

Global Halloween Convergence

Losing our Heads in Sleepy Hollow



*Headless Horseman design by Jeff Preston, Excalibur Studios
Art design by Candace Walters*

There are some places that simply shouldn't be real.

Assateague Island is one. There's no way that having a place still in existence where wild ponies run free makes any sort of sense.

Sleepy Hollow, New York, is also like that for me.

But this past June, roughly 100 Halloween aficionados came from all corners of the US to gather for the 4th Annual Global Halloween Convergence in a place that I've passed by three times this year without ever knowing it existed.

Sleepy Hollow. The birthplace of one of American literature's most classic horror stories. What better place to have a Convergence?

Meeting and greeting old friends Thursday night, one couldn't help but notice changes from past Convergences. Three tables held a wealth of items making up this year's "Halloween Expo"—an opportunity for various vendors to display their wares to a hungry, captive audience. Two more tables contained items for this year's Charity Auction, slated to benefit Hauntorama. Instead of traditional event t-shirts, gorgeous patches sporting a truly beautiful headless horseman graphic were being sold by Rochelle [Santopoalo] to commemorate this event. And a huge pile of—stuff., well, ok, trash!—graced the middle of the Halloween Expo room in preparation for the first annual Haunt Olympics! (But more about that later.)

A grab bag gift exchange started the social ball rolling, followed by a bout of live entertainment courtesy of the Ses Carney Sideshow. Glass eating, amazing feats of tongue-tastic strength, and nails driven into one's nose. . . can it get any better than this? Though the weather outside was Noah-worthy, Ses finished up his act with a valiant bit of fire-eating,



Ses Carney (Jesse House, right) and Boo (Kim Levesque, left) demonstrate the lost art of eating glass during the pre-Convergence reception in their Ses Carny Sideshow. Other amazing acts included the Human Blockhead, the bed of nails, fire breathing and fire eating.



Mark Harvey (above) instructs Convergence participants on their assignment during his Halloween Music presentation. They are to write—and perform—an original Halloween song. Fearing not everyone would be eager to participate, Mark called for the doors to be locked prior to giving instructions! The outcome was an amazing array of creative tunes that now live on his website at 13thTrack.com, Halloween Radio.





Right
Corpsifying Your Bucky
Allan & Sarah Erush



Above
Cryptology 101
Professor Brenda Breeding



Above
Basic Use of Electricity in Haunts
Doug Ferguson



Above
Quick & Quick Witted Costumes
Sarah Briggs



Above
Splat! Gory Blood & Guts
Decorating...
You Will Get Wet!
John Burton
Assisted by Glen Blinn &
Chuck Williams



Above
Morbid Party Planning Workshop
Morticia, Baroness Reuwsaat &
Dusti Lewars-Poole



and the pre-Convergence social came to a close.

Friday, the festivities started in earnest. Mark Harvey of 13thtrack.com radio persuaded Convergence attendees to think about Halloween pop music at far too early an hour. . . and then tricked us into writing (and performing) our own unique songs! After the shock wore off, we were faced with a difficult decision: attend a lecture from Professor Brenda Breeding on the reality of working with genuine cadavers, or go sit at the feet of the ever-wise and always-gracious Doug Ferguson as he expounded on the "Basic Use of Electricity." Sarah Briggs, with no competition, then gave an appropriately brief talk on "Quick and Quick-Witted Costume Ideas."

Next, Convergence attendees swarmed aboard two school buses and headed over to the Old Dutch Church and burial grounds. Here a wonderful guide (remarkably reminiscent of Rip Van Winkle) taught us about the history of Sleepy Hollow, the church that still stands (and is still in use!) in the midst of this historic cemetery, and introduced us to the people Washington Irving based his Headless Horseman characters on. (Yes, there really is a horseman buried there. Catarina, too. And Irving's grave sits on a hill, vaguely overlooking all.)

After wandering over the remains of Sleepy Hollow's early inhabitants, we reboarded our buses and headed out to a Burton-hosted barbecue. No silverware, but lots of mess and laughter were to be had, and this perfect day ended with a perfect sunset as we gathered close to hear Gail Burton's perfectly folkified rendition of "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow."

A small group of diehard Halloweenies gathered back at the hotel for a late-night viewing of Tim Burton's *Sleepy Hollow*. And thus did Friday come to an end.

Excitement was high Saturday morning, as the promise of all that garbage. . . er, treasure. . . piled in the Halloween Expo room was about to be put to use by three teams of haunters.

But wait! First, more messy fun as John Burton delivered his paint-heavy talk entitled "Splat! Gory Blood & Guts Decorating." Sure, the paint didn't wash

off as well as he promised, but one thing's certain: when John promises, "You WILL get wet!" you sure better believe it!

And then, at long last, Haunt Olympics was under way! The brain-child of Oliver Holler, Haunt Olympics is a new (and hopefully ongoing) good-natured contest between haunters to see who can take a pile of salvage and create some sort of kinetic prop. The items were amazingly varied: a fan, a cot frame, rubber window sealing strips, the list seemed endless and the creativity even more so!

As creativity was going full blast in an army tent pitched outside for the benefit of the Olympic teams, other Convergence attendees stayed inside to offer their assistance in making edible creations. The varied team of Morticia (Baroness Reuwsaat), Dusti Lewars-Poole, Rochelle Santopoalo, Candace Walters, and Debbie Santopoalo gathered together to co-host two sessions: Morbid Party Planning and the Feast of Halloween [see menu and recipes on page 7]. While the lunch room was decorated in a Gorey-esque theme, various disgusting but tasty treats were assembled and served to Convergence attendees, who nibbled away as a few brave souls performed in the first annual No-Talent Show. The presentation of the Haunt Olympic props and distribution of awards followed this. Taking first place was a haunted bed; second place was claimed by a [i forget!!!]; and third was a Jar Jar (of Star Wars: Episode I fame). Though, all were winners, really – this was an amazing collection of creativity!

