

Move over, kids: Adults like Halloween too

Batman, Catwoman and Superman costumes aren't just for the young set

By [Kathy Flanigan](#) of the Journal Sentinel
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Holy nostalgia, Batman!

Superman, Iron Man and Catwoman costumes are among the best sellers this Halloween season. But you won't see just pint-sized versions. Adults want to wear them, too.

"It's the year of the superheroes," said Holly Botsford, public relations manager for [BuySeasons Inc.](#), in New Berlin. New this year and selling well are retro characters like Batman — costumes that mimic the 1966 television characters.

No matter where you celebrate, look for poodle skirts and big hair. Sales suggest that outfits rooted in the 1950s, '80s and '90s will be prevalent, Botsford said.

Americans are expected to spend \$6.9 billion on Halloween treats, decorations, parties and costumes this year, according to results of a survey by the National Retail Federation. Adults, mostly those ages 18 through their early 30s, say they plan to wear a costume. Spending on adult costumes could reach \$1.2 billion this year, slightly higher than the \$1 billion for children's costumes, said Kathy Grannis, NRF senior director of media relations.

Pop culture is leading the way for revelers. Characters from cable TV's "Duck Dynasty" are big, and flapper costumes inspired by the Leo DiCaprio film version of "The Great Gatsby" are selling well, Botsford said.

Adults and children alike are snapping up costumes to be characters in "Monsters University" and yellow minions from "Despicable Me 2."

Miley, 'Breaking Bad'

There's another scenario where adult and children's costumes overlap. Disney's Hannah Montana costumes, based on the character played by a young Miley Cyrus, are still available for young girls, while adults can tap their inner Video Music Awards Miley and dress as the twerk-happy Cyrus instead. Also predicted to top the list for pop-culture costumes are Walter White from "Breaking Bad," characters from "Game of Thrones" and Cyrus' twerking co-star and "Blurred Lines" singer, Robin Thicke.

For adults, the right Halloween costume is about posturing.

"Putting on a costume gives people 'psychological permission' to behave differently than they normally do," said April Masini, author of the online [Ask April](#) column. "Wearing something sexy, silly, mysterious or scary evokes feelings in the costume wearer and the partner of the costume wearer, and these evoked feelings can lead to new behaviors like silliness, sexiness, edginess, etc."

So, go ahead and dress provocatively, or button up your white trench coat and channel television's Olivia Pope from "Scandal." You might have fun, but you won't win any contests at [Bryant's Cocktail Lounge](#), 1579 S. 9th St. Bryant's, a semifinalist for a James Beard award for its bar program, will host a "Mad Men" party for the fourth consecutive year. The party starts at 8 p.m. on Nov. 2.

Prizes will be awarded for the best "Mad Men" character, sexiest Joan, best couple, best Glen (the creepy neighbor boy) and most obscure character — based on costume and attitude.

Halloween on wheels

There's an extra element to finding a costume for the [Halloween Costume Crawl](#) sponsored by the Lowlander Cycling Club: It must be suitable for riding a bike. Past revelers have come as a knight on a horse (the bike was in costume, too) and the bike scene from "E.T.," said Drew Cyr, organizer of the fourth annual crawl benefiting the Wisconsin Bike Federation.

The crawl begins at 9 a.m. Oct. 26 at [Cafe Hollander](#), 2608 N. Downer Ave., with stops at [Lakefront Brewery](#), [Cafe Central](#), [Great Lakes Distillery](#), [Trocadero](#) and a final stop at the [Nomad World Pub](#).

Tandem costumes — Batman and Robin, Kim Kardashian and Kanye West, Starsky and Hutch — are among the classics, Cyr said. Popular culture might inspire the riders, but weather and convenience ultimately dictate style.

"It's hard to ride on a bike for five or six hours after a beer or two in a skimpy outfit," he said.

From behind the bar, first at Cafe Hollander and now at Trocadero, Cyr has seen plenty of homemade costumes, often with a twist. One couple came as Bret Michaels and a girlfriend — but she was Michaels in a bandanna and her male friend was dressed as Michaels' girlfriend.

Cyr said last-minute costume makers sometimes rely on clever word play for a costume. He recalled someone dressed in pink with a tiny chair affixed to the reveler's head. The costume? Gum under a chair.

Zombies, roadkill

Across town at [Best Place at the Historic Pabst Brewery](#), 901 W. Juneau Ave., they appreciate the effort of homemade costumes, said owner Jim Haertel. Last year Haertel came disguised as King Gambrinus, the king of beer.

Best Place will host its annual Haunted Brewery Bash at 7 p.m. Nov. 1. Prizes will be given for best couple costume, sexiest costume, best historic costume and best Pabst costume.

Political masks dominated last year, Haertel said, although plenty of zombies attended the party thanks to the

popularity of TV's "Walking Dead." One man dressed as roadkill with a really "good makeup job," Haertel said. Another dressed as a beer koozie, and his girlfriend was a bottle of Pabst — a costume that allowed him to hug his date all night long.

There's one more market that shouldn't be overlooked. The National Retail Federation expects that 22 million American will play dress-up with their pets this Halloween. You'll find a few of them, perhaps, at the [Haunted HAWS fundraiser](#), an event at 5:30 p.m. Oct. 18 to benefit the Humane Animal Welfare Society of Waukesha County. It's \$50 a person at Country Springs Hotel, 2810 Golf Road, Waukesha. For tickets, call (262) 542-8851 or see the [HAWS website](#) at www.hawspets.org.

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