



The ghosts of Ohio[®] Newsletter

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FROM THE SPOOKY DESK OF JAMES WILLIS:

IT'S SPRING 2018, ORBS ARE STILL DUST, AND I FEEL REALLY, REALLY OLD



James

Those of you who have been reading our newsletter for a while now (and thank you for that), you know that every spring there's at least a passing reference to the fact that all the new airborne

pollen is going to cause a rise in clients "capturing" ghost orbs on their digital cameras. Of course, as those of us within the paranormal community will attest, the average investigator is going to run across a photo featuring an orb caused by dust, dirt, pollen, etc., etc., a few times a year, due mainly to the fact that the general public is not as accustomed to seeing these anomalies in their pictures as those of us who spend countless hours inside haunted (and dusty) locations.

Recently, though, I noticed a sharp increase in orb photos and videos popping up all over the place. Most disturbing is the fact that the vast majority of these pieces of "evidence" are not coming from the general public. Rather, they are coming from individuals and groups presenting themselves as paranormal professionals.

How is this possible? How could people be declaring orbs "evidence" when the whole notion of ghost orbs had been thoroughly debunked over a decade ago? Look, I'll be the first to admit that the first time I picked up a "ghost orb" floating in front of my IR camera, I was ecstatic. But once it was

determined to be dust, I was forced to admit I was wrong and I moved on.

So why are orbs a thing again?
The answer's simple: I'm old.

Allow me to explain. When I first got into paranormal research, digital cameras did not exist. Photos were shot on physical film. When digital cameras finally showed up, they were big, bulky, and not very fast ("processing...processing...processing"). And with the advent of the digital camera came the dreaded Ghost Orb. Don't believe me? Just take a look at the history of ghost photography and ghosts did not appear in orb form until the arrival of digital cameras.

It took a couple of years, but finally the vast majority of paranormal researchers were forced to admit that most (but not all) ghost orbs were due to something freaking out the digital camera that was taking the picture. Not all of us accepted it willingly, but to be taken seriously in this field, one must admit when they were mistaken and move on. It's really the only way for progress to take place in this field.

But as I said, I'm old. So old that there is now a next generation of ghost hunters. Ones that only came into existence within the past few years, long after

the debunking of ghost orbs took place. These orbs have even popped back up on the newer ghost reality shows, many times presented as "evidence." That makes for a slippery slope — holding up something that has been proven "fake" and declaring it real

only opens up the door for all those hungry skeptics who are already prowling around, looking for anything negative to pounce on.

So please, if you are a member of the paranormal community and are asked for your opinion on a photograph containing a little white ball of light, please look to the past (or as my daughter calls it, the "old-fashioned days") before passing judgment. You just might learn a thing or two.

And yes, it's official: I've become the Paranormal Pappy.

Now if you'll excuse me, I need to go out on the front porch and shake my fists at some ghostly children who are messing up my yard.

Cheers,

James A. Willis

Founder/Director

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

Curling Up Beside Me

— Marie A., Zanesville, OH

I have always been a dog person. Had them my whole life. I guess it was 12 years ago when Buffy the cat showed up on my doorstep. She was skinny, cold, and just so sad and pathetic looking that I couldn't say no and I took her inside. I had two german shepherds with me in the house at the time but they didn't even bother with Buffy. Buffy just made herself at home and curled up on my bed and immediately went to sleep. I put ads in the paper but no one ever claimed her. So she became mine. She slept on the bottom of my bed all curled up until she died last year. Maybe a week later I was lying in bed when I swore I heard Buffy jump up on my bed like she always did. I felt her curl up beside me near my feet in her normal spot. I was almost entirely asleep when I suddenly realized that Buffy was dead. I sat up straight in bed and looked, but the bed was empty. There was a little round indentation in the covers though exactly where Buffy used to sleep when she was alive. If it were not for that indentation, I would have thought I was dreaming. But it was Buffy. I'm sure of it.



GOT A SCARY STORY TO TELL?

Have you had a ghostly encounter in Ohio? Want to see it featured in a future issue of The Ghosts of Ohio Newsletter? Then here's all you have to do:

Just write down your story and send it to info@ghostsofohio.org with the subject line "Newsletter Ghost Story." Be sure to also include your name as you'd like it to appear with the story. We'll take it from there and send you out an email letting you know which issue it is going to appear in. That way, you can get all your friends to sign up for the newsletter so they can see how famous you are!

