

Hudson Haunted House marks 50 years of scaring the bejeebers out of folks

By Craig Webb, *Akron Beacon Journal*

Required Annotations	Student-Created Annotations	Summary / Questions / Reflection
Student-created		Required (bold)

Devin Call remembers the first time he reluctantly stepped foot inside the Hudson Haunted House in Ohio. He was just 5 years old. He had the bejeebers scared out of him.

"I just remember walking through holding onto the back of Dad's coat," he said with a laugh.

Don't ask him any exact details — he was too busy hiding behind his father as they **ventured** through what was then the first year for the haunt that raises money for the city's Jaycees.

Some 50 years have passed and the haunted house that raises money for charitable ventures by the local civic club is still around and so are Devin Call and his family.

It is believed that the Hudson Haunted House is among the oldest — if not the oldest — continuously run haunts in the country and certainly the oldest one run to raise money for charity.

Devin Call's brother, Damon, is the current Hudson Jaycees president and his son, Josh, is in charge of this year's scary **incarnation** of the haunt.

The brothers have been working at the haunted house since they were in junior high. Heck, Devin and Damon Call even have grandkids now working inside this year's haunted house.

These days, Damon spends most of the fall weekends lurking about outside keeping a watchful eye on the line to get in and also making sure there are no troublemakers and everything is safe and orderly inside. But he still enjoys scaring folks.

"To this day, I don't mind going in there and scaring people," Devin Call said.

The brothers credit a dedicated group of volunteers for keeping the tradition alive for this long. Back in the day, there were Jaycee-run haunted houses all over the state. As early as the 1990s there were still some 30 left in Ohio. Now there are just three. Including Hudson, there are Jaycees haunts in Portsmouth and Riverside near the Wright Patterson Air Force Base.

In its **heyday**, the Hudson Haunted House would raise as much as \$200,000 in a single season. Damon Call said it now typically raises around \$60,000. He blames the drop on the fact the haunt is smaller than most of its for-profit competitors that offer multiple haunts and are able to charge a lot more. Damon Call said at \$12 for adults and just \$6 for kids the haunt is a bargain these days — especially teens on a date.

Since they call the city's Oak Grove Park home, he said, they are limited to the confines of the building they have called home since the 1980s.

The Hudson Jaycees Haunted House has had different locations over the

years. Its humble beginnings started on Franklin Street near the old Hudson High School. It moved a couple of years later to Hudson Springs Park on Stow Road before settling in at its current location off Barlow Road.

The haunt has raised about \$1.9 million over the years.

To mark its 50th year, this incarnation of the haunted house has been flipped. The entrance where folks have started their **trek** is now the exit. And the operators have brought "Christine" out of retirement. Spoiler alert: There's a car tucked away inside the haunt that lurches out at unsuspecting guests. The toxic waste room is even more toxic this fall.

The Hudson Haunted House has its fair share of cool lighting effects, but unlike other Akron-area haunts that rely on **animatronic** props and other expensive trickery, this one relies on living ghosts and spooks and creeps who leap out from the shadows, and some who are hidden in plain sight.

The largest single investment this off-season is one that guests will not even notice. Some 30 security cameras have been installed in and around the place to keep an eye on things to ensure the safety of not only the guests but also the actors and volunteers.

After all, the goal remains the same today as it did some 50 years ago: Raise some money for charity. Provide a safe place for a good Halloween scare. And keep the tradition alive for another 50 years.

"This place isn't dying," Devin Call said. "We got to keep this going."

1. Which sentence from the article BEST explains how the Hudson Haunted House has changed?
 - a) Don't ask him any exact details — he was too busy hiding behind his father as they ventured through what was then the first year for the haunt that raises money for the city's Jaycees.
 - b) Some 50 years have passed and the haunted house that raises money for charitable ventures by the local civic club is still around and so are Devin Call and his family.
 - c) Since they call the city's Oak Grove Park home, he said, they are limited to the confines of the building they have called home since the 1980s.
 - d) Some 30 security cameras have been installed in and around the place to keep an eye on things to ensure the safety of not only the guests but also the actors and volunteers.
2. Read the statement. "The Hudson Haunted House endures because of the efforts of many different people." Which sentence from the article provides the BEST support for the statement?
 - a) Devin Call remembers the first time he reluctantly stepped foot inside the Hudson Haunted House.
 - b) The brothers credit a dedicated group of volunteers for keeping the tradition alive for this long.
 - c) Back in the day, there were Jaycee-run haunted houses all over the state.
 - d) And the operators have brought "Christine" out of retirement.
3. According to the article, why did the Hudson Haunted House operators flip the entrance and exit this year?
 - a) They needed to find space to put a car inside the haunted house.
 - b) They wanted to draw in more visitors to the haunted house.
 - c) They were celebrating the 50th year of the haunted house.
 - d) They were trying to make the haunted house safer for visitors.
4. How did for-profit haunted houses affect the Hudson Haunted House?
 - a) They caused fewer people to visit the Hudson Haunted House than in past years.
 - b) They inspired the Hudson Haunted House to add a toxic waste room and new lighting.
 - c) They kept the Hudson Haunted House from expanding to other locations in Ohio.
 - d) They encouraged the Hudson Haunted House to partner with local Jaycees organizations.