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The ghosts of Ohío® Newsletter

Volume 18 Issue 6

We journey on



Unlike the normal rambling that usually comes with my newsletter introduction, this issue, I feel the need to do something different: To say, "thank you".

Last issue, I discussed the recent passing of my long-time companion, Khashoggi, the Queen-loving parrot. Khashoggi's death was unexpected, which made the sadness almost unbearable, especially since shortly after that, my family was forced to deal with the passing of our cat, Beezer.

What I wasn't prepared for was the tidal wave of love and support newsletter subscribers sent my way. I've lost track of the number of emails,

texts and IMs I received, all offering condolences and, in some instances, sharing personal stories involving the loss of a family pet. Hard as they were to read, especially since I am admittedly still struggling to cope with the loss, they provided me with a sense of comfort and helped restore my faith in humanity a bit. No small task today. But just knowing that there are people on the other side of this keyboard who care about me (and my family) is a pretty darn good feeling. Ghosts and the paranormal might have brought us all together, but your kindness is what warmed my heart and allowed the healing process to begin.

Thank you.

And to those of you who have reached out, please know I will be responding to you individually as soon as I am able. As I mentioned, some of the correspondences are hard for me to read without breaking down. But I will read them all and respond, just as soon as I can do so without drowning my keyboard in tears.

Cheers,

James A. Willis

Founder/Director





UPDATE ON INVESTIGATIONS & CONSULTATIONS

A lot can change between newsletters. Last issue, we mentioned that since the Ohio Stay At Home Order had been lifted, The Ghosts Of Ohio was once again able to conduct investigations within private homes and businesses. While all of that remains true, as of this writing, there are rumblings that if Ohio keeps trending the way it has been, new guidelines will be put in place.

For now, it will continue to be business as usual at The Ghosts Of Ohio...whatever that has come to mean these days. All members of The Ghosts Of Ohio organization who will be taking part in investigations have been fully vaccinated. Masks will be worn at the request of the home/business owner and/or in accordance with any mask mandates. Virtual investigations and consultations are also available. More information on scheduling is included at the end of this newsletter, but if you have specific COVID-related questions, feel to 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.

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 e-mail 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!



A SHORT TRIP TO THE BERKSHIRES (OR HOW TO DISCOVER HAUNTED PLACES WITHOUT REALLY TRYING)



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Having experienced months of cabin fever due to the pandemic, I was excited to finally get out and hit the road. My choice for this trip was the

Berkshires, an area of rolling hills and mountains in western Massachusetts. Nestled among them are some historic and interesting hot spots worth considering.

I chose to stay in the town of Lennox as it was centrally located and a good hub from which to traverse the countryside. Aside from taking in a concert at Tanglewood, the premier spot to see the Boston Pops in the summer, I ventured to Norman Rockwell's studio and museum. He famously illustrated 352 covers for the *Saturday Evening Post*, a classic weekly magazine from the 1920s to the 70s.

I also had to check out the Daniel Chester French Studio and Museum. French was responsible for creating the Lincoln Memorial, as well as other significant monuments. I learned how they carved such a sizable piece and found the process very interesting. I recommend both if you ever make it to that area. Both are in Stockbridge, the quintessential New England village. The area has much history as it became a summer retreat for the well to do as a getaway from New York City. Its heyday was really in the Gilded Age.



The Gilded Age describes an era from the Victorian period, 1870s to the 1920s. This was a time when the robber barons and families with great wealth built cottages of at least 30 rooms on at least 30 acres. An oxymoron to say the least. One activity I always enjoy when on vacation is exploring old mansions and studying the aristocratic lifestyle of the time. Fortunately, Stockbridge has more than a few cottages to explore.

My first stop was Ventfort Hall. An 'America's Treasure' landmark, Ventfort Hall is in Lennox and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It was built in 1893 by George and Sarah Morgan, the sister of the famous banker, J.P. Morgan.

