



How to Throw a CRAZY AWESOME Halloween Bash

by Jason Voorhees

Fall is in the air, which means that Halloween is just around the corner. So, if you've decided to host a spooktacular event at your place this year and you've had your costume picked out since April—now it's time to start planning a night to remember. Here are some tips to make sure your spooky, scary affair becomes a thing of legend.

One Month in Advance

If you decide to put your event together the week before the big night, it's not likely to turn out the way you may hope. You'll want to give plenty of notice to your guests, who might have multiple options for this fun holiday. This is the time to:

• **Set the Date**

Halloween doesn't fall on a weekend

this year, and deciding to host a party during the week can be difficult given people's busy schedules. Be sure to give your guests time to plan for trick or treating and other parties they may be invited to attend.

• **Make Your Guest List and Send Out Invitations**

Having an idea of how many people you will be hosting will make it easier to

make preparations. Sending invitations can be simple with email programs like Evite or Paperless Post, which will also help you to track your RSVPs.

• **Decide on a Theme**

While you are obviously having a Halloween party, have you decided on a more specific theme? Here are some theme ideas to consider:

- Pumpkin carving party
- Harry Potter
- Zombies
- Haunted house
- Spooky carnival

• **Figure Out the Serving Method**

Will your party include a sit-down dinner or buffet, or will you have simple munchies? Will your guests be asked to

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bring something? You'll want to work out these details well ahead of time, especially if you're asking those you've invited to bring something.

• **Put Together the Menu**

If you're serving food, you'll want to pull together all of the recipes you will be using and have an idea of how long each will take to make. If you are ordering from a local deli or bakery, give them a call so you'll know how far in advance you should place your order.

• **Ask for Help**

If you will be having a large event or simply want some extra hands to assist, you'll want to research and reserve those services well in advance.

Two Weeks in Advance

As the party draws nearer, you'll want to get further organized. Two weeks before the soiree, you should:

• **Purchase Your Decorations and Supplies**

Start getting everything you're going to need in order to decorate for your party. Don't forget any table coverings and toppers or window dressings you might need to set the mood.

• **Give Your Guests a Heads Up**

If you've decided to host a potluck, make sure guests know what they'll need to bring. Start getting a head count of how many people will be attending. If you will be having a family-friendly event, an understanding of the number of adults versus kids will be helpful when you're out shopping for food and drink.

• **Go Shopping**

Now is the time to make that first trip to the grocery and liquor store (if you plan to serve alcohol). Make any dishes that you can freeze ahead of time, allowing you to have more time for prep on party day.

• **Plan the Playlist**

Don't forget the tunes. Put together your playlist, with enough upbeat tunes to last the entire party. Be sure to include spooky classics like "Time Warp" from The Rocky Horror Picture Show, "The Monster Mash," and "Thriller."

Seven Days in Advance

The week before the party, make sure you know who's coming. For those who have not RSVP'd, follow up to see

whether they will be attending your shindig. The week and days prior to the gathering is when you truly need to tighten up your logistics game, starting with getting your home ready.

• **Create space in your freezer and refrigerator** to ensure you have plenty of room for the food and drink being used for your party.

• **Clean your home thoroughly.** If your budget allows, consider springing for a cleaning service to ensure your home sparkles for party night.

• **Set up your furniture for party night.** You'll want to be sure there are plenty of places for your guests to sit. If you've got the space, leaving room for a dance floor is guaranteed to make for a fun night.

• **Double check** to make sure you have enough plates, glasses and utensils. If you prefer, you can purchase inexpensive versions at your local party supply store.

Three Days in Advance

• **Make another trip to the grocery store** to pick up all the remaining non-perishable items.

• **Notify your neighbors** (unless they are on the guest list). Make them aware you are having a party in case things are noisy and be sure to ask if it's OK for guests to park in front of their homes.

