



The ghosts of Ohio® Newsletter

www.ghostsofohio.org

December 2009—Volume 7 Issue 2

From the Spooky Desk of James A. Willis: Looking Back at 2009



James

Since it seems to have become a tradition at the end of every year to take a look back at those whom we have lost, I thought I would take a moment to talk about two people that the paranormal community

lost in 2009.

On July 3rd, 2009, the paranormal community lost perhaps one of its most enigmatic people, John Keel. While he had been an author and UFO buff most of his life, Keel would be forever linked to the infamous Mothman when he began looking into the strange occurrences taking place in and around Pt. Pleasant, West Virginia, in the late 1960s. His resulting book, *The Mothman Prophecies*, which was filled with Keel's first-hand account of what he witnessed in Pt. Pleasant, became the cryptozoological bible for anyone looking into the Mothman.

Keel's passing represents a two-fold loss for the paranormal community. First and foremost, we have lost perhaps the last of the Mothman research pioneers, which leads to an even broader change. With Keel gone, the number of those

still able to provide us with first-hand encounters from the original Mothman sightings in the late 60s continues to dwindle. With less people able to vouch for the creature's existence, Mothman moves yet another step closer to the land of legend.

Earlier in the year, on April 26th, author and ghost hunter Hans Holzer passed away leaving behind an enormous wealth of research in the form of his books. As many of my family and close friends will tell you, Hans Holzer has always been inspiration to me, ever since I was a small child. An early reader, I was first exposed to Holzer's work at the tender age of 6 with his *Ghost Hunter*. Since that point, I was obsessed with Holzer because he embodied the two things I loved in life: writing and looking for ghosts. Plus, Holzer was known to sometimes be a bit of a cranky SOB, which reminded me a lot of my own father.

Over the years, my personal library would become home to literally dozens of first editions of his book. I also had "meeting Hans Holzer" on my To Do list, if for no other reason than to thank him for being such an inspiration to me. Sadly, I kept pushing trying to schedule

a meeting with him back further and further. And now, with his passing, I will never have the opportunity to tell Mr. Holzer how much he meant to me... at least not in this life.

With that in mind, if I could offer you but one bit of advice for the coming year, it would be this; don't ever miss an opportunity to remind those around you just how much they mean to you. Because one day, they will be gone and all you'll be left with are their memories.

Cheers,
James A. Willis
Founder/Director

Inside This Issue



The Ghosts Give Back! Find out more about this year's charity drive on Page 2.

The Unveiling of the KAPoS System



Mark

Greetings, readers, and welcome to my first newsletter article! As a member of The Ghosts of Ohio paranormal investigation team, I am the architect for the Vernier LabPro system, which I have worked to

turn into what we refer to as the KAPoS measurement system. Some of you may have wondered over time about that funny little acronym, so bear witness now to this first public unveiling of its true meaning, kept hidden even from Jim until the time was right!

Kaleidoscopic Anomalous Paranormal outburst Sensor (KAPoS)

From the Greek, the word kaleidoscope literally means a device for viewing beautiful forms. Here, it applies to the ever-changing and shifting probe-reading signatures we observe on the laptop computer interface. From within these multiple layers of probe signatures scrolling by in real time, at the rate of two readings per second, we search for the unexpected anomalous readings that could portend a paranormal outburst. Of course, KAPoS is a lot easier to say!

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What does the future hold for Ghostly Talk Radio? Turn to Page 3 for details.

Darrin's Tech Talk: Robert Bess and The Para-What?



Darrin

A lot of talk has been going around since this past Halloween's episode of Ghost Adventures, and it all revolves around a man named Robert Bess. This article, however, isn't about the controversial throw of his EMF meter. It's about his invention, the Parobot. The Parobot, or Paranormal Containment Chamber as he calls it, is a device that is supposed to hunt down, trap, contain and make ghosts visible. Does it work, and if it does, how does it work? There isn't much out there on this seemingly amazing piece of equipment or on its inventor.

The best description I could find of the Parobot and Bess's theory on how it works was on the Ghost Adventures website: (http://www.travelchannel.com/Ghost_Adventures_Live/gear-and-equipment/robert-bess-parobot-containment-chamber.html).

The science behind the containment chamber is based on the theory that ghosts are able to harness, and move about as, electromagnetic (EM) fields in our dimension. However, because these spirits cycle at such a low rate, humans can't see them.

