

Scary movies to die for this Halloween

GBHS students talk about what factors make a horror movie great

BY KEVIN BURNS

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For years, scary-movie-goers have been anxiously screaming at over-confident protagonists, asking why they would go into a dark room alone when a savage killer is on the loose. Many viewers, though, fail to ask themselves why they have entered a dark movie theater to see a movie that will only scare them.

Why exactly do people choose to spend \$10.50 and two hours of their time to jump in their seats? Senior and self-proclaimed scary movie connoisseur Chase Cooper attempted to answer the question on everyone's mind.

“(Scary movies) get your adrenaline going and make you appreciate the normal world,” Cooper said.

Cooper compares the world of movies to the real world every time he watches a scary movie because of the unrealistic storylines.

One of these movies with unlikely stories is *The Ring*, a movie about a dead teenage girl who climbs through her victims' television to kill them seven days after they watch a video about her death.

The Ring, Cooper's favorite scary movie, draws an audience that is attracted to supernatural movies—scary movies where the dead come back to life to fight the living. These movies were popular during the early 2000s, and featured *The Ring*, *The Ring 2* and *The Grudge* Trilogy, movies also centered around a dead child haunting those who disturb him.

After the height of the supernatural phase in the horror movie industry, a new style would hit the market, led by an iconic movie that would make its mark in the record books for revenue for a scary movie. More importantly, though, it was widely seen as one of the scariest movies ever made.

Despite its \$15,000 budget, *Paranormal Activity* shocked the movie market just as much as it shocked the millions of viewers that tuned in to the silent, but deadly thriller.

Because of the huge turnout for the first movie, the writers behind the quiet film busted out three more movies and are working on another. The viewership and quality of the films decreased as the series progressed, according to some. This is shown by movie critics' declining approval rating from the first movie from 2007 of a 6.3/10 to the 2012 most recent installment of a 4.4/10.

Despite decreasing popularity, senior Tanner Hulsebus is still a strong supporter of the international phenomenon.

“Personally I enjoy *Paranormal Activity*,” Hulsebus said. “I like how the movie is shot like the main characters are filming it.”

Yet despite his support for one of his favorite horror movies, Hulsebus always has some constructive criticism for

supernatural movie writers.

“They are suspenseful, but I think they could do better,” Hulsebus said. “The horror genre has so many opportunities (to impress) and they are never taken advantage of.”

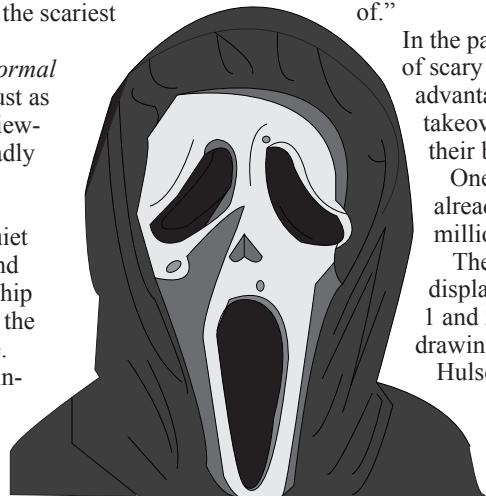
In the past couple years, the newest style of scary movies have tried to exploit those advantages. The newest style of demon-takeover movies have audiences shaking in their boots and looking over their shoulder.

One of these movies, *The Conjuring*, has already scared crowds to the tune of \$300 million in box office sales.

The demon takeover subgenre, mainly displayed in *The Conjuring* and *Insidious* 1 and 2, has been sweeping the nation and drawing huge spectators, including Helland, Hulsebus and Cooper.

“I saw *The Conjuring* and I wasn't really scared, but I did jump a few times when things popped up,” senior Ciara Helland said.

Gazette illustration/THOMAS TAYLOR



Helland explained how *The Conjuring* was not as scary to her as more realistic movies where the killer is a real person.

Hulsebus may not agree with Helland on the perfect scary movie, but he can at least come up with a formula for writers to scare him.

“For a scary movie to be good,” Hulsebus said, “there has to be a solid storyline with plot twists along the way

Generation gap in the horror genre

The Gazette recommends the best of new and old in scary movies

BY AUSTIN PINK

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As Halloween approaches, movie theaters will again play host to waves of genre junkies looking for their horror fix. The modern horror selection is, unfortunately, often limited to a sleuth of remakes and sequels. But, every once in a while, the stars align and a new horror movie arrives that is worthwhile and maybe even candidate to become a modern classic.

Meanwhile, some horror fanatics avoid theaters at all cost and prefer classics from the “golden age” of horror filmmaking.

It is still disputed whether this genre of film has lost its touch or has gotten better over the past decades.

Unfortunately, many of the basic attributes of horror films have been turned into clichés that affect the overall quality of the genre, such as obnoxious jump out scenes and overly bloody gore fests.

But there are some modern horror films that have gone above and beyond the normal concepts of horror and have given the classics a run for their money. Which era ultimately prevails?

I have compiled a list of what are, in my opinion, the best movies of each style that are worth checking this Halloween season. These movies represent what horror movies are all about: originality, creativity, and just plain old-fashioned scariness.

Classic

The Texas Chainsaw Massacre

On my list because: Upon its October 1974 release, *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* was banned outright in several countries, which is awesome. Plus, its original equation of middle-class values with cannibalism and wholesale slaughter helped define the Slasher genre and make for an exhilarating ride.

Halloween

On my list because: *Halloween* all but invented an entire subgenre of slasher horror movies, those that take place on Hallows' Eve. Its creepy take on the murderous killer antagonist involves one of the most iconic villains in movie history, Michael Myers, and caused a fan frenzy that would ultimately lead to 7 sequels. The most recent adaptation will not be commented on.

The Shining

On my list because: Stanley Kubrick's adaptation of Stephen King's novel depicts the Torrance family's headlong plunge into insanity during a winter isolated at a Colorado hotel. With a haunting score, luscious, near-eternal Steadicam shots, and Jack Nicholson's grand pirouette into murderous madness at its heart, it's one of the most crafty horror films in history.

Modern

The Blair Witch Project

On my list because: Part of the appeal of *Blair Witch* is that it *feels* real. I remember when I first saw this suspenseful “hand-cam” film that some people were buzzing this was actually a true story, and it was all real. That may sound stupid now, but at the time, even a hint of that going into the film made the experience all the more unnerving. And if you don't like its lack of action, you're missing the entire point. Go watch *Freddy vs. Jason* or something.

Paranormal Activity

On my list because: Something of a modern classic, this shocking feature plays on a culture saturated with reality television and near omnipresent surveillance. The sheer hype generated around this movie after its release cause me to enter the theater with anxiety. Contrasting with the overly sanguine thrillers of late, this creepy assault on the psyche helped to redefine the horror genre.

Evil Dead

On my list because: This is kind of cheating; this is really a remake of the 1981 cult classic, but for once a remake has actually outdone the original. It avoids slow-burn development and piles on the gory scares, but it's still a decidedly creepy pick for the holiday. *Evil Dead* reminds us that horror films with gory, bloody, even downright disgusting scenes still have their place and the ability to be imaginatively scary.