

Jack-o'-lanterns light Halloween



staff photo by Michael Johnson

Pumpkins spring up during Halloween. Prices of the future jack-o'-lanterns and pies ranges from

about 15 cents a pound to about 30 cents a pound. These pumpkins are from the Farm Patch in Bryan.

by Shellee Bratton
Battalion Reporter

Since Halloween is only a ghost away, an abundance of pumpkins have sprung up all over the city. But try to find one after Christmas and you'll have less luck than Linus looking for the Great Pumpkin in the pumpkin patch.

Tom Longbrake, a horticulturist with the Texas A&M Agricultural Extension Service, said that is because pumpkin consumption hits a peak around Halloween and Thanksgiving.

"Pumpkins are a very seasonal crop," Longbrake said. "They are planted in June, when danger of frost is gone, so that they'll mature in time for Halloween and Thanksgiving. Not many people want them after that."

Longbrake warned that if a pumpkin is to be used as both a jack-o'-lantern and as food, it should be cooked within 24 hours after it has been cut.

"The flesh will begin to deteriorate, and bacteria will form because of the high sugar content," he said.

The best jack-o'-lanterns, Longbrake said, are made from smooth, well-shaped, dark orange pumpkins. A fresh pumpkin will still have its stem attached. The stem falls off in older pumpkins.

"Some pumpkins may have a light-colored spot on the end or one side," Longbrake added. "This is not a defect — it's where the pumpkin layed on the ground shielding out the sun so that

the color pigment
Many varieties are
available. One of the
consumption purposes
the small sugar
said.

"It's very good
the best kind for
weighs six to eight
eight inches in
mellower, smoother
and it has a higher
other pumpkins."

Other varieties
often for jack-o'-
Longbrake said they
for cooking.

The pumpkin
dozens of ways
make pumpkin
in the fall. The
tallized candy
pumpkins. And
which are high
eaten as snacks.

But probably the
of the pumpkin
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The tradition
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Where have all the witches gone?

by Susan Dittman
Battalion Staff

Halloween has historically been a time when ghosts, goblins and witches come out in full force.

In Bryan-College Station, however, they seem to want to remain anonymous.

Where does one go to find a witch or someone with psychic abilities? A palm reader might be a start. But palm readers and fortune tellers do not advertise in the yellow pages of the local phonebook.

If you're lucky, you might happen to pass one on the roadside while driving around town.

This is how I stumbled onto Mrs. Helen, a palm reader on Texas Avenue. But she wasn't home — or at least she didn't answer the doorbell.

Next, I tried the Unicorn and Which Witch shop in Woodstone Center where I had better luck, although I didn't find a witch.

Kay and Bets, sisters and co-owners of the store, do not claim to be witches. But they do claim to have psychic ability.

The sisters, dressed identically in white, old-fashioned blouses and maroon prairie skirts, said that everyone has psychic abilities but not everyone has learned how to use them.

"It is all in the power of the mind," Kay said. "You have to have belief in your own ability. Our psychic ability has been developed by reading tarot cards."

A tarot reader tells fortunes by using a pack of cards with pictures representing virtues, vices and elemental forces.

"You can tell about the past, present and the possible future by reading tarot cards," Kay said.

But individuals can change their fu-

ture by changing their daily routines, she said.

For the benefit of this story, Bets did a tarot reading for Paul Cecil, a sophomore, electrical engineering major from Bryan, who is vice president of the Texas A&M Metaphysical Club.

In a back room on a wooden table with a five-point star carved in the center, Bets laid out the cards in a pyramid shape — eight, six, four, two and one.

Turning over several cards at a time, Bets told Cecil that he has had a change in his way of thinking and that his grades should improve.

"You have a tendency to be too friendly," she said. "People step on your toes."

Bets said the cards showed a female teacher will enter his life and give him advice. She said the advisor would probably have either red or strawberry blonde hair.

The tarot reading was interesting but I still wanted to talk to a witch.

Although Kay and Bets have some books about witchcraft in their store, they carry very little of the paraphernalia used to practice witchcraft.

"There are a lot of people on their own who are witches," Kay said. "But I don't know of a society of witches in this area."

So my search for a witch continued.

Kay gave me the name of a man in Houston who practices "white magic." But when I called the telephone number I got an answering machine and was told to write an address for more information.

Oh well, better luck next Halloween.



staff photo by David Fisher

Bets (right), co-owner of the Unicorn and Which Witch store in Woodstone Shopping Center, tells Paul Cecil his fortune by reading tarot cards. Cecil is a sophomore electrical engineering major from Bryan.

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