

Freaky fun at a creepy Compounce

By **JEN PLOSKI**
The Tattoo

As I walked on the chilly pavement of Lake Compounce recently, passing the games where you squirt things or knock down pins, I saw three people who didn't exactly blend in. They were disguised as monsters, ghouls, devils, and creatures from the dead.

They reminded me of dogs because if you let them know you were scared, they'd follow you in this slow, creepy sort of way.

The Haunted Graveyard adds something extra to the brightly lit rides.

At the Pirate Ship, I climbed into an empty row and raised my arms so the attendant could lower the bars that hold you in. I got excited when the ride started up, but by the end, I felt disappointed because I sat too far from the high-flying ends.

Next came the topsyturvy Top Spin. The

park looks great up high from the Ferris wheel, but it also looks pretty cool upside down.

On the Ghost Hunt ride, you sit in a

little vehicle with another person and use little laser guns to shoot blue glow-in-the-dark dots hanging from ghosts. A tiny screen keeps track of the scores.

At the end of the ride, you go through a room where you get misted and dripped on. It would have been refreshing in the summer, but not in the fall.

Finally, I checked out the Haunted Graveyard. I've been to many

haunted houses in my life — including ones made by friends and the previous best, at Minor's Farm.

The Haunted Graveyard topped them all. What makes a haunted house great is the element of surprise, and it had that down pat. Everywhere you turned there was another creepy creature or dead person popping out.

Another visitor, John Hazelton, a Bristol Central High School junior, agreed with me that it was scary.

Tattoo writer Cassie Nowak contributed to this story.

The Haunted Graveyard is open from 5 to 10 p.m. on Thursdays and Sundays and from 5 p.m. to midnight on Fridays and Saturdays through Halloween night, when it is also open.

Combination tickets for the Graveyard and Lake Compounce are \$22.95 for adults and \$17.95 for children. Tickets for either the rides or Graveyard separately are \$14.95 for adults and \$9.95 for children.

A portion of the proceeds goes to the fight against Juvenile Diabetes.
— Cassie Nowak

Grins in the Graveyard

By **SAM YOSAFI**
The Tattoo

Get ready to be spooked out of your mind and surprised by the undead, as the ridiculously cliched haunted house comes to strike fear in a town near you!

Yawn. Wake me up when this is over. Sure, it's always fun going inside a dark alley of caskets and tombstones, but only when they're real.

The cardboard cutouts at the Haunted Graveyard don't cut it for me.

Knowing that a group of workers intend to bombard my mind with scary thoughts takes away from all of the pleasure of being scared.

I mean, is it really that frightening?

You know that skeleton is about to jump out at you once you walk around that mysteriously dark and eerie corner, so why scream out?

Expecting the expected doesn't suit my taste for entertainment, and walking through 30 minutes of pure predictability isn't so interesting either.

But with my standards of what's scary, just about every horror movie and amusement ride wouldn't exist. I suppose I am just hard to scare when I know what's in store.

Not to say that I never get scared, I'm as paranoid and gutless as the next guy. I have a compulsive fear of heights, and couldn't call myself brave.

While I hate to seem like a stuck-up fear-Nazi telling everyone who doesn't feel the same as I do, I think the only thing haunting at this haunted house was its old and dead tactics of trying to get a high-pitched squeak of a scream out of everyone.

I suppose it could be a little bit better if there weren't as many people inside the Haunted Graveyard while you are journeying through it. But it takes a lot of the surprise out of it when the not-so scary monster jumps out at the guy in front of you, then tries to rattle you, too.

The main reason I felt so bitterly appalled while tripping over loose rocks and trembling feet in front of me is the abundant number of cliches I saw.

The Haunted Graveyard had no originality.

Can you believe that they tried to scare us by yelling, "Boo!" I didn't think that still scared people.

To top off this cliché spree, while spectators were waiting in line to pay a visit to this oh-so-anticipated toddler's nightmare castle, they had a magic show to entertain everyone.