Bess designed his eight-foot-tall, four-foot-wide plexiglass Parobot—fully

equipped with electromagnets, lasers, sensors, internal and external digital thermometers, and magnetic locks—to detect and capture these low-cycling energy fields.

The chamber is built on top of a robotic 3x3-foot platform with four wheels. Powered by two eight-pound lithium quartz batteries, it tops out at 25–30 mph and can pirouette on a dime. The chamber is remotely controlled, but it can be voice-activated if necessary.

If the EM sensors on the chamber detect an energy field, its doors open, and it moves in the direction of what it senses. Once it captures the energy in the chamber, the doors will shut and the massive eight-foot Tesla coil inside the unit produces 1.4 million watts of energy, "feeding" the EM field until it cycles at a far faster or higher rate, rendering the spirit visible.

Confused? Welcome to the club. How all this is supposed to work is a mystery.

Robert Bess himself is some what of a mystery as well. He is the founder of the Foundation for Paranormal Research: (<http://www.foundationforparanormalresearch.us/>). This website has very little information about the man or, as the site claims, his many inventions. The Parobot is only briefly mentioned along

with the demonstration that was filmed by NBC in May of 2007. I was finally able to find the footage of this but I can't really say that it shows a ghost being caught and made visible: (<http://www.austindesignworks.net/3MileLock>). The video basically shows Bess setting up one of his first versions of the containment unit. At one point it starts to fill with smoke and then he tells the people present they have witnessed history—the first capture and containment of a ghost. Bess never goes into any detail as to how he is able to know that his experiment is a success and the container looks to simply be filled with smoke.

But at least it's more than what he got with his newest version of the Parobot that was used on Ghost Adventures. During the live broadcast, it did little more than make a lot of noise. It is unfortunate that there isn't more on the Internet from him about his invention and how it works. His theory and invention are very interesting and if they work like he says they do I would think he would want to show it off and talk about it as often as he could. Until that time, I look forward to his next attempt and maybe, just maybe, finding out how the darn thing is supposed to work!

The Ghosts Give Back: The Firefighters 4 Kids Toy Drive



The Ghosts of Ohio has always prided itself on giving back to the community, especially during the holidays. In the past, we have been involved with Ohio Toys For Tots drives. This year, The Ghosts of Ohio took part in the Firefighters 4 Kids toy drive. Ghosts of Ohio members, family, and friends were asked to bring a new, unwrapped toy to our annual Merry Scary Christmas party and place it under our spooky tree. Afterwards, all the toys were gathered up and hand-delivered to local firefighters on Saturday, December 12th. The Ghosts of Ohio personally donated 43 toys to the less fortunate.

So many of you have asked how you can get involved that we will be looking

into broadening our scope of toy donations for 2010. Of course, we'll also be looking into ways that The Ghosts can reward you for your generosity, too!



The Ghosts of Ohio donated over 40 toys to children in need at this year's party.



