

“Bill Frazetta dress up to make people laugh”  
By Paula Heeschen, Pocono Record Reporter  
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East Stroudsburg – To most people, dressing up is something you do when you go to church.

Bill Frazetta dresses up to make people laugh.

He doesn't polish his shoes or brush off his sport coat; he dons a furry burly bear costume and pads the sidewalk.

Frazetta runs the recently opened Frazetta's Fantasy Corner, a store on South Courtland Street and, whether he's selling demon comic books inside or surprising humans on the sidewalk, it is a pursuit after his own heart.

Frazetta revels in the realm of imagination – he grew up surrounded by the fantastic adventure art of his fantasy-illustrator father Frank Frazetta.

He developed a taste for the bizarre, even the grotesque, the unreal, early in life and apparently decided if he couldn't be one of those characters he could at least ornament his own humble human form enough to give people a jolt.

“I like to dress up,” Frazetta said simply. “I've been dressing up and winning prizes for 3 years.

“I guess I take after my father. But he'd rather paint, and I'd rather dress up as what he paints.”

Frazetta has won prizes for best makeup mask and has always had a good costume for Halloween and other occasions, routinely traveling as far as Long Island to rent it.

He explained that masks, costumes and the like have a strong effect on people – one he likes to create.

“Kids go crazy,” he said. “They really flipout. Last week I was in the bear costume and my cousin was in the parrot costume, and everyone was waving and beeping their horn.

“If you had your bark turned they'd beep until you turned around.”

Frazetta's enjoyment of costumes and other such foolery, together with his admiration of his father's art, led him to the idea of opening a store for the indulgence of fantasies.

He'd already been selling the stuff out of a van and had a small storefront where he sold his father's paintings. Now he's landed, and expanded.

"Every year there are people looking for costumes, makeup and things and they can't find it," he said, noting there has been no store in the area that provided what they need.

I thought I might as well do something for the people around here."

So now Conan the Barbarian is available in the Poconos' backyard. So are Darth Vader, Yoda, The Hulk, Frankenstein, Dracula and many other fantasy characters, in masks, posters, comics and other media.

The store features framed posters of Frank Frazetta's well known fantasy warriors and also offers tee shirts, monster jigsaw puzzles, stuffed animals, and all kinds of doo-dads for dressing up.

Rubber noses, grease paint, liquid and paste make up, colored hair spray, capes, wands, witches' hats, Uncle Sam hats, top hats, derbies, devils' tails and pitchforks, rubber chickens (plucked), a Captain Hook-type hook, and other great items abound on the shelves of Fantasy Corner.

Frazetta features an inventory of 75 masks that sell from \$11.98 to \$75. Though he's done little advertising, he said he's sold 15-20 masks since he opened two months ago.

So far the store offers only two costumes for rent, the bear and parrot, but Frazetta is attempting to expand that inventory by looking for people who will make costumes.

He will soon have a dog and a soldier costume and plans by late this year to have at least a Santa Claus suit and possibly pilgrim outfits.

"This Halloween I don't know if I'll be ready. Next Halloween I'll be set, though. It takes time to get something like this going," he said.

Is there really a market for such crazy stuff?

Definitely, said Frazetta.

"People like it because there's nothing like it living," he said. "Its fantasy, and people like fantastic things."