



## Halloween revelers trade scary attire for red, white and blue

By **JAN H. KENNEDY** Repository staff writer

CANTON -- Halloween will be a more patriotic affair this year, reflecting the nation's reaction to the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on New York City and the Pentagon.

"I'm sure we're not going to be selling any Arabs (costumes) this year," said Ward Scott, owner of Scott Costume of 114 Fourth St. NW.

Steven Marsino of Marsino's Wholesale Novelty Co. at 5030 Tuscarawas St. W in Perry Township said he was offered masks of Osama bin Laden, the man believed to be the mastermind behind the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

"These people are out of Cleveland, and they sculpt masks," Marsino said. "They're pretty good. I've bought from them before.

"He called me and said he was thinking about sculpting a bin Laden mask and asked if I was interested," he said. "I said no. I would not expect to sell anything Arab."

Patriotic costumes are flying out the door. Both Marsino and Scott are getting low on Uncle Sam outfits. People also want hero stuff, like firefighters and police officers, nurses and doctors and superheroes like Spiderman and Batman.

"I went through my inventory and found a lot of red, white and blue things that I could make showgirl outfits out of," Scott said. "Put a sailor's cap or an Uncle Sam hat on it, and it will sell. They're very cute."

People also are shopping and reserving costumes early.

"I have to think it's because of the times," Scott said. "People want to party and get away from their TV sets."

Suppliers have backed off the more gory props for the patriotic theme as they adjust to a vulnerable and sensitive American psyche. Party City, the largest specialty Halloween retailer in the country, pulled some products, such as body parts, off the market. Also gone is the Grim Reaper, replaced by a skeleton pirate.

Disguise, which manufactures 35 percent of the Halloween costumes sold across the United States, sold out of its inventory of patriotic costumes the first week after the terrorist attacks, said Jeff Coppens, director of marketing and product development. It already is planning more patriotic and American history costumes for next year.

Local shoppers had differing feelings on changing Halloween from scary to funny.

"I think it's good, but it's not different for me, because I don't like gory things anyway," said Lori Hagan of Lake Township, who was shopping for costumes at Wal-Mart on The Strip in Jackson Township for her children, who are 4 and 9 years old. "I don't want my kids in something mean and hurtful. From my Christian standpoint, I'm not all that into Halloween, anyway."

Jamie Beavers of Plain Township thinks the changes are unnecessary. She has three children, ages 2, 5 and 9.

"Kids shouldn't know what going on, we should keep their routine as natural as possible," she said. "My oldest wants to go as the bloodiest thing he can find, and I think that's all right, as long as people make sure Halloween is safe for the kids. I'm going to a party, and I want to be as scary as I can. A monster, or something."



Repository / Scott Heckel

**PATRIOTISM IS IN.** Steven Marsino of Marsino's Wholesale Novelty Co. is shown in one of the most popular Halloween costumes this year, Uncle Sam. Retailers are finding that people are shying away from blood and horror this year in favor of patriotic-themed costumes.

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