EMF Test #2: Routers

In the last issue of the newsletter, we took a look at how cell phones could possibly have an impact on the readings from your EMF meters. The results were intriguing, to say the least. So much so that we decided to take a look at some other devices that could potentially cause chaos with your meters.

For this issue, we wanted to focus on something that is usually present on every investigation, even though it's not necessarily visible: Internet routers.

Not only are routers practically omnipresent, but also they are constantly sending and receiving signals/impulses back and forth, both across wired connections as well as wireless. And the fact that they are usually hidden away somewhere makes it easy to forget they are even there.

For this experiment, as with the last, we tested several different makes and models of EMF meters, including:

- EMF Field Testers
- Natural Tri-Field Meters
- K-II Meters
- ELF Meters
- Cell Sensors (aka: The Ghost Meter)
- MEL Meters



We once again arranged the meters in a wide circle, although this time we placed them on a table. We then placed a router that was wired directly into a computer (wired signal into the router and wired signal out of the router into the computer). We then performed a series of tasks once the router had powered on completely:

- Connect the computer to the internet via the router
- Send an email from the computer
- Access a web page via the computer
- Turn the router completely off and then powering it back up
- Connect a phone to the internet via the router
- Send an email from a phone via the router
- Access a web page from the phone via the router

Interestingly enough, the results were the same regardless of whether we used the wired or wireless router—if a device reacted to one, it reacted to the other in the almost exact same manner. If a device didn't react to one, it didn't react to the other one, either. Similarity, the same fluctuations (or lack thereof) were visible regardless of whether we were using the computer or cell phone to complete the tasks.



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EMF Test #2: Routers Cont.

Here's how each device did (or did not) react to the routers:

EMF Field Testers

These did not react at all. In fact, with the exception of a brief 0.01 increase on one specific meter during the "wired" portion of the experiment, the EMF Field Testers did not fluctuate at all.

Natural Tri-Field Meter

Did not react at any time.

K-II Meter

Just like they did during our experiments with the cell phones, the K-II Meter reacted strongly to both the wired and wireless routers. While levels were slightly higher (all lights coming on and remaining on for 4-5 seconds at a time) when we were using the cell phone to perform the tasks, the K-II meter was the one meter that had the most consistent reactions to the tasks.

ELF Meters

Did not react at any time.

Cell Sensors (aka: The Ghost Meter)

Did not react at any time.

MEL Meters

Did not react at any time.

I think the biggest takeaway from this experiment is the same one from our cell phone experiment. Specifically, that in both scenarios, it was the K-II that responded the most. It's intriguing because the K-II has become one of the go-to devices for people wanting to have something resembling two-way conversations with ghosts ("light up all the lights for 'yes'"). That's not to say that those types of K-II "conversations" are all a result of cell phones and routers. Our experiments did, however, remind us that when our meters, especially the K-II, start acting weird on investigations, that we would do well to take a closer look at our surroundings for potential (non-ghostly) causes.



ZAK BAGANS: The Man Who Cried “Demon”



James

This article was originally going to be my review of Zak Bagans' documentary, *Demon House*. I'm sure a few of you are rolling your eyes already. But hear me out. After

seeing the movie, the piece grew into something more. Simply put, I didn't hate *Demon House*. Didn't love it, either. It did leave me with a lot of questions and thoughts about the documentary as well as the facts of the case put forth in the film. The result was a piece that, while centered on the documentary, extended far beyond it.

For those of you wondering, the dwelling that has become known as Demon House was a bungalow-sized rental home located in Gary, Indiana. In late 2011, Latoya Ammons, her three children (all under the age of 13), and Ammons' mother, Rosa Campbell, moved into the house. They allegedly came to believe there were demons inside the house, and claiming they were repeatedly attacked. There were claims of Ammons' children acting as if they were possessed (eyes rolling back in their head, growling, levitating from their bed). When the Department of Child Services (DCS) was called to the home to investigate why the children hadn't been attending school, Ammons allegedly said it was due to the demons. This would lead to the now infamous report that a member of the DCS witnessed Ammons' youngest son "walking up the wall backwards." Father Michael Magniot was called in and performed several exorcisms, including one on Latoya Ammons. The world became aware of all this shortly after the family left the rental home in 2012.