Ghostly Talk Paranormal Radio: A Silence That Speaks Volumes



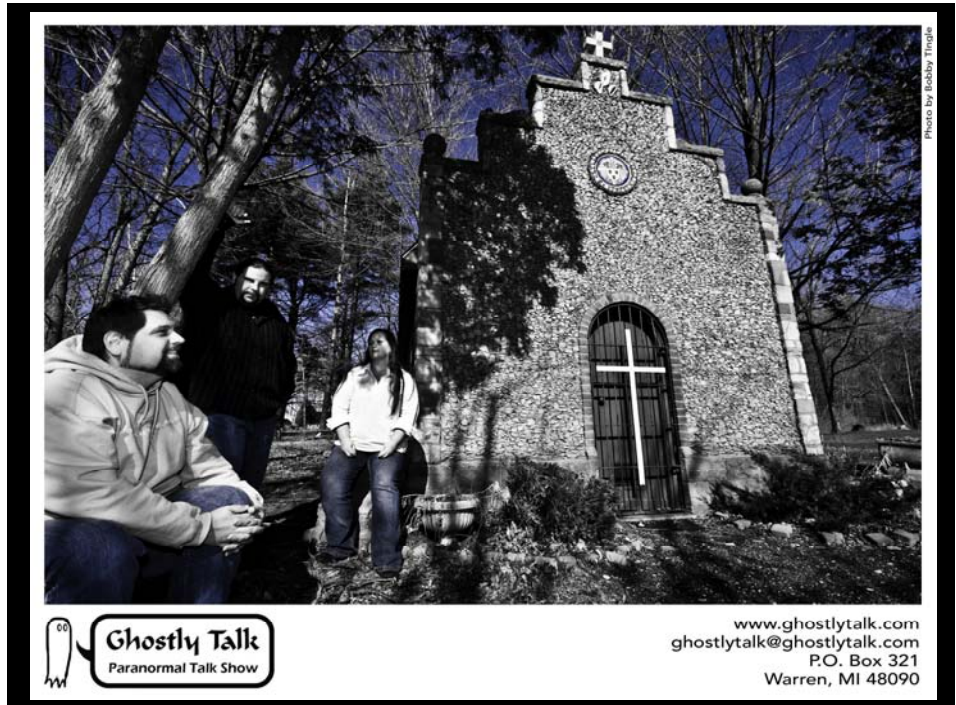
James

What is becoming of the paranormal community? On the outside, the plethora of ghost reality shows on television and paranormal talk shows on the Web seem to hint that things have never been

better. And yet, there are those who believe that our community has lost its way and is now more concerned with fame and fortune rather than serious research. So which side is more accurate? For now, I will choose to remain silent and simply say that, while many people were not aware of it, on October 18, 2009, something happened that speaks volumes as to the current state of the paranormal community—Ghostly Talk Radio went on indefinite hiatus.

For the uninitiated, Ghostly Talk became the first regular, live, independent, Internet-based paranormal radio show when Scott L. and Doug (they prefer to go by their first names) hit the airwaves eight years ago. For the most part, it was the two guys sitting behind a microphone, talking about all things paranormal. They had no set script for how the show would go (or if they did, they never followed it). Rather, Scott L. and Doug would banter back and forth about the latest paranormal tidbit they had just picked up. It didn't matter that the show ebbed and flowed, often coming dangerously close to getting far too out of control. What mattered to Doug and Scott L. was that they were in love with all things paranormal and were getting the chance to talk about it on the air. If you weren't into the paranormal, you probably shut the show off 10 minutes into it. But if you were a paranormal freak like me, you felt like it was it—a couple of people getting together and shooting the s**t about things. For me, it felt like home.

As the years rolled on, Scott L. and Doug brought in Bonnie in a vain attempt to reel them in a bit. Thankfully, it didn't work and the Ghostly Talk machine just kept right on rolling along.



You never knew that they were going to be talking about or what was going to happen next, which was part of the show's allure. But more than that, the one thing listeners always took away from the show was that Ghostly Talk was in love with the paranormal community...and we with them.

Visiting the Ghostly Talk website and flipping through their archived shows and interviews reveals a who's who of the paranormal community: Lorraine Warren, Stanton Friedman, Loren Coleman, Peter James, Loyd Auerbach. And let's not forget the mixed bag of bizarre guests that would stop by, too: Sid Haig, Dee Snider, and even Henry Rollins. Listen to any of those interviews and you can almost see the smiles on Scott L. and Doug's faces as they're talking to these people. Through the years, Scott L. and Doug never lost sight of the fact that they were just two guys from Michigan—two guys who somehow got the amazing opportunity to chat with people they had long admired and looked up to.

On top of the radio show, Ghostly Talk also took to the road and made appearances at conventions across the United States. The few times when Doug and Scott L. actually spoke at the

conventions were few and far between and when they did, you could see a certain awkwardness with them. You could tell they didn't like the spotlight. Once again, they simply wanted to be a part of the paranormal community that they had grown to know and love. They never got paid for traveling to these conventions, even though they often recorded the entire show and they put them up on their site for free. For them, it was a labor of love. And then, on October 18, 2009, it all came crashing down.

On that show, which is available for a free download on ghostlytalk.com, Scott L., Doug, and Bonnie announced that Ghostly Talk would be going on an indefinite hiatus. You could hear it in their voices that this was a hard decision to make. And yet, one could not argue with their reasons. They felt that the paranormal community they knew and loved was gone, replaced by one where getting a new television pilot was more important than what value was being added to the field. They felt that the driving force of the field—people's personal paranormal experiences—was being overshadowed by sensationalism and all-out manufacturing of evidence.

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Continued: The Unveiling of the KAPoS System

Continued from Page 1

And, yes, I am a bit of a technical geek, of course, to find “beauty” in colored lines plotted on the screen—but what else would you expect from an applied engineer/scientist who chases after ghosts and other paranormal phenomenon in his spare time?!