They built this massive home, with beautiful furnishings, artistic plaster, amazing woodwork, and a 90-foot grand veranda. The house was used in the Academy Award

Venfort Hall

film *The Cider House Rules* among a few other lesser knowns. The film company restored areas of the house they were filming at considerable expense. Restoring mansions is a deep pocket activity. In its prime, the house required nearly 30 full time servants to fulfill the needs of the property and family. Not having maintenance for several decades, you can only imagine the cost of repairing and matching woodwork and carved plaster pieces, just to name a few.

The house was occupied by several owners over a 50-year period, the last being some type of commune group. The house fell into severe disrepair and was vacant from 1976 until the late 1990s. A local nonprofit group bought the property in 1997 and began restoration. Much has been accomplished and more needs to be done.

After the tour, the docent made a

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A SHORT TRIP TO THE BERKSHIRES CONTINUED

few unanticipated comments. He said the house was definitely haunted. That immediately piqued my interest. I asked why he felt so sure. He responded that over the years he would periodically walk through an invisible cloud of lavender perfume, a scent used by Sarah Morgan This happened throughout the house. He said you can feel Sarah's presence in the house. No malevolence, she must be just checking on how things are going. I would have inquired further but was running short on time.

Next Stop: The Mount

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The Mount was the home of Edith Wharton. Reading from the brochure at the ticket booth I learned Edith Wharton (1862-1937), was born into a conservative New York society that discouraged women's intellectual ambitions. She became the first woman to be awarded the Pulitzer Prize for fiction, and the first woman to receive an honorary Doctorate of Letters from Yale.

Upon further snooping around the booth, I saw several purported paranormal pictures on display. I remembered TAPS did an investigation here some years ago and the attendant said *Ghost Adventures* also spent some time here.

My antennas were up!!

When I got home, I checked it out. Ghost Hunters were there twice, once in 2008, which aired in 2009, and another time in 2014. You can look it up on SyFy, Season 10, Episode 13. I could not readily locate the 2009 investigation, but I vaguely remember it. They had some evidence of an infrared handprint and a few other odd bits you can discover on the episode.

Ms. Wharton began building this

European style mansion on 200 acres in 1902. Her husband. Teddy, developed some mental instability in a few years and she sold and moved to Paris in 1911, eventuallv



Edith Wharton's Desk

divorcing him. She was a prolific and successful writer in her time, including bestsellers, The House of Mirth (1905) and the New England classic Ethan Frome (1911). I noticed she wrote over 40 books and short stories in her lifetime. One of the last books was Ghosts. I'm motivated to try to get a copy and see what she was thinking. This property was well maintained and is well forward in restoration but far from complete. No original furniture exists as she emptied the house and took it to Paris when she moved out in 2011.

During WW I she was a significant humanitarian to the Belgian and French people. She has been honored with the highest medals accorded to a civilian by France.

I did not notice any oddities or anomalies in the photos I took as I walked through the property. I interviewed two docents briefly. One was too new to have any real experience, the other said this: "At times, when I walk through Teddy's bedroom, I can smell cigar smoke".

Another docent commented in an interview with *The Berkshire Eagle*, a local newspaper, that curious things happen in the outbuildings

and stables, too. Even visitors have submitted photos over the years that are truly unusual. Feel free to check out the interview in the Nov 17, 2015, issue of the newspaper.

It's hard to say who could be hanging around as several families lived here over the years including a theater company; the last group was a girls' school that closed in 1996.

In reviewing the photos near the ticket booth, I took pictures of the pictures. There was a face in a window, orbs in some rooms and a rather interesting one with a unique blue light between curtains. The last one appeared to be an apparition of some type in the garden.

If you go on vacation or some interesting place, you might ask if there are paranormal experiences nearby. I have found most people are delighted that you asked and will happily disclose some interesting haunts.

If you have an interesting experience, please share it with readers of this newsletter. We are always delighted to learn of interesting activity.

SECRET SYNCHRONICITY

The following is a work of fiction. All characters and incidents are products of the author's imagination, and any resemblance to actual people or events is coincidental or fictionalized.

