

# Pumpkin art lights the night

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**Hundreds of carved jack-o'-lanterns will spread their eerie glow over the grounds of the Victoria Truth Centre this weekend. The annual event features the carvings of artist John Vickers.**

**Photograph by: Bruce Stotesbury, Times Colonist, Times Colonist**

What's more spooktacular than a carved bright orange pumpkin around Halloween? How about more than 600 of them?

The grounds of the Victoria Truth Centre is the must-see Halloween haunt for families this weekend for what is billed as the largest display of intricately carved pumpkins in the country.

Visitors will be bathed by the orange glow from the hundreds of illuminated Jack-o'-lanterns presented in more than 40 themes. They are carved with the likenesses of local personalities, cartoon characters, movie and television celebrities, rock bands and, of course, in spooky Halloween themes.

The display, called Pumpkin Art, was first started by local artist John Vickers on his Fairfield-area lawn in 1998 as a fundraiser for UNICEF. It was an immediate hit with the public. Over the years he has kept adding new carvings to the collection.

Vickers uses polyurethane molds instead of real pumpkins to do his carvings, so the creations last considerably longer than real pumpkins. The collection was on display every Halloween season at Government House between 2003 and 2006, but found a permanent home at the Victoria Truth Centre last year.

Over the years the intricately carved pumpkins have been displayed as far afield as New York City and the Royal Ontario Museum. Over the years, the collection has raised more than \$150,000 for various charities. This year, proceeds from donations will support the Victoria Youth Clinic, a part of the James Bay Community Project.

The Victoria Truth Centre, located at 1201 Fort St., is a New Thought spiritual centre celebrating 76 years in downtown Victoria. The grounds are open between 5 p.m. and 10 p.m., today until Sunday.

Admission is by donation. Free parking is available between 5 p.m. and 9 p.m., Oct. 30 and 31 at the Victoria Art Gallery on Moss Street.

For more information on Pumpkin Art: [pumpkinart.ca/](http://pumpkinart.ca/)