

REPORTER

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Editorial

Top Ten Terrifying Things I Saw Last Weekend

- 10) There was a man on the street singing "Happy Halloween" to the tune of an upbeat version of "Happy Birthday" that he played on an old accordion. I had seen him there before, but I couldn't tell if he was homeless, or just so excited about the season that he had to pump out a few tunes on the old squeezebox. I avoided him because I was scared he would ask for money.
- 9) The website design for Fear at Frontier. It's like being lost before you even get there. It's as disorienting as the cacophony of mirrors and smoke and chain link fences and strobe lights. If you can find the times its open, the prices, or anything besides the answer to the FAQ "Is it scary?" you spent too much time looking and not enough time going there and getting scared.
- 8) The virulent orange that my signature is printed in below. Special thanks goes out to Jon Aber from DayGlo Color Corporation, who was kind enough to donate 30 pounds of "blaze orange" for us to print as a fifth color. To get the full effect and see the ghouls in this week's issue like they're meant to be seen, check them out under a blacklight.
- 7) I saw that *The Nightmare Before Christmas*, has been regurgitated in 3-D so that Disney could make a pretty penny off what has become a cult classic after its mere \$50 million gross when it first hit theatres thirteen years ago. As much as I don't like the idea of repackaging things and selling them again, I'm wildly curious to see how far 3-D technology has come.
- 6) I saw an emergency medical team rushing anxiously through a crowd in an attempt to get to a person who needed assistance in a haunted house attraction. One of the men, in an attempt to clear a path, shouted, "I need everyone to move off to the right *expeditiously!*" The scary thing was that the crowd just got really confused about the word and didn't do much of anything besides curl their noses.
- 5) I saw an injured raccoon on the south loop of RIT get run over by a truck; but, rest assured, Student Government is currently in talks with Facilities Management Services to assess the possibility of installing a speed bump along the loop, mostly as a means to increase jogger safety.
- 4) I saw a goat hotel where cloven-hoofed beasts with ovular pupils violently shove their large heads, complete with testicular-looking glands dangling from their necks, through a mesh wire fence to gobble bits of feed from the hands of small children. The stench was unbearable.
- 3) The Bills game.
- 2) I saw a pre-teen boy in a haunted house taunting monster mannequins because, "Monsters aren't supposed to be chubby!" What the little boy didn't seem to know was that 30% of Americans are overweight. Maybe the haunted house was trying to isolate the obese as being monsters in a controversial effort to create a sense of in-group and out-group that will make Americans more conscientious about their health. Or maybe children aren't as good at suspending disbelief as they used to be.
- 1) Christmas trees at Wegmans, being sold alongside gourds and pumpkins.

But, if it weren't for all this terror, it wouldn't be my favorite time of year. Happy Halloween.

Casey Dehlinger
Editor in Chief

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Cover photo by Ralph Smith. ◀TOC illustration by Greg Caggiano.

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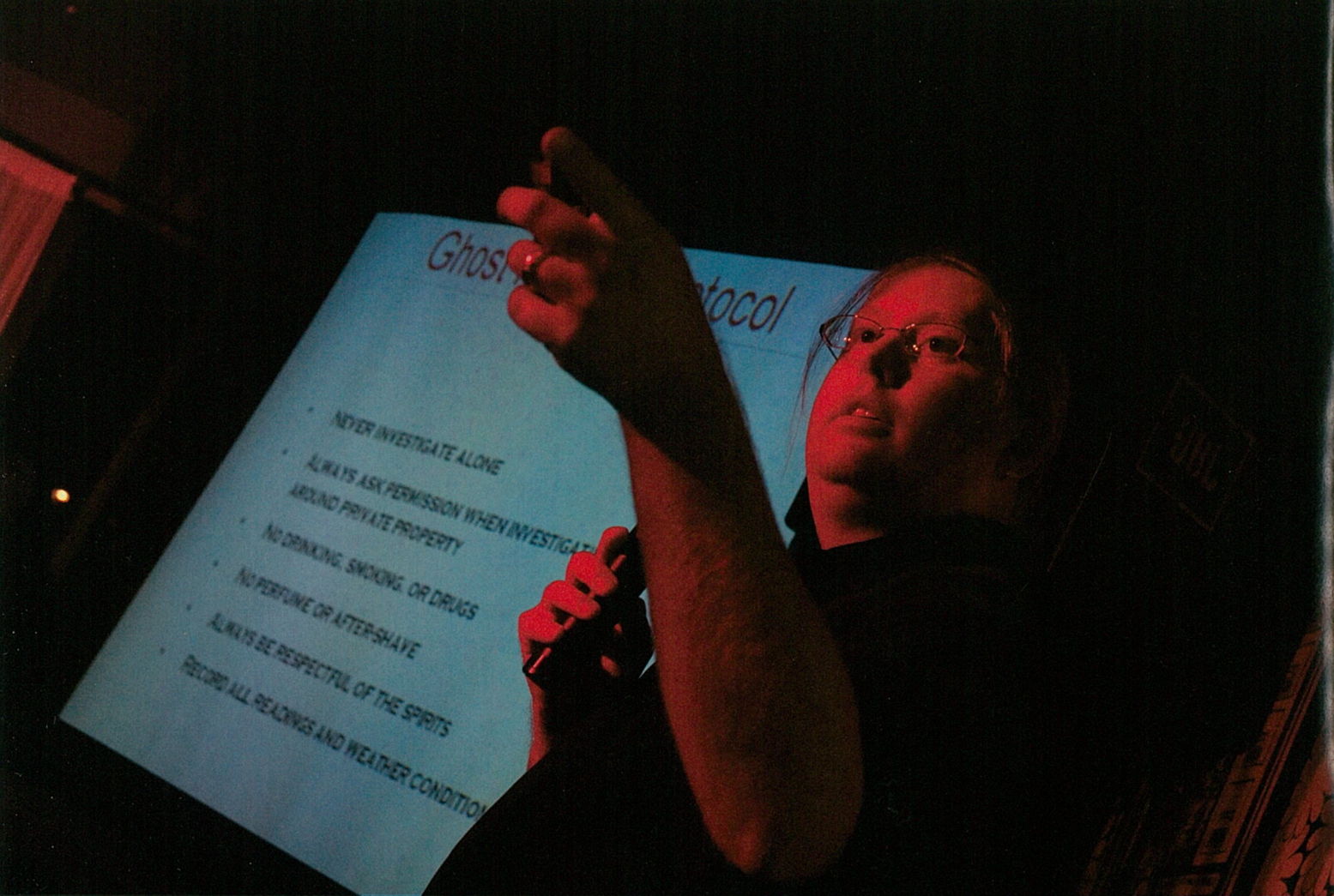
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GHOST HUNTING 101

BY CAROLINE MARTIN | PHOTOGRAPHY BY KATHARINE SIDELNIK

Hey, do you smell that? No, not your roommate's socks—it smells just like grandma's old sweaters with the slightest hint of her chocolate chip cookies. It's such a distinct scent; you could swear she's right around the corner baking again. But she's been dead for years now, so of course it's not her. **But what if it was?**

Scientists would probably say this smell phenomenon occurs due to some neuron-firing glitch dealing with your olfactory receptors. Chris Moon says this smell is the first way spirits try to get in touch with the living. Chris Moon would know; he's a professional ghost hunter. On Friday October 13, he held the attention of believers and skeptics alike during a discussion of his past experience with spirits, demons, and haunting investigations. Java Wally's was overflowing with students attending this CAB event.

In the far corner of the dimly lit study cafe, a projector displayed the title screen to what would be a mini movie about spirits and the supernatural. Just after 10:00 p.m. the movie started, filled with bad special effects and shaky camera angles. The movie ended, and a guy who looked a little too much like the comic book guy from *The Simpsons* started talking. This was Chris Moon, telling stories of his first paranormal experiences.

They started when he was seven years old. "I would wake up with a little boy next to me," he said, eliciting giggles from the skeptics at the back of the room. Throughout the presentation, they shot each other oh-you've-got-to-be-kidding-me looks. Still, after the snickers subsided, the skeptics were just as fascinated by Moon's stories as the true believers up in front. Even if the entire show was a hoax, it was hard to pull your eyes away from the pictures of orbs and shadows and mists.

"So what is ghost hunting?" Moon asked the crowd, as if it were a mass lecture. His PowerPoint presentation switched slides to a definition page. It read: "Ghost Hunting—the pursuit of evidence of the paranormal." Spooky pictures were paired with definitions and bits of information on each slide. Another slide gave a list of the dos and don'ts of ghost hunting:

- 1) Never investigate alone. Not only are you going into creepy abandoned houses that could be home to inmates on the run, but you should always have verification of your sightings.
- 2) Always ask permission on private property. People own guns and will shoot you.
- 3) No drinking, smoking, or drugs. If you tell someone you saw a ghost, that's one of the first things they're going to ask you.
- 4) No perfume or aftershave. Spirits try to catch your attention with smell first; your own smell could block it out.
- 5) Always be respectful of the spirits. "Do unto spirits as you would have them do unto you."
- 6) Record readings and weather conditions. Don't mistake fog for a ghost.

