

Not just child's play

Adults buying costumes by the case this Halloween

By Kathryn McKenzie Nichols
KRT CAMPUS

MONTEREY, Calif. — Halloween used to be mainly for kids of a certain age, the ones who didn't feel self-conscious about dressing up and knocking on doors for candy.

These days, everyone's getting into the act.

Grownups are buying costumes by the case — not just for their small fry, but also for themselves. They're also decorating their homes, Halloween-style, to the tune of \$2 billion nationally. According to Newsweek, the holiday spending for this holiday is second only to that of Christmas.

Just walk through the "haunted aisle" at the Party Wholesale Store in Sand City, a small town on the Monterey Peninsula in California, and you'll see what they're buying. There, frighteners can shell out as much as \$1,300 for a life-sized, animated ghoulish who pops up behind a gravestone; \$799 for a gargoyle that flaps its wings; or a giant space alien for \$149.

Even body parts are big sellers, according to Sandy Gregory, who owns the store with her husband, Bob.

"We had one guy who came in and bought two hands, two legs, a heart and a brain," said Gregory. "There was also a nurse who bought body parts and was going to leave them in the fridge with some blood around them."

Beyond the delirious decoration is the desire to make a Halloween fashion statement. Adult-sized costumes include bizarre inflatable contraptions that make one resemble a sumo wrestler or a chubby ballerina; you can also choose to be a giant SpongeBob Squarepants or a "tacky tourist," complete with cheesy Hawaiian shirt.

Or if you opt for tasteful over terrifying, visit any number of local boutiques for cute 'n' cuddly signs of the season, like Halloween trees, ceramic jack o' lanterns, pumpkin wreaths and miniature haunted houses.

"In general, it reflects some on the nesting trend," said Nicole Brooks, a spokesperson for Cost Plus World Market, which recently opened a new store in Seaside, Calif. "More people are entertaining at home ... your home becomes



Halloween masks and decorations are on display everywhere this week, as at Party Wholesale in Sand City, Calif.

the party place."

Cost Plus carries such items as ghost salt-and-pepper shakers, pumpkin-colored napkins and "Witch's Brew" mulled spices, with an emphasis on setting a nice table for the holiday. Several bins of toys and treats also carry the Halloween theme.

At Target, everything from yard decor (like signs that say "Scaring Up Some Fun" and "Will Spook For Treats") to candy bowls and votive candles are meant not to terrorize, but to celebrate the holiday with style.

Even Halloween trees — draped in black with witch and pumpkin ornaments — can be found at the Home Sweet Home store in Pacific Grove, along with a number of fall-themed items.

But if you opt for the creepy, the scary, or the grotesque, the Party Wholesale Store is the place to be.

"It's just too spooky in that one spot," said Sandy Gregory of the "haunted aisle"

where the store's largest animated figures are situated.

"We sell a lot of them."

This year, Gregory said, there are more of these spooky statues than ever — and electronic sensors that make them talk, sing, and move

make them increasingly lifelike — and disconcerting to those who walk down the aisle.

"There's never enough room," said Gregory, noting that the warehouse-style store has had to place many of the bigger items on a third tier of shelves. "They keep coming up with such great items."

Some of the demand comes from the increasing popularity of the Mexican Day of the Dead, which is observed Nov. 1. Skulls and skeletons of all types are common in imagery for that holiday, so those are always best sellers.

"I never have enough skeleton cookie cutters," Gregory said.

Popular costumes for 2003

- Spiderman
- Harry Potter
- SpongeBob Squarepants
- The Osbournes (especially Ozzy, Kelly and Jack)
- Gandalf from "Lord of the Rings"
- Austin Powers
- Any character from "The Matrix" (especially Neo and Trinity)
- "Wizard of Oz" characters
- The Incredible Hulk

Infant bodies found in Brown County attic

By Penny Cockerell
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A trash bag containing the mummified bodies of three infants was found in the crawl space of a rural home about 10 miles southwest of Brownwood, Texas, and will be analyzed by medical examiners, authorities said Sunday.

The sheriff's department in Brown County is investigating the deaths as homicides, Chief Deputy Mike McCoy said.

Homeowners renovating a two-story rock house in rural Brown County, about 70 miles southeast of Abilene, made the discovery Thursday while doing electrical work.

The trash bag was found in the attic crawl space between the home's first and second floors.

The family has lived there for three years. They are not suspects, McCoy said. He would not identify the family or the precise location of the home, which he said was built in the mid-1980s.

Upon an initial review, Brown County authorities

thought the bag contained one infant. Investigators then closed the bag for shipment before examining further, McCoy said.

"We didn't disturb any of the other packaging because it was forensic evidence," he said.

It wasn't until the bag arrived at the Travis County Medical Examiner's office in Austin on Friday that investigators found three separate sacks, each containing an infant. A call to the medical examiner on Sunday was not immediately returned.

"One baby was wrapped in a towel, and the baby was originally found wrapped in a sheet inside a paper sack," McCoy said.

"The one that I saw was a larger baby that I do not believe would be like a miscarried child," McCoy said. "I believe it was at least a full-term baby. But that's just guessing."

The infants' ages and genders were not known due to deterioration.

McCoy said no missing babies have been reported in the 26 years he's worked in Brown County.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Border agents nab Kansas murder suspect

EL PASO, Texas (AP) — Border Patrol agents captured a U.S. citizen suspected in a Kansas City, Kan., homicide as he tried to return to the United States from Mexico.

Raul Cuellar, 23, initially claimed he was a Mexican citizen, but a fingerprint check revealed he was wanted on charges of murder, aggravated battery, and three counts of aggravated assault. The El Paso Times reported Sunday. He was arrested Wednesday.

Cuellar is accused of fatally shooting a 24-year-old man, wounding another man and firing at three others during a June 28, 2002, fight. He was jailed in El Paso pending extradition to Kansas.

Cuellar is the seventh homicide suspect captured by border patrol agents since August 2001. Border Patrol spokesman Dan Mosier said such captures of legal citizens indicate a trend.

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Polar Bear Club	All semester		FREE

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Kayak Roll Instruct. Clinic	TODAY!	Oct. 28
Woman's Rock Climb	TODAY!	Oct. 31–Nov. 2
FREE Climb Technique Clinic	At Event	Nov. 4
Mt Bike Ride and Clinic	Sept. 1–Nov. 4	Nov. 9
Lead Climbing Clinic	Sept. 1–Nov. 10	Nov. 11

BREAK TRIPS

Event	Registration	Event Date
Horsepacking Big Bend	Sept. 1–Nov. 7	Nov. 26–30
Ski Colorado	Sept. 1–Dec. 1	Jan. 11–17
Costa Rica Adventure	Sept. 1–Dec. 12	March 14–21

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