Well, whaddya know, the magician made doves appear from his handkerchief. I've never seen that one before. Oh, and how could I forget the whole make the chick disappear act?

Gag. I saw those tricks from a mile away, and at that moment I had a gut feeling of what was to come.

If you're going to take all the time and money to set something as extensive and detailed as the Haunted Graveyard, at least use some brainpower (don't hurt yourself!) and conjure up some good ideas to make your haunted house different from the rest.

Even a little twist from the norm would have made me crack a smile and look back on my experience in a positive way.

I mean, c'mon, during the 30 minute walk through the Graveyard I saw about 20 skeletons, 40 zombies with knives through a random limb, and about 30 idle gargoyles.

When I go into a haunted house, I want to be really freaked out. I want to see something like bon-

zai kittens planted into the walls, mannequins getting fried in electric chairs, some high voltage walls or floors to rattle your flesh while waiting for the next 'boo,' a demented jack in the box that pops up right from under your feet to really give your heart a jerk — anything!

What I say:
Funny, yeah. Scary? Not a bit.

While some may find some of my ideas a little psychotic and out of the ordinary, need I remind you that Halloween is based around pure evil.

What really gets me into the Halloween spirit is being scared senseless by demented images that will burn in the back of my mind for a lifetime.

I'll never forget the first time I saw *Nightmare on Elm Street*. The scene where Freddy Krueger suddenly turns into the bus driver and steers the students into a hellish lava pit always repeats in my head when I get on my bus and think about my evil drivers.

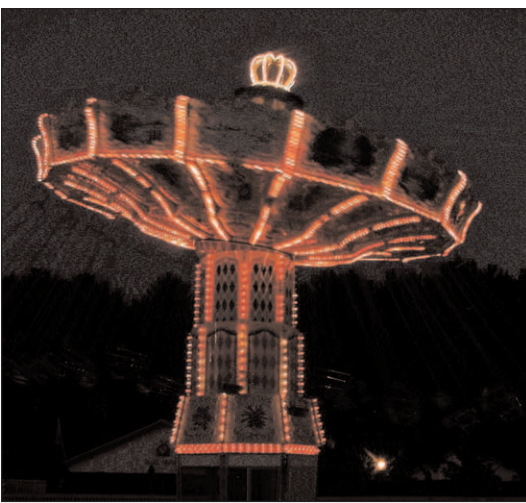
Making a haunted house better would require lots of money, but if you're going to go all the way, might as well go with a bang. Looking at everything that was done, it seemed they spent a lot of time and effort putting this program together. But with all that work, why didn't they bother to do anything special?

Although the attempt to spook the crowd was weak, it was still worth going through, which is all that matters.

I can't say that my face was set in stone the whole time I was there — I was actually dying of laughter from predicting and foreseeing everything that was going to happen.

It gives you a macho feeling knowing that you went through something that is supposed to make you scream mercifully without a flinch.

The Haunted Graveyard is worth going to, for the laughs.



Lake Compounce Wave Swinger
Jen Ploski / The Tattoo

Bristol is scary after all

By **MIKE NGUYEN**
The Tattoo

Did you know you don't have to go out of town to find some scary places in Bristol?

Well, I'm not surprised either. And every October weekend, Lake Compounce rolls out its cobwebs (hey, it is old) and gravestones to become one of the spookiest places in the state.

You wouldn't know it by the annoyingly loud thunder sounds in the entrance tunnel or out-of-place fog machines or the gravestones that look like cardboard cutouts, but there's a small jewel in the Lake that has the ability to scare the wits out of most people.

At the end opposite the actual lake is where the park is hosting The Haunted Graveyard for the second year.

In fact, it has become so big, it now boasts about four haunted houses, a large cemetery, haunted woods trails, a haunted cornfield, and that's just all I could remember when I could open my eyes.

Let's start at the beginning. Throughout Lake Compounce are small rooms that give a preview of the Graveyard. They're only a room or two of chills, but it will get a free screech out of visitors.