One of the main focuses of the lecture was on Orbs, the small anomalies that sometimes show up in photos. These orbs, Moon said, are spirits; the leftover energy from life. "Once energy is created, it cannot be destroyed," one student in the front supplied. Orbs are earth-bound spirits who haven't moved on for one reason or another, the most

common reason being the fear of punishment on the other side after crossing over. Occasionally, full-bodied apparitions can form from orbs if they can generate enough energy, either through "taking some energy" from the living, or even using batteries.

Ironically after this, the lights in Java Wally's went out. "Ghosts!" a few shouted, along with, "Put the batteries back in!"

Just before midnight, the crowd bundled up in coats and scarves and followed the Ghost Hunter outside to try to capture some orbs. A white noise machine was used to attract the spirits; Moon described it as their "dinner bell." Camera flashes filled the walkway between Wallace Library and Infinity Quad. The group moved down the Quarter Mile towards the dorms, stopping at various points along the way to listen to Moon discuss energy, spirits, or demons (which are really "more of inter-dimensional beings than spirits").

The group ended up in the woods, huddled around a picnic bench where Moon set up an electronic voice phenomena (EVP) recorder and microphone. EVP uses electronic devices to pick up spirit voices that would normally go undetected by human ears. The group, now down to about 30 people, hushed to listen to the static and white noise emitting from the device. Moon spoke softly but firmly, asking if there were spirits in the area and to please make contact and state their name. After a few seconds, the static changed briefly. The spirit had made a connection. The static was difficult to decipher most of the time, and so Moon translated the crackles and noise into the responses that this spirit was giving to the questions the group was asking. "How are you?" one person asked kindly. The spirit responded, "I'm dead," and laughed. Good to know he had a sense of humor.

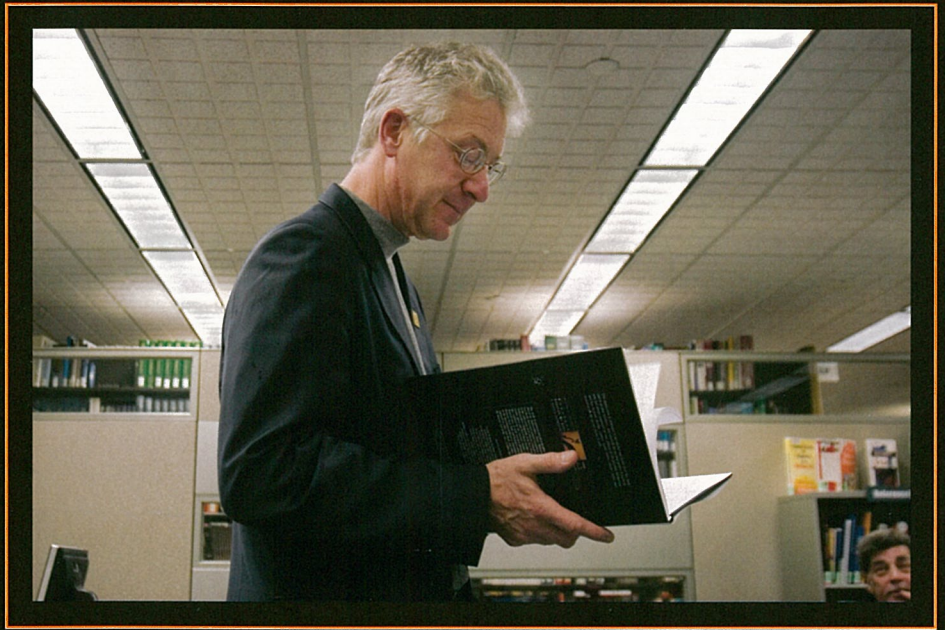
The spirit's name was Jim and he had not crossed over at his time of death. After questioning him for some time, the story came together. He committed suicide at the old RIT campus in '46 or '50 (it was hard to tell) by jumping from the seventh floor of building three. An intelligent spirit (one that has crossed over) was trying to help Jim over. The conversation between the living and the spiritual became a quest to help Jim "go to the light." At times, a demon tried to interrupt the process, saying, "Kill Chris," but Moon simply told the demon that no one was getting harmed and pressed on. He guided Jim to the intelligent spirit to cross over. In the end, the group heard Jim say, "Thank you, thank you."

Photos and audio files of the conversation will be posted on Moon's online magazine, "Haunted Times Magazine" (www.hauntedtimes.com/). Whether you're a believer or not, it's fun to see other people freaking out at orbs and voices from beyond. Orb photos and other questions are welcome at Moon's Myspace page (www.myspace.com/c_moon).

► Chris Moon tells ghost stories and discusses the paranormal with RIT students at Java Wally's before leading a Friday the 13th ghost hunt.

MEET THE AUTHOR SERIES

THE TRANSYLVANIAN TRAVELER COMES TO RIT



by Veena Chatti | photography by CoCo Walters

Click. The photographer is photographed.

Click, click, click, click. Stephen Spinder knows what it's like to be behind the lens. As a professional fine arts photographer, he's been there.

Interestingly enough, his photographs aren't what he chooses to begin the informal chat with. Instead, he asks the small group of people if they've ever lived outside of the US for more than six months. Having lived in Budapest since 1991, Spinder says, "It's a strikingly different experience. Moving to Budapest was a big step because of the language. Hungarian is the third most difficult language in the world. It's so difficult that they say even God doesn't speak Hungarian."

An RIT alumnus, Spinder has been taking photographs that document the changes in the capital city of Hungary since the fall of communism, looking at life in former Hungary and Romania (now Transylvania). In addition to his internationally acclaimed photography work, he's the author of two books, *Budapest Through My Lens* and *Ten Years in Transylvania*.

The audience is a small group, mostly professors, a few older students and fans of Spinder's work. Their enthusiasm is obvious as they happily buy autographed copies of his book at the end of his talk. They ask questions of life in Transylvania.

"What is strikingly different about life in Budapest? What do you like about it?"

Spinder responds, "It was 1991, in the winter—biting cold. It was raining a lot. Budapest was a landing point; I was actually going to Transylvania. Hungary used to be much larger before World War I; it lost two-thirds of its land after the war, including Poland, Romania, and Czechoslovakia in the

north. Romania got the part of Hungary that was Transylvania. That is where Hungarian folk dance, culture, and music have been preserved."

He quickly gets up and does a boot-slapping Hungarian folk dance. *Click, click, click.*

Spinder speaks of his travels, about the Romanian shepherd he photographed at 3 a.m. with a heavy, smelly sheepskin coat; of the time he ran a kilometer across the castle district in Budapest to capture the full moon as it appeared over the beautiful building; how his photographs document the change in Budapest after the fall of communism; of when he starred in the musical, *Evita*.

"That's me in that picture there," he says to a woman flipping through his book, "No! Not the *old* guy!"

And then he talks of the city. "It's a fascinating city to see, architecturally. You have to look up. That's where I get all this."

Someone asks, "How did you manage that shot without scaffolding?"

"That's a good question," Spinder answers immediately, "you've obviously been there. There's no scaffolding because I cropped it out." There is another question about how he would walk into people's apartments to get vantage points for his shots. "Back then, I was bold. I'd think, 'That window right there would be the best above the street lines.' So I just started going up into buildings and knocking on doors."

As he walks around, talking about the photographs, urging us to stand up and look at them, the lens clicks away, capturing the photographer as he talks happily of a Transylvanian traveler's life as a professional fine arts photographer. •

▲ On Tuesday October 17, 2006 photographer Stephen Spinder speaks in the library on his life and travels in Budapest and Transylvania.

