



From the Broker's Desk Nancy C. Rowe

The cool nights and crunch of golden leaves under our feet signal that fall has arrived. For adults, October is a great month to wander amongst the booths of the fall festivals, attend National Storytelling and tour the back roads to enjoy the colorful mountain scenery. For children there are corn mazes to traverse, haunted houses to test their bravery in and trick or treating events for the young ones. Parents must be diligent in their monitoring of the children at these events. At a corn maze be sure that children do not run ahead out of eyesight and they should never enter the un-cut stand of corn. The degree of difficulty to navigate in a corn maze will vary but certain elements remain constant. Wear comfortable shoes as you will be in a field which may be uneven and muddy and always stay within the cleared paths. Daytime may be a better time for younger children to attend while older children will enjoy the eeriness of the night. Often, along with the maze, there are hayrides, a petting zoo, face painting and games. Haunted houses appeal more to the older child and it should be stressed that they respect the establishment with no vandalism pranks. Time and money has been applied to create the entertainment so they should leave it intact for those coming after. As the parent, you will have to determine if your child is age appropriate for haunted events. Younger children love Halloween activities but there are so many dangers that parents need to address. Children should never be allowed to trick or treat alone but there should be an adult to chaperone a reasonable number of children. That "just have to have costume" your child wants may not be practical if it has billowing sleeves or skirt that could be tripped over or so long that it could come into contact with a flame (always buy flame retardant costumes), uses a mask or head piece that doesn't allow the child to see properly or has a long, hard sword, stick or cane which would injure a falling child. Caution your child to stay on well lit pathways and never cross yards, stay together and don't eat any of their treats until they get home and the goodies inspected. With the increase in pedophile activity, it is important that a child know not to go into anyone's house without an adult's approval, never talk to a stranger or respond to someone calling from a vehicle. As a homeowner, be sure that all walkways are clear, steps are free of debris, leaves or ice and all are well lit. In their excitement, children often cut across yards so cut any low hanging limbs, remove any obstructions that might cause a fall and be sure that there are no protruding objects that a child might hit. Set candle lit decorations in a manner so that children won't be burned as they rush your front door. For the protection of visiting children and for the safety of your pets, always contain pets in a secure area. Now is not the time to be frugal as most parents will not allow their children to eat homemade treats so store bought goodies are best. October is a wonderful month so embrace all that it has to offer. Thinking about a new home for the Holidays? Call on the experienced Agents of WILLOW Realty for assistance.

Witch's Brew Punch

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- 1 (6-oz) package lime gelatin
- 2 c boiling water
- 3 c chilled pineapple juice
- 1 (2 liter) bottle chilled lemon-lime soft drink or ginger ale
- 2 c chilled vodka, optional

- (available at party or craft stores)
- 1 punch bowl that fits inside the cauldron
- 1 plastic hand (available at party supply stores), sterilized in hot water
- 1 block dry ice (available at supermarkets, ice cream shops or ice companies)

Special equipment:

- 1 large black plastic cauldron

Pour the gelatin mix into a large bowl. Slowly stir in the boiling water. Stir at least 2 minutes, until the gelatin is completely dissolved. Stir in the pineapple juice. Let cool to room temperature. Wearing heavy duty gloves or using tongs, place the block of dry ice in the bottom of the cauldron. (Dry ice will burn skin, so handle it with gloves and tongs and keep it away from kids and pets!) Use an ice pick to break the block into smaller chunks, if necessary. Fill the cauldron with just enough water to cover the dry ice. It will begin to "steam." Place the punch bowl inside the cauldron, on top of the dry ice. The cauldron will appear to be magically smoking. Entrap the sterilized rubber hand between the cauldron and the punch bowl, squeezing it tight so the hand appears to be reaching out of the mist for help. Hot-glue the hand to the cauldron, if necessary, to hold it in place. Carefully pour the drink mixture into the punch bowl. Slowly add the chilled vodka and lemon-lime soda or ginger ale. Stir gently to mix.

Laptop Care and Maintenance Tips

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Performing some basic maintenance on a laptop will help it last longer and keep your data protected. Here's some advice to keep your laptop secure and performing optimally:

Turn on Windows Firewall: Turn on the Windows Firewall feature to stop people and programs from downloading malicious code and viruses to your computer from the Internet.

Use System Restore: You can create a System Restore Point to save current settings and revert to those settings if your computer begins having problems. This can happen after installing a new program or driver for hardware.

Defragment your hard drive: Defragmenting your hard drive cleans out any damaged or obsolete files to improve your laptop's performance.

Check the battery life: All batteries wear out and your laptop's is no different. If your battery doesn't hold a charge as long as it used to, consider buying a replacement battery from the manufacturer.

Perform a Disk Cleanup: Use the Disk Cleanup feature to free up some disk space on your hard drive. This helps your laptop perform better.

Set up a password: By assigning a password to your Windows user account you may prevent people from accessing your files and personal data.

Protect your laptop from damage: Invest in a good case for your laptop to protect it from damage when travelling with it. Also, get a screen protector, which is a thin sheet of plastic that you place across your screen to prevent scratches.

Use a lock or fingerprint reader: Some laptops come with the ability to read your fingerprints so that only you can turn the laptop on and access files on it. You can also buy a laptop lock that you can use to secure your laptop to furniture to prevent people from walking off with it if you leave it unattended for a few moments.



Clothes make a statement. Costumes tell a story.
-Mason Cooley

