Story and photos by Rebecca Unger

YUCCA VALLEY — Kids and critters had a day of happy haunting at Saturday’s annual Spooktacular and Howl-o-ween Pet Parade. The Hi-Desert Nature Museum overflowed with merry mayhem as little goblins were indulged with spooky games, crafts and treats. The town’s community center courtyard was a scene of pet pageantry with prize costume categories for the animal and human masqueraders.

Mixing fun and fantasy for kids and their furry friends is a sure way to cast a spell of Halloween magic. (Abrahamson)

Cackling cauldrons! Dallas and Dylan Dorem of Joshua Tree are more curious than curious as they peer into the foaming depths of this wickedly witchy brew.

Gaisha girls Deja Valeur and Tink of Morongo Valley make friends with pretty poodle Barbie, the new Sandy Paws Pet Grooming mascot.

The Most Original award at the pet parade went to fiddler Ellie Schroder, her sister Hannah and poohch Grace of Joshua Tree.

Yucca Valley’s Jade Sanchit as Little Red Riding Hood and rescue dog Nellie Girl as the Wolf That Ate Grandma win Best Do-It-Yourself costume honors.

Lacy “Pocahontas” Leninger of yucca Valley checks out the Spooktacular goodies, but says she prefers a snackers bar to cemetery dirt as a treat.

Yucca Valley duo Rupert the teacup pig and his human, Jill Steiner, enchant the judges for the best animal/fower look-alike prize.

P.J. of Joshua Tree rocks the banana split costume. “He gave me the look when I first put him in it,” admits his human, Sarah Case.