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## 'Tis the Season for Halloween



Lafayette Elementary students eagerly help unload over 400 pumpkins for the school's annual Westival Family Carnival on October 9th. Photo Doug Kohlen

the event into two sections - the first for kids seven and under that is "not so scary" - later in the evening it's officially "very scary" for bigger kids. Dates for this fundraiser are prior to publication. Jonathan Katayanagi, a kid at heart and Recreation Program Coordinator, was up to his elbows working on it. He said, "Halloween is all about letting your freak flag fly - it's a chance for teens to express themselves creatively. This is a great community thing - even in tough times."

In Moraga, The New Rheem Theatre will also have a haunted house featuring a claustrophobia chamber advertised as not for the weak at heart. Appropriate for children age ten and older, it will be open after 7:00 p.m. all Halloween weekend.

Burton Valley Elementary school will be filled with little monsters on Friday, October 29. The school hosts arguably the largest costume parade in the area, teachers dress up and parent volunteers come to help out at classroom parties with Halloween themed crafts and games.

"The kids love it - they definitely look forward to it" said Assistant Principal Chris Reddam, "it's a spooky good time." He described it as a huge tradition where everyone dresses up. Teachers have come in years past in group themed costumes like a deck of cards and pirates. One teacher came as a dining room table. He recalls one student came as an iPod last year. Un-spoiler alert - Reddam will not be attending this year as Abe Lincoln.

This season, look for school parades across Lamorinda, Halloween events, tons of candy, and parents with flashlights shepherding their little ones up and down the streets of our semi-rural spirit-filled community. Keep an eye out - this year you may even bump into Buster Posey or Lady Ga Ga going door to door searching for Snickers bars.

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Not only is Halloween a unique American tradition, but it really comes to life in the suburbs. Lamorinda is filled with family neighborhoods, a plethora of pumpkins on front porches, creepy spiders and other ghoulish decorations that contribute to the holiday vibe. For kids the prospect of a pillowcase full of candy and morphing into their alter ego for an evening can't be beat. It's not every day you see a giant inflatable Frankenstein on a front lawn and get to embrace your inner witch or vampire.

Kids have figured out over the years how to maximize their candy take - starting early, and finding well lit neighborhoods with homes relatively close together. Everybody has their favorite - in Moraga the Camino Ricardo area and along Rimer Drive are very popular, in Lafayette - all of Burton Valley is a winner - Merriewood Drive becomes Scarrywood Drive. Orinda youth have two favorites - one on each side of town. South of the freeway, they gravitate toward Ivy Drive, on the north side appropriately named Sleepy Hollow goes nuts - smoke machines, Halloween karaoke, where you may need to sign for your treat and homes are completely decked out.

Along with a ridiculous amount of sugar, the seventh annual Haunted House presented by the Lafayette Youth Commission at the Community Center adds to the excitement. Teen organizers divided