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Photo by Ashley Quintela

Xavier Puett, 2, trick or treats during Trick or Treat Olde Towne Bellevue Sunday. Children and their families were able to trick or treat at local businesses. More Halloween photos can be found on Page A6.

Sweet Treats

Fort Crook Elementary School students, from left, Kerra Gaylord, Chiara Carbajal-Campuzano and Elizabeth McNeerney receive candy. Despite the windy 36-degree day, the school had a Trunk or Treat event Friday. Students, dressed in costumes, walked from decorated vehicle to vehicle receiving candy.

Photo by Hailey Stolze



Cemetery regulations discussion in the works

By Eugene Curtin
Leader Associate Editor

A discussion on the display of U.S. flags at the Bellevue Cemetery is set for the Nov. 27 City Council meeting.

An Oct. 19 memo to council members from City Administrator Joe Mangiamelli reveals he will present an amended cemetery ordinance on Nov. 13 that will be the subject of a public hearing two weeks later.

The memo reads: "The ordinance and resolution should clarify what the city can do legally and cannot do in violation of families' rights in this *public* cemetery (emphasis Mangiamelli's)."

The tone of Mangiamelli's memo, which is critical of the Bellevue Cemetery Committee, suggests the proposed standards will loosen rules requiring that only U.S. flags be displayed at the cemetery.

The presence of foreign flags at the cemetery has fueled a longstanding dispute between the four-member cemetery committee and cemetery staff. Committee members argue that staffers have not consistently enforced city rules permitting only the U.S. flag to be displayed.

That complaint was addressed recently by Parks Superintendent Brian Madison, who said the Bellevue Cemetery is a public cemetery and must be careful about placing limits on how people memorialize loved ones. He said he knows of no requirement in U.S. law or Department of Veterans Affairs regulations that restricts the display of flags in public cemeteries to the U.S. flag.

Mangiamelli's memo appears to side with Madison's approach by stressing the word "public" in "public cemetery."

The memo is also critical of the cemetery committee's efforts to enforce the existing flag ordinance.

The committee asked Tom Mlnarik, director of the Sarpy County Veterans Service Office, to cease providing flag holders until the flag ordinance was properly enforced. Mlnarik said he would take the request under advisement pending input from the Sarpy County Board of Commissioners.

Mangiamelli said city staff will contact Mlnarik "to mend the fences broken by the committee" and will work to establish the proper intent of the flag holders provided by the county.

"There is no federal or county policy or guideline on this matter, notwithstanding the opinion of the committee, that has been obtained or provided by the county representative," Mangiamelli wrote.

City Councilman Pat Shannon, who is the city's representative on the cemetery committee, took issue with Mangiamelli's proposed ordinance revision. He said the committee is charged with reviewing any proposed changes before they are submitted to the city council.

Allen Holley, a cemetery committee member, said a gray area exists concerning display of foreign flags at the cemetery if the flag holder is provided privately and not by the county. He said discussions concerning such a scenario have taken place and that while no policy currently exists prohibiting the private display of foreign flags, he believes one will be enacted.

Mangiamelli's memo also takes issue with allegations that cemetery staff does not police the cemetery for prohibited items such as stuffed animals, toys, balloons and beer cans.

He said photographs provided to local news media showing such items are old and outdated.

"See the brown grass," he wrote.

BU, BLT partner for 'M*A*S*H' production

By Hailey Stolze
Leader Staff Writer

Five Bellevue University international students have been cast in the upcoming Bellevue Little Theatre show.

As BLT's upcoming production is "M*A*S*H" centers on the Korean War, it was searching for Asians to cast. Coming up short, the theater reached out to Julie Verebely, BU international student experience specialist, for help. She rallied five male Asian international students to fill the roles.

"They saved us," Producer Pam Matney said. "We want the show to be as period correct as possible."

Verebely said this was a great opportunity for the students.

"It's an opportunity for them to meet new people, local people, and they can practice their English," Verebely said.

The students are Chinese, and English is not their first language. Matney said the students have an excellent knowledge of English, so the language barrier

hasn't been an issue. The few times they didn't know a word, actor Geoff Dame, a former military linguist, has been able to translate.

None of the international students have acted before, they said. Kyan Wei, a BU student who's cast in the production, said he's learned a lot already.

"People in the theater are really nice," Wei said. "They teach me what I should say and what emotion I need when I speak."

Matney said it's been wonderful working with the students, and they've caught on quickly.

The students said they've already met friends of various ages, who often help transport them to rehearsals.

Through this experience, BU's international program has made a connection that will be utilized in the future, Verebely said. She said they'll be happy to help out again with acting or with volunteering.

"They can help us; we can help them," Verebely said.



Photo by Hailey Stolze

Bellevue University international students helped fill Asian roles in the Bellevue Little Theatre's upcoming production of "M*A*S*H*." From left: Hugo Xu, Kyan Wei, Ethan Gang and Nelson Chen. Banana Tan is not pictured.

"M*A*S*H" opens Friday and continues through Nov. 19. Showtimes are 7 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays and 2 p.m. on Sundays. Tickets are \$18 for adults,

\$16 for seniors over 65 and \$10 for students.

For more information or to make reservations, call the BLT at 402-291-1554.



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