

{Halloween} By ANNE BURKE, *Los Angeles Times* Special Sections Writer

Be Afraid, Be Very Afraid

THERE'S PERHAPS NO BETTER PLACE TO SPEND HALLOWEEN THAN VEGAS. HERE ARE OUR PICKS FOR A FRIGHTFUL NIGHT FULL OF SPOOKY FUN.

Las Vegas is the ultimate land of make believe. A frat-house dude-bro in sagging khakis and a polo shirt boards a flight in Burbank and steps off the plane at McCarran International a silver-tongued sex machine capable of sweeping Megan Fox off — and out of — her spike heels.

But that's any old night of the week. Las Vegas on Halloween night is a whole different stack of chips. Picturing yourself as a blood-sucking vampire girl? A stilt-walking tuba player? A thong-clad Borat in a Barack Obama mask? Sin City calls.

With apologies to West Hollywood, no city pulls out the stops for Halloween like Las Vegas. From megaresorts on the Strip to blue-collar haunts downtown, Sin City suspends disbelief for one long and besotted night of revelry. With the holiday falling on a Saturday this year, recession or no recession, the party will be hearty.

If you're recently laid off and want to stay that way, go ahead

and post your Halloween-in-Vegas photos on your public Facebook profile. The employer who might otherwise have asked you to join the IT department will get a kick out of your "naughty, naughty boy" self getting whip-spanked at the hands of a dominatrix in thigh-high leather boots.

While sexy-scary outrageousness rules at the adult venues, Las Vegas does not forsake pint-sized ghouls and goblins. Mom and Dad can find family-friendly events at which there's no shame in donning Harry Potter specs or a white sheet with two eyeholes (although your hotel's housekeeping department will appreciate it if you bring your linens from home).

ADULTS-ONLY ACTION

The mother of all Halloween blowouts in Las Vegas is the annual Fetish & Fantasy Halloween Ball, held this year for the first time at the Joint, the Hard Rock Hotel and Casino's new concert facility. As long as you observe the barest minimum standards of decorum — which in Vegas means no nudity, pasties or liquid latex — you can feel free to liberate

the kinky party animal trapped inside your computer-tethered 9-to-5 self. Expect lots of go-go girls, laser lights, fire breathers and aerial silk dancers.

In recent years, erotic parties have come under criticism in Las Vegas. Fetish & Fantasy sponsors ask that wearers of especially risqué costumes cover up when coming to and from the event so as not to arouse further ire of those whom the erotic party crowd calls PEEPers ("People for the Elimination of Erotic Parties" [yes, it's real]).

There will be a coat check at the door (if you're wearing that much). The party is from 10 p.m. to 4 a.m. Tickets are \$82.50 in advance or \$87.50 at the door; after 1 a.m. \$42 in advance or \$47 at the door; V.I.P. \$232.50 in advance or \$237.50 at the door. 4455 Paradise Road.

www.halloweenball.com;
www.hardrockhotel.com.

At Palms Casino & Resort, across town from the Hard Rock, costumed partygoers will compete for \$100,000 in cash and prizes at the property's four nightclubs — Playboy, Rain, ghostbar and Moon. The Playboy Club



MADNESS AND MAYHEM AT THE HALLOWEEN FETISH & FANTASY BALL.

will hand out the biggest purse. It's valued at \$43,000 and goes to the best three Playboy-inspired costumes. Admission at each club ranges from \$25 to \$40; local ladies get in free. 4321 W. Flamingo Road. www.palms.com.

The Halloween bash at Studio 54 at MGM Grand promises a special if bitter-sweet night for fans of Michael Jackson. In keeping with tradition, Studio 54 dancers will recreate scenes from Jackson's "Thriller" video, complete with gray-palored zombies and a fog-shrouded cemetery.

The "Thriller" show will be among highlights of the nightclub's annual Nightmare on 54th Street Halloween bash. On hand to weave webs of naughty intrigue will be Studio 54's "spider girls," who spin, swoop and swing on aerial webs and ghostly bungees. 10 p.m. to late. 3799 Las Vegas Blvd. South. Ticket info: www.mgmgrand.com.

The MGM Grand kicks off Halloween season early with its 44th annual Beaux Arts Ball on Oct. 29 at Studio 54. A benefit for Golden Rainbow, which provides housing and financial assistance to people living with HIV/AIDS,



DUTY NURSE AT THE FETISH & FANTASY BALL.