

HAUNTED HYDRO TAKES ITS SCARY BUSINESS SERIOUSLY

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FREMONT — There are few weirder sights than walking into the Fremont Community Recreation Complex on a Saturday morning and seeing a killer clown sitting down for a job interview.

And yet, there he was: Blind-O, a gruesome, eyeless, cannibal clown with a giant black Afro and bright red pants, sitting down at a table with a member of the Haunted Hydro Dark Attraction Park to discuss his qualifications.

"We want to hire the very best," Bob Turner explained to applicants. Turner, whose name tag identified him merely as "Crazy Bob," owns the Hydro with his wife, Beth.

Now in its 19th season, the Hydro is one of numerous local haunts gearing up for Halloween. Part of its annual preparation process is to hold try-outs that include everything from role playing in front of the group to personal interviews.

"We came from a theatrical background and we thought this is a performance of sorts," said Beth Turner as she stood behind a table covered with sign-up forms and a can of Fieck Screem Evil Energy drink.

This year, the Hydro hired about 65 ghouls, goblins, and other ghastly creatures to spook the more than 15,000 visitors it expects before the end of the month. About 90 people showed up to audition over a weekend last month, including Blind-O, a veteran monster whose real name is Harold McCall, of Sycamore, Ohio.

Perhaps what was most eerie about the proceedings was the businesslike way they unfolded. The auditions took place in a meeting room in the rec center filled with rows of folding chairs, where Bob Turner talked about the requirements of the job.

"You have to be creative. You have to be spontaneous," he said. "We are here to give consistent, good quality, professional scares."

He also reminded the group that even monsters cannot escape the tax man. There will be 1099 forms for each person/ghost/zombie hired as an independent contractor.

While most of those in the crowd had worked for the Hydro in the past, Crazy Bob still encouraged the 23 wannabe monsters in one session to attend his "Hauntertainer University." (According to the DVD version of the class, it's "guaranteed to take basic haunted house acting to the next level and beyond" and promises help in costuming, makeup, and impromptu dialogue.)

VIDEOS

[Haunted Hydro auditions](#)

Two veterans demonstrated scare tactics for the group, but the real test for newbies — first-timers who give "fresh blood" a new meaning — came during the one-on-ones. That's when Crazy Bob asked Tommy Alexander, 39, why he wanted to join the crew and help with security.

"I love helping people," said the Springfield Township man who works for the Ohio Highway Patrol. "Just to be here to experience a haunted house ... it's something I've always wanted to do."

They talked about character ideas, and Alexander even left with some homework.



Blind-O is one of the characters at the Haunted Hydro in Fremont (THE BLADE/AMY E. VOIGT)

“Go down to the video store,” Bob Turner said. “Pick out two or three of the old masters. I especially like Lon Chaney ...”

Gary Wise, 44, of Green Springs, Ohio — another newbie and a fan of gory movies like Saw — already had an idea for a cool outfit: “A machete through my neck or split down through my forehead.”

Some came with ideas, some came with costumes, and some, like Jerry Chaffee of Tiffin, just came. Nevermind that the 35-year-old who’s worked at the Hydro since 2001 showed up as the demon warrior Nemesis, adorned with wings, webbed feet, leather armor, a chain mail shirt, and multiple piercings.

“I really don’t call it a costume,” Chaffee said, “because I will wear it out to clubs.”

FRIGHT SITES

Boo! What, that didn’t scare you? Maybe you’ll have better luck at one of the many haunted attractions around the area. Information about discounts can be found on some Web sites.

- Chainsaw Creek at Westfield Franklin Park, 5001 Monroe St. in Toledo. Four haunted houses. Hours: Dark to 11 p.m. Thursdays to Sundays through Oct 16 and Oct. 19, 23, 26, 27, 28. Dark until midnight Fridays and Saturdays starting Oct. 17 as well as Oct. 29 and 30. Cost: \$10 per attraction or \$20 for all four. Information: 419-343-7478 or chainsawcreek.com.

- HalloWeekends at Cedar Point in Sandusky. Three indoor haunted houses, five outdoor fright zones, kids’ areas, and other park attractions. Hours: 6 p.m. to midnight on Fridays (only a portion of the park will be open), noon to midnight on Saturdays, and 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Sundays, except Oct. 12 when it’s 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Open through Nov 2. Cost: \$43.99 for all-day passes Saturdays and Sundays, \$25.95 for Friday nights, after 5 p.m. on Saturdays, and after 4 p.m. on Sunday, \$19.99 for seniors 62 and over and guests under four feet tall. Children 2 and under are admitted free. Information: 419-627-2350 or halloweekends.com.

