



Costumania owner Mark Young holds a mask of Anubis, Egyptian god of the underworld, in front of the masquerade mask wall, which displays hundreds of choices for all occasions.

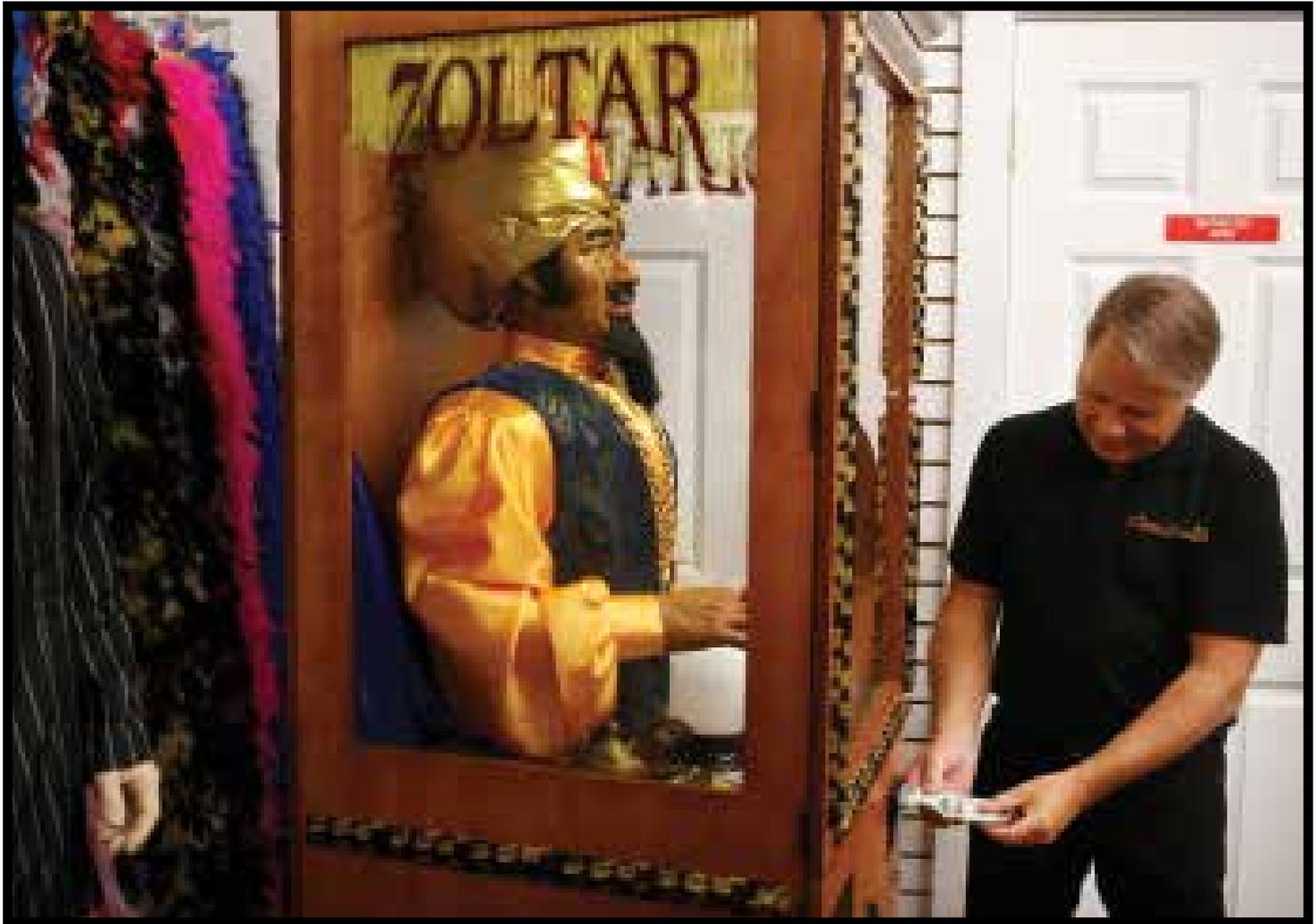


HALLOWEEN ATTIRE

Costumania: Your year-round dress-up shop, and more

As Halloween approaches, thoughts turn to the dress-up fun central to the holiday—well, besides the candy. The night of October 31 has evolved into a time when not only young children transform into princesses, superheroes, and pirates. Teens and adults also join in the costume fun.

