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# 'High School,' 'Hanna' in demand this Halloween

The "Hannah Montana" children's costume, as shown by Spirit Halloween, is proving to be popular this Halloween season.

At top right, Debbie Smith, manager of the Spirit Halloween Shop in the Laurel Mall, holds the most popular Halloween costumes for little girls this year — Hannah Montana and High School Musical. At bottom right, Barbara Haraschak, owner of Designs Unlimited in Freeland, shows two of her popular Halloween costumes — Wonder Woman and Supergirl. — in her shop on Wednesday.



ERIC CONOVER/Staff Photographer

## Television, movie characters and political costumes in demand this year, area retailers, shoppers say

By JILL WHALEN  
Staff Writer

When it comes to selecting Halloween costumes, boys will be boys and girls will be girls. Personnel at local costume shops said that although the characters kids "want to be" for Halloween changes from year to year, there is a rule of thumb.

"Little girls always want to be pretty, and little boys always want to be scary," said Barabara Haraschak, owner of Designs Unlimited, Freeland.

Pretty this year, according to Haraschak and Debbie Smith, manager of Spirit Halloween Shop in the Laurel Mall, is Hannah Montana and the crew of "High School Musical."

"A lot of girls want to be Hannah Montana," Smith said.

A length of one wall inside Halloween Spirit is dedicated to the popular Disney characters. A blonde wig here, a bangle bracelet there — and just about every style of microphone imaginable.

Girls also like to be fairies, princesses and other cute characters, Smith said.

The popular boy costumes were located near a display of severed fingers and fangs at Halloween Spirit.

"They want Ironman, Batman and horror stuff," Smith said.

Haraschak, who sews her own costumes and rents them, agreed that superheroes like Batman, Spiderman and the Incredible Hulk remain popular.

As for adult costumes, Smith said women tend to want to dress in flirty outfits, while men want funny or creepy costumes. "They like costumes from television shows and stuff," she said.

People also liked masks of presidential hopefuls Barack Obama and John McCain — so much so that Smith can't keep them

### SAFETY TIPS FOR TRICK-OR-TREATERS

The American Red Cross, NEPA Blood Services and local American Red Cross Chapters have provided the following trick-or-treat safety tips:

- Map out the route that you plan to roam, so adults are assured you will find your way home.
- From the bravest of superheroes to the noblest of knights, everyone should remember to bring their flashlights.
- If you visit a house where a stranger resides, accept treats at the door and, please, don't go inside.
- When you get ready to put on your disguise, use face paint instead of masks, which will cover your eyes.
- Always remember, before you embark, to wear light-colored clothing to be seen in the dark. (And remember to use reflective tape, even on bikes, skateboards and brooms).
- Whether you walk, slither or sneak, do it on the sidewalks and not in the street.
- As you roam through the neighborhood

collecting your treats, please look both ways before crossing the street.

- Wigs, capes and costumes are flammable attire, so avoid open flames to prevent a fire.
- Use a glow stick instead of a candle so your jack-o-lantern isn't a safety gamble.
- You may fly on a broom or a space ship from Mars, but please be on the lookout for drivers in cars! (And don't hide between parked vehicles.)
- Monsters and zombies should stay off the lawn, and only visit homes with their porch lights turned on.
- You may be dressed as a werewolf, a cat or a frog, but be cautious around strange animals, especially dogs.
- Have a grown-up inspect your candy when you're done trick-or-treating to remove open packages and choking hazards before eating.

For a detailed list of Halloween safety tips for motorists, parents and homeowners, visit [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org).

on the shelf.

"All we have left are the Hillary (Clinton) masks. She's the loser," she mused.

Samantha Drumheller and Heather Medina, both of Nuremberg, went against the grain when picking out their adult costumes.

Medina decided on Batman, so Drumheller's choice was easy: Robin.

But Stephanie Kurchock, Pottsville, needed more time to find just the right outfit to wear to a Halloween concert in Reading.

"Last year I dressed as a sheriff," Kurchock said, rifling through prepackaged costumes.

Brian Rojas, 12, knew that he'd be dressing as the masked character from the movie, "Scream." He was at the store with his teacher, Danielle Bernstein, and other Life Skills class members from Hazleton Ele-

mentary/Middle School as part of a community-based instruction trip.

Jane Barrington, 13, couldn't wait to show Bernstein the costume she fell in love with from "High School Musical."

"It's there!" she pointed, across an area where Kelly DeFuzo and her son, Billy, 3, were checking out decorations.

Billy's outfit — Spongebob Squarepants — had already been purchased, but his mom said he likes to visit Halloween Spirit to look at its outfits — and pet an oversized rubber spider.

Others, too, said they were perusing the store to look at costumes and get ideas.

At Haraschak's Designs Unlimited, getting an idea is as easy. If they didn't have anything in mind, they can simply look at a board that has costumes listed by category.

There are animals, television characters, scary costumes and funny ones, too.

"Some come in and try a lot on," said Haraschak's mother-in-law, Irma, who helps with rentals. "Some come in and immediately say, 'This is the one I want.'"

While she does have child and teen sizes, most of the rentals go to adults, Haraschak said.

And just like their younger counterparts, women like to be pretty — and guys like to be scary or funny.

"Women are less apt to paint their face green and have blood dripping from it," Haraschak laughed.

This year, she said, she added Wonder Woman and Supergirl costumes to the 375 costumes she already has. The Three Musketeers are on a "things to sew" list.

A narrow walkway begins near a rack of gorilla suits and takes visitors past rows of outfits that include the entire cast of the Wizard of Oz, several Santa Clauses, Bert and Ernie and Cookie Monster.

There are also period style costumes, complete with the poodle skirts of the 1950s and the tie-dyes of the 1960s.

Haraschak said she's never sure what costume a customer will choose, but said that many return year after year. She's always adding new stock to the supply — things she's able to create when she's not busy sewing wedding dresses or other attire.

And, she added, she can whip up any costume a customer dreams up. In fact, she was putting the finishing touches on a cosmic fairy outfit on a recent afternoon.

As for the strangest costume request received by Halloween Spirit employee Katie Bast?

"Richard Simmons," she said. "I couldn't help with that outfit. But I was able to find a wig."

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