CHAPTER NINE: "MIRRORS OF THE MIND, PART 2"



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Mark gazed up at dozens of shipping crates lining the tall shelving units spanning the long exterior wall of the backstage laboratory. Mark pointed to one coffin-like gray shipping crate on the top level saying,

Topside,

the solid

encased

concrete

standing on

concrete floor

within a solid

building, Jim,

Darrin, and

"I think it was that one. Just for fun, a long time ago, we put a sign on that container that read: ALIEN - RETURN TO HANGAR 18. A few folks noticed it over the years, providing a good laugh at times. But then a certain government inspection team showed up one day and, sadly, they were not so amused. They made us take it down."

Jim and Darrin both chuckled at Mark's story and exaggerated sad face. In the background, Jim's upbeat rhythms of the Big Band era music softly echoed, rather hauntingly at times, in the cavernous hangar space. Like an ancient brick barrel vault, the keystone-like arch construction

supported a vast tonnage of concrete gracefully arcing above their heads to the peak some 50' above without any visible means of support. The more visible lower sections of the concrete arch contained the permanent imprint of woodgrain from the massive plywood form-factor used during the hangar's construction in 1944.

A brief vibrational code from the phone in his pocket prompted Mark to take a quick peak at the message displayed. It appeared in ethereal floating text above a blurred high-tech background and simply read "STEP AWAY! O." before erasing itself into digital oblivion.

Glancing high overhead at the parabolic-shaped reflectors surrounding the high wattage light fixtures, only a few of which emitted light, Mark excused himself from the group.

"If you'll excuse me, there's something I need to check on in the lab. I'll be back shortly. Just don't wander off beyond this general area." Pausing as he turned to go, Mark added "You, umm...should be fine."

With that, Mark walked away, touched a biometric door lock interface to the lab, and

disappeared behind the solidly closing door. Faraday shielding layers fabricated into the lab's construction on all sides - floors, walls, and ceiling - now completely blocked all electromagnetic fields from entering (or leaving) the sealed chambers within. Mark closed his eyes and recited one of his go-to phrases for times such as these: "I do believe in Physics...I DO believe in Physics!"

Alone now, Jim and Darrin discussed their amazing good fortune and current circumstance.

"I can hardly believe we are standing here at Mark's supersecret laboratory looking for ghosts! Holy Cow!" exclaimed Jim, using a uniquely midwestern phrase of dubious origin.

"Yes, quite extraordinary," added Darrin, gazing at the huge power conduits leaping across the space above them to the sealed chamber beyond, "though, of course we cannot tell anyone about any of this."

"True," replied Jim, walking over to his digital recorder on a nearby table. "It reminds me of the old African tale that goes something like this: the problem of the thief is not how to steal the Chief's

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SECRET SYNCHRONICITY continued

horn, but where to blow it."

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Darrin nodded his head in agreement, also reaching for his digital recorder, and began to say "Shall we begin--" a dangling phrase that just hung in the air.

Because that's when he stopped moving. Stopped thinking. Both Jim and Darrin stood frozen in midstride and discussion, as still as Disney audio animatronics at the end of a show after the last guest had left the theater. Locked in a moment of time.

Deep under thick concrete, stone-laden earth, and vast flowing aguifer beneath them, MIB agents Arcturus and Orion began manipulating complex 3D symbology virtually projected into their very special sunglasses. To the casual observer, their hands moved and rotated in a blur around invisible objects, as almost as if they were solving a large, floating Rubik's Cube puzzle. In their augmented reality view, they were manipulating computer-generated 3D views of two highly detailed brains.

The TANIS mainframe computer spoke next, "Daedalus Field ENGAGED. Tracking and Stasis Initialized for Subjects 173 and 219. Neuromorphic interface locks activated and deep layer neuron scanning underway. Mind copy interface initiating. Standing by to commence neural transfer to artificial universe constructs."

"Orion," spoke Arcturus in a steady even tone. "Status?"

"Subject 219 (Darrin) is presenting some challenges. His mind's logical allocation structure is not entirely logical," answered Orion.

"Same here," commented Arcturus. "Must be their artistic creativity strengths. Tricky."

