

NEIGHBOURHOOD FRIGHT NIGHT

Home is where the haunt is

By Shelley Cooke

Each October, Conference Boulevard residents Liam and Allison Herbinson, and their next-door neighbour Barbara Adamek, transform their front lawns into one of Centennial's most anticipated Halloween spectacles!

What began in 2020 as a modest display to lift community spirits during the pandemic, when walks were one of the few safe activities, has since grown into a full-blown tradition. Back then, they welcomed just two dozen trick-or-treaters. Now their haunted display draws close to 800 visitors on Halloween night alone, with hundreds more stopping by throughout the month.

The neighbours have their Halloween displays fully set up by mid-month, giving trick-or-treaters plenty of time to enjoy the eerie ambiance. Liam prefers a hands-on approach: "I build my props piece by piece and set them up as I go." In contrast, Barbara opts for ready-made decorations, carefully staking them into her yard for maximum effect. "I move my monsters around daily," she said with a grin. "The neighbourhood kids even put in special requests for which creatures they want to see next."

The two households have earned enthusiastic praise from passersby admiring their Halloween displays. Their many visitors include schoolchildren and teachers from Charlottetown Junior

Public School, along with seniors from local retirement homes.

According to Liam, the decorations serve as a magnet for community connection. "This is the time of year when the community comes together to enjoy the Halloween spirit," he said. He particularly delights in the startled shrieks and uneasy laughter that erupt when visitors encounter their eerie animatronics and well-timed jump scares.

Liam shares that one of his most popular and scariest props is "Bubba," an animatronic bulldog with razor-sharp teeth that leaps out unexpectedly. Meanwhile, Barbara's top crowd-pleaser is "Lil Skelly," a skeleton designed to deliver a sudden jump scare.

One of the most common questions curious visitors ask is where do the homeowners store all of their Halloween props and large monsters during the rest of the year? For the Herbinsons, the answer lies in a combination of storage spaces like their crawl space, garage and backyard shed. While some of the larger props, especially those belonging to the Herbinsons, are difficult to disassemble and store, Barbara's decorations are more manageable. Many of her pieces can be broken down and neatly packed away into large boxes and stored in the garage.

When asked what tips they'd offer to others considering elaborate front lawn decorations, Liam and Barbara both suggest starting modestly, adding a few new pieces each year to gradually build your display. Barbara recommends hunting for post-Halloween sales and keeping an eye on Marketplace throughout the year for good deals. They also encourage checking out YouTube channels like "Wicked Makers" for creative inspiration and do-it-yourself display ideas.

The neighbours' enthusiasm for elaborate Halloween displays has sparked a spirited trend along their street. Throughout October, drivers have been slowing down on Conference to take in the increasing number of decorated homes. The neighbourhood's growing scare factor is now a seasonal tradition in the making!



Top and Middle: 75 Conference Blvd.

Top left: Barbara's elaborate display includes a cast of monsters, clowns and skeletons.

Top right: Barbara Adamek is surrounded by her beloved monsters with their glowing eyes and enticing smiles. Photo: Denise Bacon

Middle left: "Lil Skelly Bones" suddenly springs into action scaring his visitors off his lawn.

Centre: This creepy clown lures the visitors to his lawn by offering them free ice cream.

Middle right: A lovely witch invites the neighbours to taste her magical concoction that she stirs with her ladle.



Top left and across the bottom: 73 Conference Blvd.

Top left: A wicked witch consults her brew book for the recipe of skull stew to make on Halloween night.

From far left to right: The Herbinson family, creators of the hauntingly impressive Halloween setup, welcome their visitors. Photo: Denise Bacon

Among the eerie details of Liam Herbinson's spooky front lawn, his custom-made tombstones draw particular attention.

A vintage baby carriage, complete with a sinister-looking doll, adds a chilling focal point to the Halloween display.

"Bubba" the bulldog gives unsuspecting visitors a screaming jump scare.

Photos by homeowners unless otherwise noted.