The clown Fun House was especially entertaining if anyone has some clown phobias.

Also roaming the park are some monsters and freaks (besides the regular park attendees) to meet and greet with the little ones.

If I didn't know better, it was Disneyland in Transylvania. The monsters were quite creative, to tell you the truth. What other park would think up an ugly pimp monster?

But I digress. After spending our day out at the park, I made my way past the Top Spin ride and started getting in line for The Haunted Graveyard since it was getting eerily dark.

The line, considering it was only 8 o'clock, was quite long, so I wouldn't suggest coming in 15 minutes before the park closes.

The line did move along amazingly well. And although quite cheesy, Lake Compounce even threw in some hourly magic entertainment on a stage built by the Graveyard entrance.

If they could do that while waiting to ride Boulder Dash on peak season, we'd be all set.

In line, boredom consumes you and the hundred or so other people in line.

Sara Hall, far ahead of us in line, said they'd waited "for like 10 minutes."

"I'm cold," complained 11-year-old Britney Fignar. "This better be good."

If you make it through the line without dishing out \$2 on glowsticks, you're doing good.

Before you enter, you're briefed on not touching the actors and props and so forth. The man at the entrance said the tour takes 45-55 minutes.

Personally, I'm not sure if my nerves were ready for more than a half an hour's worth of fright, but I took the dare.

After waiting for the group before of us to get ahead before a creature bursts out the door. A few screams of terror and we're in.

I don't want to give away the entire Graveyard experience, but I must say, it has everything. It seemed like it never ended, but maybe that was because I kept on running into walls and actors.

You go through one haunted chapel and out into an open cemetery.

One piece of advice: never believe that something even remotely human could be a statue, because most likely, it's an actor that's about to jump out at you.

After the cemetery, my heart probably stopped because the rest was a huge dizzying array of monsters, ghosts, and more monsters.

You go through a haunted forest, a maze of maize and very nicely camouflaged monsters, and who knows how many more houses.

Monsters on the bed try to grab you, Draculas try to eat you, and it seemed like every monster had a thing for my group, because they chased us throughout the whole place.

We ran and pushed each other so fast in fear, we finished the whole thing in about 20 minutes.

That's got to say something, right?

After collecting our nerves and scattered and rattled brains, out comes the next group from the experience.

"It was great!" exclaimed Joey, Jason, and Tim from the Zaprzalka family. "Really good."

Joey added, "I'd recommend it to everyone."

There you have it, a second opinion. And for about eight bucks, it's quite a deal for what you're put through.

The Haunted Graveyard is open every weekend this month so get out there and see all the freakily ghoulish decorations they've put up around the park. Spend a few hours at Lake Compounce, too, while you're at it.

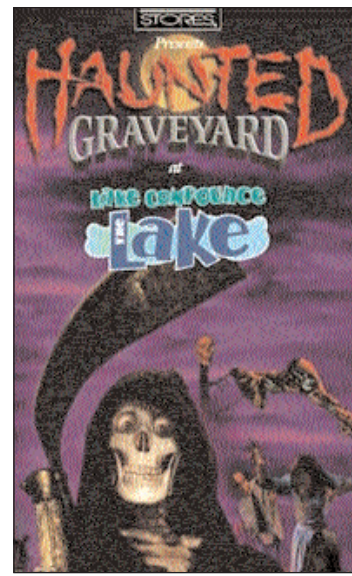


Photo courtesy of Lake Compounce and The Haunted Graveyard.

Inside the Graveyard

By **DANIELLE LETOURNEAU**
The Tattoo

There I was, standing in a corner by the bleeding fountain, wearing my stylin' brown robe and Grim Reaper mask and acting like a statue. I was just doing my job — jumping out at people and scaring them — when around the corner came my next victim.

He was about 18, the last in a group of people. He passed me, thinking I was just a statue. I decided to show him otherwise. I crept up behind him, intending to scare him out of his mind.

I succeeded. He turned back, saw me, gave a frightened scream, tripped over his own feet and fell on his butt.