A few more seconds elapsed with furious virtual puzzle solving underway, followed by Orion pulling his hands away from Darrin's virtual brain and folding his arms. "Done! Well, as good as it gets, anyway."

"Subject 173 (Jim) preparations complete as well," noted Arcturus. "TANIS – begin neural copy transfers now!"

"Mind copies initiated. 10% completed...20% completed..." tracked the TANIS mainframe computer voice in the background.

While Orion focused on Darrin's brain graphics interface, Arcturus typed a new command into the keyboard interface: "LOAD ALIEN MIND 7". In the augmented reality view of their MIB glasses, a new brain construction began to form between those of Subjects 173 and 219. This one, however, presented an entirely different structure and complexity in its visual representation, and it glowed and pulsed with inner deep blue flashes of light.

"Arcturus?" questioned Orion with genuine hesitancy and concern.

"...80% completed..." noted the TANIS mainframe computer.

"This is the perfect opportunity to attempt what has never been done before – the grafting of our only successfully stored alien mind copy into a human host's brain structure," remarked Arcturus. "Once awakened, this merging of minds could open a pathway to understanding beyond comprehension."

"...90% completed ... "

"Which host?" asked Orion. But before Arcturus could answer, the mainframe computer announced:

"...100% completed. Subject minds successfully copied into virtual universe construct. Releasing AI agents to reset reality parameters and begin interface guidance on copied minds."

"Jim, Subject 173 will be the host," decided Arcturus, as he typed the command "MERGE MINDS 7 and 173" into the console keyboard. In the augmented reality world before them, the agents watched the AI-assisted process graphically move alien mind components into the rotating 3D view of Jim's brain.

Far above them, still frozen in place, billions of new neural interconnections and weighting functions began overlaying into the established structure of Jim's mind, all orchestrated by the incredible precision of the alien neuromorphic scanner technology hidden in the lamp fixtures high overhead.

SECRET SYNCHRONICITY continued

"I assume you intend to keep Jim's mind dominant in this hidden overlay?" asked Orion.

"Of course. Awakening an alien mind in this way is completely unprecedented. This will take some time and careful study, for years most likely. Baby steps. Assuming alien babies do that. For now, Subject 173 will be one of our most important projects, second only to that," answered Arcturus, pointing at the large screen before them. On it, an image of the Star Gate serenely floated above a gently rippling dais, the heart of the saucershaped craft just beyond the control room observation window below.

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"What do you intend to do with the copies of their minds?" asked Orion.

"Learn..." replied Arcturus, pausing momentarily. "One day, learn what they really know about all of this. Their copies will play out in the virtual universe construct, as real to them as reality itself. Well, almost as real."

"MERGED UPLOAD COMPLETED," announced the TANIS mainframe computer. "NEURAL OVERLAY ACCURACY: 95%" blinked the mind transfer graphics in the augmented reality view.

"I wonder what happened to the other 5% of the mind transfer overlay?" remarked Orion.

Backstage on the broad hangar floor, Darrin and Jim resumed

their motion and speech, oblivious to the lost 10 minutes when they were frozen in time. Darrin continued his sentence apparently uninterrupted, "...a new EVP session?"

"Yes, that's what I was thinking," answered Jim, checking his digital recorder.

Inside the lab's shielded interior, Mark nervously sat at his computer desk and sent an Instant Message inquiry over the closed communication system to the TANIS control room far below. "ALL CLEAR" came back within a few seconds. Exiting the laboratory into backstage, Mark hailed his two friends who had just picked up their digital recorders and appeared to be looking for a good place to try a new EVP session.

"Hey, I'm back!" said Mark.

"Back?" asked Darrin with a bit of a raised eyebrow that Mark recognized so well. "You only just walked through that door a moment ago."

"True, but that was time enough," answered Mark. "I have my recorder too. Let's get started!"

An evening geared toward paranormal investigation proceeded as planned. The three friends laughed and enjoyed the company of each other, the unique venue, and hoped to hear a few ghostly voices on their recorders later. In that endeavor, they were unsuccessful, but they enjoyed the fun evening, nonetheless. Several hours later, the trio packed up, said their goodbyes, and went their separate ways.

