

# CAMPUS

## Exploding the Myth of the Great Pumpkin Sacrifice

On October 31, 1973, two young gentlemen, in a celebratory state, threw a pumpkin off of the roof of Harrison House, and so the Great Pumpkin Sacrifice began. Twenty-Three years later the tradition continues. Most student know what the Great Pumpkin Sacrifice is but they do not know the history. Each year, since it's beginning, the Great Pumpkin Sacrifice has become more elaborate. In 1974, other house residents began watching the dropping of the pumpkin from the ground level dressed in bed sheets and pillow cases. In 1975, the pumpkin sacrifice became a full-fledged ceremony, taking on the tradition of the procession to Lady Dunn Residence, lighting the pumpkin and returning to Harrison to sacrifice it. The modern day sacrifice has become an elaborate event. All Harrison House residents are involved, in many different roles. Senior people from the house perform the roles of Banner Carriers, Torch Carriers, Monks or Bishops. These people are called Actors. They are the people on the roof during the actual sacrifice. The rest of the house members are involved by being dressed in white bed sheets and pillow cases and carrying candles for the ceremony. Traditionally, during the ceremony, the entire house is in complete darkness except for pumpkins in every window. Spooky music, Toccata Fugue in D minor by Bach, was added to the tradition in 1977.

Three banners are carried during the procession. The first banner is the gothic H. The second banner displays the university crest. The third banner is the pumpkin banner. It takes the place of the pumpkin on the roof during the procession. The Latin saying on the banner translated into English says, "That thrown object is a huge thing."

Harrison House Alumni are given the opportunity to take part in the ceremony as well. Alumni are dressed in black, have their faces painted black and act as the militia. Their job is to protect the procession.

Immediately preceding the dropping of the pumpkin the Three Wise People make speeches. The wise people are usually Dons. The are called wise because they are scholarly. The House Don is always one of the Wise People. He is the last one to speak before the sacrifice.

The two Loyal Guardians are the people who are responsible for the organizing of the Great Pumpkin Sacrifice.

This year the people who are to be given credit for such a spectacular show are Wendy Schulman and Manny Descombes. The 1996 Great Pumpkin Sacrifice was a "smashing Success." Harrison House had the largest ever pumpkin at 530 pounds. For the first time this year, Harrison house made an effort to ensure that the female members of the house could be involved. Every year ten male house members are chosen to carry the pumpkin. This year ten female members were chosen to go immediately before the pumpkin with their faces painted the same as the pumpkin barers. Also in previous years the other people in the procession were required to keep their heads lowered during the entire ceremony. This year they were allowed to raise their candles and their heads to watch the dropping of the pumpkin.

There are three main reasons for having the Great Pumpkin Sacrifice. One is to unify residence and foster fraternal friends and strong house spirit. Second is to give thanks for the beautiful arcadian harvest. This is what the pumpkin symbolizes. The third reason is to have a ceremony of offering for a bountiful academic harvest. This is symbolized by the students.

The face of the pumpkin also has symbolic significance. The face is supposed to be the face of the Roman Goddess Janus. Janus was the Goddess of all beginnings and endings. It also combines the happy and sad faces of the theatrical masks. On half of the face is happy and the other is sad. Tradition says that if a student is doing well when they look at the face they will see the happy side. If the student is doing poorly they will see the sad side.

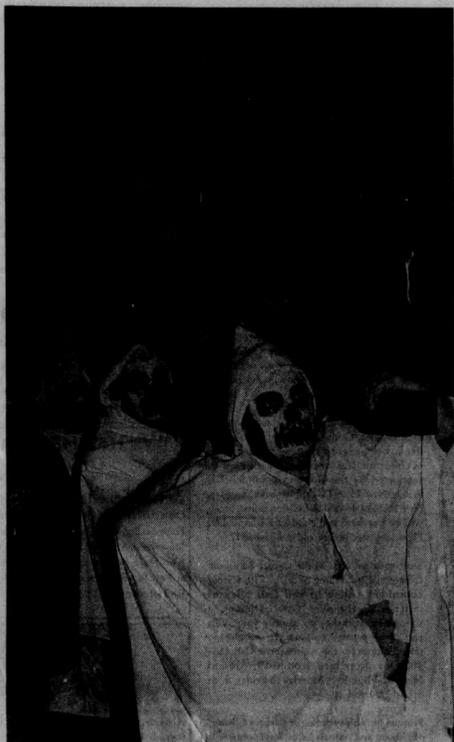
Next year is the twenty fifth anniversary of the Great Pumpkin Sacrifice. It will be combined with a Harrison House alumni reunion.

Two points concerning the Great Pumpkin sacrifice that Harrison House residents would like mentioned are that any similarities between the KKK and the people in the white robes are not intentional. "The white robes and hoods were used in the beginning because it was easy to get white sheets. It is carried on now because we borrow the sheets from the residence office. It is not easy

to get sheets for 100 people, but it has nothing whatsoever to do with the KKK" says Wendy Schulman. Another important thing to know about the Great Pumpkin Sacrifice is that it is also a fund raiser. This year through booths at the market, canvassing the campus, house contests and a bike raffle the members of

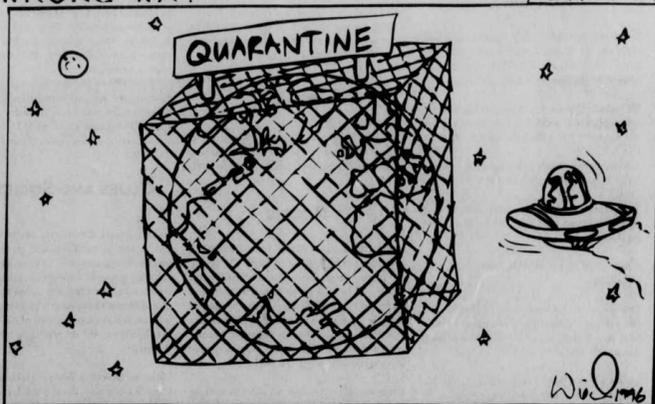
Harrison House managed to raise approximately \$1000.00 for UNICEF. Despite the fact that the Great Pumpkin Sacrifice began as only a rambunctious prank on Halloween night it has developed into a campus tradition that many students look forward to.

Jenn Brown



It takes ten to move the 530 pounds of pumpkin flesh to the roof of Harrison House. Once there, it plummets to certain destruction. DREW GILBERT PHOTO

WRONG WAY



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