Costumania in West Lebanon has everything you need to dress up as your favorite character—and not just for Halloween. Owner Mark Young says, “We’re open year-round. We’re not a pop-up, take-the-money-and-run store.” He adds, “We’re a small local business, and we hope people will shop at locally owned stores. It was the mom-and-pop stores that helped this country grow.”



Above: As Mark demonstrates, customers can pay a dollar to Zoltar to receive their fortune, horoscope, and lucky numbers on a printed ticket.

Right: Scary Halloween masks from Trick or Treat Studios and Zagone. A special line of handmade mustaches and beards from the European Union look like the real thing. Once stuck on, they stay in place with the included adhesive tape.



The store began in 1994 as a side business to what was then College Formals. Mark and his former wife started Costumania as a way to generate money outside of the formal-wear season. In 2015, they sold that portion to Everything Tuxedo but kept the costume shop. The store settled into its current location in September 2016. The Colonial Plaza shop—Walgreens is at 3 Airport Road and Colonial Plaza is at 5—is painted bright yellow and purple to match the store’s logo.

A Costume for Everyone

For this Halloween, Mark predicts costumes from *The Incredibles* movies will be popular. He notes, “The whole family can go as all of the characters. Superheroes are always popular. So is Pennywise [the clown from the movie *It*]. Girls like princess costumes and boys like scary costumes. It’s been that way for years.”

Mark points out that cosplay costumes tied to video games and anime characters are popular with teens and adults. And so are the motion-activated Halloween props he sells. “If you walk by them, something jumps out at you,” he says.

The shop offers items priced from 99 cents to \$1,000. What can you get for a cool grand? That would be a Darth Vader deluxe costume. Mark notes he always keeps *Star Wars* costumes in stock because they are sure to sell.

Beyond Halloween, Costumania has apparel and accessories for many other occasions. For example, the shop offers an extensive collection of items for bachelorette parties, including sashes, cups, car decorations, and photo props. Need a wig, beard, mustache, or theater makeup? You’ll find those here too, as well as capes, cloaks, hats, glasses, fangs, and teeth. There are also party props and decorations.

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WHAT'S IN STORE



Below: Oversized masks are flat, lightweight, and easy to wear.

Inset: Octopus hat.

Bottom: No one can wear the Devo hat without singing a few bars of "Whip It."

Opposite: Toreador jacket, pin bodice vest, and tapestry kilt are made by Shrine Clothing in Los Angeles.



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Beyond Costumes

Costumania has been a longtime supporter of the Children’s Hospital at Dartmouth-Hitchcock (CHaD). The shop partners with Positive Tracks for the CHaD HERO bike, walk, hike, or run race event, helping all participants 23 years of age and younger to maximize their fundraising. They offer tips and training on how to line up donations, and they get Positive Tracks partners to double the funds they raise.

Beyond costumes, the store is also the go-to place for the entire Melissa and Doug line of toys, and you’ll find Yelete leggings and Liberty Wear shirts for women as well. Plus, there is an extensive line of Shrine clothing from Los Angeles—known as clothing for rock stars. Says Mark, “The people who work for me know everything about everything we sell in the store,” adding, “They are invaluable to me.”



Mark hopes people who shop at Costumania for Halloween realize they can dress up for events throughout the year. There are plenty of opportunities—from New Year’s Eve (costume parties) and Mardi Gras (“It’s very big with parties, winter carnivals at schools, and the Masquerade Ball at the Fireside”) through Easter (bunny ears) and July 4 (Uncle Sam) to Thanksgiving (turkey hats and pilgrim costumes) and Christmas (elf ears and Santa suits).

He says, “Something I enjoy hearing is a customer who is hosting a Christmas in July event and asks, ‘Do you have a Santa suit?’ And I can say, ‘Yes, we do!’”

Costumania

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www.Costumania.com

Linda A. Ditch has worked as a freelance writer for two decades. She liked dressing up for Halloween as a kid, especially one year when she went to a party as an old woman. Her costume was so good everyone thought she was someone’s grandmother instead of a sixth-grader sitting in a corner wondering why no one would talk to her.

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