

## WHICH WAY OUT? - CITY MUSEUM PLANS A HALLOWEEN EXTRAVAGANZA THAT'S ABSOLUTELY A-MAZE-'N

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Why let your kids inflict their Halloween sugar rush on your new living-room furniture when they could take all that energy out on the City Museum?

Elizabeth Parker, the museum's public relations director, talks speed-racer fast. In New York, this verbal pacing is the norm. In the Midwest, such rapidity can come off as baffling, rude or both.

But Parker's accelerated chatter sounds not like that of a New Yorker or an ungraceful businesswoman, but more like a proud and excited 9-year-old girl inviting you to her extravagant birthday party. Imagine such a child, chin up, ticking off the hired clown and pony rides in a gasping monotone - "andthen ... andthen ... andthen ..." - and you've got the generous, hopped-up spirit of the City Museum's Halloween-night party, called "Get Out of the Suburbs and Into the City."

Parker's brags of "andthen" are well-deserved. Indoors, every corner of the building promises to be loaded with kid-focused fun. On the evening's packed roster are contests, prizes, giveaways, costumed staff, trick-or-treating, pumpkin carving, dancing, music, movies (both the Disney variety and classics like "The Mummy" and "Frankenstein"), a fortune teller and catered Halloween-theme treats (e.g., bat wings and hot cider). Adults will also have access to a cash bar and can head outdoors for a hot-metal-pour performance-art piece and a bonfire.

Even the tiniest member of your family can participate by vying for the Best Baby Costume award. Costume contests will be held for many age groups and categories, so there'll be lots of prize winners, although fun freebies will be doled out to even those who don't get in the running.

All this, mind you, is scheduled above and beyond City Museum's usual activities and attractions: several craft stations, amazing climbing tunnels, trains, sliding tubes, the everydaycircus and, for toddlers, Mini City.

Although adults may feel a wave of exhaustion by simply reading such a lengthy list of entertainment options, kids can not only take in that information, they can actually do it all and then some. So there's more.

Bob Cassilly, City's Museum's founder and mad scientist in residence, has just completed the first of two stages of work on 17,000 square feet of concrete caves that burrow under and throughout the building. The caves already have creature-like forms incorporated into their design, but for Halloween the caves will be decked out in flickering lights, scary sound effects and - according to Parker - Cassilly himself in costume as an ogre.

Why lurk on the sidewalk on Halloween night - your kids begging the neighbors for mini-Snickers - when you could all be out dancing the Monster Mash? You'll be guarding against boredom for even those with the shortest attention span. And extending the life of your coffee table.

"Get Out of the Suburbs and Into the City"

What: Halloween party

When: 7-11 p.m. Friday

Where: City Museum, 701 North 15th Street

How much: \$8 advance, \$10 at the door

More info: 314-231-2489 or [www.citymuseum.org](http://www.citymuseum.org)

- Caption: PHOTOPHOTOS BY KAREN ELSHOUT/POST-DISPATCH: (1,2) Photos - Kurt Knickmeyer (above) runs through the maze at City Museum as workers prepared the attraction for opening earlier this month. The 10-story corkscrew shaft (left) at the old shoe factory has been transformed into a grown-up playground. (3) Photo - child dressed as a ghost

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