In previous newsletter articles, Darrin has discussed many of the technical features of the KAPoS measurement system that we routinely use on paranormal investigations. This real-time data acquisition system has the ability to track rapid changes in air temperature, static electrical charge, magnetic field strength, and both movement and velocity of objects within the ultrasonic motion sensor's field of view. And though not presently integrated with the main acquisition system, we also have the ability in a handheld device to measure the that complements the normal recording of video and audio from cameras and handheld digital voice recorders. KAPoS uses the LabPro system, made by Vernier Software and Technology, with support for 50+ sensor probes in differing areas of physics and chemistry.

Beyond the off-the-shelf science-specific sensors offered by Vernier, a simple voltage probe allows for other measurements within custom circuit designs of our own invention. For example, in the coming months we will add a customized “ghost bait” probe that will monitor the real time electrical charge on a battery and record any rapid



KAPoS sensors deployed at an investigation of Room 108 at the Versailles Inn in Versailles, OH.

drain in its energy. A recurring theme of strong paranormal activity, the rapid draining of batteries may signify the presence of a powerful ghostly manifestation, so this would be a cool new addition to KAPoS capability!

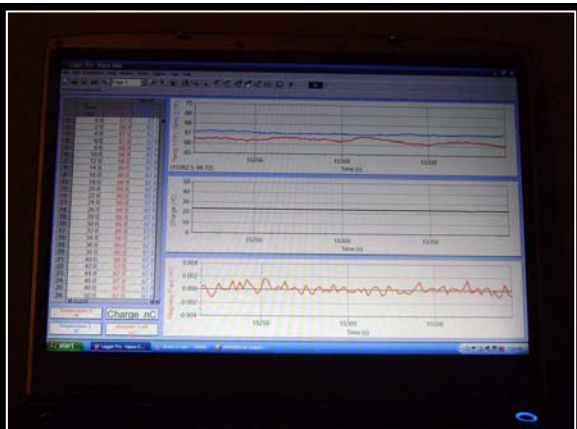
So, what has been our experience so far in using KAPoS on investigations, you ask. Like our other methods of recording potentially haunted environments, such as video cameras and audio recordings, sometimes boring normalcy prevails.

Yet, at other times, intriguing variations in the probe signatures have appeared that lack simple explanation. For example, at the Versailles Inn investigation in 2009, in Room 108 to be specific, which is a small hotel room without open windows or open doors and without the temperature probe being close to a working air vent, we observed repetitive cyclical drops of several degrees Fahrenheit in air temperature along a wall of interest in the room—but only when female investigators were present. When we moved the

ladies out of the room and left it empty, that temperature variation abruptly ceased. When we put male investigators in the room, there was no cyclic variation at all—only a small increase in room temperature. In the case of the Versailles Inn, full body apparitions eye-witnessed over long spans of years have always been male. Could a male ghost have been “looking over” the ladies in Room 108? Who knows for certain, but the data we recorded is intriguing.

Even more so, in that same room, KAPoS simultaneously recorded very unusual changes in the static electric charge fields throughout the evening. It was as if there was a varying level of static electricity near the probe, or an ionization generator in the room that changed its behavior with time—sometimes adding ions to the air and sometimes taking them away. Ions in the air directly affect the build-up or removal of electrical charge on the copper pipe connected to this KAPoS probe, and they can affect its sensitive sensor readings much like a charged-up static electrical balloon does.

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The primary KAPoS screen displays real-time metrics captured by the various sensors equipped to the system.

A Merry Scary Christmas: Celebrating the Holidays, Ghosts of Ohio Style



Sheri

What do you get when you cross The Ghosts of Ohio with the holiday season? A Merry Scary Christmas party, that's what! Imagine Tim Burton's "Nightmare Before Christmas," crossed with the abominable snowman, met with paranormal investigators and TONS of food, and you'll have a good idea of what a Merry Scary Christmas party is all about. The Ghosts of Ohio and our families celebrated the season with food,

fun, laughs, and the "spirit" of giving. This year we held our 6th annual holiday party, and as with tradition, the Ghosts members generously brought gifts and toys for needy children. The presents filled the room with warmth under the Merry Scary Christmas tree.

