A girl nervously approaches a Six Flags attendant, but before she can even begin to ask directions to the ride she can’t find, the attendant pulls out a chainsaw, screams in her face and lurches towards her.

Any other time, this would probably be considered major headline news, but this is the fall, the annual time where tree leaves die, football kicks off and Great Adventure transforms into the Fright Fest park of terror.

Anyone who’s been to the park over the last season will attest that Fright Fest this year was by no means a 15-minute decorating job. The entire amusement park has been given a very serious makeover to create a creepy, but fun, atmosphere. Carefully placed smoke machines and strobe-lights set the mood with models of rotting corpses on poles and eerie music through hidden speakers to drive it home.

Even the park attendants are in on the gag, dressed as ghouls, murderers and zombies complete with props like fake chainsaws, knives and shovels to help them scare unsuspecting pedestrians.

However, while the employees are not allowed to make physical contact with guests in their attempts to frighten them, they come close enough to get the job done. Some do not even have to approach a passerby to elicit scares; one attendant, dressed as a zombie and hanging out of a sidelined ice cream truck was creepy enough even from 20 feet away.

However, while the decorations and ghouls get a good grade, sadly the crown jewel of the festival, the hayride, does not. After waiting in line anywhere from 45 minutes to four hours spiraling around in the abandoned Batman stunt show arena, the guest is taken to a wagon with benches, without even a strand of hay. From there, the wagon lurches into the woods, surrounded by bright purple Christmas lights, scattered torches, the occasional evil clown and walls where demon-clad employees pop out from. As the ride is most likely designed as a family attraction, it is understandable for the hayride to be considerably weak, but night rides should have been designed more with the adult crowd in mind.

Fortunately for those who don’t get much out of the hayless hayride, all of the park’s regular rides and attractions are open as well. From Nitro and Superman: Ultimate Flight to the teacups and carousel, they’re all operational to give guests the thrill of their choice. In addition, Halloween-themed skits and shows line the side-streets for people to stop and enjoy, or check out as they make their way to the next ride.

Despite a somewhat embarrassing hayride, the impressive decorations, ghouls, shows and, of course, rides, make Six Flags’ annual Fright Fest celebration definitely worth checking out before it closes on Sunday Nov. 2.

WHAT WAS YOUR BEST & WORST COSTUME?

**Fright Fest**

By Vinnie Civitillo

Managing Editor

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