

Sunday Hallowe'en spooks towns

Two NF towns ask children to trick-or-treat Oct. 30

by Nadya Bell

ST. JOHN'S, Nfld. (CUP) Witches and ghosts looking for candy will head out a day earlier this year in two Newfoundland towns.

Lewisporte and Botwood, two communities on the northern shore of Newfoundland, have asked children to trick-or-treat Saturday, Oct. 30, out of respect for the Lord's day.

"Halloween is a form of pagan worship. I'm open minded, but the bottom line is that's what it is," said Gerry Dean, mayor of Botwood. But Hallowe'en "is 99 per cent there for the kids to go out and get some candy, so we tolerate it, and look forward to it."

Some children at St. Andrew's Elementary School in St. John's said they prefer trick-or-treating Saturday, because they don't have school the next day.

"I like Saturday because we can stay out longer, and get more candy," said Aaron, 10.

Rikuo, a grade three student, said he also liked Saturday because it was sooner.



Towns debate whether or not to have Hallowe'en on Oct. 30th

Dean realizes councils cannot unilaterally change calendar dates, but said they have decided the fire department and town council's safety patrol will be out Saturday.

"Quite a number of people have talked to us about it and commended us on what we've done, and that's a combination of hardened churchgoers as well as people that don't go to church," said Dean.

Lewisporte Mayor William Hooper

stressed his council's decision was just a suggestion for parents to choose Saturday.

"We're not saying, 'Look you don't go out on Sunday night.' If your kid wants to go out on Sunday night, that's fine; he's got every right in the world to do so," said Hooper.

While residents in Lewisporte say Devil's Night and the Lord's day should not mix, a larger town in Newfoundland, Grandfalls-Windsor,

decided against changing Halloween, as did St. John's.

In past years, St. John's has changed the date of Hallowe'en, but some children exploited the confusion to get more candy.

"Last time Hallowe'en was on a Sunday I was quite young, and we decided we were going out trick-or-treating both nights," said student Michael Clancey.

Similarly, in Prince Edward Island, four councils have debated the possibility of changing Hallowe'en, but all voted against their motions. Charlottetown in particular changed the day, but voted it back because of safety concerns for children on Saturday night.

Dean said traffic wasn't really a consideration in his town because of its small size, and because most children are back inside before partygoers go out.

Summerside council in Prince Edward Island will have a curfew of 8 p.m. on Oct. 31 for children because of safety concerns.

The town of Souris in Prince Edward Island considered bumping Halloween back a day, but decided on Sunday because it didn't want to deal with the possibility of two nights of vandalism.

Sex pays for school

Advice for students in the sex trade

by Amy Chung

TORONTO (CUP) -- The sex trade industry is often portrayed to be a lucrative but shady business, pursued by people from the "wrong side of the tracks."

However, times have changed and many students are turning to escort agencies and street prostitution as a way to finance their education.

One 22-year-old computer science student turned to escorting as a way to get out of debt.

"It's not what people may think. The money is good and it's pretty fun," he says.

After working in retail part-time, Tommy was dissatisfied with the wages he was making and finally turned to escorting.

"One day, I was flipping through Now Magazine (an alternative weekly paper in Toronto) and saw these self-advertisements and I thought, 'Hey, I can do this.' What I make in a day now is like one pay cheque I earned in retail."

Valerie Scott, the co-ordinator of Sex Professionals of Canada, a political organization fighting for the decriminalization of prostitution, observes the growing trend of student sex workers over the years.

However, there are other reasons why young people turn to the sex trade.

"Some people go into the sex trade because they need to, want to, have to, or they're forced to do it," says Dan Lavoie, an advocate for sex trade workers and editorial assistant at Xtra, a lesbian and gay newspaper.

Lavoie began street prostitution at age 13, and says that as a result, he had to grow up fast. However, he says he made his decision partly because he needed to do it, but also because of the intrigue of the underworld.

"At one point, I was addicted to drugs, living on and off the streets. Since I didn't have the option like most kids to seek funds from my parents, I turned to street prostitution," says Lavoie.

"Although I have a deep fascination with culture and subculture, I was well aware of what I was getting myself into."

However, Lavoie advises students that it is a choice and they should look at all options before getting into this business.

With high tuition fees and additional debts that students accrue, part-time minimum wage jobs are often not good enough anymore.

"Over the past few years, I have observed an increase in student sex workers because of the high tuition fees," says Scott.

"These girls can get a job as a bartender or a waitress and sure, you get tips, but the hours are dramatically decreased when working in prostitution and it gives you more time to study."

If students do look into the escorting industry, Scott suggests they work independently as opposed to working for an agency because of commission cuts.

"The escort agency used to receive 25 per cent of the commission, but now it has increased to 65 per cent and this does not include paying your driver. So, if your agreement is \$200 for a date, you're going home with \$80," says Scott.

She encourages women to work independently, not only because of the drastic commission split, but also for their safety.

