

Are you brave enough for The Haunt?

4-H – Howling, hair-raising, horrifying, hysterical

By Kay Dahlke

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CEDARBURG — If you walked past the Ozaukee County Fairgrounds the last couple of days and heard terrifying groans and screams coming from the Cow Barn, fear not. It's not a torture chamber; it's the 12th annual Haunt, presented by the county's 4-H clubs and the Ozaukee County UW-Extension.

This year's event is bigger and better than ever. Run like a well-oiled machine, The Haunt includes mazes, strobe lights and possibly, clowns.

"Don't be afraid to scream," said Sue Dowe, a member of the Haunt committee. "We want to catch guests as off-guard as possible."

The footprint of the haunted experience is bigger this year – multi-level and expanded into the horse barn. A new maze will be totally dark, lit only by blacklights.

"We never announce the theme," said Dowe. "They should prepare to be scared!"

Adult volunteers and leaders, as well as 4-H youth, have been busy setting up scary scenarios, building walls and fine-tuning the sound system. The event is totally handicap-accessible, with work-arounds for those who can't maneuver through the rooms and hallways.

4-H members who participate are eligible for scholarships. Criteria is based on the number of volunteer hours each member contributes to the construction and running of the event. Additionally, volunteer hours are tabulated throughout the run of The Haunt.

Construction specialists, actors, guides and ghouls check in when they arrive each day and monies are distributed to each club, also based on amount of participation. Some clubs raise more than others. The balance of money raised goes to the 4-H program to cover summer camp, trips, other scholarships and operating expenses.

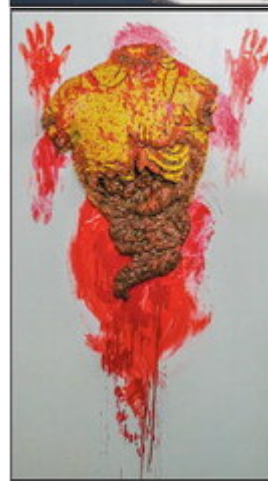
The Haunt was the brainchild of Dave and Nancy Salkowski. In later years Dan and Rachelle Cehanovich and the Omdahl family took it under their wings.

The event couldn't happen without a dedicated group of volunteers. Melissa Korinek is one of the key contacts and communicators; Michelle Kringel and her daughter, Alycia, are the primary coordinators of the volunteer staff. Dan and Clara and the rest of the Paulus family coordinate the build and decorating; the event could not exist without the work of special effects coordinator Mike Krummey and the FX audio team of Matt Petrovic and his sons Nick and Joe; Jan Danner is responsible for painting and decorating, and managing the parking staff; Melinda Caughill has handled marketing duties since the Cehanoviches took over. The Haunt. The list could go on and on, and every one of the volunteers and youth put their whole hearts in the endeavor.

For more information, visit cedarburghaunt.com.



Working hard Tuesday night to get The Haunt put together for this weekend's performances are, from left, Philip Paulus, Dan Paulus, Jan Dommer, Clara Paulus and Mike Krummey.



Left, the food in the cafeteria has been hanging around just a little too long. **Right**, looks like a patient tried to escape from the surgery.

While The Haunt is rated PG-13, it's a safe environment. Closed caption cameras capture the activity in each room, ensuring that guests obey the rules and follow the flow. Should guests find themselves overcome with fear or other discomfort, all they have to do is put their hands on their heads and say "I quit," and someone will be there within seconds to help them escape.

While The Haunt is a terrifyingly fun Halloween tradition, it's actually much more than that. Money raised by the event is funneled into the 4-H budget.

High school-graduating

This year's haunt will take place Fridays and Saturdays through Oct. 27. Tickets are \$15 per person; sales begin at 6 p.m., with the last tickets sold no later than 10 p.m. Tours are made up of groups of six victims (I mean tourgoers). A large ticketing area includes activities for those awaiting their turn and a concessions area.

For those who wish to experience The Haunt in a group, V.I.P. tickets are \$11.50 per person. Reservations must be made 24 hours in advance with an exact headcount.

Photos by Art Dahlke