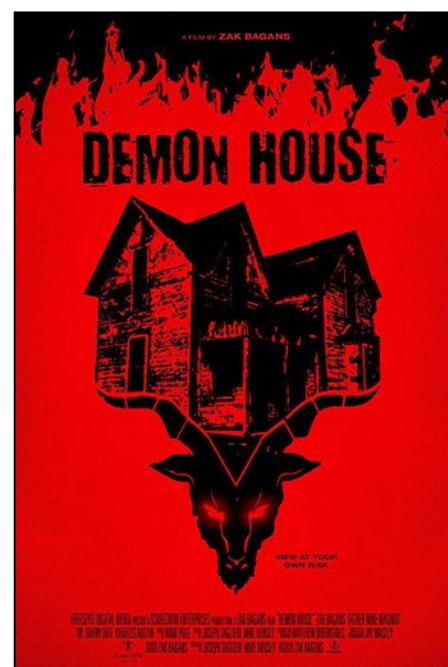
As news of this "real-life Exorcist House" spread across the Internet and news wires, it eventually made its way to Zak Bagans, who admits in the *Demon House* documentary that he believed the house would be "the next Amityville" and made the decision to buy it, sight unseen.

Zak Bagans is a very polarizing figure in the paranormal world. His rabid fan base has come to love his over the top, hyperactive, overly dramatic personality that permeates every episode of his *Ghost Adventures* TV show—the very personality that many of his detractors loathe and point to as being proof that *Ghost Adventures* is nothing more than reality show entertainment that's not to be taken seriously. In other words, no ghosts. This is not news to anyone, least of all Zak Bagans. Say what you will about Zak, but he is an incredibly intelligent businessman and he knows what sells.

So what does all of this have to do with *Demon House*? It's simple, really. *Demon House* was promoted as a documentary. Sure, a documentary about a demon-infested house, but a documentary just the same.

At their core, documentary films strive to not only entertain, but to educate. Documentaries bring to life subject matter that its audience might not be familiar with. Or, if they are familiar with it, the documentary will attempt to provoke thought by showing the subject matter in a different light. *Demon House* does none of that. In fact, the point could be made that *Demon House* comes across as nothing more than an overly long episode of *Ghost Adventures*.

Whatever opportunities Zak may have had to change the general public's image not only of himself and the story of the Demon House, but of paranormal research as a whole, are



dashed literally within the first 15 seconds of the film. That's because it opens with a super warning that demons might be able to crawl through the electronic device and get you. In other words, you should watch at your own risk.

The film officially opens with Zak walking through some abandoned buildings while a surprisingly somber Zak provides the voiceover. After a brief explanation about how he came to purchase the Demon House (including mentioning that this was "the case that really f**ked me up"), Zak proceeds to mention all the bad things that befell people associated with the house or the documentary. This ends with Zak stating, "The truth is, this film is cursed."

For those not keeping track, we're not even 5 minutes into the film and we've already been warned twice that we probably shouldn't be watching *Demon House* as some bad things could result. Most "normal" people would probably have turned the movie off at that point. But again, simply put, Zak Bagans knows what his target audience wants and expects. And he's damn good at giving the people what they want. So he knows his fans aren't going to turn the doc off. If anything,

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ZAK BAGANS: The Man Who Cried “Demon” Cont.

they want more of the same. But in catering to his tried-and-true fan base, Zak alienates the casual viewers and provides further fodder for the skeptics. This is where *Demon House* stumbles the most, repeatedly.

Case in point, many reviewers have pointed out the over-the-top, cringe-worthy, and totally unnecessary “dramatic recreations” included in *Demon House*, especially the one where the boy is supposedly walking backwards up the wall. And they are correct—those scenes are not necessary and, if nothing else, distract from the film by providing unintentional comic relief. But those types of scenes are the very ones on which the *Ghost Adventures* TV show was built upon.

The area where *Demon House* chooses to deviate from the *Ghost Adventures* formula is also very perplexing. Namely, the point where they break out all the ghost-hunting equipment and investigate. Even though *Demon House* was filmed over the course of three years, almost no time is spent doing anything that could even remotely be considered an investigation. Yes, they do mount video cameras in several rooms and even the basement, and do occasionally refer to things the cameras caught, but nothing to the extent that you would expect to see for cameras that were (or should have been) running 24-hours a day for months, if not years. Again, as a seasoned investigator myself, I know ghosts/spirits/demons/insert spooky creature’s name here don’t do anything on cue. Ever. But we’re talking about the Demon House here, the place that people reportedly claimed 200 demons live. Surely one of them would have stumbled into the kitchen for a bite one evening and forgotten about all the cameras.

The finale of the movie involves Bagans literally boarding himself up inside the house in an attempt to

confront whatever might be dwelling within. He goes through the trouble of staging the house and even filling (or so the audience is led to believe) the place with extra audio and video equipment (and lots of it, judging by the giant steam trunks labeled “Cables”).

