



Every Halloween Beacon Hill residents dress in costume, streets are barricaded and houses that have been elaborately adorned in festive decor offer trick or treaters candy.

The neighborhoodwide enthusiasm for the holiday, however, is not upheld by direction or requirement from a specific organization, but rather by the voluntary participation of its residents year in and year out.

"There is no real rally or anything, people just do it themselves," said Wendy Oleksiak, Co- President of the Beacon Hill Women's Forum and life- long neighborhood resident. "I don't think I've ever been in a neighborhood that gets as dressed up as Beacon Hill."

According to Hillary Gabrielli, who lives on Louisburg Square, the Beacon Hill Civic Association (BHCA) has only a minor role in the planning of the festivities each year. "The BHCA is only dealing with the placement and removal of the barricades for safety issues," she said.

Beginning in the late afternoon on the day of Halloween, the BHCA sets barricades at the beginning and end of Mount Vernon and Pinckney Streets, to allow children and adults to wander safely.

"I think it's pretty safe, ever since I was a child, I have always loved it," Oleksiak said.

When asked why the neighborhood has such an impressive Halloween presence, Oleksiak commented, "The architecture really lends itself, with the brownstones and whatnot. Certain homes are known as the homes to watch every year."

Oleksiak noted some of the more memorable homes are those that have elaborate displays such as intricately carved pumpkins, live projections and one infamous house that dedicates a chosen theme to their decor each season. This year's theme is Alice in Wonderland.

In addition to residents wandering the streets on Halloween, tours are also provided. Tour group company Boston By Foot has been hosting the "Beacon Hill with a BOO!" tour for over 30 years, and it remains their most popular tour offered. Attendees can experience all the magic the neighborhood has to offer, "to walk to the dark side on All Hallow's Eve."

The innate Beacon Hill holiday spirit that is reflected in extravagant decor and costumes is a joy for anyone to experience, according to Oleksiak. "The parents have just as good of a time as the kids," she said.

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