By Cathy Dausman

## Dark Dreams: Nightmare at Kheem heatre

\_chicken—I admit it. I flinch at thunder storms, close my eyes during scary movies. It took me years to look the Wicked Witch of the West in the eye, and just *hearing* the music to The Exorcist gave me the heebie jeebies. So what was I doing, voluntarily going to inspect The New Rheem Theatre haunted house?

"We'll be right behind you," said writer Cathy Tyson. And she meant it – yours truly had to go first. Gulp! A little background first, to delay the inevitable: Dark Dreams is a Rheem Theatre fundraiser benefitting the California International Film Festival (CAIFF). The creepy maze is a "behind the screens" look at all things dark and twisted. It is the work of three women: Joanne Foy, vice president of CAIFF, Maevis Padgett, and Julie Christensen, who is the lead designer and the one whom Foy labels "most twisted."

Foy used to decorate her home and garage for her children's Halloween. When they outgrew that, she

haunt. It's totally dark in here - I'm already on guard, and slightly disoriented. Crouching like Igor, I take a tentative step forward. Spooky music and cobwebs assault my ears and skin. Nervous laughter ensues from the group—or is it only a figment of my frightened mind? Haunted

houses equate with sensory overload, or in the case of sight—underload – it's still dark in here! Ghoulish living dead inhabit the maze, going about their daily (perhaps I should say "nightly") chores. Up ahead is a rattling door-don't make me turn the corner! More nervous laughter and we've come around the bend. Better that than going off the deep end, which you might do going through this alone. Without giving too much away I can say that even escaping from the maze is a fully claustropho-

turned

to produc-

ing haunts for

non-profit

fundraising.

Starting in mid-

September, the

crew put over

100 hours of

work into build-

ing the set, and

use a dozen live

your

haunt,"

monsters. "This

not

cautions Foy. Scary

or not, the set is profes-

sional theater quality, and

mother's

fully fireproof. It's safety first, says

Foy, who arrives to greet Lamorinda

Weekly staff wearing a green reflec-

ready to sell my soul and enter the

After a nudge from behind, I was



bia-inducing experience.

28 through Halloween evening, 7:00 so there.

Dark p.m. to 11:00 p.m., and is recom-Dreams is rated 9 out of 10 skulls on mended for ages 10 and up. Admisthe Haunted World website sion is \$8, and proceeds benefit (http://tinyurl.com/3ngjk8m). "You'll CAIFF. A special "lights on, no monhave to sleep with a light on," says sters" session for younger children, and chickens, will be held from 4:00 The haunting continues October p.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Halloween –I'm

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Costumed children must be accompanied by an adult. See stores for details. While supplies last.

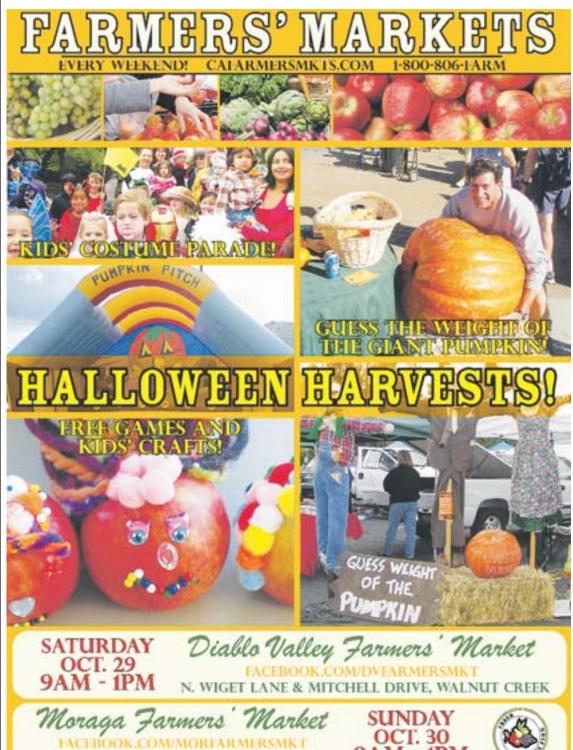




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