

CREEPIN' AROUND GRAND JUNCTION: A GUIDE TO HAUNTED HOUSES

X-TREME TORMENT LEAVES YOU LOST AND CRAWLING



A masked actor wielding a chain saw chases customers out of the last room of the house Saturday.

29 1/2 ROAD AND NORTH AVENUE
X-TREME TORMENT HAUNTED HOUSE.COM

Whitney Kidd
wkidd@mavs.coloradomesa.edu

With tunnels and little to no lights in each room, this haunted house is more about getting lost and not being able to see where you are than being chased by a man in a mask.

X-Treme Torment has a smaller cast of actors, and many of them seemed to not have their whole hearts into the haunt, and a half-hearted scream will only scare the younger, middle school demographic.

But not having a huge cast may not be a bad thing. The mood of the house is really set on disorienting customers. There are rooms where it's completely dark and you just have your arm



in front of you as your only guide and rooms with white cloth hanging from the ceiling and the brightest lights imaginable.

The ground isn't flat, either. The terrain has been modified and has bumps and hills, making it easy to trip and fall on the person in front of you. They also have a tunnel where you have to crawl through on your hands and knees. This one is definitely not for the claustrophobic.

The proceeds benefit Grand Junction High School, so it makes sense that the target audience is teeny-bopper high school kids. That being said, it's noticeable that the scare tactics are aimed toward that same demographic. I definitely jumped a few times. It's decent for a Grand Junction haunted house.

TIPS AND TRICKS FOR A SAFE TIME

Whitney Kidd
wkidd@mavs.coloradomesa.edu

So maybe you're more of a scaredy cat than a non-sense Clarice in "Silence of the Lambs." If you frighten easily and are prone to peeking through your fingers and internally panicking when watching horror films, yet your hunger for a good scare keeps you up at night aching to walk through a haunted house, here are some tips to take you through the haunt.

Remain calm

Zombies, doctors and clowns alike have been known to spook the hell out of people who already look like they've crapped their pants. Seriously, though. When I was 13, I made it through the first room of a haunted house until I was cornered by Samara from "The Ring." Frozen in panic with tears streaming down my face, Pennywise walked into the room, took one look at me and followed me through the rest of the house,

whispering sweet nothings into my ear.

Footing is everything

You're going to be walking through dark rooms that have an uneven floor. Don't be that girl who wears Gucci's finest heels only to get her stiletto caught in moss, and is suddenly on the floor, crawling around, trying to get away from the butcher who is slowly approaching, taunting, "Let me taste your blood."

Keep your eyes open

The old saying, "If I can't see you, you can't see me," absolutely does not apply to this situation. As tempting as it is to blindly follow your friend while clawing into her hand, being alert and aware of what is going on is key. I've seen too many people run into walls and dead ends because they were following their adventure buddies with their faces buried in their hands. And it's not like monsters won't attack you just because you're lost.

It's all about the company you keep

Bring along friends who are just as scared as you are if you're looking to whiz past ghosts and ghouls. Brothers and older siblings are great to go with if you're into the whole yelling back at the undead thing. Significant others make great companions as well, and you might get to cop an "accidental" feel. Know prior to stepping inside how your companion feels about the haunt. The last thing you want is to envision blasting through the house, sprinting, and have that jerk of a friend with you who wants to stay in each room for as long as possible.

Remember, you're invincible

Unless you've signed a waiver beforehand or have been told otherwise, Freddy and Jason can't lay a finger on you without getting fired. Don't worry about how "House of Wax" ended — you aren't Paris Hilton, and you aren't going to take a pole to your dome space. Just don't touch the actors, and they won't assault you.

DARK ACRES CORN MAZE PATH OF BOREDOM

21 1/2 ROAD NORTH OF HIGHWAY 6 & 50
STUDS PUMPKIN PATCH.COM

Whitney Kidd
wkidd@mavs.coloradomesa.edu

Oh, Studt's Dark Acres Corn Maze? It's the best half-assed haunted, not-a-maze cornfield you'll experience in Grand Junction. It's advertised as a maze, but it's only a maze if you don't walk on paths well and every time you try, you end up walking straight through ears of corn.

After driving 20 minutes, waiting in line at the ticket booth for half an hour and waiting in line again for 45 minutes, anyone is going to have a hard time being impressed, but Dark Acres takes disappointment to another level.

I went with one other person only to get stuck in a group with eight obnoxious teenagers. Not only were

they annoying, but with such a big group, only two or three people were scared each time an actor appeared. And to make it worse, the actors had little, if any, interest in scaring maze-goers. The jumpiest part was when air was shot toward my group — oxygen, the real nightmare.

The one redeeming feature Dark Acres had was that there were trailers throughout the route the group would walk through with actors posted to scare. Great idea, poor delivery.

Studt's does also have some other activities that seemed pretty neat. They have a pumpkin patch, mini scarecrow corn maze that is also misleading and not an actual maze, petting zoo with pony rides, slides, and a hay mountain. If you have some little ones, it might be worth the trip.