What happens during that final night is some of the most frightening and disturbing things ever captured on audio and video. It’s some serious nightmare fuel if it’s real. But that’s a pretty big “if.” Why? Because it happened to Zak Bagans, that’s why.

By sealing himself up alone inside the house, Zak had to know he was going to make it way too easy for skeptics to say he faked what happened. But he did it anyway. Exactly why still has me scratching my head. If, as we’re led to believe, the demons inside the house were capable of affecting anyone who stepped inside, why not bring at least one other person with you, Zak, to corroborate and/or validate anything that happens? But he doesn’t; he goes it alone, and then delivers classic *Ghost Adventures* non-evidence, captured on his own camcorder, which stereotypically goes out of focus at just the right time. Immediately after this scary incident (and it is indeed scary), Zak begins to rage, to the point where he knocks over a TV (don’t panic, it was just an old tube TV). And then...morning comes. No review of what had been captured the night before. No mention as to what, if anything, the other audio and video devices throughout the house captured. Nothing. Just a brief description of the lasting impact the case has had on Zak and others, both mentally and physically. And then, the grand finale.

(Spoiler alert: skip to the next paragraph if you don’t want to know how it all ends.) Still here? OK, so after spending the better part of an hour trying to convince the audience

that this house contains the motherlode of paranormal activity, complete with demons who apparently have the power to possess or otherwise control people at will—in other words, Zak is the proud owner of quite possibly the world’s first paranormal laboratory capable of producing unexplained activity that can be quantified and qualified in a controlled environment—what does Zak do? He bulldozes the house.

But don’t feel too bad for Zak. As was mentioned earlier, he’s a showman at heart and knows what sells. Remember, that’s why he bought the house in the first place. So just before the house is leveled, Zak decides that “as an investigator and a collector,” he needs to preserve parts of it. So he gathers up some artifacts, including the basement stairs and a couple of buckets of basement dirt, all of which can be seen at Zak Bagans’ Haunted Museum in Las Vegas. You need to buy a ticket, of course. And that’s when it becomes apparent what this documentary really is: One long commercial for Zak’s museum.

That’s not to say *Demon House* is a bad movie, which it’s not. It was certainly entertaining. It’s just not going to change anyone’s beliefs or get him or her to look at things differently. Just look at the ratings on IMDB.com. It’s filled with just as many 10s from Zak/*Ghost Adventures* fans as it is 1s from skeptics and those who have been turned into disbelievers from the onslaught of ghost reality shows like *Ghost Adventures*. Seems the general public has seen and heard Zak’s demonic shenanigans one too many times and is not willing to give what he has to say any weight or credibility, which is what will ultimately doom *Demon House*.

Oddly enough, it’s not because of the boy who cried wolf. Rather, it’s the doing of the man who cried demon.

IT'S ALL ABOUT ETHICS: HOW TO FIND TRUSTWORTHY PARANORMAL HELP



Samantha

“Who ya gonna call?” For anyone experiencing paranormal activity in their home or business, this question can be daunting, especially since

a quick Google search reveals that Ohio is home to a virtual smorgasbord of self-proclaimed ghost-hunting gurus, all eager to take on your case. Some have a genuine interest in helping you, while others may be more interested in their own personal gains. So how can you separate the wheat from the chaff, so to speak? Don't worry. It's not impossible as long as you're willing to do a little homework.

The first thing you'll need to do is take stock of your situation. Do the phenomena make you uncomfortable enough to warrant contacting a paranormal group? Believe it or not, some people are able to live quite comfortably with whatever's happening in their home and don't feel the need to seek out assistance at all. If you feel like you could coexist with what you're experiencing, then you may choose not to seek help. However, if that's not how you feel and the phenomena are starting to interfere with your day-to-day life, then it may be time to reach out to a group.

But hold on! Before you sit down to an afternoon of Google, you'll also want to consider what you want a paranormal group to do for you. Do you simply want verification that the phenomena you're experiencing are really happening and that you're not going crazy? Do you want an explanation for what's happening? Do you want someone to make the phenomena stop? Every group has different skills. As you begin your

research, look for those who might be able to help you meet your objectives.

