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THE UNDEAD DECADE

Zombie Walk celebrates 10 years of ghouls and fundraising

By DENNIS BURCK

All rallies at the State Capitol are political. Zombie Walk on Oct. 20 is no exception. It's a demonstration against death - the ultimate term limit. It's also a benefit for the Greater Lansing Food Bank.

The event has been in the hands of Jerry Jodlowski for the past six years as part of his How-To Halloween festival at the Lansing Convention Center. Participants are asked to come in zombie fashion and donate imperishable foods to participate. All ages of undead are welcome.

"The best part of it is seeing the reactions of people. We hope to be the spectacle of the city," sJerry Jodlowski said. "I love the fact that it is a completely unique event in Downtown Lansing.

Downtown Lansing Zombie Walk 2019

Sunday, Oct. 20
Noon to 2 p.m.
Lansing Convention Center
333 E. Michigan Ave.
(517) 204-6119
how-tohalloween.com

Halloween is only one night. Why not spread out the fun a little?"

The zombie walk route runs from the Lansing Convention Center to the Capitol where the horde will pose

for a group shot. Returning zombies to the Lansing Center will be granted reduced admission and can participate in a zombie costume contest.

"I do love the zombie families," Jodlowski added. "Zombie dogs are appreciated too. We have a lot of people bringing up the rear with zombie survival vehicles."

Participant Emily Emerson-Rich dresses up as a zombie bride each year. She's been doing it for the past seven years.

"We met in a little park where the ice skating park is now. There were probably only 20 of us that were there," Emerson-Rich said. "There are people who have



Courtesy Lansing Zombie Walk

A horde of zombies decked out in grisly gore will stumble and stagger toward the Capitol Sunday, Oct. 20. According to founder Steve Ward, the combined walks raised over 9,000 pounds of food for the Greater Lansing Food Bank.

food insecurities and we were bringing people together to donate non-perishable food items so the zombies can feed humans instead of feeding on humans."

Emerson-Rich's choice to be a bride wasn't just to add a bit of wow factor to passersby.

"It was my form of protest back in the day because my wife and I were not able to get legally married. She and I figured we'd be dead before it was legal for us, and even in death we'd be married beyond," Emerson-Rich said.

She said the thrifted wedding gown adds "a great character of undying eternal love" to the horde.

The routine for getting into the zombie bride character takes about an hour.

"It is a trademark of mine to have a lot of pustules and boils on my face. After Halloween, rub-on tattoos and scabs are on sale and that's how I start gathering for the following year."

As a former cosmetologist, Emerson-Rich can mimic wounds with careful detailing of eye shadow and makeup



Courtesy Lansing Zombie Walk

Zombie bride Emily Emerson-Rich.

around the tattoos.

"I prepare the dress by hanging it up and doing some blood splatter on it. I take fake blood on my hands and grab it in places. Then I rub it in dirt."

However, dressing up as an undead icon is secondary to the mission of food availability, she added.

"I had to make a choice between paying a bill and making sure my son had food in the house," she said. "I know the importance of food banks personally. I do this to make sure we are taking care of each other because we are all in this together."

Emerson-Rich, who owns Catalyst Warrior Yoga by day, is also running an inaugural zombie yoga class after the walk starting at 2 p.m. to stretch out those tendons post rigor mortis.

Emerson-Rich said the best advice for new participants is to focus on layering up a costume to be able to keep insulated from the cold weather.

"It is not a moneymaker, it is just a great opportunity for people to get together and do something," Jodlowski said.

The Lansing Derby Vixens will also be in attendance as zombie derby girls.

"For me, it is an honor to be known as the zombie bride," Emerson-Rich said. "Even though it is fun, I take it more seriously now. It got heavier because I realize we are really doing something for people in need."