COURTESY PHOTO BY STUDT'S PUMPKIN PATCH

THE TRAIL OF TERROR BEST ACTORS IN TOWN

721 S. SEVENTH ST.
FACEBOOK.COM/EXPRESSALLSTARSTRAILOFTERROR

Whitney Kidd
wkidd@mavs.coloradomesa.edu

Trail of Terror is celebrating its 14th year this Halloween. Between 85 and 100 actors wait to scare customers each night they're open, making the house full of screams without a dull moment to catch your breath.

The actors are in it to win it, as they're all either Express Allstars dancers and cheerleaders or their family members. All of the proceeds made from the house go toward the cheer and dance teams to travel to competitions at both national and world venues.

The first person in the group will have a rope tied around his or her waist, and all other group members will have their hands tied. A tour guide will lead you through the 30-room house, which is actually terrifying -- having to wait in each room and letting yourself get tormented by demon kids flying through the house? Yeah, pretty terrifying. But it's also great because for once in your haunted house career, you're getting your money's worth.

The people acting in the house is what brings the haunt together to make for a frightening experience. The actors, mainly girls between eight and 13 years old, complete ghoulish moments throughout the haunt. It's obvious they are performing to their fullest extent because they love doing it and not just for the money.

Trail of Terror is the house to go to this Halloween season. You'll be screaming as a zombified schoolgirl grabs at your ankles and you watch a child get electrocuted.



An actor cooks up a flesh filled meal Friday night in the Trail of Terror haunted house.



Friday night, two actors in the Trail of Terror haunted house play pat-a-cake in one of the house's 30 rooms.

GARDENS' CREEPY PLAYGROUND OPENS THIS WEEK



A swinging doll scares customers as they turn the first corner of Botanical Gardens' haunted castle.

641 STRUTHERS AVE
WCBOTANICAL.ORG

Whitney Kidd
wkidd@mavs.coloradomesa.edu

Botanical Gardens won't be known only for their butterflies after this Halloween season if all goes as planned. Opening Oct. 23, Botanical Gardens will break into the scare industry when they open their haunted castle. Normally a playground, the area is being transformed into a fright fest full of severed heads, blood and gore.

"This is the first time we've had a haunted house here, and we've been working on it for about six or seven weeks," Robert Hayward, who has helped put together the haunt, said.

Working on a haunted house for a month and a half seems like a lot of time for it to be open only for a week, but Hayward and others who have helped in the creating of the haunted castle are hoping it will be well worth it.

"I think it is definitely going to pay off," Hayward said. "There have been times that I've gotten scared just walking through and turning everything off at night, and I'm the one who made it."

The haunt is estimated to take 10 minutes, and children under the age of 10 are being advised not to attend.

At this haunted castle, a small group of up to five people will be guided throughout the course, making everyone stay in a room until instructed to move on to the next one.

"We have the guides to make sure that we're getting a scare out of everyone coming through in every room," Hayward said.

Unfortunately, the one part Botanical Gardens is struggling with is getting volunteers to help out.

"We're hoping to have actors in every place possible during the tour," Hayward said. "We just can't seem to get enough volunteers. We're encouraging anyone and everyone who wants to help out to contact us."

The castle is putting twists to the usual undead, doctors and Jasons. They also have a room they're keeping under wraps until opening night but is sure to trigger responses.

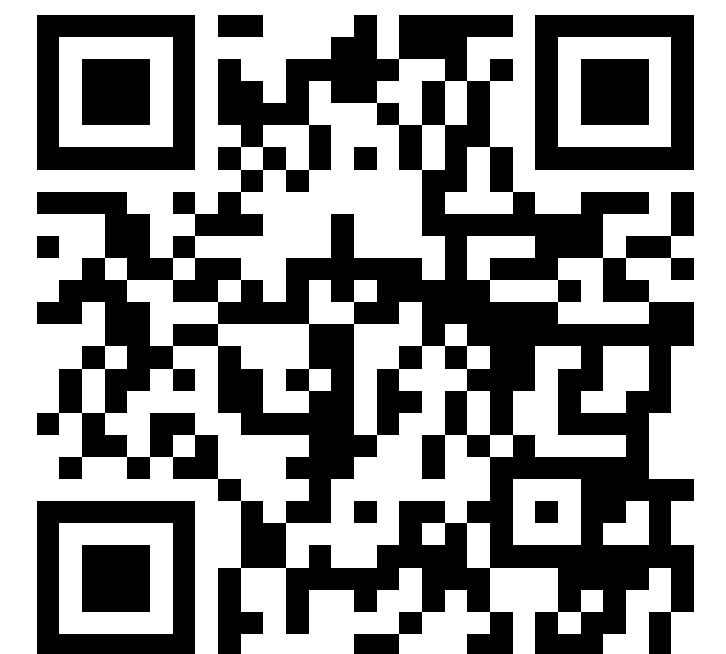
"This is still happening through Botanical Gardens, so we want to still keep it cost-effective," Hayward said.

Tickets are \$8 for adults and \$5 for kids under 12.

If the haunted castle seems too scary, Botanical Gardens will also be having an admission-free carnival in front of the castle for the kids on Halloween night.



A doll at the Botanical Gardens' haunted castle offers a plate of fingers to customers.



Scan this QR code with a smart phone to see a spooky slideshow with links to the haunted house websites.