

Last Call For Haunted Houses!!

This weekend sees the last of the Halloween season of 2010. I always try my best to do as much Halloween and fall-related things as possible; I just love the season. This year I've been lucky enough to have gotten to try THREE haunted houses, and I will rate them here in case anyone has time to check any of them out. I would really like to fit in a few more or even a repeat visit to one I've already been to, but I have a jam-packed weekend planned with other fun stuff like Halloween parties and Trick-or-Treating.

A few weekends ago, we visited the Chicago area and were able to get to two haunted houses, both in the area where we were staying – Aurora. We would have liked to check out some other of the MANY haunted houses in the suburbs (as well as other entertainment offerings), but alas, we quickly ran out of time. So the haunted houses visited were:

[BASEMENT OF THE DEAD](#) – 42 W. New York St. Aurora IL 60502 - This is by far the best haunted house that I've ever been to. I've been able to visit here 2 years in a row, and it's gotten better with time. The makeup on the creatures is incredible – horror movie caliber – and the characters waiting to scare people waiting in line are great. They ALWAYS stay in character, which is very important, and they are creative in their scariness – much more than the typical monster or “BOO!” yelling psychopath. I tried to get video of the ultra-impressive 7+ foot tall monsters that hang around outside, but Basement of the Dead is located in downtown Aurora, so I had to help my husband navigate around the tricky one-way streets instead. A MUST SEE for any haunted house enthusiast! We will probably be making the trip next year, if not just for this haunted house alone; it's that good! 4!'s for fright out of 4.

MIDNIGHT MASSACRE – 3440 Odyssey Court Naperville IL 60540 – Well, there really isn't much to say about this lame attempt at a haunted house. I don't even think it was made less scary by our visit to Basement of the Dead before this one – it wouldn't have been any better even if we hadn't just visited a spectacular haunted house first. The scariest thing about Midnight Massacre was the hour and a half we waited in line, which was hidden from view when you buy your tickets. We got a bad clue when we saw a snack stand in line – you know they won't want you taking food or drink into their haunted house, so if they let you buy food and drink in line, you know you're going to have a long wait. And in this case, a long wait for what? The haunted house was not scary. This one did consist of actors (?) yelling cheesy things like "BOO!" There was a guy dressed like Freddy from Nightmare on Elm Street, and his "scare" was jumping up from a bed and yelling "Freddy!" We even had one actor apologize to us and say, "Hey, I tried." Talk about breaking character! But in a haunted house as bad as this one, it didn't really matter that he broke character, that wasn't the only thing wrong with it. The first part of it was a black light maze that was so obviously part of a lazer tag course – they didn't even try to hide it. But there weren't any monsters in it or anything. They had a couple of cool robots and animatronics, especially this one large dinosaur thing, but it was just a head, and they didn't do anything to cover up the robotic looking body. And the actors were terrible. Enough said about this one, not recommended – well, maybe for a kid's first haunted house. One ! (for effort I guess) out of 4!'s

[Leader's Family Farms](#) – near the intersection of Ohio State Route 24 and Henry County Rd. 16 near Napoleon, Ohio – I got to go into this haunted attraction with one of my youth group girls, and she was a screamer. It was a lot of fun, especially since the ghouls and monsters focused their attention on the screamer and left me alone! We did not have the time to check out their new haunted attraction,

PanDEMONium, but Screamacres was a nice haunted attraction as always. 3! out of 4! – Lots of the same old haunted house effects, but being outside and in the middle of nowhere certainly adds to the effect. I should also note that Leader's has activities for the entire family, every age group. Great fall fun to be had here.

Well, there you have it – those are the 3 I've gotten to this year. If you have the time and are looking for a good scare, I highly recommend Basement of the Dead in Aurora Illinois or Leader's Family Farm's Screamacres in Napoleon Ohio. I wish I had more time to visit more and get some reviews. Maybe some day I'll be able to get down to Columbus Ohio to go to [Dead Acres Haunted Hoochie](#); it looks very scary and really cool!

Anyone else think haunted houses should extend their seasons into November for those of us who are very busy in October taking kids trick or treating and to fall parties, etc?? I sure wish they would!!! Have a GREAT Halloween!!

You Fell Over The Side Of A What With A Which?

One of my not so graceful moments took place after a high school football game. My cousin and I were riding in the back of my brother's pickup while my parents were in the front driving. While riding, I was wrapped up in the [sousaphone](#) that I played in the marching band. Why I had it on still is a mystery to me. We were turning a corner and all of a sudden... falling over the side was a body wrapped up in a sousaphone. My cousin yelled "Stop!" Mom came running out of the truck to make sure I was all right... yelling at dad because

he went around the corner too fast. Actually, I think the instrument took most of the damage. I was more worried about what Mrs. Curtis was going to say Monday about the condition of the horn (she was more worried about me, of course). To this day, everyone who was involved or knows about the incident gets a chuckle. Shortly after we got back to the school, Chad, Dan, and I left for Columbus where we met my oldest brother, Jeff, to go to Cleveland the next day where the Buckeyes were playing a special game. On the way to Columbus, I had an ice pack over my head. AH, YOUTH.