



TOMB OF DARKNESS EMPLOYEES Shelby Follis (left) and John Miller put on makeup before heading to their spots inside the haunted house. Follis, a senior film and art major at UNL, does makeup for several of the Tomb of Darkness workers.

JONATHAN HOUGHTON/DN

costumes and makeup, although he does have a vast collection of costumes to offer each worker.

"It all depends," Egan said. "I have eight or nine who have their own costumes. Sometimes they like to intermix some of what I have, and then go shop and see what they can find on their own."

Before the hired ghouls ever have the chance to scare one person, Egan said, they are required to go through extensive training classes.

The meetings include lessons on makeup, costuming, safety and "scaring tactics."

After working in many haunted houses, Egan said he has a feel for "what works and doesn't work." During the classes, the employees all have a chance

to try out their scare tactics on the other monsters in a sort of trial run.

"We just don't throw them in there," Egan said. "They go into character. They are a monster."

Keeping things safe while also keeping them scary is instrumental in a haunted house. Besides fire safety, Egan said the most important rule is no touching.

"The visitors are warned four times before they enter the house not to touch the monsters either," he said. "We are one of the safest haunted houses in Nebraska."

Tomb of Darkness is high-tech in more respects than just its special effects. The safety system includes a voice activated fire system, handicapped access,

and a staff of employees who have been thoroughly educated on all safety procedures.

"This is not your average haunted garage," Egan said. "We take the codes strictly. One bad thing could cost a fortune."

Jack Bruns, Lincoln fire investigator, said all haunted houses have to be properly inspected and licensed before they are ever allowed to open to the public.

He said the houses are inspected for adequate emergency exits, emergency lights and sprinkler systems.

"We just make sure everything is up to snuff," Bruns said.

He said problems with haunted houses have been rare in the past few years.

"Once we get them right the first

Where to get scared

Tomb of Darkness
126 N. 16th St., Lincoln
7 p.m. to 11 p.m. Sunday through Thursday
7 p.m. to 12:30 a.m. Friday and Saturday
Admission is \$7 with a \$2 discount on Sundays with a canned food item.

Mystery Manor
716 N. 18th St., Omaha
7 p.m. to midnight Friday and Saturday through Halloween
Admission is \$7 at the door.

The Edge of Darkness
61st Avenue and Grover, Omaha
7 p.m. to 11 p.m. Sunday through Thursday
7 p.m. to 1 a.m. Friday and Saturday
Admission is \$7.

The Fright Zone
1711 California St., Omaha
6:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. Sunday through Thursday, 6:30 p.m. to 12:30 a.m. Friday and Saturday
Admission is \$8, a \$2 discount is available on Sunday with a pan of food or with a Baker's Value Card from Monday through Wednesday.

Academy of Terror Haunted Barracks
11000 N. 72nd St., Omaha
7 p.m. to 10 p.m. Sunday through Thursday
7 p.m. to midnight Friday and Saturday
Admission is \$6.

Chambers of Horror
812 S. Fort Crook Road, one block south of Cornhusker Road in Bellevue.
Through Halloween, 6 p.m. to 1 a.m. Friday and Saturday
Admission is \$7 for adults, \$5 for people 15 and under.

JON FRANK/DN

time, there is rarely a need for going back again."

Egan said it takes about 25 employees to staff the house on a typical night, but he employs about 40 total.

Most work on a rotating basis, but Egan said he lets the monsters make their own schedules.

"Some of them work every night," he said. "They get good incentives, like free passes to other houses or free pizza. Plus they make new friends."

Haunted house monsters aren't necessarily assigned to only one portion of the haunted house, and sometimes have the chance to get a little variety in where they scare.

Harvey's plan of attack consists of blending into the wall at first, then "popping out" under a black light, where his monochrome costume begins to eerily glow.

"People have actually stopped me in the middle of the damn maze and said 'Hey, that's cool! How do you do that?' I tell them to move along," he said, laughing. "But the response is great. I love it."

Afraid that you'll miss the big game?

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Tomb of Darkness Haunted House

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