- Ghostly Manor Thrill Center, 3319 Milan Rd. in Sandusky. Indoor haunted house and simulated motion ride. Hours: 7 to 10 p.m. Thursdays and Sundays, and 7 p.m. to midnight Fridays and Saturdays. Cost: \$11 for adults, \$6 for children 9 and under, and \$6 for the XD 3D Theater. Information: 419-626-4467 or ghostlymanor.com.

- Haunted Halloween Train at Whitehouse-Waterville Moose Lodge, 11900 Jeffers Rd., Grand Rapids. Train ride, hay ride, corn maze, and haunted tent. Hours: 7 and 8:30 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays, and 1, 2:30, and 4 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays, beginning Oct. 17 through Nov. 2. Cost, which includes all four attractions: \$23 for adults, \$21 for seniors, \$19 for kids 3-12, and free for those under 3. Reservations suggested. With pre-registration, prices are \$21 for adults, \$20 for seniors, and \$17.50 for kids 3-12. Information: 419-878-2177, 866-63-TRAIN, or tlew.org.

- Haunted Hydro Dark Attraction Park, 1333 Tiffin St. in Fremont. Hours: 7:30 p.m. to 11:30 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays through Nov. 1, and 7:30 to 10:30 p.m. Oct. 19, 26, and 30. Cost: \$10 per haunted house, \$15 for combo deal. Recommended for ages 9 and above. Friendly Monster Sundays on Oct. 19 and 26 allow kids up to age 9 to enter for free between 6 and 7 p.m. with an adult admission of \$7; \$5 for an additional kid and children over the age of 9. Information: 419-332-7380 or thehauntedhydro.com.

- The Haunting at the Lenawee County Fairgrounds, 602 North Dean St. in Adrian. Two indoor haunted houses, a maze, illusion show, and ghost tours. Hours: 7 to 10 p.m. Sundays and Oct. 16, 23, 28, 29, 30, and 7 p.m. to midnight Fridays and Saturdays through Nov. 2. Cost: Ranges from \$13 for two haunted houses up to \$20 for all events. Information: 517-264-1941 or myhaunting.com.

- Leaders Family Farms, O-064 Henry County Road 16, Napoleon. ScreamAcres haunted cornfield and a corn maze. Maze hours 6 to 10 p.m. Fridays, 1 to 10 p.m. Saturdays, 1 to 9 p.m. Sundays through Nov. 2. Cost: ScreamAcres, which opens at dark, is \$12 for adults, \$8 for youths ages 5 to 11. Maze is \$8 for adults, \$6 for youths, free for kids 4 and under. Adult combo ticket is \$16 per adult and \$13 per youth. Information: 419-599-1570 or leadersfamilyfarms.com.

- Scarewood Forest Presents Realm of Lost Souls, 3045 Alexis Rd. Hours: 7:30 to 10:30 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays through Nov. 1. Cost: \$4. All proceeds go to the Make-A-Wish Foundation of Northwest Ohio. Information: 419-262-1254.

- TerrorTown at the Lucas County Fairgrounds, 1406 Key St. in Maumee. The House of the Dead and three

other attractions. Hours: 7:30 p.m. to midnight Fridays and Saturdays through Nov. 1, and 7:30 to 10 p.m. Sundays. Cost: \$11 for adults and \$8 for children under 10 to The House of the Dead. Combo tickets for all four attractions are \$20 for adults and \$12 for kids. Information 419-897-7242 or terrortown.net.

- Train of Terror and Haunted Engine House, 11600 County Road 99 in Findlay. Haunted house and haunted train ride. Hours: 8 to 11 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays through Nov. 1. Not for children younger than 12. Cost: \$6 for both attractions. Information: 419-423-7275 or nworrrp.org/haunted.

- Brocks Haunted Greenhouse, 2925 Smith Rd., Lambertville Mich, between Secor and Douglas roads. Hours 8 p.m. to midnights on Friday and Saturdays, and 8 p.m. to 11 p.m. on Sundays and week nights. Open Oct. 3, 4, 10, 11, 17, 18, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, and 31 and Nov. 1. Admission \$8 adults, \$6 for 12 and younger, \$7 with student ID. Information: 734-856-3313

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