Ready for the meaty stuff that will help you find a group you can trust? For every paranormal group you find, keep these tips in mind:

1. The group's services should be absolutely FREE. This is because it is unethical for any paranormal group to charge money for services that are largely based on personal experiences and research.
 2. There is no such thing as a paranormal “professional” or “expert.” Believe it or not, there are hardly any accredited parapsychological classes or training opportunities out there to justify using that sort of title, especially since the majority of paranormal investigators out there haven't had any such formal training. And if someone claims to have a specific degree or certificate, Google it to see how legitimate it is.
 3. A group's “total years of experience” doesn't mean much. An example would be finding a group that claims to have 10 years of combined experience. If you look deeper, you may find that there are 5 group members. This would mean that the real number of years of experience would be averaged at just two years per member. Saying that they have 10 years of experience makes people think they've been investigating for a longer period of time than they actually have.
 4. Don't be fooled by photos of team members in black t-shirts and menacing poses looking ready to kick some paranormal butt. You'll see this sort of thing so often, it's comical. The truth is, investigating the unknown is not what it seems like on TV. Not every bump in the
- night is a demon out for blood, and 99% of the time isn't even paranormal at all! There's no butt to kick! Just ignore the pictures and look at the content on their website. How do they conduct business? What are their beliefs and values? This is the stuff you really need to know and consider.
5. Beware of those claiming to be able to cast out demons and such. It sounds ridiculous, but some of those people call themselves things like “demonologists” after having only read a book or watched a TV episode on the subject, and they're more likely to tell you that every bump in the night is a demon. The thing is, while real demonologists do exist, it's extremely unlikely that the people in paranormal groups have received any real training from a church; and it's quite possible that they may make your situation even worse. If you genuinely feel like you need assistance with this sort of phenomena, consult your church. And if yours can't/won't help, consult one that will. As I stated before, however, it's rare to find something that is genuinely paranormal, let alone something we would consider demonic.
 6. Be sure to check out a group's social media page(s) in addition to its website. When was the last time anyone posted anything? If there are no recent posts, then that group may not be active anymore. However, if there are recent posts, take a look at the sorts of things they like to share. If any of it makes you uncomfortable, then that group is not for you.
 7. While you're at it, check out YouTube, too. Does the group have any videos there? If so, watch them. These will give you a good idea of how the group operates. Then,

IT'S ALL ABOUT ETHICS: HOW TO FIND TRUSTWORTHY PARANORMAL HELP CONT.

consider if you'd be comfortable having them in your home/business.

8. Look for a group that will protect your privacy by never sharing your information (pictures, video, audio, personal information, etc.) outside their organization without your permission. This may take a little extra research on your part because I have seen some websites that claim to protect privacy, but their "evidence" includes things that they've captured on private investigations that could potentially allow unscrupulous people to identify you and/or your location. You don't want to attract any unwanted attention, so do your research and stay safe.
9. Just because a group may claim to be the "official" (or even "unofficial") ghost group of a particular location doesn't mean that it has more credibility than other teams out there. In fact, "official" groups have a habit of being replaced by someone else or moving on to another location. Just ignore this and look at the group's website content to find out what you want to know about them.

10. Beware of anyone seeking fame and fortune. Thanks to years of (mostly bad) paranormal programming, there are a number of groups out there who aspire to have their own TV shows or celebrity status. They may have DVDs of their investigations for sale, or they're producing their own podcasts and shows on YouTube and even Amazon Prime. If you get the impression that their focus will not be entirely on you and your well-being, then you don't need to be messing with them.

Once you've done your research and narrowed your choices to two or three potential groups, go ahead and contact them. Once each group receives your message, they'll usually email or call you back to discuss your case. This is considered an initial interview, which is used to determine what your case entails and how the group can help. You'll want to be ready with questions of your own to ensure that you're getting all the information you need to make a decision on which group you'd like to work with. Think of it as though you are an employer seeking a

new employee. How comfortable are you with their answers? Their philosophy? Their procedures? Do they seem to be pressuring you into accepting their services? Just because you're seeking help doesn't mean you're not in control of whom you choose to allow into your home or business. If you're not comfortable with someone, say so and move on to the next option. However, if you like what they have to say and you feel comfortable with them, then go ahead and "hire" them! Hopefully, they will be able to provide the assistance you're looking for.

No matter what, please keep in mind that, regarding the paranormal, no one has all the answers. That's just a fact. There are no guarantees. Promises cannot be made. The entire field is based on theory and speculation, things we are constantly striving to prove. All any group can do is their best based on experience and research. I'm hoping the tips I've shared here will give you the knowledge and confidence to find the one that's right for you. Good luck!