• **Decorate your home.**

• **Put away any personal items** that



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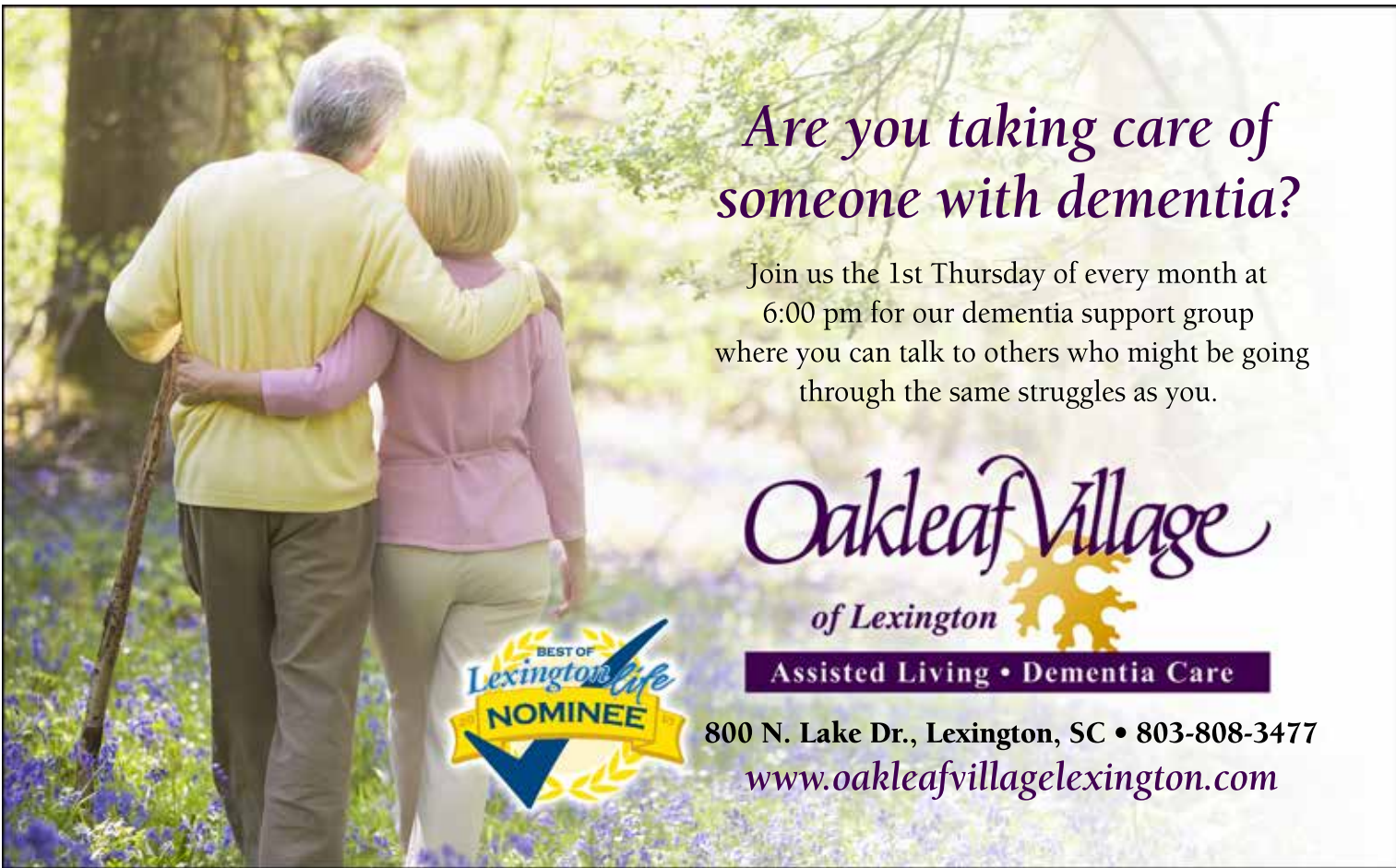
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you don't want your guests to see. Don't forget to check the medicine cabinet.

- **Create a place** to put your guest's coats and jackets.

The Day Before

- **Purchase the remaining grocery items** and prepare as many of the remaining recipes as you can.
- **If you've prepared any dishes ahead of time** and had them frozen, pull them out of the freezer to allow them to defrost overnight.
- **Set up tables to serve the food** and give your home a last-minute once-over.
- **If you're serving alcohol**, be sure to make arrangements to ensure that everyone will be able to get home safely.

Party Day

The big day is finally here! If you've been preparing all along, today is just a matter of putting on the final touches.

- **Make any of the remaining dishes** left on the menu.
- **If you decided to get help**, make your assistants aware of exactly what they'll need to do come party time.
- **Set up the bar if alcohol is on the menu** (make sure there is plenty of ice!).

Now it's time to put on your costume and get ready for your guests to arrive. Halloween is always one of the most popular holidays of the year. With these tips, you'll be able to throw a party your guests will be talking about for years to come. ■



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