OFFBEATQUIZ

by Laura Mandanas

- In September 1992, British newspaper *The Sun* quoted a spokesperson of toilet suppliers as saying, "Never before has this happened in the history of portable toilets." What happened?**
 - every Blue Bowl toilet in London was painted red
 - a black widow spider sunk its fangs into a carpenter's manhood as he sat on a portable toilet
 - as a part of an elaborate practical joke, a dozen toilets appeared to stand up and walk away...with surprised users still inside
 - the stench of the portable toilets at a Renaissance festival was so bad that three people were knocked into comas
- Last year, Isaac Espinoza spent close to \$6 million of his own money and lived in the jungles of South America for eight months trying to track down what?**
 - his shadow
 - Bigfoot
 - the corpse of his ex-wife
 - la chupacabra
- What is 'memento mori'?**
 - an essay by David Sedaris about gifts that come back to haunt you
 - a Latin phrase meaning 'remember that you must die'
 - an awful song by The Streets about a love of shopping
 - all of the above
- In Spain, they are called 'Pesadillas.' In Norway, 'Grøsserne.' In Sweden, 'Kalla Kárar.' What is this in the United States?**
 - 'Nightmares'
 - 'Creepy Crawlers,' a popular children's toy put out by Mattel
 - 'Pokemon'
 - 'Goosebumps,' a series of books by R. L. Stine
- Computer engineer Gordon Bell, a researcher for Microsoft Corporation, recently announced that he is developing what?**
 - a backup brain to act as a surrogate memory for human beings
 - an official 'leet speak' dictionary
 - a line of teledildonic devices with in vitro fertilization capabilities, for long-distance relationships
 - something really, really delicious
- The Joint Economic Committee of the U.S. Congress is currently in the preliminary stages of looking into what?**
 - starting an animated television show to teach toddlers lessons in basic economics
 - taking up babysitting to earn some extra spending cash
 - charging real-world taxes on virtual economies, such as those in World of Warcraft and Second Life
 - taking saxophone lessons together as a cross party team-building activity
- Sometime next year, Brett Holm of Chaska, Minnesota, will be selling an improvement over shotgun shells. In what way are they considered an improvement?**
 - bullets dissolve in fluid
 - bullets automatically flavor meat
 - it doesn't really matter, because he plans to make a special Dick Cheney-brand shot...which is awesome
 - all of the above

RITFORECAST

compiled by Jen Loomis

Friday 27 OCT	<p>Frite Nite Clark Gym. 10:30 a.m. – 2 a.m. Carnival games, dance party, and prizes! (Oh my!) Sponsored by the wily folks at Special Interest Housing. Free.</p> <p>Road Into Terror Student Development Center. 8 p.m. – 2 a.m. NSC's haunted house and Halloween party. Oh so free.</p> <p>Friday Night in the Ritz presents...Piamater Ritz Sports Zone. 10 p.m. – 1 a.m. Self-described as "Brain Food." Which is pretty clever, considering that the pia mater (in anatomy) <i>actually</i> nourishes your brain. \$1.</p> <p>Sigma Lambda Upsilon: Code Red Dance Party SAU Café. 10 p.m. – 2 a.m. Dress as a bottle of Mountain Dew. See if they find it amusing. \$5.</p>
Saturday 28 OCT	<p>Electronic Gaming Society Fall LAN Party 1250 NRH. 4 p.m. – 10 a.m. All night gaming party! Snack food is so included. \$5 for non-members.</p> <p>Anime Club Dance Party SAU Clark Rooms. 8 p.m. – midnight. The tagline for this event reads: "Try some Japanese Candy!" I couldn't have said it better myself. Free.</p> <p>Rocky Horror Picture Show COS 1250. 9 p.m. – 12 a.m. Come do the time warp again. And again. And again. Preferably while wearing some form of fishnet. \$4 gets you a ticket to this cult classic.</p> <p>CAB Saturday Stand-Up Presents Tiny Glover & Jamie Lissow Ingle Auditorium. 11 p.m. – 1 a.m. Two comics. One stage. Battle to the death? Probably not. But a girl can dream, right? \$1.</p>
Sunday 29 OCT	<p>Give Wildlife a Break week starts today. So, give them crazy critters a break. Perhaps by breaking off a piece of that Kit-Kat bar.</p>
Monday 30 OCT	<p>What Does the Law Say About That? Finding a Law, Regulation or Case RIT Library, second floor. 12 p.m. – 1 p.m. 'Cause it's time you learned something about the law that you didn't hear on <i>Law and Order</i>. Free.</p>
Tuesday 31 OCT	<p>American Society of Mechanical Engineers Trick-or-Treating KGCOE Atrium. 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. Trick-or-treat to get candy from your professors! \$1 gets you all the candy you can talk outta your Materials professor.</p> <p>Today is Halloween. We all know that. But, did you know that today is <i>also</i> National Knock-Knock jokes day? Just so we're clear: "<i>Knock-knock. Who's there? Boo. Boo who? Boo-hoo, gimme some candy!</i>" is still not funny.</p>
Wednesday 1 NOV	<p>Rock the Vote: Voter Awareness SAU Lobby. 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. Encourage yourself to vote by visiting this rockin' table! Note that rocking the table itself is probably less encouraged. Free.</p>
Thursday 2 NOV	<p>Performance: "Tales From a Clubroom" Panara Theatre. A play about deaf kids interacting in a club. I'm not doing it justice; it actually sounds pretty cool. Dual-performed in ASL and English. Students/Faculty: \$5. Other: \$7.</p> <p>CAB Thursday Night Cinema Series presents Caddyshack. Ingle Auditorium. 10 p.m. – 1 a.m. Ever notice that some of Bill Murray's best work is done side by side with fake rodents? Weird. Free.</p>



SURVIVING THE BRAIN DEAD MASSES

by Laura Mandanas | illustration by Mike Norton

You smell him before you see him. The air burns your nostrils as you inhale; like rancid, feculent vomit, it's pungent, potent, putrid. You knew this was coming, but you're unprepared. You're trapped in a room with only one door, no windows. All you can do as the limping shuffle-stepper draws nearer and nearer is fight your gag reflex, and pray that he passes you by. But no such luck. He appears in the doorway, the rotting flesh hanging off his gaunt frame. Despite the vacant deadness in his eyes, you can tell that he's ravenous for living human prey—and so are all fifty of his companions. *Oh shit*, you mutter. What do you do now?

If you had been smart, you wouldn't have gotten yourself into this situation in the first place. Zombie preparedness is an important life skill—didn't your mother ever tell you that? Fortunately for you, the zombie apocalypse is not yet upon us. This scene doesn't have to become reality; there's still time to educate yourself. And here at *Reporter*, we've got your back.

Though there has been little hostile zombie activity in recent years, the zombie sector is ever-expanding. And as we all know, bringing alumni back from the after-college-life to talk to current students is one of the best ways to inspire students and to help them succeed in the real world. Who better, then, to educate you about zombies than an information technology and a computer science graduate of the class of 2005?

Rym DeCoster and Scott Rubin are two really, really geeky guys. By day, they battle the living dead as they toil at their technically oriented jobs. But by night, they run *GeekNights*, a late night talk show which airs every Monday through Thursday. On Thursday, September 28, the geekery of choice was zombie survival skills. In order to get the lowdown on zombie safety specifically at RIT, Reporter e-mailed Rym and Scott. They responded promptly, with the characteristic wit and offbeat humor their fans have come to expect.

What do you mean, zombies?

There are a wide range of zombie types, ranging from "shambling undead to sprinting monsters, rotting masses to WoW players." For our purposes, zombies are "a dangerous, humanoid being lacking any significant intelligence or conscious motivation."

How can I prevent a zombie attack from happening?

You can't, really. As Rym and Scott noted, there is the fairly impractical option of instituting mass efforts to uncover and subsequently burn all known buried humans, but in general, "One should simply avoid creating super-rabies and the like...Do not anger dark gods or necromancers. Avoid creating super-pathogens and infecting monkeys with them. Shoot eco-terrorists on sight if attempting to 'rescue' said monkeys. Avoid wishing for dead relatives to come back to life."

What do I do when it happens?

