

Halloween season's marked by family fare

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Sunday. Upwards of 1,000 area children were expected to attend.

At the first event of its kind at Botsford, children age 10 and younger were treated to mimes, magicians, clowns, balloon-makers and Punch and Judy shows. Law enforcement officials from Farmington and Farmington Hills provided safety programs.

The party was made possible at no charge to the community through cash and prize donations from area businesses and individuals, coordinator Barb Zeiser said. "We want children to have a healthy Halloween."

The hospital served no candy at the party, and gave attending parents recipes for healthy treats.

NEIGHBORS On Birchwood in Farmington Hills swapped scary tales Saturday night during the annual Halloween block party hosted by Sandy and Greg Smigielski. Their wooded backyard is used for a "ghost hunt," where the likes of Count Dracula, Frankenstein, Wolfman and other assorted ghouls await neighborhood trick-or-treaters.

What began as a Halloween party in Heritage Hills has grown into a five-community event after 13 years. On Thursday, five neighborhoods in an area between 13 and 14 Mile and Farmington and Drake roads will host their annual Halloween party at Forest Elementary School, 3455 Old Timber.

The party is funded by the five homeowners associations and run by the Forest Elementary PTO. Chairwoman Gloria Pochman said the PTO plans 15 different games, serves cider and doughnuts and awards prizes donated by area businesses and residents.

"We bill this as an alternative to trick-or-treating," she said, although children in the subdivisions go door-to-door before the party, which runs from 7:30-8:30 p.m.

"It's really become a place for people to socialize," she added. Anyone within the mile area is invited to attend.

OPEN TO the public through Thursday is the Farmington Area Jaycees Haunted Store at Mul-

wood Square Shopping Center, Grand River Avenue and Drake Road. The annual House of Horrors is open 7:30-10:30 p.m. Admission is \$2.50.

For the younger crowd, the Farmington Community Library is offering both preschool and elementary programs at the 12 Mile and downtown branches.

At the 12 Mile library, preschoolers will be treated to a Halloween Special from 10:30-11 a.m. Thursday. Movies and stories will entertain while cider and donuts are served. The Downtown Library will host a preschool Thriller Party 2-2:30 p.m. Thursday.

Elementary-age children can enjoy three movies: "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow," "The Ghosts Belong to Me" and "Ghosts and Ghouls" 4-5 p.m. Thursday.

Children are encouraged to wear costumes to all library parties.

SEVERAL AREA organizations sponsor the annual Halloween Howl, to run 5:30-8 p.m. Thursday in the Farmington YMCA, 28100 Farmington Road, Farmington Hills.

Programs will be geared for 5-to-10-year-olds, organizer Sue Brooke said. A flashlight treasure hunt, trick-or-treating down Haunted Avenue, movies and costume judging will highlight the evening.

The program is held in conjunction with the Farmington Parks and Recreation Department, the Farmington Community Center, the Farmington Community Library and the YMCA.

Many area programs are sponsored to provide an alternative to neighborhood trick-or-treating, which has been unsafe in some areas due to candy tampering.

The Oakland County Sheriff's Department in Pontiac and Providence Hospital in Novi and Milford are providing candy screening for those who go door-to-door for goodies.

The Farmington Department of Public Safety, the Farmington Hills Police Department and Botsford hospital are not providing screening this year, according to officials.

FARMINGTON HILLS Chief of Police William Dwyer does not believe metal detectors address the entire problem of candy tampering. "We suggest any suspected candy be immediately destroyed by parents," he said. All tampering is not related to metal items being inserted into candy, he added.

Zeiser of Botsford Hospital said screening was discussed and decided against. Objects such as glass are not picked up through the detectors, she said, and parents may get a false sense of security with them.

A 24-hour national hotline sponsored by a chiefs of police association, in conjunction with the candy industry, has been in operation since 1983 to address the tampering problem. Residents should call this toll-free line, 1-800-433-1200, or their local law enforcement agency to report any problems, Dwyer noted.

Candy tampering is a federal offense carrying fines up to \$100,000 to life in prison in the case of death. Attempted tampering carries a \$25,000 fine or imprisonment, Dwyer said.

Extra police patrols are planned in both Farmington and Farmington Hills during Halloween week. Parks in Farmington will be closed from 6 p.m. to 7 a.m. from Monday, Oct. 28, through Friday, Nov. 1, as will Raphael Street.

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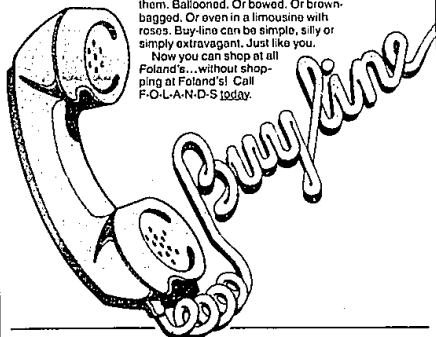
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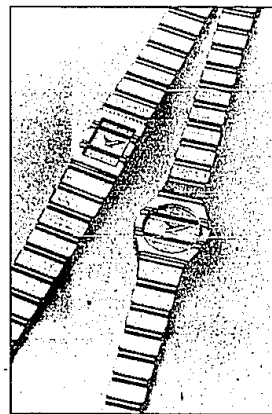
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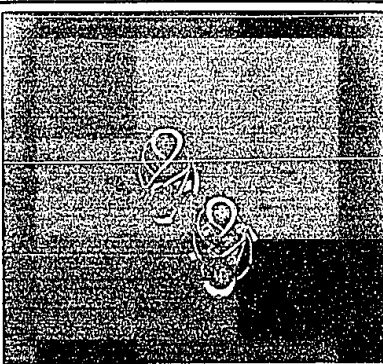
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