

Downtown Beloit invaded by ghouls

By Hillary Gavan hgavan@beloitdailynews.com | Posted: Monday, October 29, 2012 4:00 pm

A whoopee cushion, dark shadows on stilts and an aging Miss Beloit were spotted in downtown Beloit on Saturday for the Downtown Beloit Association's (DBA) annual Halloween Costume Parade and Party.

With a trail of families spread across Horace White Park, the pleasant weather had attracted around 500 children to the parade alone, according to DBA Program Coordinator Crystal Buhmeyer.

The parade of costumed children seeking treats from local businesses was held in conjunction with the last Farmers' Market of the season in downtown Beloit. Saturday's events also featured the "Fun Zone," with a super slide, bounce house, and obstacle course along with story telling at Turtle Creek Bookstore, pumpkin decorating at State Street and Grand Avenue and other interactive activities. Scoopie from Culver's, Peppy the pizza slice from Papa Murphy's as well as Cupcake the Clown joined with children to ring in the trick-or-treating spirit.

Dustin Kauffman, 7, led up the parade with Cupcake. Armed with a whoopee cushion at home, Kauffman said his mother looked all over for a whoopee cushion costume. The cushion at home had been used so much, it had broken.

Miss Beloit Melissa Gile was busy pushing her 2-year-old niece, Brooklynn Van Marter, dressed as Little Bo Peep in her makeshift walker. Gile, dressed as an aging Miss Beloit, was donning a housecoat stuffed with a pillow and had sprayed her hair gray and applied wrinkles using eyeliner. Gile, who works at a nursing home, said her platform is keeping seniors minds young. She admitted she enjoyed trying a new look for a day.

"It feels weird wearing comfortable loafer shoes. I didn't have to do my hair, just sprayed it gray," she said.

Gile wasn't the only older attendee. Breanna Redieske, 17, attended the parade for the first time on Saturday with her mom and brothers. Dressed as a jailbird, she brought along her new Labrador and hound puppy to entertain the kids.

Diva devil Halie Calhoun, 9, excitedly demanded candy.

"We are off to see the devil," she joked as she demanded candy with her pitchfork. Accompanied by mom and scarecrow Tammie Farage and sister Emily Calhoun, 15, dressed as "some guy named Edgar," Halie got into her persona with wild abandon.

"I go around stealing candy from little kids," she said. "I keep the candy bag on my pitchfork."

Halie met her match when she ran into the Turtle Creek Bookstore's Missy Schoon, dressed with an array of name tags claiming to have multiple personality disorder.

"I have many names," she said.

Other adult spooks also roamed the streets terrifying attendees. Arnie Newland, dressed as Shadow Walker, towered over the crowd in stilts. He had hand-made his wooden stilts and carved and painted mattress foam for his elaborate costume. His mother, Connie Jakabowski, led him around with a chain. Jakabowski said her son was at the parade with his four children, and has been wearing elaborate costumes since he was a child. Last year he was a ghoul with a stake through his heart.

Participating organizations in the parade included Turtle Creek Bookstore, the Beloit Fire Department, Beloit Family Eyecare, Bagels and More, Blackhawk Bank and others.