Then he ran away like a scared puppy. I laughed so hard and I could not stop — not even to scare the next group of people as they came around the corner.

That's what it's like to work inside The Haunted Graveyard.

The real fun of working inside the spookiest spot in town, is, of course, scaring the crap out of people. It's one of the most exciting things I've ever done, and is leaving me with memories I'll never forget.

There are material perks that go along with this volunteer job, too: you can earn prizes for working, like tickets and season passes to Lake Compounce, tee shirts, and gift certificates to Bob's Stores. And you get free food.

But there are disadvantages and hazards, too.

One girl, who was playing a statue like me, suffered a broken nose. Some guy — who supposedly had too much to drink before his trip to the Graveyard — got way out of line. He apparently wanted to play a tough guy, and thinking the girl was really a statue, decided to punch it.

So all she did was stand there doing her job and she gets a broken nose.

There are also the weird people that walk through the haunted house.

You've got the guys who think they're big and tough and swear and call you names, the groups who get so scared — or laugh so hard — that they almost pee their pants, and the assorted oddballs, like the lady who tried to hug me.

But it's all for Halloween — and to raise money for juvenile diabetes, so it doesn't matter, as long as you're having fun.

Movie museum offers artsy horror

By **SAM YOSAFI**
The Tattoo

What may be Bristol's best kept secret will be sure to bring you a treat for the Halloween season.

The Witch's Dungeon Classic Movie Museum, created and founded by Cortlandt Hull, is an interactive art museum for classic horror movies. Hull artistically sculpted monsters from these films into life-like replicas of the real thing.

"I try to be as accurate as possible with all of them," Hull said, when discussing the looks of these hell-bent mannequins.

To make these figures look so real, he uses a live cast for the head, real human hair for the scalp and eyebrows, and glass eyes that make you think that the monster is staring you down.

Hull's Hollywood friends taught him about movie makeup and gave him some of his monstrous wardrobe and props — including the head from The Creature from the Black Lagoon. His

uncle Henry Hull played the original Werewolf of London, which helped spark his interest in horror films and elevates his status as a horror guru.

His collection of dark art at the Witch's Dungeon contains the Frankenstein Monster, The Phantom of the Opera, Zenobia the Witch, Dr. Phibes, The Creature from the Black Lagoon, Count Dracula, one of Mole People, Kharis the Mummy, Professor Henry Jarrod, The Fly, Nosferatu, the Werewolf of London, and many more.

Each of these classic beacons of horror is in costume, posed in a recreated scene from a movie. The Frankenstein Monster is shown with an operating

table; the Mummy is shown with a sarcophagus. This kind of precision will impress die-hard movie fans.



The eyes of Dracula are upon you.
Photo courtesy of The Witch's Dungeon

"Big movie buffs will recognize these little details," Hull said.

Don't let the exterior of the tiny museum fool you. When you look at the building, you think there's not much that can fit in there. But once you step inside, you'll see that looks are deceiving.

You'll get a brief biographical scene of each character that uses lighting, movement and sound to amuse your imagination and get you into the Halloween spirit.

Hull's special guests this season include Sara

Karloff, daughter of Boris Karloff, the classic Frankenstein Monster; Dwight Frye, son of the character actor that was best known as "Renfield" in "Dracula"; Joe Mazza, national radio talk show host; and Disney artist and animator, Mark Mitchell.

Together Hull teams up with these well-known classic horror movie lovers to bring the city of Bristol a treat for the 2001 Halloween season, which is the 35th year of the Witch's Dungeon.

The Witch's Dungeon is open Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays this month, from 7-10 p.m. Get there early to avoid waiting.

Anyone in line before 10 p.m. will get in, but the line closes at 10.

Located on 90 Battle St., which is off of James P. Casey Road in Bristol, CT. Admission is 99 cents and kids get in for 50 cents.

If you want more information about the museum, call 860-583-8306, or check out Witch's Dungeon's website at www.witchsdungeon.org.