The last official talk of the Convergence was "Corpsifying Your Bucky" by Allan and Sarah Erush, and instructed attendees how to take a plain plastic skeleton and make it look like a convincing rotting corpse, a perfect complement to Brenda's lecture the day before.

Next came the long-awaited auction! All of the items on display in the Halloween Expo were made available, as well as an amazing collection of signed horror toys, props, and, of course, Sleepy Hollow-themed items. Indeed, there was



4th GHC

*Right, below
A picture perfect day
for a cemetery tour!*



*Right
Old Dutch Church Burying
Ground host William Lent*



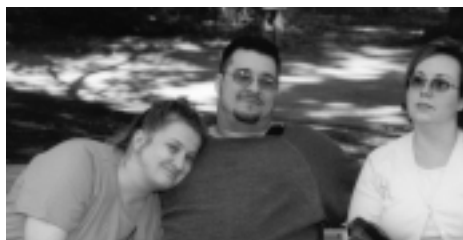
*Masterminds behind the Warlock's Barbecue
(l - r) Gail T. Burton, Joel Burton & John Burton*



*Official Taste Tester at the Warlock's Barbecue
Besides forbidding utensils, temperamental waiters
got VERY testy when asked for seconds!*



*The crowd listened attentively as notorious
cowboy poet Gail T. Burton told his
version of The Legend of Sleepy Hollow.*



*Sleepy Hollow. . . Halloween fans. . . a scenic view
of the Hudson River. . . it doesn't get any better!*



*Barbecue site: Kingsland Point
Park, Sleepy Hollow, NY*

Photograph by Debbie Santopoalo

HAUNT-O-LYMPICS

Oliver Holler,
Haunt-o-lympics Founder



This competitive event was developed for the promotion and celebration of the creative spirit of Halloween by Oliver Holler, who, along with the Haunt-O-Lympic Committee, created a wonderfully exciting spectacle that promises to be an annual event at the GHC

Graciously providing sponsorship for Haunt-O-Lympics is Denny Dahm's *Terror By Design*.



1st Place:
(l-r) Robert Cuniff, Gary Hargrave, Allan Erush, Brenda Cady and Cori Senger



2nd Place: Mother Cluckers
(l-r) Joe DeSantis, Jesse House, Kim Levesque. Not pictured, Jim House



3rd Place: The Lost Senses
(l-r) Andrea Bass, Jeff Weinberg, Dave Rogers, Sandy Kimball and Randy Bates.



Haunt-o-lympic judges present their "criteria."
(l-r) John Pearson, Jeff Preston, Jo Gray and Steve Gray. Not pictured, John Burton.

Olympic Village Tent

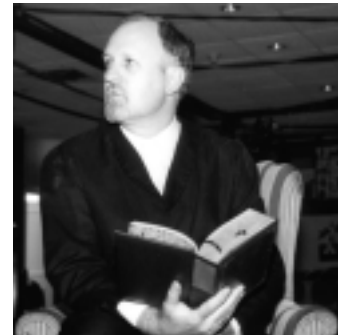


so much available to be auctioned that we ran way over schedule for this event, and were hard-pressed to get back to our rooms, get gussied up, and return for the final Convergence event of the evening: the annual costume ball!

Although 20 to 30 Convergence attendees were able to make visits on Sunday to local-area haunted attractions for behind-the-scenes tours, many sad good-byes had to be made late Saturday night or far-too-early Sunday morning. And once again, I was reminded of what makes this event so unique.

Lectures and locations, tours and costume balls are what get advertised but it's the friendships—those wonderful, scattered connections that bring us back year after year. The Halloween Convergence is, for me, like the most perfect family reunion. It takes place in wonderful places most of us would never get to see otherwise, and it involves people most of us just can't find in our everyday lives.

*Contributed by Dusti Lewars-Poole
Photos by Pam Liebson*



The (No) Talent Show title proved to be incorrect. Performers included (clockwise, upper right) Leonard Pickel ("The Raven"); Jesse House as Ses Carney, assisted by Tim Reuwsaat; Rochelle Santopalo ("The Grinch Who Stole Halloween"); John Pearson as Tom Jones; and Peter Melilio, assistant to the Great Towelzini.

4th GHC

➔ 8



Thanks to the participating companies at the

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- Gore Galore
- Halloween Productions
- Haunted Attraction magazine
- Hedstorm Productions
- Horror Hotel/David Lady
- International Association of Haunted Attractions
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- Sculpture on Ice
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- Westchester County (NY) Office of Tourism
- World of Magic

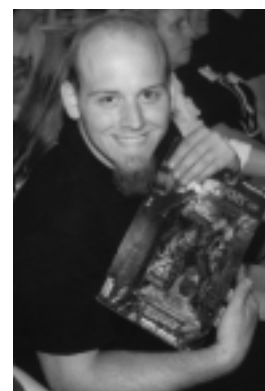
Presented exclusively at the Annual Global Halloween Convergence by Global Halloween Alliance



(Left) Besides serving as the official "Ambassador of Fun" at the Convergence, Chuck Williams did a stellar job as auctioneer.

(Upper right) Thanks to the helpful antics of Sarah Briggs and Oliver Holler (not pictured), the Scary Charity Auction raised over \$1,000 for Hauntorama.

(Right) Jim House goes home with a new found treasure from the auction.



4th GHC Gala Costume Party

