

The Interview

So many pumpkins, so many people

By JONATHAN SHEEHAN

WEEKS before it's happening, word is getting out about Keene's Harvest Festival.

Images of the thousands of jack-o'-lanterns — the core of Keene's Halloween-harvest celebration — are appearing in national magazines and newspapers.

"It was in the Boston Globe last Sunday," bubbles organizer Nancy Sporborg. "I couldn't believe it."

One goal of the event Oct. 29 is to exceed last year's total of 4,817 jack-o'-lanterns. The target: 6,000. The day will also have a costume parade, judging of children's costumes, music, trick-or-treating on Main Street, street performers, dressed as leaves, country line dancing, karaoke, and pumpkins — lots and lots of pumpkins carved into scary faces, ghoulish fright masks, letters, numbers, and animals.

The Guinness Book of World Records has already listed Keene as the record-holder in the Most Jack-o'-Lanterns category. Based on last year's event, "they gave us a whole page," Sporborg says of the Guinness compendium. "You can't get better PR than that."

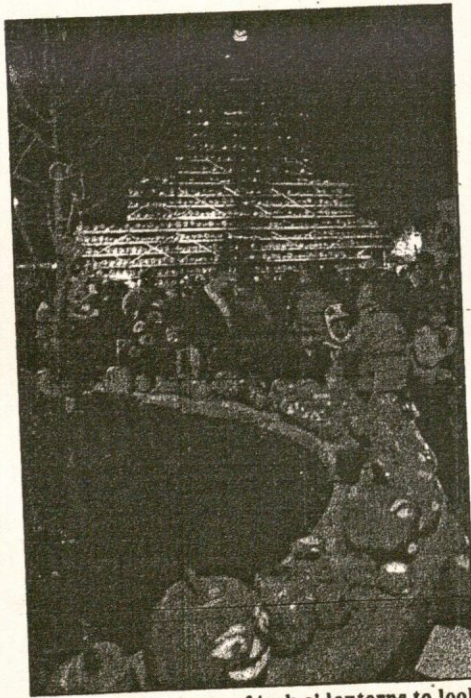
Copies of the \$18 book will be for sale through Paragon Cable on Eagle Court, and a copy is also available there for public viewing. "All those people who were kids and carved a pumpkin — this is their moment in history," Sporborg says of the book.

Area companies are interested in making the project succeed, too. For instance, The Keene Sentinel bought a pumpkin for any employee willing to carve it into a jack-o'-lantern for the festival, and Kingsbury Corp., which is celebrating its 100th anniversary, is contributing 100 pumpkins to the event.

"We've had a lot of businesses asking how they can get involved," Sporborg said.

The Keene Post Office is even creating a special postmark for the event. Center Stage, Cheshire County is selling pictures of last year's pumpkin tower, with a card and envelope, for \$2. With the "Harvest Festival" postmark, "it's a neat little

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But whatever else goes on Oct. 29 pales next to the orange glow of carved-out pumpkins. Main Street will close at 8 that morning, allowing time to set up all the scaffolding needed to hold 6,000 jack-o'-lanterns. This year, a 13-foot-square tower, 35 feet high, has been added to the two pyramids that will also hold jack-o'-lanterns, and "we've challenged Keene State College to fill that."

Booths will be set up around downtown for people to bring their carved pumpkins and a candle.

"That and-a-candle part is very important," Sporborg says.

It's also important for people to sign in at one of the booths. The Guinness people want to ensure that the record-breaking pumpkins weren't just carved by a small crew of workers, and Lehman and Wilkinson, a local accounting firm, will tally the numbers. "Our Certified Pumpkin Accountants," Sporborg calls them.

Sporborg's own jack-o'-lantern will be part of the spectacle: "It's my way to be in the book, too. ... It's everybody in the community, bringing in a piece of themselves. That's what makes it so neat. That's why I think it has caught on."

Stags events, the Harvest Festival brings a different concern. "Every once in a while, I get this little shiver: What if we get thousands more pumpkins than we thought?"

That would be a happy problem. A big event can pump money into the local economy and make Keene a bigger dot on the entertainment map.

