

## Halloween in Chico: 36 arrested Friday night; police extra vigilant

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CHICO -- Halloween falls on a weekend this year, prompting the Chico Police Department to patrol the streets with extra caution as crowds of zombies, fairies, pumpkins and more swarm the streets south of campus.

Because the holiday is on a Sunday, police were left wondering which night of the Halloween weekend would see the most action — Friday, Saturday or Sunday night.

"Traditionally the night of Halloween has been the big night," said Chico Police Lt. Linda Dye. "But we've been getting indications that (Saturday) will be the big night."

Friday night saw 36 arrests, Dye said, a majority of them alcohol-related and occurring in the south campus and downtown areas. Between 11:30 p.m. and midnight was the peak time for the area of Fifth and Ivy streets, where hundreds filled the sidewalks until mounted units dispersed the crowds.

Dye reported that many people were fighting with the officers and one officer was punched twice in the face, but was uninjured.

A DUI checkpoint was set up at 7:30 p.m. Saturday at the corner of Third and Walnut streets and on Friday night, agents from Alcohol Beverage Control were helping the local officers.

"Historically in the late '90s," Dye said, "we saw an increase in violence at Halloween. Between 2002 to 2005, we saw a significant decrease, but as it got back to the weekends, it got more and more people coming into Chico."

In the weeks leading up to Halloween weekend, the police department ran advertisements on

local television with the slogan to "Keep It Chico" and not invite out-of-town guests to party. Dye said it is the influx of strangers that contributes to the oversized crowds.

"Social networking has not helped us at all," she said.

Taylor Simms, 18, of Castro Valley, came to Chico this weekend to party with her friends Haley Bashaw, Meridian Magana and Claire Holley, also all 18, who are freshmen at Chico State University.

"It's intense," Magana said. "People get a little irrational."

"I'm happy I have a pitchfork, Bashaw said. "There was a guy walking around with a video camera. I wasn't happy with that."

The four friends said they are out "every weekend" but mostly because they like to dance.

"I've seen girls in just panties and bras," Bashaw said of the costumes she'd seen Saturday night.

As for drinking, it wasn't first on their agenda. "Everyone is going to drink," Magana said. "But I'm not going to get stupidly drunk."

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