In addition to the giving, there were delicious confections from meatballs, to cheese trays, to homemade cookies, to pizza, to chips and dips. The highlight of the evening was looking back on The Ghosts of Ohio's accomplishments over the past 10 years. Memories of

the fun events, group investigations, presentations, and charity work we have participated in over the past 10 years were shared.

The evening carried on with great conversations and games with the Ghosts members. All who attended left with a great appreciation for all we have accomplished over the last 10 years and with a sense of anticipation and excitement for the next 10 years to come. Happy Holidays!



Not your typical holiday party, as some guests wore elaborate costumes and delivered frightening delicacies.



The Ghosts of Ohio rarely miss an opportunity to cut loose, and this year's "family" portrait was no exception.

Spook-O-Vision!

The pictures below were taken using the Ghost Camera, a state-of-the-art disposable camera found in the Ghost Hunting aisle at a paranormal outfitter called Big Lots. As you can see from the startling evidence below, this party will certainly *haunt* its attendees for years to come!



Putting Reality Shows Under the Microscope: A Review of Ghost Lab



Wendy

I have to admit that I had pretty much given up on “reality” ghost shows. Don’t get me wrong...it seemed to start out ok. You had Ghost Hunters, which was the one that really seemed to start it

all, and actually opened my eyes to the fact that people out there actually had *groups that investigated ghosts!* They are the ones that put me on my investigative path, and they have (with a couple dramatic issues) stayed true to themselves. Then there was the dearly departed Haunting Evidence, which tried to close cold case files via psychics and scientific “paranormal” findings. Along came Paranormal State, with a different angle at investigating, and Ghost Hunters created an “International” show. And it snowballed from there. Everyone and their brother either wanted or had a show. And the quality...the quality?!? Do you hear that flushing sound?

Most Haunted found its way across the pond to our TV sets, and blew everyone out of the water with general goofiness and idiocy. Seriously? Running away from DUST?? Follow this up with various ghost hunting specials with goons running around with cameras, and my stomach began to knot, my jaw clenched, and I began pulling out huge chunks of hair. I began to fear that the public was going to write off the paranormal investigative community as a joke, and to prove my point, along came Zak and Ghost Adventures. So much running, yelling, provoking, and biceps! While they do provide a comedic value, and ghost hunting does have its fun, dumb, goofy, totally blonde moments, there is a very serious side that seems to have been tossed out with the week old pizza. Were we ever going



to save face with the public and prove we all aren’t just a joke? And suddenly, Ghost Lab appeared on my lovely AT&T U-verse guide. Another joke, or worth the hour of watching? It turned out to be the latter.

Ghost Lab follows the investigations of Everyday Paranormal out of Texas, headed up by Brad and Barry Klinge. It has a narrator who is not a member of the group, giving the show a documentary-type feel missing from the other shows. This small group of investigators travel across the US of A in a loaded down trailer they use as their command center. This enables them to review evidence in real time, which helps focus what direction their investigations take. It is always great to get immediate feedback when you are working. It lets you know you are on the right track, and eliminates the boredom I know we all feel when we are sitting in a dark room holding a tape recorder for hours on end. So I must say I am seething with jealousy at their swanky setup. The investigators all seem to be personable and serious about what they are doing, although I think no Emmys for acting will be coming forthwith. There is (so far), no dramatics (well, some slight panic), no petty arguing, no running, no screaming, NO DUST ORBS. I love this group. Sigh. Although I don’t think I would take one for the team and get a tattoo in order to try and draw out a ghost!

While they may have the same equipment that most of us are using,

they are doing some things the rest of us are not, such as their intensive baseline readings and setup. This gang moves in like an army and just coats each investigative site with digital picture taking so that they have proper backup for questions that pop up later. The clock radio in the old brothel was a good example of how having more pictures than you can possibly know what to do with can actually help disprove what another group may have taken to be evidence. They also try and recreate events that may bring out paranormal activity, such as bringing in a group of people off the street to be the audience in an old theatre in an attempt to bring out the ghost of John Wilkes Booth.

Another thing that puts Everyday Paranormal into a class of their own is their deep hooks into the scientific community. They are actually *teaching* us with every episode. It is very refreshing to actually learn something from the scientists and specialists that appear on Ghost Lab that can be put to use in our own evidence reviews. Any investigator that is serious about what they are doing in the field is definitely going to benefit from this, so much thanks goes out to the Klinge brothers for that.

