

Submit your Ghost Story to *Saugus.net*



Every
author whose
story gets posted
wins a T-shirt.

The best stories
will be posted online
this Halloween.

Entries must be received
no later than October 22nd;
the earlier the better.

Age categories include:
Elementary, Middle School,
High School, and Adult.

For more details,
log on to
Saugus.net

23rd Annual!

<http://www.saugus.net/Contests/Halloween/2020/>

Saugus.net is now accepting Halloween stories that are e-mailed to contests@saugus.net for our twentieth annual Ghost Story writing contest. The rules below are pretty much the same as last year (and please note we stopped accepting entries via FAX or physical drop-off years ago — everything must now be sent electronically).

Our judges will pick out the stories they feel are best (based on scariness, originality, entertainment value, and writing quality) for four different categories including: Adult, High School, Middle School, and Elementary School. “Does spelling count” you ask? Yes, somewhat, but not as much as the creepiness and entertainment value of the story. In any case, all of the chosen stories will be posted online here by Halloween night, Saturday, October 31, 2020. Don’t forget to tell us in which category you belong and provide some means for us getting back in touch with you. Let us know your town, and if you go to school (even college) let us know which one; if you win, we’ll mention both.

If your story gets posted, you’ll win a Saugus.net T-shirt (different from the first year’s model, the same as last year’s model; see below — these feature a glow-in-the-dark logo on a black background) to be handed out in mid November 2020. We’ll have something else for repeat winners.

Entries must be received no later than October 22nd. The earlier the better, though; keep in mind that if we receive dozens of stories on the 22nd we’ll have to rush through them to get everything ready for Halloween, and thus a story submitted early probably has a slight advantage because it can be read more leisurely.

Please try and keep them fairly clean — lots of people of all ages will be reading them. Favor the suggestive over the explicit, and keep in mind that needless obscenities aren’t apt to help your chances any but are likely to cost you points in the “writing quality” department.

The ideal length is a few typewritten pages, but both longer and shorter are welcomed. The upper limit (not hard & fast) is around two dozen typewritten pages — there is no lower limit. The preferred format for e-mail is regular text, although we’ll also accept HTML, OpenDocument (ODT), and Acrobat (PDF) formats. Please note that **we can not accept handwritten entries**; it really isn’t fair to our volunteer judges. We also don’t officially accept MS-Word (DOC) format or Rich Text Format (RTF) as they have known bugs that can affect their transmission and often cause subtle errors. Likewise we don’t officially accept other word-processor specific formats. We’re willing to try to work with such files, but we cannot guarantee that we’ll see the exact same thing that you wrote (in fact, missing characters, words, sentences, and even paragraphs are not unknown) if you submit your story in an unsupported format.

Although Saugus.net reserves the rights to print and potentially reprint all entries received (giving proper credit on each printing, of course), we aren’t claiming them as our own property — that means that you retain the copyrights to your work and are free to reprint it and/or publish it elsewhere, too, without getting any further permission from us (although a little blurb like “first appeared online on Saugus.net” would be appreciated in any future publications). Of course, even though it need not be mentioned, entries must respect existing copyrights and may not be based on copyrighted material without the written consent of any applicable copyright holders, and material should not have been published prior to the contest deadline.

As always, we will be judging interactive fiction entries in addition to the traditional prose entries. We’ll include two winners, one for standard interactive fiction with accepted formats including Z-machine (typically z5) and Glulx (ULX) as produced by Inform and one for fixed branching “choose-your-own-adventure” HTML formats as produced by Twine. All the regular rules apply (as appropriate) for interactive fiction entries. The different medium does impact the rules on length and file format, however. Judges have been instructed to work on the standard interactive fiction stories for only an hour to an hour and a half each and fixed branching interactive fiction stories for a half hour each, so use that for figuring ideal length. While (as with the prose entries) we will not claim copyright, we reserve the right to make entries freely downloadable (and even usable) directly from the Saugus.net web site. In fact, we also strongly encourage that standard interactive fiction submissions be made to the worldwide IF Archive, but this is by no means required. If you’re interested in this option but don’t know where to start, send us an e-mail and we’ll provide some pointers.

Halloween is a fun time of year and we’re likewise holding this contest completely in a spirit of fun. The results will hopefully be entertaining to all. Send us your entry (or even entries, if you’d like) today, and good luck.