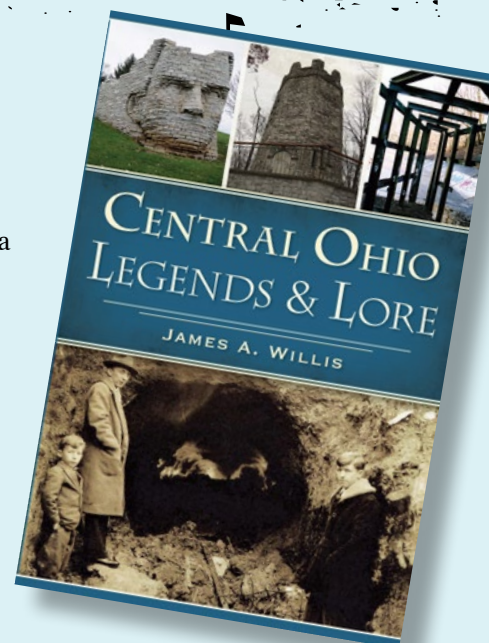
OHIO HISTORY & LEGENDS: A CONTINUING EDUCATION CLASS

If you've been a subscriber to The Ghosts of Ohio newsletter for any length of time, you have no doubt realized that we are always striving to find that sweet spot where a ghost story and actual history meet. And if you're as fascinated with that as we are, here's a truly unique opportunity to spend the day learning more about it.

This summer, our very own founder and director, James A. Willis will be offering a 4-hour Continuing Education course on researching the historic aspects of Ohio's folklore and ghost stories. The course will be held on July 26th from 10:00 AM until 3:00 PM, with a one-hour break for lunch.

Registration will begin as soon as the Summer Class Schedule is released in a few months. So go ahead and bookmark this link as it's where all the pertinent class information will appear in a few months!

<http://www.cotc.edu/Communities/Pages/Lifelong--Learning-Institute.aspx>



SPRING is here and the ghosts can't wait to see you!

That's right, we couldn't wait until October, so The Ghosts of Ohio is offering a bunch of strange and spooky presentations, just in time for this warmer weather people keeping telling us about!

So if you're looking for some strange and spooky places to make part of your road trip, come out to one of our presentations and bring a notebook because we plan on sharing a whole bunch of Ohio locations for you to check out!

All of the following events are FREE and open to the general public. Seating for these are usually limited, so we suggest contacting the venue beforehand to see if they require pre-registering.

See you soon!

Tuesday, May 1st @ 6:30 pm
Central Ohio Legends & Lore presentation

West Salem Branch–Wayne County
Public Library
99 East Buckeye Street
West Salem, OH

Tuesday, May 8th @ 6:00 pm
Weird Ohio Road Trips presentation

St. Clairsville Public Library
108 W. Main Street
St. Clairsville, OH 43950

Saturday, May 26th: 10:00 am–2:00 pm
2018 Preble County Author Con

Preble County District Library
301 N. Barron Street
Eaton, OH 45320

Saturday, June 9th @ 2:00 pm
Just How Weird Is Ohio? presentation

Morley Library
184 Phelps Street
Painesville, OH 44077



WANT TO SPEND THE NIGHT WITH THE GHOSTS OF OHIO IN 2018?

It's true: The Ghosts of Ohio is getting ready to start releasing a list of locations where you can investigate with us as part of our Spend the Night With The Ghosts of Ohio program!

What's the Spend the Night program? Simply put, it's an opportunity for some of our fans to get locked inside of a haunted location with us on a private, overnight ghost hunt.

All you need to be is an active subscriber to this very newsletter. As long as you are, there's a chance your email address will be randomly pulled from the list. When that happens, you and a guest are headed to a haunted location with us for the night!



Investigations & Consultations

The Ghosts of Ohio are continuing to schedule investigations for 2018. If you or someone you know is experiencing something unexplained in a home or place of business, contact us at info@ghostsofohio.org or visit our website to fill out an investigation request. All investigations are offered free of charge, and confidentiality and discretion are assured.

Not sure if you want or need an investigation? The Ghosts of Ohio also offers consultations. Let us sit down with you to discuss your current situation and what help we may be able to offer. For more information, please visit <http://ghostsofohio.org/services/investigations.html>

Interact with The Ghosts of Ohio

In addition to our website, here are a couple of places where you can find The Ghosts of Ohio lurking online:

 FACEBOOK
<http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#/pages/Columbus-OH/The-Ghosts-of-Ohio/60704381381?ref=mf>

 TWITTER
<http://twitter.com/ghostsofohio>

Administration

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