So...the stomach is unclenching, the jaw is unlocking, and I’m sure my hair will grow back eventually. Hope has been restored for those of us who want the public to view what we do as serious, viable work. Rock on, Everyday Paranormal...you are worthy.

ADMINISTRATION

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Spend the Night with The Ghosts of Ohio!

As part of the Spend the Night with The Ghosts of Ohio program, we are renting out some of the most haunted buildings in Ohio for an entire night. Unlike traditional "ghost hunts," where you are often forced to share the location with total strangers, every building we rented out was totally ours.

How do you get in on all this spooky fun? It's simple, really. All you need to do is sign up for The Ghosts of Ohio newsletter—which is free...and which most of you have already done!!

For each investigation, we'll be picking several names from our list of newsletter subscribers and giving them the first shot at spending the night with us. All they need to do is pay the same registration fee that the members of The

Ghosts of Ohio have to pay in order to rent out the building (dollar amount subject to change based on individual venue).

In addition, we'll be drawing at least one lucky Grand Prize winner who will get to come along for FREE!

That's all there is to it! Of course, we might want to take a few pictures of you on the investigation and post them on our site so you'll be the envy of all your friends. But hey, that's a small price to pay for the chance to spend the night with The Ghosts!

If for some reason you don't have your own subscription, what are you waiting for? <http://ghostsofohio.org/services/newsletter.html>.

The Ghosts are Planning Where To Spend The Night in 2010

Our investigation of Bobby Mackey's officially ended the 2009 Spend the Night program. But if you weren't one of the lucky winners, have no fear. As long as you are subscribed to our newsletter, you are eligible to win in 2010 and beyond!

Plans are currently underway to book several locations for our 2010 Spend the Night program, including a return visit to Mansfield Reformatory. So keep an eye on The Ghosts of Ohio website and this newsletter for more details as they become available. Until then, keep your fingers crossed!

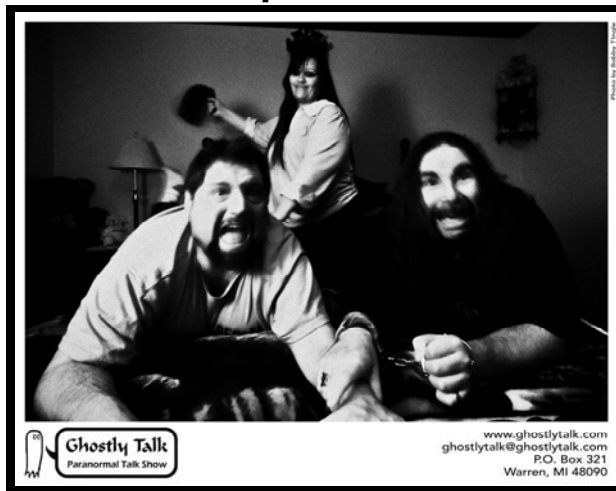
Continued: A Silence that Speaks Volumes

Continued from Page 3

Ghostly Talk didn't want to go away, but they also felt they couldn't continue the charade anymore. It wasn't fair to their fans and it wasn't fair to them. And so, with sadness, they turned their microphones off.

While I can't pretend to understand everything that Scott L., Doug, Bonnie, and the rest of Ghostly Talk are feeling, I can't deny that it has opened my eyes even more. And when you look at the big picture—a group of individuals becoming so disillusioned with a field they once loved that they are willing to walk away from something they are so passionate about—one can't help but wonder what's become of this field.

They promise that this is just a brief hiatus and that Ghostly Talk will rise



again in the near future. I, for one, am hoping and praying that's true. Ghostly Talk's departure, aside from being a message to us all, has left a void in the paranormal community that, despite what others might tell you, cannot be filled.

The Newsletter is a Robot!

We'll stop reminding you when you stop sending emails to the newsletter address! If you send anything at all to the newsletter address, our surly robot will eat it...and that will make us all sad. So please don't do it, OK? Promise?



Continued: The Unveiling of the KAPoS System

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Normally, this probe simply produces a reading that slowly ramps up (or down) to a saturation condition and then must be reset. That night, in room 108, something else in the room environment was dynamically changing this probe all by itself—something that, to this day, has intrigued us all here at The Ghosts of Ohio and keeps us looking forward to the next time when we can incorporate KAPoS into an investigation.

Investigations and Consultations: Now Scheduling for 2010

The Ghosts of Ohio has begun scheduling investigations for 2010. 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 now 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>.