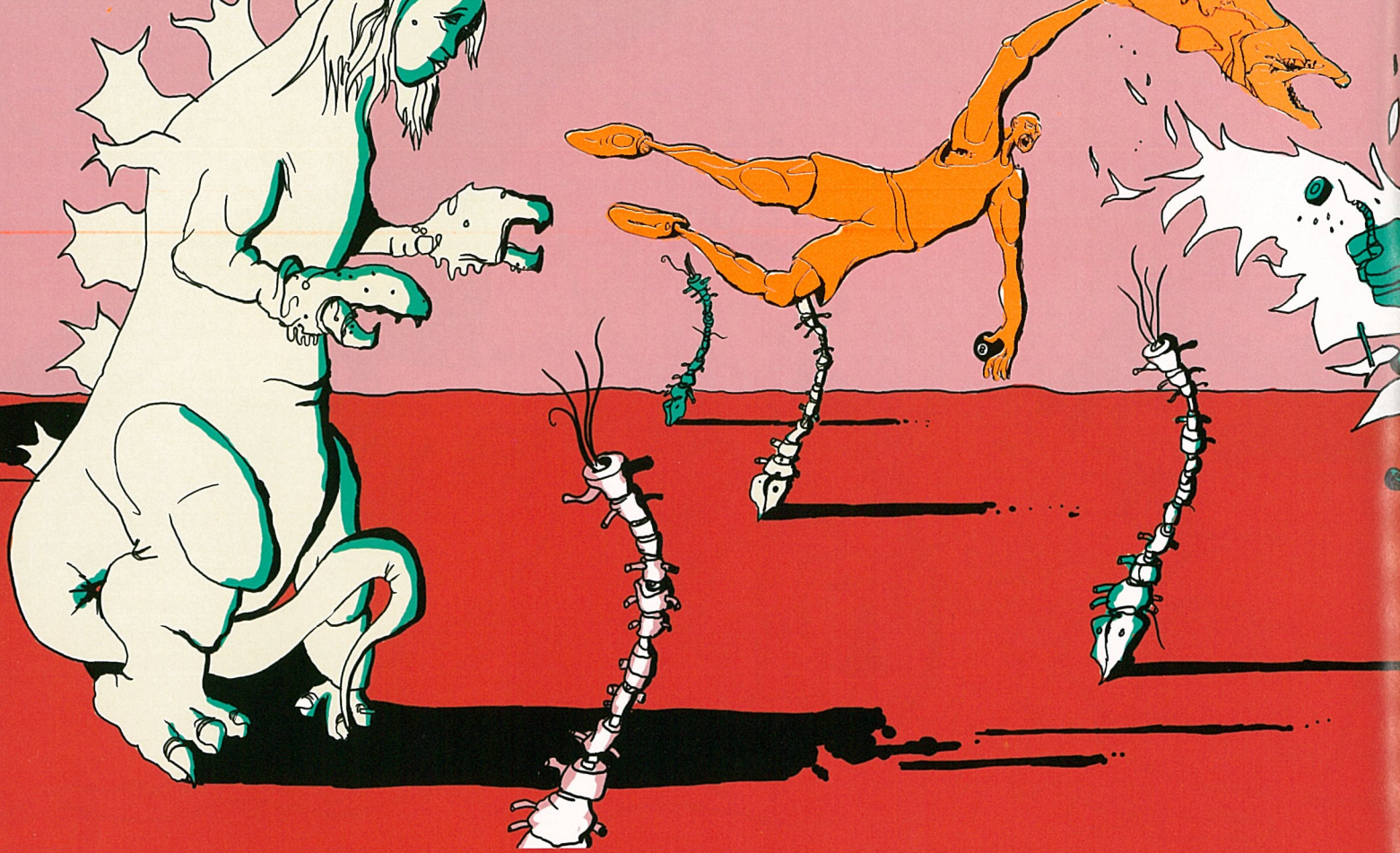
According to Rym and Scott, "You want to gather on the academic side of campus with as many emotionally stable people as you can...Building Seven, while wonderfully bunker-like, is a zombie death trap. It has no real tunnel access to the rest of campus, and will likely leave you trapped and surrounded. The interior layout could easily leave you cornered in the event of a compromised perimeter.

"In general, hold onto open spaces, where you will have much more maneuverability. Use narrow halls and doorways as choke points and fallback positions. If retreat is necessary, assess the outside situation. This is very important."

Final Words from Rym and Scott

"RIT is one of the single most concentrated dens of geekery in the Western Hemisphere. Revel in it while you can, and always be vigilant for the coming zombie apocalypse."

For more information on how to survive a zombie attack, The GeekNights website is at www.frontrawcrew.com; you can download the show from there, or easily find them in iTunes under podcasts. •



PRACTICAL SUMMONING: A QUICK GUIDE TO THE DEMONIC*

by Elliot Jenner

All Hallows Eve (a.k.a. Hæl ə'win) is the ideal time for summoning an extra-planar entity. Summoned entities can grant many requests, depending on their individual abilities; however, please remember that the *literal* phrasing of a request will be honored. For example, a request to ensure that no *man* can harm you does not protect against attacks by people below the age of consent, women, government hit squads, or the IRS.

The four essential ingredients for a summoning ritual are:

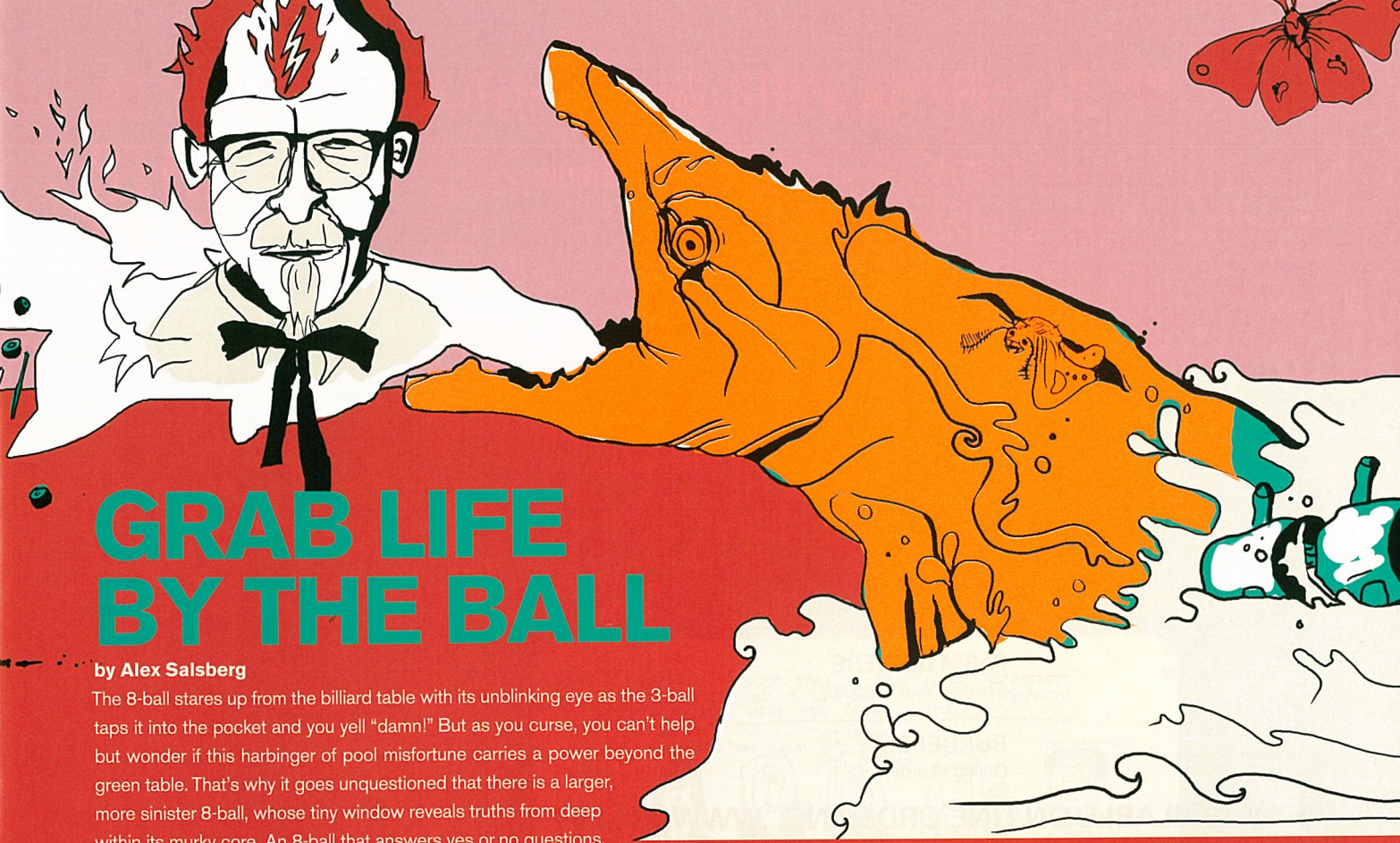
1) **A properly inscribed summoning circle.** Circle design depends on what you wish to summon. Absolute perfection is required in drawing a circle.

2) **A summoning incantation.** Incantations are often written in Latin, Greek, Lemurian, Atlantian, Ancient Babylonian, Hebrew, or several languages specific to magic. A knowledgeable individual should carefully review the spell with you to ensure proper incantation. Mispronunciation will result in spell failure and possible death/banishment to hell/eternal damnation/extremely large explosions and/or sex change.

3) **The name of the one you wish to summon.** Again, pronunciation must be precise. For example, Dagon is a water monster who can be used to kill your enemies (so long as they come near water), while *Dagon* is a fertility god whose presence will result in those in the immediate vicinity performing fornicatory acts with the nearest person (regardless of gender or preference). It all depends on how you say the word.

4) **Payment.** An item or willingness to perform an act of equal value to the desired boon is required. Failure to present this will result in forfeiture of life or selection of a price by the summoned. Requests tend to involve highly illegal and immoral acts as payment, such as human sacrifice, ritual bloodletting, shoplifting, and mass murder. Due to the truce between heaven and hell, most demons are not currently accepting souls. Summonings usually last until the opposite hour; however, they can be dispelled once business has been concluded. Exiting the summoning area while an entity is present is not a good idea; circles are reinforced by application of the summoner's will. Additionally, a person may wish to ward the room with items for containment or control of the summoned in case they escape. •

*Women who are nursing, pregnant, or may become pregnant should not practice summoning as their child may be eaten or possessed. People with heart conditions or a history of mental illness should not summon, as this may cause an unsafe rise in blood pressure, adrenaline, and/or dementia. *Reporter* magazine does not endorse the practice of summoning, and is not responsible for any injuries, disabilities, deaths, eternal damnations, Armageddons, or sex changes resulting from following the advice given in this article.



