



NEWARK SENIOR
WARDEN
OF TERROR

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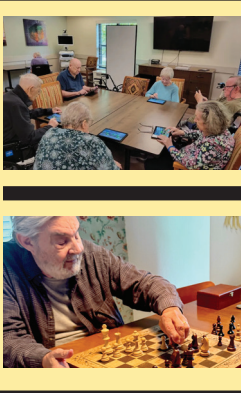
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WARDEN OF TERROR

Newark senior was in character at a haunt

By Mary Anne White

Don Robertson is a fascinating character. In fact, he is his own entire cast of characters. Husband and father of three, he is an employee of Newark radio station COOL 100; a wedding deejay; an event emcee (most recently for the “Little Miss Firefighter” event at the 2026 Pataskala Street Fair); a creator of voice characters, and a commercial voice coach.

During the Halloween seasons of 2015 through 2025, he was “the Warden” of the Jail of Terror Halloween Haunt in the Licking County Historic Jail—a real, decommissioned jail built in 1889—with ghostly attachments, according to a 2014 television episode of *Ghost Adventures*. Not content to confine his role to terrorizing the inmates inside the jail, Robertson also honed his terror techniques

creams, tried baby oil—and none of them will remove it completely. Sometimes it might take a while to wear off. It can leave some darkness under the eyes. I think cold cream probably works the best for me.

Senior Times: Do you have script lines that you have to remember or do you improvise?

Robertson: There’s LOTS of improv involved, but then it becomes part of the dialogue. One night, I don’t know why, I started referring to young visitors as “chicken nuggets,” “chicken tenders,” and “happy meals.” Those improvised words became standard references to kids. As a result, I started carrying salt and pepper shakers in my ammunition belt so when I confronted kids, I would salt and pepper them and

Don Robertson as “The Warden”

When a person bought a ticket, there was a “touch” or “no touch” option. If a person wasn’t identified as “no touch,” then he or she could be grabbed and kept as a prisoner for a while.

There are ways to scare people without touching them. I once chased three

for pre-teens and teenagers. Occasionally, a kid would ask, “Remember me? I was here last year!” Sometimes a parent or grandparent would bring kids, and the Warden always enjoyed trying pick-up lines on the grandmas.

Senior Times: The actual historic jail has a reputation for being haunted. Have you personally witnessed anything paranormal in the jail?

Robertson: Yes, I have. There was a young woman standing alone inside a cell. All of the sudden, a section of her hair was lifted up—and it stayed up in

the air as if someone was holding it.

Senior Times: Will you be continuing your role as the Warden of Terror this Halloween season?

Robertson: Unfortunately, I will not. The Jail of Terror ended with the 2025 Halloween haunt season. People can still participate in scheduled tours at the historic jail, and there are also occasional paranormal investigation options available.

Senior Times: Meeting the Warden at the Jail of Terror haunt may no longer be an option, but the history tours and paranormal investigations at the Licking County Historic Jail may

The Warden always enjoyed “haunting” grandmas

tell them I was “seasoning our jail’s chicken tenders.”

Senior Times: Did visitors become “inmates” while in the haunted jail? What were some of your scare techniques as the warden?

Robertson: I liked being the Warden because I wasn’t confined to being inside the jail. I liked to scare people waiting outside—to the point that I had to be reminded by staff in the ticket booth: “Wait until AFTER they buy their tickets! We’re trying to get funds to renovate the jail!”

teen girls into a port-a-potty on the grounds outside the jail and used my billy club to bang on the different walls of the port-a-potty. Then, I left quiet spaces in between the banging. I could overhear them discussing if it was safe to leave, then they would scream when I would bang on a wall again.

Senior Times: How was the recidivism rate among the people who visited the Jail of Terror and what age ranges did you see?

Robertson: It was a popular Halloween haunt

Robertson was recently the emcee of the “Little Miss Firefighter” event in Pataskala.

offer both educational and fun ways to celebrate this Halloween season. Call (740) 345-5245 or visit the Ohio.org website for more information about events available at the jail.

Mary Anne White is a local freelance writer and frequent contributor to Senior Times.

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