

Published October 26th, 2011

Happy Haunting



The folks in Burton Valley go all out decorating their homes for halloween. This suburban graveyard is just one of many frightening facades getting dolled up for Halloween. Scores of little monsters make the annual pilgrimage to Merriewood Drive...also known as Scary-wood Drive to maximixe treats. Neighborhood kids and their parents have a sweet pre-holiday tradition, Boo burglars do a reverse burgle - ring the doorbell and leave a little basket/pumpkin of candy before running away. For homes hit by the Boo burglar, there are instructions to pay it forward, delivering sugary morsels to other unsuspecting souls. Photo Cathy Tyson

The signs are unmistakable-they appear on front yards and driveways, in doorways and windows. Everything from scarecrows to skeletons, pumpkin patches to graveyards, and all manner of creepy crawlies in between have taken up residence across Lamorinda as Halloween approaches.

Rebecca Nadauld of Orinda first created a graveyard in front her home five years ago. For her, it's all about the fun factor for her children. She describes her parents as minimalists when it came to Halloween decorations, and she wanted to do something special for her own kids, who "really get into helping with the decorations" now that they are old enough.

The Nadauld home is a popular attraction every fall - the kids' friends start asking in late September when the decorations will go up. Last year, Nadauld even saw a car pull over and children hop out for a photo in front of a tombstone. "We used to have a zipline - a giant bat would fly down the hill!" she recalls, adding that she feared an accident should a driver be surprised by the sight of a huge, winged creature hurtling down the hillside, so the bat was retired.

Lamorinda is a relatively safe community, but it doesn't hurt to keep a few safety tips in mind while the little monsters are out haunting on October 31:

Make sure costumes are safe, allow clear vision and are visible in the dark; "dangerous" props such as knives and scythes should be avoided or at least made of flexible material so unhappy accidents don't happen; costumes that drag on the ground and high heels can result in injury.

Stay in well-lit areas; if a home is dark, don't ring the doorbell.

If you don't accompany your trick-or-treaters make sure you know the route they are taking and remind them of safety rules regarding crossing streets, never entering the home or car of a stranger, and coming home/calling on time. Children should be well-lit with glow-accessories and flashlights, and you should be able to pick your child out in

a crowd should the need arise. Unaccompanied kids should always stay in a group.

Trick-or-treaters of all ages should keep in mind the difference between a trick and vandalism.

We wish pirates, princesses and characters of every kind a safe and thrilling Halloween! L.Borrowman



The Nadaulds' home on St. Stephens Drive in Orinda features a graveyard at Halloween Photo Doug Kohen

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