Jim felt particularly alert and awake, in part due to those Monster drinks he brought on late night investigations. But mostly due to the merged alien mind now interleaving his own; a mind still sleeping, still dreaming strange incorporeal things, waiting to awaken to a whole new world.

Next Issue: Epilogue



THE HAUNTED WILDERNESS OF THE US



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There are haunted forests all over the world, some of them very well known, such as Aokigahara Forest (Suicide Forest) in Japan, the Black Forest of Germany, and the Island of Dolls in Xochimilco, Mexico. But there are many wild places you can explore without leaving the United States. Since forests seem to go hand in hand

The Pine Barrens.

Quite possibly the most

area in the country, the

Devil is perhaps one of

child of a local woman,

well-known haunted

Pine Barrens Jersey

this country's most

Reputedly the 13th

born in 1735 with

goat, the creature

leather wings, hoofs

and the countenance of a

famous cryptids.

New Jersey

with camping, try staying at a haunted campground, and see how much the wild part of the United States has to offer!



<u> — from new-jersey-leisure-</u> guide.com

attacked the mother and flew up the chimney to live a solitary life in the Barrens. Subsisting on local livestock and the odd missing child or two, the Devil is still seen today. The Barrens itself is located in the southern coastal plain of New Jersey and contains more than 1 million acres. It was originally home to lumber and paper mills as far back as the early 1700s. Those places were eventually abandoned as workers moved west, and the ghost towns soon became the focus of local ghost lore. The people who remained living here earned a reputation of being inbred and slow.... think 'Deliverance'.... giving the area a scary feeling, especially after dark.



— from thedyrt.com

<u>Holy Ghost</u> <u>Campground,</u> <u>Santa Fe National</u> <u>Forest, New Mexico</u>

This campground found in the northern Sangre de Cristo Mountains is choc-abloc with paranormal

activity. While some of it is believed to be caused by the murder of a Spanish priest in the 1600s, the activity spreads all over the Pecos Wilderness. Here, people disappear, UFOs are seen, disembodied voices are heard, and shadow people are seen walking near the water.



<u>— from sandiegoreader.com</u>

<u>The Elfin Forest,</u> <u>California</u>

This forest is located just southwest of Escondido in San Diego County. Using Jim's 'according to legend', gypsies living here in the early 1800s

Lake Morena

Near the start of the

Pacific Crest Trail is a

lakeside campground

in Morena, CA. Seen

here are floating

figures, the ubiquitous

campsite,

California

were driven out or killed by people of the nearby town. The survivors cursed the forest and land so that the locals could never live happily here. If you are hiking in this forest, look for women in white who float through the forest, mysterious footprints, and a black horse ridden by a ghastly hooded figure.



<u> — from sdparks.org</u>

woman in white and odd sounds are heard. Experienced by not only campers but park rangers, the hauntings have only been around for a few decades.

THE HAUNTED WILDERNESS OF THE US CONTINUED



<u> — from friendsatgriffithpark.org</u>

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<u>Griffith Park,</u> <u>Los Angeles,</u> <u>California</u>

Located at the Eastern end of the Santa Monica Mountains in Los Feliz, this area was reputedly owned in the mid-1800s by Don

Antonio Feliz. The 4,300-ranch acreage should have gone to his niece upon his death since he had raised her. Instead, he left the ranch to a local politician. The niece cursed the ranch, which subsequently had a fair share of accidental deaths and crop failures. In reality, this land was part of a Spanish Land Grand, and the land was purchased by Griffith J. Griffith when he settled in LA in 1882. 3,000 of the 4,000+ acres were gifted to the people of Los Angeles in 1896. Used as a park after that, it became the site for murders, Satanic cult rituals and fires, while also containing the Zoo, the Griffith Observatory, the Hollywood sign and more. Hardly seems like a spooky place, right? I drove through here at night back in the late 80s...it did have a weird feel to it.