"Women may feel that affiliating themselves with an agency would be safer because there's a driver waiting for you, but it's not (safer) because the driver may have to drive another girl after they drop you off."

Another important reason why escorts should be independent is to protect them from a "bad call or date."

"Sometimes, female escorts are victim to bad calls/dates and have been assaulted by their client and the agencies will not help them because their biggest fear is being placed under investigation by police. Now, you are helpless because the agency will withhold the client contact information from you so you cannot report them," says Scott.

Scott advises sex trade workers to go with their intuition to ward off potential bad clients.

Although prostitution is legal, soliciting is not. Therefore, Scott advises that people who want to be in this business must be careful about the legal issues.

"Advertise in a publication, call on a landline and agree to meet your client at a hotel which he rents, because if he doesn't, then you have to cover the tab which (can) then be considered a 'common bawdy house.' If you're caught by police, you may face two years in prison and unlimited fines."

Scott speaks of one woman who came into her office and spoke about how the police stripped her of everything she owned.

"They froze her account and assets. They arrived at her apartment with a moving van and took everything, even the kitchen cabinets," says Scott.

Scott also suggests sex workers get their money up front, so everything is settled before anything begins.

"I had a bad date where the guy just refused to pay me and I took him to small claims court and won. Sometimes, women are not likely to report these instances because they're afraid to be prosecuted and they're outing themselves because the courts (are) public," she says.

"Nothing is inherently dangerous about this business. It's the way we're forced to work that makes it dangerous," Scott insists. "If prostitution was decriminalized, like it is in Australia and South Wales, there would be fewer bad dates occurring and the escort agencies would be more likely to protect their workers."

"Compared with other jobs, sex work pays quite well for the amount of time you spend. It's a great job for students because you work on your own schedule," says Scott.

According to Scott, most of the clients are normal people and the shady portrayal sex workers receive is mostly untrue.

Riding the electromagnetic waves on land

by John Thaler

SACKVILLE, N.B. (CUP) -- Up until now, cheap solar-powered vehicles have been something scientists and science fiction writers have been predicting is just around the corner, but as you and I both know they certainly aren't a reality yet.

The development of solar powered vehicles has been promoted by several major competitions. There is the American Solar Challenge, a 1,400-kilometre open road race from Chicago to Los Angeles, as well as the World Solar Challenge in Australia, which spans 1,100 kilometres from Darwin to Adelaide. The groups that participate in these competitions are usually from engineering programs at major universities and colleges.

There is one slight problem with this tactic of promoting economic solar transportation: these groups spend upwards of \$600,000 on each model, which is not quite affordable for the cash-starved student.

Another problem is the competitions have just met a substantial roadblock in the form of safety concerns.

Last year, a student was killed in a car accident involving one of the

solar vehicles, and the safety of such competitions and vehicles has been called into question.

Now, a Canadian group may have the answer to the problems of solar-powered vehicles. BioMod, based in Montréal, has recently designed a solar scooter that you can build in your garage using spare parts. Best of all, the plans are free and accessible on the Internet (<http://groups.msn.com/BioMod>).

BioMod's design is for a solar scooter that can be built for only \$1,600. The cost is purely for materials, since the plans are free and it is self-assembled. The BioMod group has modelled this free distribution after the common computer operating system Linux.

Just like Linux, the plans are open source and people are encouraged to get creative and modify the design.

BioMod also encourages people to obtain the necessary materials through alternative channels -- such as searching through used electronics shops and garage sales -- rather than buying new components.

Jeff Dekzty of the BioMod group says there are three main differences between other vehicles and the solar scooters (he prefers the term solar



Solar scooters: build your own set of climate-friendly wheels.

bicycle). Unlike most other solar vehicles, the propulsion of the scooters is not provided by a "motor" but by magnetic drives; the power is stored in virtual capacitors instead of in batteries; and the panels are not solar but rather "light-sensitive" as they use the neon bandwidth instead of the solar bandwidth.

According to Dekzty, the design of the scooters was driven by the desire for a sturdy vehicle that is

inexpensive (under \$2000), able to travel at the urban and rural bike trail speed limits (35 and 30 kilometres per hour, respectively), and able to generate much of its energy while moving and recharge quickly.

In addition, they wanted a vehicle that could carry a significant load safely and efficiently (50 to 150 pounds, plus passenger), last a long time without major repairs, and take the shocks of both urban and rural road use.

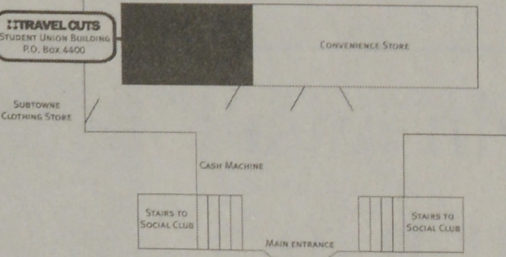
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