"It was the funnest thing we ever did, and the people didn't mind," he said. "They're happy to see someone our age still enjoying Halloween. It was fun seeing all the little kids. We didn't steal any of their candy, but it was tempting."

Cheryl White, a junior, said dressing her guy friends in drag ranks as one of her more anticipated Halloween events. White also had advice for creating a good Halloween party: "We used to tell a horror story [passed from one per-

son to the person next to them], and we'd use pieces of apricots for someone's cut-off ear in the story."

On Halloween, safety should be a concern, especially when hosting a party.

Linda Devine of the Office of Student Life talked about safe ways to host a party.

"People drinking outside, noise and large numbers of people invite problems," she said. "The police will show up because they've received noise complaints, and they will stop people they see with open containers."

Hosts assume legal responsibility for any trouble that police might find.

"If any minors are caught drinking, the hosts will get charged with supplying them alcohol," Devine said.

ASUO President Bill Miner advised that for each group of partygoers or hosts, "at least one person should remain sober to talk with the police if they should show up."

"The police are concerned about Halloween falling on a Friday this year," he added. "In the West University area, there have been 150 arrests in the past three weeks, and 15 officers have been assaulted."

Whatever students decide to do, "think about what you're doing," Devine said.

Richardson had advice, too: "Have fun."

Witches' Ball invokes All Soul's Day

A local pagan group will observe the holiday with a costume party

By Carl Yeh
Freelance Editor

Real-life witches may be attending the third annual Witches' Ball, but "I'd be super-impressed if I saw anybody I know flying around on a broomstick," said Lia Salciccia, co-organizer of the Witches' Ball and a member of the Cauldron of Changes.

The Cauldron of Changes is a group of local Eugene pagans who are putting on the Nov. 1 ball at 9 p.m. in WOW Hall. The Witches' Ball will commemorate All Soul's Day with a costume party, concert, ritual and tribal dance.

There will also be a jam session of percussion instruments at the end of the ball, and participants should bring their instruments, Salciccia said.

"Paganism is an earth-centered religion, but also people who come to the magician's ball would be witches, magicians, shamans," Salciccia said. "They're all kind of linked by the practice of magick."

Salciccia, who considers herself a witch, defines magic as the "casting of an illusion" and magick as "causing change to occur in conformity with one's own will."

"Most of the pagan community in Eugene will be doing their own private things for Samhain [pronounced Sow-ane] on the

31st," Salciccia said.

Samhain, also known as the Witches' New Year and Halloween, is the time when the veil between the living and the dead is the thinnest, allowing contact, Salciccia said.

"Halloween kind of comes from trying to connect with people who died whom you loved," Salciccia said. "Nov. 1 is the day of the dead [All Souls' Day]. The energy where you could feel you could contact your loved ones peaks on the eve of All Souls' Day."

"We will have a ritual at midnight, which is designed to have everybody get in touch with their ancestors. The ritual fits in with the theme of this year's ball, which is 'Meet the Ancestors.'"

People who are curious about their future can get their tarot cards read for free at the ball.

The Witches' Ball will also feature many music groups, including Land of the Blind and Thoth.

"It's [Land of the Blind's] third year here — they're the backbone of the ball, musically speaking," Salciccia said. "They're great to dance to and they're really creative and they're all pagan themselves."

She also said the music group Thoth was an especially big hit with the women, and the tribal acoustic sounds that come from their instruments are bound to get the belly dancers and the rest of the crowd going.

In addition to considering herself a witch, Salciccia also considers herself a magician.

"I'd be super-impressed if I saw anybody I know flying around on a broomstick."

Lia Salciccia

Co-organizer of the Witches' Ball

"The difference is a witch is more focused with the energies of the moon ... magicians are more focused on identifying themselves and aspiring towards the divine."

Salciccia compared the practice of magick to the practice of other religions.

"It leads you to something higher — it's like other religions except you're more active in trying to get there by using ritual as opposed to using prayer and meditation."

Prizes will be awarded to participants with the best costumes. Salciccia acknowledges that not everybody will want to dress up.

"If they don't feel like coming in costume, just dress festively," she said.

People of all ages are welcome to the event, Salciccia said.

"It's a really good chance to work with people who have a festive spirit and energy at this time of year and show people that energy," she said. "It's also a chance for witches, pagans and magicians to show the community what Halloween really means to us."



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