

Terrors await in Orland Lions' Haunted Woods

by Kevin Olsen
staff reporter

Ravinia Avenue in Orland Park has been developed over the years with a new Village Hall, public library and police department, but there still remains a stretch of woods — haunted woods.

At least they are haunted through this weekend during the Orland Park Lions Club's 13th annual event. The Lions Club's Haunted Woods Forest of Fears is open to people of all ages this Thursday through Saturday from 7 to 10 p.m. at 14800 S. Ravinia Ave.



People need just to look for a black 1973 Cadillac hearse to know they have entered the haunted woods. This is the first year the Haunted Woods has been held on two weeks; it ran from last Friday to Sunday as well.

A general admission ticket costs \$8 for the 15 minute trip through the Forest of Fears. Children five and under are free when accompanied by a ticketed companion. There is a \$2 discount for anyone who brings a non-perishable food item. The food will be donated to the Orland Township Food Pantry, Lion Phil Bell said.



"We try to do it more or less for the community," Bell said.

Those who dare to enter will first encounter a haunted graveyard where they will come across corpses, swinging creatures, a funeral scene and costumed haunters with strobe lights flashing and scary music playing.

"We try to play off the natural woods feeling," Bell said.

When participants think they have made it through the chain-saws, witching station, and execution sites, they will still have to endure a house of horrors.

Tinley Park Boy Scout Troop 378 constructed a house under tents that has surprises around every corner. The house is equipped with a living room, kitchen and bedrooms with plenty of drop panels and people waiting to jump out from unexpected places to elicit screams from its inhabitants.

The Haunted Woods could never be completed without the help of various volunteer groups. Bell said there are anywhere from 30 to 50 volunteers a night helping to spook the children going through the woods. Many students from Sandburg and St. Michaels volunteer as well as the Boy Scouts and Orland Park Youth Group. The Lions donate some of the proceeds to the groups that help with the event and the rest goes into the general fund for the club's charitable work.

Boy Scout troop leader Bill McAdaragh said the troop spent a couple weekends building the structures for the house, which is the finale scare for the Forest of Fears. The traps, scares and mechanics were all done by hand and put together in a week. The Boy Scout troop has worked with the Lions Club for all 13 years and plans on bringing back the house next year. They just used tents and plastic tarps in the past.



Refreshments are also available outside the Haunted Woods. About five to seven people travel through the woods together as a group, but larger groups can be accommodated by request. Bell said on good nights there are as many as 600 people going through the Haunted Woods.

For more information, email oplchauntedwoods@live.com with "Haunted Woods Info Needed" in the subject line.

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