GRAB LIFE BY THE BALL

by Alex Salsberg

The 8-ball stares up from the billiard table with its unblinking eye as the 3-ball taps it into the pocket and you yell "damn!" But as you curse, you can't help but wonder if this harbinger of pool misfortune carries a power beyond the green table. That's why it goes unquestioned that there is a larger, more sinister 8-ball, whose tiny window reveals truths from deep within its murky core. An 8-ball that answers yes or no questions.

I wanted to see how the plastic prophet could be more than a toy, if the 8-ball could be a small black guide to life (like Will Smith in *Hitch*). My life isn't very exciting, so I feared the 8-ball would only limit fun. "Should I go skinny dipping with the Russian women's tennis team tonight?" *My Sources Say No*. "Okay, I'll cancel." But it was worth a shot. I would just have to set some ground rules:

- 1) No questions that determine basic daily needs, e.g. "Should I pee?"
- 2) No questions that could negate an already planned activity, e.g. "Should I go sunbathing with the Swedish women's volleyball team?"
- 3) No using the 8-ball in life or death situations. That's what coins are for.

With these provisos, I set off on my mystical journey. Several days and a lot of shaking, flipping, and squinting later, I could step back from my experiences, and compile them into a handy guide. Get ready to shake what your momma gave you (for your tenth birthday).

The 8-ball on Activities

Many people complain there's not enough fun activities to do here (Reslife tries so hard; it's adorable). I've often found myself alone on Friday night, sulking and typing articles with shaky premises for *Reporter*. Luckily, the 8-ball could help.

DO think of two activities that you wouldn't normally do, and let the 8-ball choose between them. You might end up at the zoo, or the strip club, or the strip zoo (very exotic dancers).

DO NOT drive around aimlessly, letting the 8-ball determine which way to turn. I found this to be extremely dangerous.

The 8-ball on Romance

It's no secret that I'm popular with the ladies. They're always saying they "wanna be friends" with me. But if your love life is lacking, ol' eighty can help.

DO ask the 8-ball if you should talk to that girl. If it says yes, you could meet your future wife! Or meet awkwardness, like when I asked her how much a polar bear weighs, then said "enough to break the ice! Hi, I'm Alex..." Don't steal that one.

DO NOT sit around asking the 8-ball if each girl in the room likes you. The 8-ball might go on a no streak and make you sad, or a yes streak and give you false hope, making you use bad polar bear lines.

The 8-ball on Academics

School is hard, but like the predictions that float to the top of our miniature mystic, it's also arbitrary. So don't be afraid to let your ball do some of the work.

DO ask the 8-ball the answer to questions on quizzes. "What year was Bolivia founded?" *Without a Doubt*. Okay, so I just did yes or no questions I was unsure of.

DO NOT ask the 8-ball if you should skip class more than twice during the quarter because each subsequent absence will result in a letter grade reduction.

DO NOT ask your professors if they use an 8-ball to grade your assignments. They will become defensive.

These are a few ideas that may or may not have ruined my life. I can't say I still believe the dark orb holds any powers that a game of rock/paper/scissor can't summon, but life is more than making decisions. Shake things up, turn things around, look them square in the eye! Is this true? All signs point to yes. •



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WRAPS

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CALZONES

JUMBO WINGS

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PARM DINNERS

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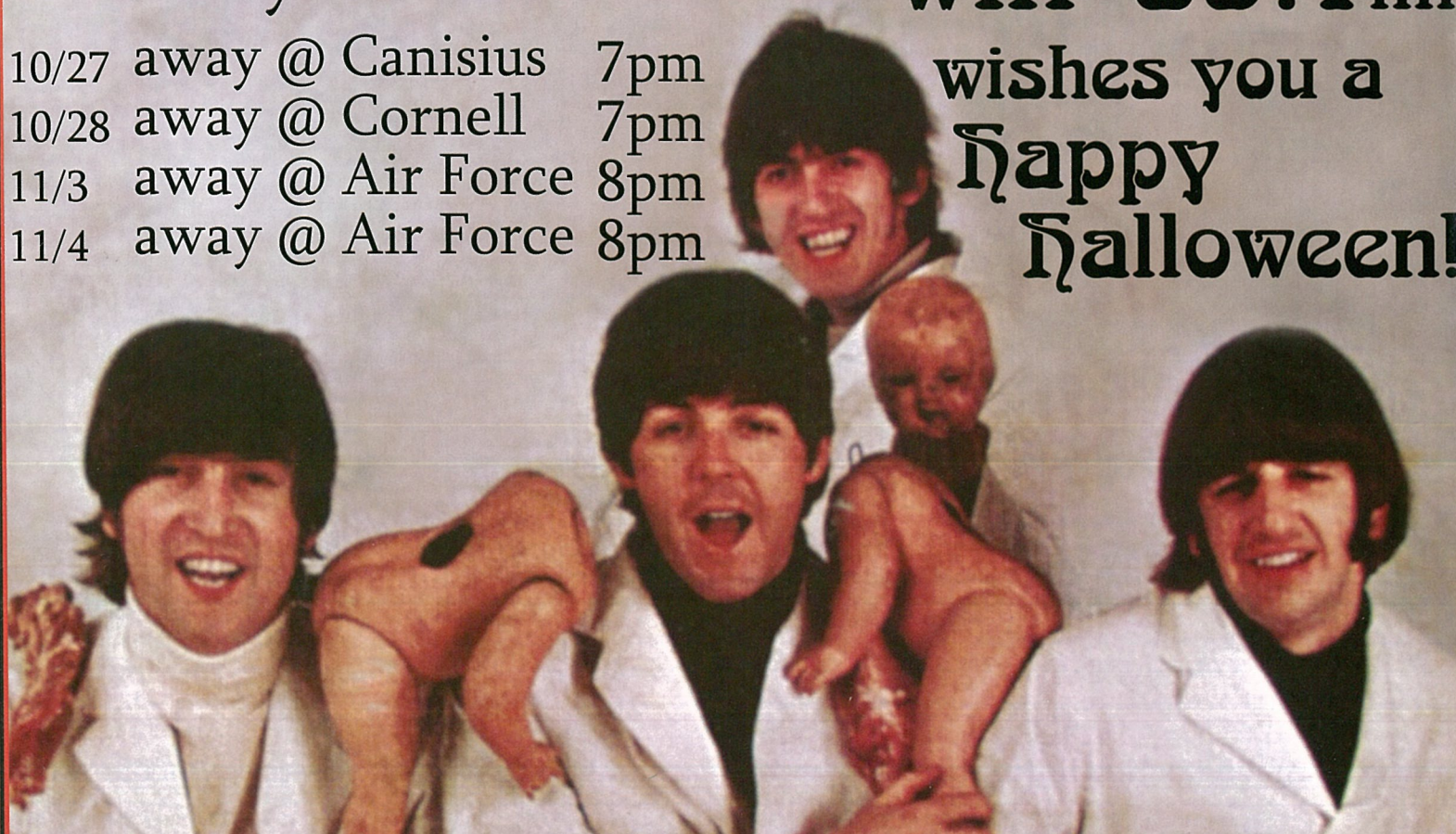
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Hockey Schedule

10/27 away @ Canisius 7pm
10/28 away @ Cornell 7pm
11/3 away @ Air Force 8pm
11/4 away @ Air Force 8pm

WITR 89.7fm

wishes you a
Happy
Halloween!



AT YOUR LEISURE THINGS, STUFF, AND PEOPLE, TOO...

STREAM OF FACTS

OCTOBER 27

October 27, 1932 – Sylvia Plath is born. More famous than her birth, however, is her death: suicide by taking a bottle of sleeping pills and sticking her head in a **gas** oven.

The word "**gas**" was invented by Dutch chemist Jan Baptista Van Helmont. It is a phonetic spelling of the Greek word "**chaos**" (if you say it with a Dutch accent, anyway).

After hearing about **chaos** theory, one meteorologist remarked that if it were correct, one flap of a seagull's wings could change the course of weather forever. In popular media, the seagull has now been replaced by the more poetic butterfly, and been termed the "**butterfly** effect."

In China, the **butterfly** is a symbol of everlasting **love**.

Research shows that the female brain naturally releases oxytocin, the 'hormone of **love**,' after a 20-second hug, bonding the huggers and triggering the brain's trust circuits. There's still no word on how long it takes the **male** brain takes to do the same.

In manufacturing terms, a **male** screw is a screw with threads on the exterior, corresponding to the grooves on the inside of a **nut** or female screw. Parts containing both protrusions and indentations are known as combination, two-way, or hermaphrodite parts.

To the ancient Egyptians, the goddess **Nut** was the personification of the **sky**, a symbol of resurrection and rebirth.

