

AGGIELIFE

THE BATTALION

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FEAR FACTOR: HAUNTED HOUSES

By Nancy Dubinski
THE BATTALION

As the fall air begins to grace Aggieland with its presence and the ghosts and goblins prepare to make their annual return, Aggies are reminded of the delightfully haunting experiences of Halloween's past.

Through the trick-or-treating, endless amounts of candy and ever-amazing plethora of creative costumes, one memory tends to come alive in the minds of many: The ever-frightening stroll through a haunted house.

For some, nothing can compare to the thrill of not knowing what is lurking behind the next turn or the anticipation of not knowing what to expect.

"I love that kind of stuff. The kind that gets your adrenaline rushing," said Amy Mitchell, a senior agricultural economics major.

Mitchell attended Kappa Sigma's "Wicked Woods" two years ago with a friend.

"He was more scared than I would have expected most guys to be, and when something jumped out at us or anything, he would jump," she said. "Actually, he grabbed my arm one time and kind of bent it backwards."

Mitchell has a passion for scary movies and haunted houses.

"I like the stuff that jumps out at you and the sudden loud noises. Even when I know it's coming, I still always jump," she said.

"Wicked Woods" is the Kappa Sigma fraternity's annual fundraiser for the American Red Cross, the Brazos Valley Food Bank and the Mental Health Association. It holds this fright fest at the fraternity house every year through the latter part of October. It has become one of College Station's main spooky attractions over the past several years.

Many Aggies have attended "Wicked Woods" and can recall the screams, the terror, and for some, the pain.

Jason Barron, a senior agricultural development major, remembers a "Wicked Woods" adventure he won't soon forget.

"A friend of mine and I took a couple of girls a few years ago. We were going because the girls wanted to and they didn't want to go alone," Barron said. "We had a good time and it was funny because I actually spent most of the night pulling fingernails out of my back."

Barron explained that he wasn't scared, though. "You go to those things and you sort of know what's going to happen," he said.

Educational human resource development graduate student J.K. Kovanovic also had an interesting night in the "Wicked Woods."

"It was really muddy the year I went, so you add that to the endless line and your classic yells and screams, and you have yourself a pretty crazy night," Kovanovic said.

Bryan Ehlert, a senior biomedical science major, made an attempt to try out the "Wicked Woods," but it didn't quite work out.

"I remember trying to go to "Wicked Woods," but the line was always too long," he said.

Instead, Ehlert ended up visiting the Veterinary Medicine school haunted house. His favorite part

was being chased by someone with a chainsaw, a token ingredient in the recipe for a successful haunted house. Overall, he recalls the experience as a good one.

"There was a lot of screaming and people were always trying to grab onto you," Ehlert said.

Cassandra Behr, a junior biomedical science major, said her favorite haunted house memory is set in the halls of Hotard Hall at the residence hall's annual scare factory, "Hotard from Hell." The residents' rooms are temporarily converted into sanctuaries of fear for their adrenaline-filled guests to explore.

"One of the scariest things that I remember was a room that was completely covered in black tarps and was completely dark other than a strobe light," Behr said. "They closed us in there and some guy appeared and chased us around this tiny little room and we couldn't see to get out. Overall, 'Hotard from Hell' was definitely scary. I screamed the whole time."

Another haunted house that invokes fear in the hearts of Bryan-College Station residents is the Girls' Club Haunted House hosted by Alpha Phi Omega service fraternity. The event is funded partially by the fraternity and partially by donations from businesses in the Bryan-College Station community. Proceeds go to benefit the Girls' Club after-school programs.

Approximately 65 members of Alpha Phi Omega put on the haunted house, doing everything from getting donations, building and decorating the rooms and playing haunted characters and guides.

"It's a lot of fun. We get to dress up and scare the kids," said Matt Kainer, a senior civil engineering major and Alpha Phi Omega member.

Kainer said his favorite haunted room is filled with students, including himself including himself dressed as terrifying clowns. He also described a room with an electrical chair, one with a scary surgeon performing an obviously unsuccessful operation, another with a seemingly lowering ceiling and a wall-o-hands. The wall-o-hands is a black wall decorated with inflated, white surgical gloves and a few members of Alpha Phi Omega wearing all black except for their white gloves that move tortuously toward their potential victims. No haunted house is complete without the chainsaw, which Alpha Phi Omega has not failed to include.

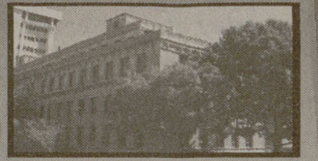
It's possible that there are other locations around this exciting college town that have some sort of haunted history. Senior psychology major Rebecca Branom had what she originally thought was a supernatural experience.

"I was in Langford the other day and the guy sitting next to me randomly asked if I had just seen the Confederate soldier that just walked by. I looked around and saw nothing of the sort and told him that I thought maybe he was seeing things," Branom said. "But was this a ghost? No. A few minutes later I saw a guy dressed in a Confederate soldier's uniform walking down the hall and I'm pretty sure he was real because he stopped to talk to a girl in my class."

Whether it's creepy excursions or a little trick-or-treating in the Halloween plans for this year, there's no question that Aggies just want to be scared. There's nothing like a good haunted house to quench that yearlong, much anticipated thirst.

GRAPHICS BY PAUL WILSON • THE BATTALION

Animal Industries Building



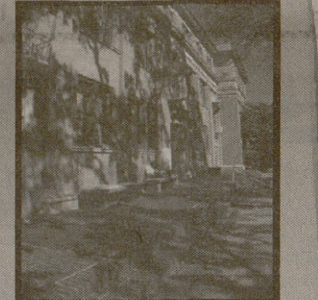
In 1965, a professor cut his leg and bled to death while doing meat preparation. Sounds of his screams for help and his footsteps are still rumored to echo in the halls.

Dairy Science Center



While lights flicker, an image of a man standing by the grain silo has caught more than one person's eye.

Francis Hall



Shadow apparitions have been seen trolling up and down Francis' halls. Strange noises that seem to relocate on their own add to the spook factor of Francis Hall.

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