

'Ghoulsville' is a haunting family affair

By Becky Schmal
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We have been operating our family run haunted house, "Ghoulsville," in Almaden for the past four years. It is free to the public and is located at 856 Hampswood Way (at Queenswood). Each year we try to add strange and different attractions in an effort to keep things interesting. The haunted house is run primarily by the Higgin and Schmal households.

My parents (the Higgins) have

been nice enough to donate their garage for six months out of the year. The haunted attraction is free to the community; however, donations are greatly appreciated so that we can re-invest into making this event better each year. The whole haunt consists of a maze of scary props, sites and sounds within the garage. The front yard is converted into a graveyard and houses a ghoul named Clyde who begins at 8 feet tall and rises to over 14 feet tall during a show that is per-

formed every hour each evening.

The haunted house as well as the show are all computer controlled. We convert my parent's front porch into what we fondly call "THE CONTROL CENTER." This is what makes everything happen. My father, Ron Higgin, wrote the computer code that makes everything in the haunted house work like clock work. My brother, Shawn Higgin, and my husband, Mark Schmal (both computer technicians), are the masterminds behind everything that goes on inside the haunted house. This year we decided to completely re-design the inside of the haunted maze as well as the "Clyde" show. We have many friends that help with the construction projects as well as acting in the shows on the event nights.

Last year was a very unusual year due to the events of Sept. 11. We were unsure whether to hold the Halloween event but decided the kids still needed something to look forward to. The reception we received was phenomenal. Many parents told me that they were not allowing their children to trick or treat but knew of our haunted house and took their kids to Ghoulsville because they knew it was a safe,



Alex Eckenrode is "Ghoulsville's" youngest helper and she helps, along with her family, each weekend with the construction projects as well as entertaining the crowd by trying to fly away on her broom - (yes, she dressed as a witch last year). This little angel was so tired by the end of the evening last Halloween that she fell asleep inside the haunted house with all the music still going. We found her behind a curtain, curled up, and sleeping like a baby.

low gore, family haunt. We had almost 1,000 people visit our attraction on Halloween alone.

Visit our web site for directions to Ghoulsville at www.ghoulsville.com. On the web site you can find two videos that show our event from 2000 &

2001. You can also find pictures and construction details. The haunted house is open on Friday, Oct. 25 from 7:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.; Saturday, Oct. 26 from 7:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.; and Thursday, Oct. 31 from 6:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

