

Pumpkin display finds a new home

Truth Centre to house collection of 500 polyurethane jack-o'-lanterns

BY KATIE DEROSA, TIMES COLONIST MAY 13, 2009



Part of the pumpkin display at Government House

Photograph by: Bruce Stotesbury, Times Colonist

The pumpkin display that once gave a famous orange glow to the grounds of Government House during Halloween now has a new permanent home at the Victoria Truth Centre.

The centre, at 1201 Fort St., bought the hundreds of illuminated pumpkins from Victoria artist John Vickers.

The Truth Centre offered to house the display -- which consists of more than 500 polyurethane jack-o'-lanterns, 1,000 milk crates and yards of string lights -- for free.

"I was just happy to find it a good home," said Vickers, who began working as the centre's executive director in January.

Each pumpkin has carved into it the likeness of a famous actor, politician, local celebrity or other well-known characters.

Vickers plans to bring the display up to date with some new carvings -- for example, Victoria Mayor Dean Fortin, Victoria police Chief Jamie Graham and U.S. President Barack Obama.

"I'll have to whip up an Obama pumpkin to add to the U.S. presidents section."

This year's show, on the last weekend in October, will raise money for the Victoria Youth Clinic, which provides health and counselling support for street youth.

The Halloween show was displayed at Government House until 2006 and Vickers said he is looking forward to having the display back in the Rockland area.

"Right from the beginning, it's been a home-grown event," Vickers said.

Pumpkin Art started as a modest display on Vickers's front lawn to raise money for UNICEF. As more pumpkins were added, it quickly became a hit with the public.

The Victoria Truth Centre is a New Thought spiritual centre and is celebrating its 75th anniversary this year.

kderosa@tc.canwest.com

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