<u>—from alltrails.com</u>

Freetown-Fall River State Forest, Massachusetts

This Massachusetts forest contains everything from UFOs to Sasquatch (the two tend to be seen together all over the

country). Part of what is known as the Bridgewater Triangle, early settlers purchased the land from the Wampanoag Tribe, and locals have been cursed ever since. Perhaps it's the sacred burial ground located here that caused the land to be cursed; it is definitely a huge magnet for paranormal activity. Ghosts roam freely, poltergeist activity is rife, and fireballs are seen in the area along with flying objects and Bigfoot. In the 1970s-80s, the area became known for satanic cult activity and the odd murder, making it not only scary from a paranormal side, but from a human side as well.



<u> — from facebook.com</u>

be the home of a woman accused of witchcraft. When people disappeared in the surrounding forests, rather than blame animals, the locals blamed the woman and burned down her house. Today, she chases visitors who are unlucky enough to encounter her. And when running from her, don't run up Jacob's Ladder. These stairs are haunted by a ghost who will grab you by your shirt or pants and pull you down. All the better for the witch to catch you!

Cameron Park, Waco, Texas

If you come across crumbling ruins in Cameron Park you have found the Witch's Castle. Many stories surround the ruins, which were believed to



-from adirondackexperience.com

Big Moose Lake campground, <u>New York</u>

Located in the Adirondacks, this lake was the site of the murder of Grace Brown in 1906. She was secretly seeing

(and was pregnant by) Chester Gillette. He was the son of the owner of the skirt factory Grace worked at. While Chester did not want to marry her, he led her to believe he was going to propose by asking her to come with him to Big Moose Lake. He took her out on a boat and in the middle of the lake, bludgeoned her and pushed her into the water, where she drowned. Campers here still see her figure walking the shores of the lake.





THIS OCTOBER, THE GHOSTS ARE (HOPEFULLY) COMING FOR YOU!

Things were going so well for a while there, weren't they?

After being forced off the road for nearly a year due to COVID restrictions, everyone here at The Ghosts Of Ohio was looking forward to fall 2021, where we could get back out there and hang with all of you. New presentations, new audio and video, new stories to share. And of course, wrapping our ghostly hands around the paranormal community in celebration of all things strange and spooky. Heck, I was even going to shoot off a couple of confetti cannons during certain presentations...but fellow Ghosts Of Ohio member Sam still won't let me!

But then, reality reared its ugly head: variants, cases rising, new mask mandates. We're not about to let all

that slow us down. We're continuing to work with individual venues to try and make this October one to remember.

The following is a list of all presentations and appearances that, as of this writing, are confirmed. Keep in mind that things can, and probably will, change at a moment's notice. So, if you are at all interested in attending any of these events, please be sure to follow The Ghosts Of Ohio on any of our social media accounts as we will post updates as soon as they happen. Also consider contacting the venue(s) directly as they will also be able to fill you in on any guidelines/rules regarding masks.

Tuesday, October 5th @ 6:30 pm Meet The Ghosts Of Ohio presentation New Lebanon Branch/Dayton Metro Library 715 W. Main Street

New Lebanon, OH 45345

Monday, October 18th @ 7:00 pm Meet The Ghosts Of Ohio presentation Rodman Public Library 15 E. Broadway Street Alliance, OH 44601

Wednesday, October 20th @ 6:30 pm Ohio's Historic Haunts presentation Seville Library 45 Center Street Medina, OH Friday, October 22nd @ 6:00 pm My Strange & Spooky World: An evening with author and paranormal researcher, James A. Willis Verity Lodge: Miami University (Middletown) 4200 N. University Blvd. Middletown, OH

Tuesday, October 26th @ 6:30 pm Meet The Ghosts Of Ohio presentation London Public Library 20 E. First Street London, OH

Saturday, November 6th Ohio's Historic Haunts presentation Defiance Public Library 320 Fort Street Defiance, OH 43512 1

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Investigations & Consultations

The Ghosts Of Ohio continue to schedule investigations for private homes and businesses for 2021, and all members of the organization who would participate in investigations have been fully vaccinated. Additionally, we can also make arrangements to drop off ghost-hunting equipment at your home or business and walk you through how to set it up yourself if you prefer. So 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

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

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