

The State News

Weekend

TRICK-OR-TRADITION

Modern-day Halloween practices rooted in ancient, multicultural customs

By Meredith Skrzypczak
THE STATE NEWS

Carved pumpkins left smashed on front porches, well-worn homemade costumes and half-eaten candy might represent Halloween history at the end of this weekend as students celebrate an ancient holiday. But few students might realize that the holiday has existed in some form for centuries and is celebrated across the world by different cultures. Despite the modern twists Halloween has adopted, older traditions that originated thousands of years ago still can be seen today on MSU's campus.

Celtic history

The Celts lived in what now is known as Ireland some 2,300 years ago, said the Rev. Joe Krupp, the director of campus ministry for St. John Student Center, 327 M.A.C. Ave.

They were nature worshippers and farmers who celebrated the new year on Nov. 1. The date represented the end of summer and the start of a "dead" time of year, he said.

"That was the time they really contemplated death," Krupp said. "They thought that the night before the new year, the line between Earth and heaven got really blurry and weak."

The Celtic people held a festival called Samhain on Oct. 31, with costumes and bonfires, Krupp said.

"They put on costumes and built these huge sacred fires," he said. "The costumes usually were animal costumes and the priest would tell peoples' futures."

Eileen Reilly, the associate director of the Glucksman Ireland House at New York University, said Samhain is a very old Pagan festival.

"The lighting of the bonfires, the idea that the division between worlds was very thin ... all of that has a modern connotation in Halloween," she said.

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ILLUSTRATION BY EMILY CUMPATA/THE STATE NEWS

For a video of East Lansing's downtown trick-or-treat festivities, visit stateneews.com/multimedia.

STATE BUDGET

Granholm to spare MSU programs if they focus on staying green

By Meredith Skrzypczak
and Marissa Cumbers
THE STATE NEWS

Although Gov. Jennifer Granholm agreed to spare funding for the MSU Extension and the Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station, or MAES, Wednesday, university officials still are unsure of the programs' futures.

"We have to await the final signature on the budget bill,"

President Lou Anna K. Simon said. "There's a lot of uncertainty in the state budget."

MAES conducts research across the state on issues such as food safety and biofuels. MSU Extension applies the research for business use, job creation and youth development programs such as 4-H.

The programs were funded at \$64 million for the next fiscal year but after the state did not issue their monthly payment

Oct. 16, university officials were concerned they could be completely eliminated, MSU Extension director Tom Coon said.

While balancing the state's \$40 billion budget, lawmakers already had made a 44 percent cut to the programs' budgets, which heavily rely on state funding.

The programs fund 82 extension offices and 15 research stations statewide, employing about 3,000 workers. They also

provide 74 percent of the funding for the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, said Jeffrey Armstrong, the college's dean. Without funding for the Extension and MAES, the college also would have been in danger of elimination, Armstrong said.

Armstrong said although it's a relief that funding won't be completely vetoed, he still has long-term concerns about the possibility of additional future

cuts and job losses.

Armstrong said the decrease in funding still could mean hundreds of job losses by January 2010 as officials decide how to absorb the cuts.

Granholm agreed not to veto the programs' funding if they took steps to focus on green initiatives.

"What happened this week was, as we had conversation with the Legislature and the governor, we mentioned that we

were going through (a) restructuring," Coon said. "They really picked up on the green economy stuff."

Megan Brown, a spokeswoman for the governor, said the funding will remain intact when the governor signs the higher education budget.

"As Michigan moves from rust to green, these programs will be focused on enhancing

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