October 27, 1953 – All eyes are on the **sky** as the British detonate nuclear test Totem 2 at Emu Field, South Australia. This was the last nuclear test done in Australia to date.

QUOTE

Over the centuries, mankind has tried many ways of combating the forces of evil... prayer, fasting, good works and so on. Up until Doom, no one seemed to have thought about the double-barrel shotgun. Eat leaden death, demon.

Terry Prachett

HAIKU

by **Brian Garrison**

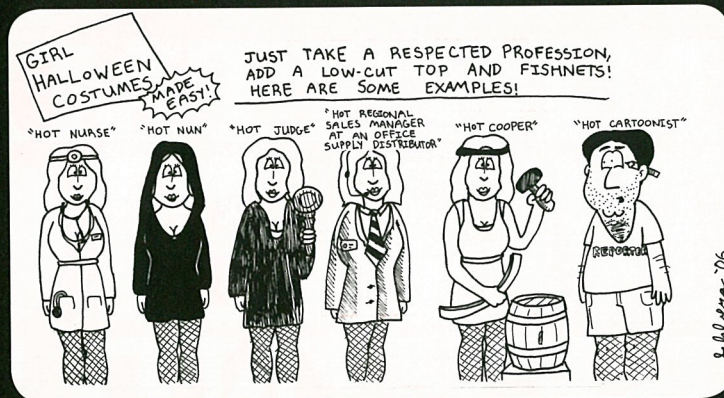
sharing is caring,
but not really so much when
it's crack addictions

REPORTER

RECOMMENDS

Reese's Peanut Butter Cups. They're at Sol's. \$4.29 for a twelve-ounce bag. Maybe you're too old for trick-or-treating (or maybe you're not), but you're probably falling behind on your debit by now anyway, so go buy yourself some chocolate goodness. If you're having a bad day, this will cheer you up. If you're having a good day, this will make it even better. It's a win-win situation, really. Do it!

CARTOON | by Alex Salsberg



SUDOKU

				8		6	5	
			3	1		9		8
					5	2	1	
	1				7		6	
		8	6	3	1	4		
	7		9				8	
	9	2	1					
5		7		4	3			
	4	1		6				

If you've never done one of these, this is how it works: each row and column should contain the numbers 1-9 once and each of the blocks should contain each number once too. The answer is on the website, go check it out!

JUMBLE

Zombie-Killing Weapons

- wcoabbr
- inahaswc
- ctcrike tab
- volshc
- taeeworlhrfm
- nberko olbtet
- aaktna
- hgustno
- htchtea
- oabogmnr
- tcmaee
- ucehinbngmsua
- deal ppei
- rsnpei eirfl

crowbar, chainsaw, cricket ball, shovel, flamethrower, broken bottle, katana, shotgun, hatchet, boomerang, machete, submachinegun, lead pipe, sniper rifle

Two weeks ago, many of us were on edge, and for a good reason. It was Friday the 13th, the most superstitious day of the year. I had just been told to go and spend some time at Nightmare Manor. I made it through the day unscathed and uncrossed by any black cat, but it appeared the universe was saving it all for one momentous kick in the teeth. My task: get a look inside the manor, find out about its past, and hopefully make it out to relay my experience in this week's issue. Thankfully, death and dismemberment did not find me. Safely on the other side of my assignment, transcribing my thoughts (with the doors locked), I still have a clear memory of the headless children, defiled corpses, and a blood-covered chainsaw swinging towards my high-pitched cry for help. *continued on 18* →

NIGHTMARE MANOR BEHIND THE MASK

by Anthony Castillo | photoillustrations by Ralph Smith & Erin Wengrovius





The Manor's Past

One year ago, the 5,000 square foot space in Henrietta's Southtown Plaza rested undisturbed and vacant. Everyday shoppers passed the dimly lit storefront windows, paying them no attention whatsoever. To many, the retail spot was a relic of the past with little potential in the sprawling commercial complex. To four childhood friends, however, it would serve as the culmination of a lifetime of jokes and trickery that had progressed to full-scale mayhem—a place where adults and children from all over New York state would flock to feel helpless, tortured, and insane.

Every inch of window space at Nightmare Manor is covered in black paper. The purpose is not to keep people from looking in, rather to make sure they feel trapped inside. Mark and Tammy Hefner, Joe Pokorny,

built from discarded card-board boxes, erecting a haunted mansion takes more than duct tape and old bed sheets. It takes months of preparation in order to execute the effect that makes a guy "crap his pants." "He really crapped his pants," Pokorny recounted, "right after someone vomited."

Piecing it Together

When construction for Nightmare Manor began this year, on the Hefners' front lawn, the neighbors still asked, "What the hell are you guys doing?" Assembly started in early August to prepare for the opening night which fell on the last weekend of September. Without a formal crew, the four owners pool together helping hands from close friends, but primarily make all of the props themselves. Collectively, they elaborately

**"HE REALLY CRAPPED HIS PANTS,"
POKORNY RECOUNTED,
"RIGHT AFTER SOMEONE VOMITED."**

and Troy Driver are the private owners of Nightmare Manor, now in its fourth year of operation. On a scale of mild to wild, Nightmare Manor is off the charts. It's one of New York's most frightening and gore-filled commercial haunted houses, and serves as a pinnacle of success to the four owners. They are more than happy when a grown man cries and barely bat an eye when bodies begin to hover in mid-air. For these small business owners, bringing fear to the masses is something they love and have perfected to appease their uncanny desire to make the rest of us scream.

Joe Pokorny explains that their scare tactics started with a Halloween party that Driver would throw every year. "It would get bigger and more frightening year after year, and seemed like such a waste for just one day." That's when Driver convinced Pokorny to start a full-fledged haunted house, and a year later Mark and Tammy Hefner, husband and wife, would join them to create Nightmare Manor. "It was [Driver's] idea to have a haunted mansion with a doctor that went crazy. The truth of the matter is Dr. Jack Limon haunts the house. It's because [Driver] drinks Jack Daniels, and I drink Limon."

In their first year, 1,200 people visited the production. This year the team anticipates 10,000 patrons will pass through the mansion's doors and onto the other side. While many of us have played inside club houses

fill ten rooms and several walkways and corridors. When traveling through the manor, it is difficult to believe that so much can be accomplished in so little time, but anyone attending RIT knows the output level that can be willingly (or unwillingly) extracted from someone in ten weeks' time.

The manor contains sets which are constructed to meet the typical expectations of haunted house enthusiasts: dungeons and caskets, graveyards and skeletons, and the white, hollow-eyed, hockey mask. Setting itself apart from the mundane are scenes that would make anyone think, "WTF!?" One in particular is the Bathroom of Death, replicated in the excruciating likeness of a fraternity bathroom. Soiled and terribly neglected, with bodily excrement strewn on every wall, no scary actor is needed to make one's stomach drop.

In the off-season, Mark Hefner and Pokorny travel to conferences which specialize in haunted house accessories. They get ideas from the conference vendors, who supply Hollywood production studios with the devices to create special effects on movie sets. "Animatronics is the popular thing right now," Pokorny explains. Nightmare Manor has just the right blend of homegrown scare and battery-powered props. Many of the sets are homemade, but above the level which the typical handy man would make it his spare

time. If there is any doubt, all one needs to witness is the flying banshee that soars several feet above your head before diving towards your gaping face. If nothing else, knowing there is no manufacturer's warranty on the robotic arms that lunge at your head should cause some concern.

The cost of this freaky-yet-fun enterprise has reached \$100,000 for the mansion's proprietors. "It's a cost that we accrued over four years," Hefner explains. "We really took a hit when we expanded the mansion to fill the current space. It was the year Hurricane Katrina hit, which sent the cost of plywood from \$8.00 a sheet to \$16.00 a sheet." Also included in the growing budget is compensation for the 30 actors that fill the house every night. Their responsibilities include moving the blubbling cheerleaders through at a constant speed, or when it gets to be too much, escorting them out through one of many exit doorways along the route. It is a job they perform with venerable devotion, but truthfully, who among us would have a hard time frightening annoying adolescents?

Better than Serving Burgers

Samantha Lindsey, a first-year actor at the mansion, loved the experience as a visitor to the extent that she immediately applied to work at Nightmare Manor. "There are emotions you feel on a daily basis, such as being happy or sad," Samantha says, "but rarely do you say, 'I was devastated and it was cool.' I like giving people the chance to get scared in a good way." Samantha routinely works the "graveyard shift," but most actors find themselves on different sets throughout the night. "The randomness of where we work gives people a different feeling each time. You could come through twice in the same night and get scared in places you didn't the first time," Samantha explains while adjusting her Elvira-inspired wig and touching up the scar across her cheek. I tell Samantha not to be too hard on me when I go through. She finishes her touch-ups, then turns to me, lowers her voice, and reveals, "The secret is to just let yourself get scared, and not get yourself worked up. It's not real, after all." On that note she departs, blood-stained knife in hand.