What the Dickens? Beyond a Christmas Carol



James

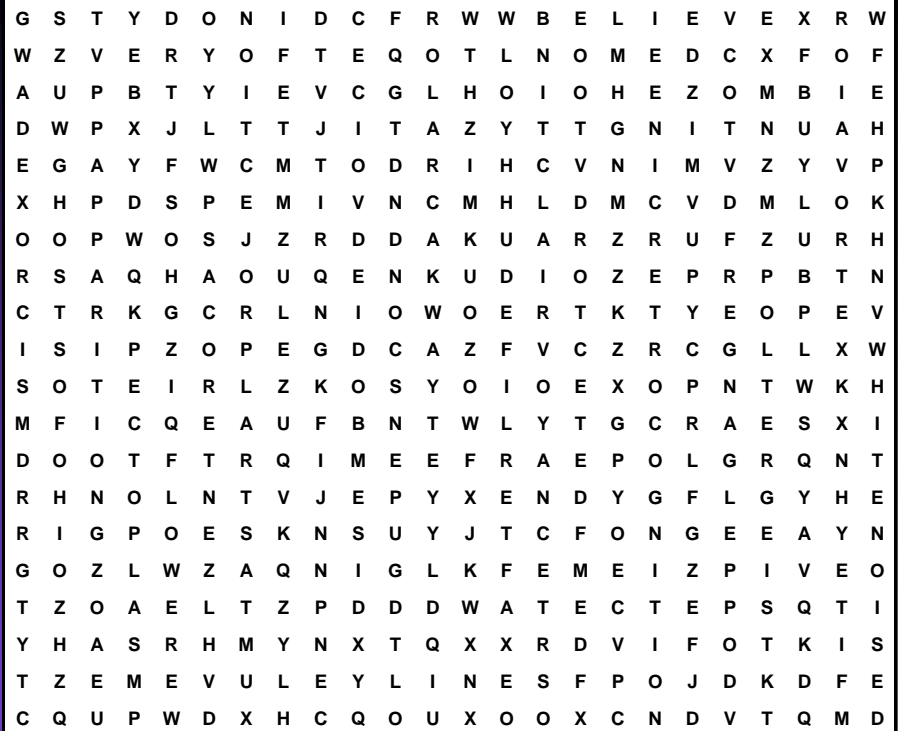
The release of A Christmas Carol, starring Jim Carrey, this holiday season has once again reminded everyone that it's just not Christmas without another re-telling of the Charles Dicken's classic tale, A Christmas Carol. First published in December of 1843 under the rambling title, A Christmas Carol in Prose, Being a Ghost Story of Christmas, Dickens' book hasn't been out of print since and has spawned a mind-numbing array of adaptations, including those on the stage, screen, and radio. But for ghost aficionados, the best part about A Christmas Carol was that it was a holiday story that centered on ghosts! If you're one of those people who love your merry with a little bit of scary thrown in, you can rejoice in the little-known fact that A Christmas Carol was one of dozens of Christmas stories Dickens wrote that involved ghosts and other spooky creatures.

Something that is often overlooked was that back in Dickens' day, part of the Christmas tradition involved families gathering around the fire and telling stories after the holiday feast was done. More often than not, as the night wore on, the Christmas tales would be replaced by chilling ghost stories. This may have been the inspiration for Dickens to create a mixture of Christmas and ghosts in A Christmas Carol. Regardless, after its publication, Dickens felt he had hit on just the right mixture of merry and scary and decided to continue creating spooky Christmas tales.

In 1850, Dickens created and became part owner of the magazine Household Words. Aside from overseeing every aspect of the magazine's publication, Dickens also made the decision to contribute a ghost story to the annual December edition. Beginning with 1851's What Christmas Is, as We Grow Older, Dickens wrote eight holiday stories involving ghosts for Household Words, including the chilling The Wreck of the "Golden Mary."