"That's a big step for us," Sporborg says.

The Harvest Festival runs from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 29, on Keene's Main Street. For information on the Harvest Festival, call Center Stage, Cheshire County at 358-5344.

Jonathan Sheehan is editor of The Keene Sentinel Magazine.



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3rd Annual Cheshire County YMCA N.E.H.T.

Pancake Breakfast

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Oct. 25 - Tuesday - A conversation with Charlie Bass, the Republican candidate for Congress in the heated second-district race.
Oct. 26 - Wednesday - Judd Alexander, author of the book "In Defense of Garbage," joins Laura Kiernan for a conversation about recycling, juke boxes, and whether or not there is a garbage crisis at all.

Oct. 27 - Thursday - It's been 30 years since the inception of the War on Poverty, and in honor of that anniversary, Laura Kiernan is joined by Gale Monahan, executive director of Southern New Hampshire Services, and Bill Marocco, executive director of Southwestern Community Services.

New Hampshire Public Radio is a non-profit corporation operating WEVO-FM at 89.1 throughout most of central and southern New Hampshire; 90.3 in Nashua; 104.3 in Dover and WEVH 91.3 in Hanover and The Upper Valley; and at WEVN, 90.7 in the Keene and Monadnock regions.

Public Mass

RESPONSE TO THE FAITHFUL SOULS' HIDDEN QUESTION

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Who live in Freedom's light
Long may we flourish here
And pray God's grace
Must lead us forth to act
In His name, that
We might improve the lot
Of this, our race,
Endure, we must,
The trials of Satan's hand,
This call would otherwise
Unworthy be.
Liberal the selfless
We must conjure, that
Folly, Evil's grand design
Defeat.

JOHN J. CASEY JR.
Marlow

THE KEENE SENTINEL MAGAZINE

Hartford, the
er-songwriter who
won three Gram-
performs Oct. 26
30 p.m. at Del Rio
rattoria, Route
Dublin. \$15 in ad-
ce. Information:
7195. The next
at Hartford is at
Iron Horse Cafe in
hampton, Mass.
other doings
and the region, see
e 6 for 'What's Up?'

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 hys' Up! page 6-10

is per year out of U.S. dumps
another 250 million bottles out
rign dumps.
 illman make plastic bottles and
 stemers from to fabric, which it
 to compare that last or weave
 fabric.
 Villman is the only company to
 a fiber from 100 percent recy-
 goods and Widars is the only
 party to make 100 percent recy-
 underwear, Langan said.
 last year, two companies bought
 hian's recycled material —
 Siers and Potogonia Inc. Today,
 hian sells to at least 70 compa-

Potogonia, of Ventura, Calif.,
 has 24 products from recycled
 tic bottles, including sweaters,
 hats, hosi, gloves and other out-
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**NEWSPAPER IN
EDUCATION**

Keene Sentinel
 sions and answers are on page 4.
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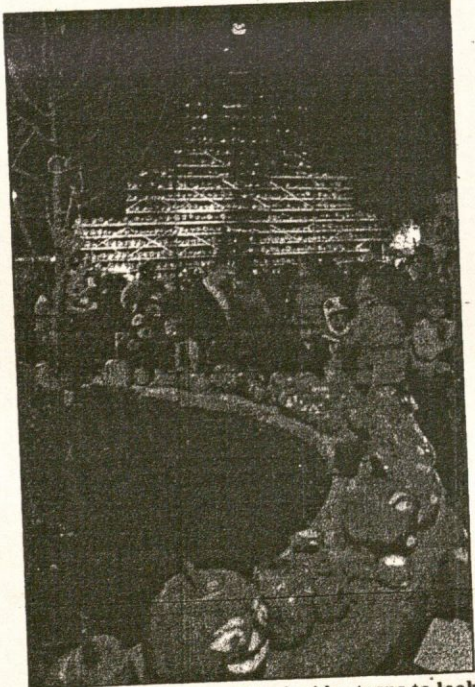
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Public Muse

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Folly, Evil's grand design
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JOHN J. CASEY JR.
Marlow

THE KEENE SENTINEL MAGAZINE