The cast of Nightmare Manor have assembled in a back room, completely transformed into headless freaks, hags, zombies, and mad scientists; almost every visage of Halloween is in attendance. The fluorescent overhead lighting casts a B-rated sci-fi feeling over the room. Suddenly we are plunged into pitch darkness and I feel figures moving past me. All of the lights in building have been shut off to set

the mood, which means patrons have begun to stream in. Under the red lighting of an exit sign, a straggling actor adjusts his werewolf mask. I ask him if it's tiring scaring people all night. "Well, yeah, we have to give as much energy to the first group as we do the last. It's fun though. All of my friends have jobs working at Burger King or serving fast food, but I get to scare people. That's so much more rewarding."

Despite my well-lit guided tour of Nightmare Manor only an hour earlier, I still feel uneasy as I wait in line to enter for the first time with paying customers. Directly behind me are a rowdy group of high school girls, who can't stop gossiping about their new Uggs and plans for the weekend. Secretly, I hope Samantha scares them enough to cause a stampede so they will trample over the loudest and most obnoxious one. I run through my list of haunted house dos and don'ts: a) Just have fun; it's not real. b) Maintain control of bodily functions. c) Take an exit door if necessary; which results in justified taunting from your friends. The walking corpse is waving me over; let the fright begin.

After the Fear Subsides

I'll save you the gripping scare-by-scare details of my experience through Nightmare Manor. Instead I would encourage you look into it on your own with a group of friends. The Manor is located in Southtown Plaza, less than a mile from campus, and will be open for just three more nights this year. The hours of operation and ticket pricing are as follows:

Friday 27: 7:30pm-12:00am

Saturday 28: 7:30pm-12:00am

Sunday 29: 7:30pm-10:00pm

Cost is \$10.00 at the door, \$9.00 in advance (tickets purchased from their website nightmaremanor.com), \$8.00 per person for a group of 15 or more.

Once you have rounded up your friends for whatever you have planned for Halloween, you may find a detractor or two in your midst. If anyone tries to dissuade you from having a good time, reassure them that you'll be around in case they drink too much and start seeing ghosts. Make sure you teach them about being so inexcusably boring by taking them through Nightmare Manor and place them at the head of the group. Call in advance and inform Joe, the guy who wields the chainsaw, that a special guest wearing an ostentatious RIT hoodie will be arriving at a certain hour and he really needs to know, "Who's your daddy?" •



THE SCIENCE OF FEAR

by Elizabeth Kiewiet

photoillustration by Tom Schirmacher & Steve Miller



You're sitting in your dorm room, typing that term paper you've perpetually put off until now—the last day. It's 11 p.m. You have an hour to finish the last three pages. It's a race against the clock. You're typing as fast as you can think, fingers flying across the keys, and drinking amp as you go. Suddenly, a loud, intense screech interrupts you, followed by a flash.

Your muscles tighten, and you fly out of your chair, knocking over the empty cans of amp from your desk onto the floor. Your heart starts to beat wildly, threatening to knock your ribs apart in a futile attempt to escape your body. Your breathing increases and your eyes dilate. Finally, your brain starts to assess the situation, and you realize that the fire alarm has gone off. You shakily grab your coat and head outside, listening to your disgruntled floormates as they curse the stupid idiot who couldn't figure out how to use the microwave...again.

Although all you're worried about is the fact that the fire alarm has screwed you over again, for a few seconds your body had initiated the *fight-or-flight* response. What is the purpose of such a reaction? What exactly is *fear*? *Reporter* goes in depth to find the answers to these questions, as well as ways to defeat fear.

What is Fear?

Fear is a chain reaction in the brain that starts with a stressor and ends with the release of chemicals that cause the physiological symptoms like a racing heart, fast breathing, and muscle tension. The stressor can be any sort of stimulus: getting on an airplane, standing up in front of class to speak, that spider creating a web in the corner of your dorm room, or the fire alarm.

Most fears are learned, either from personal experience or from another person's experience. The classic "crazy guy" who is so afraid of the sun that he will only go out at night probably had a negative experience with the sun. This type of fear, an irrational fear that continually interferes with normal living, is a phobia. So let's take a more typical example: The reason why some people are afraid of flying in planes is because they know that there is a chance that they could crash into the ground. Most likely, they have not personally experienced this, but have heard of enough instances to make them wary.

Physiological Side of Fear

To get a precise explanation on the fear processing cycle, I spoke to Dr. Andrew M. Herbert, RIT professor of Psychology. "Whenever you see something that scares you, your visual cortex is stimulated," he explained. The information comes in through the eye, goes to the thalamus, and then ends up in the visual cortex. "To be afraid of something, you have to recognize what it is first. That processing is done in your temporal lobe." There are two structures within the temporal lobe, the hypothalamus and the amygdala. Whenever you see something that makes you afraid or angry, the amygdala becomes active. From there, the signal goes back to the visual cortex, which then translates the signal into information the brain can process.

Dr. Herbert explained why some people are more afraid of horror movies than others: "The stuff you already know, the experiences you already have

and remember, those influence how you process stimuli. So, someone who laughs off something in *Saw II*, maybe they've seen lots of horror movies, and are sort of 'oh, this again.'"

So, how can we eliminate our fear? Fear as an emotion is insuppressible. However, excessive or irrational fear—phobias—can be nearly eliminated through desensitization. Dr. Herbert used horror movies as an example: "If horror movies scare you...the one way to avoid that sort of thing is to watch lots of horror movies. And so you desensitize."

Phobias

Are you afraid of any of the following?

- a) Afraid of certain social situations (e.g. speaking in public)
- b) Afraid of being trapped in a place or a situation? (e.g. getting stuck in an elevator)
- c) Afraid of a specific object? (e.g. pink furry bunnies, storms, needles, bridges)

These are the three types of phobias. Respectively, they are social phobias, agoraphobia, and specific phobias. According to most sources, phobias affect more than ten percent of the U.S. population, making them the most common mental disorder in the U.S. Phobias tend to affect women more than men (or maybe men just don't want to admit it). However, only about 10% of reported cases of phobias are actually life-long phobias.

RIT & Fear

So, what does this mean for you and your fear of those squirrels on the quarter mile? There is hope! RIT's Counseling Center is ready to help you overcome your fears—irrational or rational. I spoke with Patrick Walsh, M.S., a Licensed Health Counselor who works with students to help them overcome their fears and anxieties.

The Counseling Center offers many options, including individual therapy, group therapy, outreach workshops, and mindfulness meditation. Walsh stressed that "we really want, above all, to feel like a safe place for people to come to."

The counselors at the Counseling Center range from psychologists at the doctoral level to licensed social workers and mental health professionals with masters degrees. Rather than focus on one theory of psychology, like psychodynamic (think Freud) or cognitive (thinking processes), the center instead uses a variety of theories in order to better suit the individual. Walsh explained, "We try to be flexible, meet students where they are, rather than impose a model 'one-size-fits-all' to everybody."

Whether you're looking for someone to listen to you, a way to get rid of your fears this Halloween season, or a peaceful place to meditate, the Counseling Center is available for appointment. As for the fire alarms...half of you are engineers, I'm sure you can figure out a way to prevent microwaves from setting off the alarms. •

FRESHMAN & MIDDLE CLASSMAN

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NEW!

Freshman

Middle Classman

Must have 3 quarters remaining after spring

Applications available in the SG office on **October 31**

Deadline for submissions: **December 4**



sg.rit.edu

WORD ON THE STREET

COMPILED AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY BELVEDUDE

Q: Trick or Treat?



"Give me a Hershey's kiss, because a kiss starts the day off right."

Chris Spinelli

Third year
Economics



"This one time, my friend found a razor in an apple."

Jeff Terranova

Fourth year
Environmental Science



"Bobbing for apples in a refurbished toilet."

Stephanie Warczak

Fourth year
Illustration



"Eat dead babies."

Torren Doherty

Fifth year
Biotechnology



"I'd rather just have a beer."

Nick Brandeth

Third year
Advertising Photography



"I'm a fan of the flaming bag of pool!"

Seth Goodrich

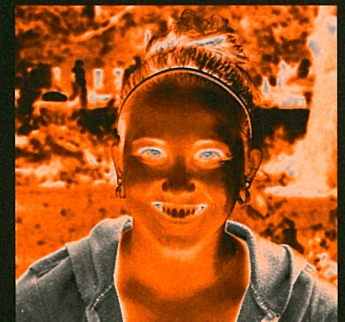
Second year
Computer Engineer



"Meat©"

Irem Gultekin

Second year
Computer Engineer



"Candy or your life."

Kristen Curtze

Second year
Information Technology



"Trick or treat, smell my feet, give me something good to eat, if you don't, I don't care; I'll pull down your underwear."

Abe Taleb

Second year
Industrial Engineering



"It's a trick when I get candy apples, since I am allergic to fruit."