The Ghosts of Ohio Word Search



After Life	Ectoplasm	Poltergeist
Apparition	EMF Detector	Retrocognition
Astral Projection	Exorcism	Vortex
Believe	Ghosts of Ohio	Werewolf
Clairvoyance	Haunting	White Noise
Demon	Ley Lines	Xenoglossy
Disembodied Voice	Mothman	Yeti
Doppelganger	Orb	Zombie

In 1859, Dickens chose to disband Household Words over disagreements with his co-owners. Dickens decided to create his own magazine, over which he would be the sole owner and decision-maker. That magazine became the weekly journal All The Year Round. As with Household Words, Dickens continued to contribute a ghost story to All The Year Round every year for the December issue. This would continue until 1867, when Dickens retired and handed the business over to his son, Charles Dickens, Jr. Holiday ghost stories written by Dickens for All The Year Round included The Haunted House (1859), A Message From the Sea (1860), and No Thoroughfare (1867).

Dickens so loved the idea of telling ghost stories around the holiday fire that he even published several short stories outside of his magazines. Some of his more popular stories published outside of his own magazines were The Goblins

Who Stole A Sexton, The Signal Man, and The Haunted Man And The Ghost's Bargain.

Charles Dickens passed away in 1870. And while many may argue that A Christmas Carol stands as one of his best holiday ghost stories, a trip to the local bookstore or library just may change your mind. If nothing else, it will give you a way to spring new spooky tales on your unsuspecting friends and family.



The Scariest Movie of All Time? A Review of Paranormal Activity



Wendy

Paranormal Activity definitely wins the prize for being this year's most hyped movie. "Go online and DEMAND Paranormal Activity for your theater!!" And either a lot of people did and it worked, or it was all a ploy and we were going to get the movie anyway. Next step, rush out to see the "scariest horror movie ever." Me? I cried when I found that \$5.00 and almost two hours of my life were gone, never to return.

The Blair Witch Project was the movie that pretty much pioneered horror "reality" filming...one of the characters carrying around a camcorder and recording the unfolding events. Blair Witch set the bar. Then came Cloverfield, which was cheesy, intense, goofy and full of win. And finally, Paranormal Activity came along, which turned out to be a fail of epic

proportions in some respects, while brilliant in others.

The premise of the movie is thus: Katie and Micah are engaged and living together. Micah gets a camcorder to try and capture paranormal activity that Katie is complaining about. Unfortunately, Katie is a whiner, and Micah is a self-centered cretin. This characterization caused me to be unable to feel for or connect to either character. Movies never win when you don't feel something for the main characters. The only thing I felt was the need to smack them both into their next lifetimes.

Scared Katie calls in a psychic who gives them good, valid advice...the same advice I find we as investigators giving to our own clients. Does Micah listen? He is under the impression that people who work with these things don't know what they are talking about, and that web surfing and a Ouija board will give him all the answers he needs. So he continues on his way to trap a demon, whilst unknowingly fueling the fire. By the 20-minute mark, he is deep into the "obsession" step that occurs during demonic possession, while Katie continues in a downward spiral from regression, to repression, to depression. Lots of "sions" when it comes to the demonic.

While the characters are completely annoying, the effects are well done, and the information given out throughout the movie is good. My guess is most people who see this don't understand the steps of possession, and weren't aware how really well those steps were being shown. As with most things that we find occurring in the paranormal, you don't actually see the being that is doing the damage, only the damage itself, whether it is physical or mental.

Unfortunately, somewhere around the 1-hour mark, what had started out as a good, if annoying and repetitive, scary movie, was steadily "hollywoodizing." The movie spiraled from actuality into out and out fantasy, negating all the positive information that this movie was giving out. Even The Exorcism of Emily Rose (by far and away the most authentic recounting of possession) has a little hollywoodizing in the barn scene, but the rest of that movie MORE than makes up for a minor snake attack. In Paranormal Activity's instance, we got a movie that started out Blair Witch, and ended somewhere far below. The final written notes were the icing on what had turned into a rotting fruitcake. While it worked for The Strangers, and had everyone Googling the names of the supposed victims, in this instance it merely elicits a giggle.

So I'm going to give this one 2 skulls, for the brilliance that you can catch glimpses of between the unsympathetic characters and the SciFi movie shenanigans.

Rating: 



Interact with The Ghosts

Need a spooky friend? If you have a MySpace account, swing by and add The Ghosts of Ohio to your friends list: www.myspace.com/ghostsofohio.

And for those of you who use Facebook and/or Twitter, you can now find The Ghosts of Ohio on those sites, too:

Facebook

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

Twitter

<http://twitter.com/ghostsofohio>

Whichever online community you prefer to use, you can always find us!



2009



Have a Merry Scary Christmas
and a Happy "Boo" Year!



The Ghosts of Ohio