Jackie Sillery

First year
Medical Science



"Jesus Christ, jellybeans!"

Liz Wanamaker

Second year
Photojournalism



"Shaving cream fights."

Amanda Hannan


Fourth year
Fine Art Painting

TRIGGER-HAPPY:



RIT students prepare to battle at Rochester's NYP Paintball field on University Avenue on Saturday, October 14.

THE WORLD OF RIT PAINTBALL



by Geoff Shearer | photography by Dave Londres

Trying to vent some week eight woes?

Maybe you're just in the mood to release a little bit of that college frustration. The RIT Paintball Club may have the answer you're looking for. As if the idea of avenging your roommate squabbles over a friendly barrage of welts and bruises wasn't enough, the cost of a night of paintball for us starving college students rivals that of a dinner at Crossroads and a movie (but with twice the satisfaction).

If you're not familiar with the game of paintball, here it goes. The tournament level competition is based on a game of elimination. Typically, teams of three or five players engage in a multi-colored battle of pigment, eliminating players of the opposing team until one team is defeated. The arena differs from tournament to tournament but the trend of professional circuit paintball today is focused on indoor arenas with Astroturf and inflatable bunkers rather than the outdoor grass fields with wooden crates and oil drums of yore. In recreational competition, that nostalgic game of capture-the-flag has evolved into one of auspicious strategy and gut feeling. However in this game, getting "tagged" means being on the business end of a paintball traveling at 250+ feet per second (all the more reason to hone those skills posthaste). To put that in perspective, that's about one-fourth the speed of some pistols. Additionally, the arsenal of equipment used in this sport is as varied as its athletes. Paintball markers (guns), loaders, masks, grenades, gloves, uniforms, and ammo belts makes the professional circuit paintballer look more like Rambo than the typical collegiate athlete.

No matter the age, skill, or equipment of players, there is a venue for every level. Just remember not to be unsettled when a decorated 12 year old is telling you to storm the flank. The president of the RIT Paintball Club, Aaron Nash, suggests, "You just got to go out there and have fun, don't get discouraged. Chances are you're going to get shot, that's just the way things work, but everybody has to start somewhere. If you really like it a lot, don't give up. It's fun. It really is fun."

Outside of the events sponsored by the College Activities Board, the club meets every weekend for practice and its teams participate in tournaments around the country, including the NCPA or National Collegiate Paintball Association events. They encourage all levels of players to join the club, which practices between two fields—NVP Paintball in Rochester as well as their sponsor, Headrush Paintball's field in Syracuse. Headrush paintball provides the club with much of their equipment as well as some support from RIT.

The RIT sponsorship is limited. With the budget of a club sport rather than a fully funded athletic organization, often times its athletes pay their transportation and entrance fees out of pocket. On the issue of funding, Nash states, "We want to try to get into more collegiate level stuff, maybe we can show RIT we're actually representing the school."

So maybe this weekend, rather than beating Halo 2 on legendary (again), you should take a trip to NVP Paintball downtown and spend an evening getting back in touch with those intrinsic survival skills (if this is your first winter in Rochester, it couldn't hurt).

While the idea of potentially being pelted with paintballs may sound overwhelming, it's really not as bad as you think. Warm weather is fading away quickly; perhaps paintball can prove to be your aerobic solace in the winter months. Concurrently, Nash remarks, "One of the big problems on this campus is too many people sit around all the time. There's not a lot to do and this is definitely something fun to do."

To get in contact with RIT paintball, access: www.ritpaintball.com

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Saturday, November 4, 2006

9:00am - 11:30am

at the Dyer Arts Center, NTID

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RIT RINGS

585.475.5633

compiled by Ryan Metzler

*All calls subject to editing and truncation. Not all calls will be run.
Reporter reserves the right to publish all calls in any format.*

Tuesday 5:03 p.m.

Hey RIT Rings, I'm a girl at RIT and as a girl at RIT I get a lot of attention. All girls here at RIT get a lot of attention. When I came here I had no knowledge of how to deal with such attention and I made some pretty bad choices. I think we should have a program to help girls learn to handle all this attention and make good decisions when choosing affection from the males on campus.

Tuesday 11:42 p.m.

Has anyone besides myself found the incoming class of freshman rather pathetic in their general lack of respect for each other, the campus, and generally everything? I mean, even as drunk as I am, I can comprehend how horrible it is that there is so much vandalizing and breaking and entering, just general misconducts by the freshman. It's pathetic. Even last year, when the *Reporter* told all the stupid crime reports, which by the way were hilarious, it wasn't so bad. It wouldn't be so bad if people would just show some respect.

Wednesday 10:51 a.m.

Hi *Reporter*, I'm just calling to say that my neighbor is having severe kidney pains due to his injury he sustained this weekend at a party. He probably should be driven to a medical practitioner, but today is Wednesday and there is no illness allowed on Wednesdays here at RIT. If my neighbor dies I'm probably going to burn RIT down.

Wednesday 11:11 a.m.

Alright *Reporter*, what's the deal with the RIT movie channel? When I was a freshman, even last year, we had very cool movies on there and now it's nothing but *Julius Caesar*. This issue needs to be addressed.

Thursday 9:57 p.m.

We're the RAs and we want our residents to behave because we get really pissed off when they come in Thursday nights, Friday nights, and Saturday nights and they think it's cool to be loud all night. No it's not. Getting drunk is so stupid; there are so many better things to do with your Friday night.

Thursday 10:00 p.m.

I just want to let someone know, and I chose you, *Reporter*. RIT has scheduled me for five finals, one of which is on Monday, four of which are on Friday, and two of which are at the same time. It's kind of messed up, just thought I'd let you know.

Friday 11:35 a.m.

Your content is very boring and we don't want to read it. Listen to this. [inaudible noise] That was your magazine hitting the wall. Now we're ripping it up. It's just not worth it. The *Reporter* has hit a wall. Who cares about Erin Brockovich? If she wasn't dressed like a slut in her lecture, then I wouldn't even go. The only reason I watched the movie was to see Julia Roberts dressed like a slut.

Friday 12:00 p.m.

Hey, RIT Rings, earlier I was looking at the *Reporter* and trying to do the Sodoku thingy and it was really hard. I wanted to put a nine in that box but it wouldn't let me. [Intimately love] you; it was really hard, but I really wanted to do it. •



The Leaves

by Casey Dehlinger | illustration by Greg Caggiano

"Listen" is just another way to say "be quiet," and that's exactly what I want you to do.

Legend has it that if you listen on the coldest evenings of fall the leaves whisper stories. Their rustling takes on a distinguishable characteristic, not quite human, but inherently interpretable. One of the most matter-of-fact tales of the leaves is that of a quiet man condemned to death. A man who, one morning, awoke to find himself turned a shade of orange so brilliant it matched the color of the back of his eyelids when he stared at the sun.

Of course he denied it at first. Washed. Scrubbed. The things any man would do to keep his sanity, if only for a while. He called in sick and watched the shadows roll across the room as the sun passed by the windows. His brow furrowed and the creases ran so deep it looked like they could be read like lines of text, but he was quiet. Yet, in his despondence his silence allowed him to hear the leaves chattering outside a window of his, gossiping.

Wandering into the woods behind his place he could hear the leaves clearly, rubbing against each other like out of tune crickets. They were changing, too, crimson and yellow and ochre and oranges not so very different from his own hue. At first, they accepted him as one of their own. Soon, though, it became apparent that there was something different about him, although they couldn't wrap their thoughts around it.

"Could it be that his veins are different?" asked one leaf.

"No, he seems to have them just the same," replied another leaf before blowing away in the wind. Only the leaves on the ground could speak, though, their hardened and crackling bodies hissing.

"He looks fit to fall, too," said a violent red one, "look at how bright he is."

The man, confused and excited, exclaimed, "No, really; I'm not a leaf!" but the leaves had a difficult time hearing past his thick animal accent.

Another leaf of a soft yellow tint said, "he's practically dead on his branch, but that's an awfully funny stem he has."

"Dead on my branch? I swear, I'm alive," said the man.

The leaves had a good chuckle over this. "But son," they said, "only the dead can talk."

And, of course, the soft supple bodies of the leaves on the tree watched on in silence, listening, like the leaves said all living things should. And the man stood there, not making a peep, attempting to prove to the leaves that he was still one of the living. They insulted him and called him awful things that only leaves have tongues enough to say, but no matter how they abused the man, he continued to play mum. Finally, an old worn leaf of brown rasped, "But being silent is what kills us."

And with that the man fell, fell, fell to the ground in a flutter of color like the leaf that he was. He fell until he lodged himself into the damp dirt of a graveyard of leaves that had already muddled into the dull browns of winter. And that's where he lay dying forever, slowly turning to brown with the leaves, conversing with his enemies.

And on autumn nights they say you can still hear the leaves as they call for new victims, chanting in the wind, "Listen. Listen. Listen..." •

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