



# The ghosts of Ohio® Newsletter

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Volume 13 Issue 2

FROM THE SPOOKY DESK OF JAMES WILLIS:



## Ghostly Auld Lang Syne



James

It happens every New Year's Eve immediately after the ball drops: People everywhere start singing *Auld Lang Syne*... or at least mumbling it.

Chances are you've done it yourself, complete with the mumbling part. But have you ever given a thought as to the significance of the song or why we sing it right at the moment that the new year has begun?

*Auld Lang Syne* is Scottish that translates roughly to "old long since." The song itself is about looking back on friends and past events and being resigned to not let them be forgotten. So with that in mind, and the fact that this will be the last newsletter of 2015, I thought this would be as good a time as any to look back on the ghostly year that was.

Aside from the usual ghost hunting and paranormal research, 2015 was a very special year for me personally. A huge part of that was the release of my book, *Ohio's Historic Haunts*, in September. And while that book meant a lot to me in terms of what it represented—namely, over three years

of research crammed into one book—what I will never forget is all the smiling, happy faces I got to meet as we crisscrossed Ohio on the fall tour. It was truly an amazing and touching experience to not only see everyone, but to have the opportunity to hear all of your words of encouragement, as well as being honored that so many of you chose to share your personal ghost experiences with me. It is something I will never forget. If you were there, you know exactly what I'm talking about. And if you weren't there, then make your plans to come see us in 2016. It will be something you'll never forget, either!

Which brings me to The Ghosts of Ohio organization itself. When I first started the group back in 1999, there was only one member: Me. Over the years, not only has the group continued to grow, but something else strange happened: People who joined, stayed. Sure, there were members who came and went, but by and large, people who made the decision to join The Ghosts of Ohio not only stayed, but thrived with the group. While preparing this issue of the newsletter, I took a peek at the different members and crunched some numbers and came away with an amazing statistic: In 2015, the average length of time a Ghosts of Ohio member had been with

the group is 6.8 years! What's more, if you add up all the time current Ghosts of Ohio members (excluding me) have been investigating, just within the group, you're well over 100 years! In fact, there's 70 years of collective experience just between our 7 most-senior members. Amazing!

All in all, 2015 was truly spectacular. But, as the saying goes, you ain't seen nothing yet! Just you wait and see!

Cheers,

James A. Willis

Founder/Director



# Christmas, The Pagan Way



Wendy

When the church began its Christianization of Europe and the British Isles, after much debate, it proclaimed the birth date of Christ to be December 25.

Although it was actually believed to be in mid to late summer, it was put into midwinter to coincide with the pagan Juul or Yule celebrations. The church believed it would be easier to get converts to the new religion if their religious celebrations happened at the same time pagan celebrations did.

The winter celebration of Yule was celebrated throughout the Germanic, Celtic and Scandinavian regions of Europe. They centered around the Winter Solstice, which was when the sun began to appear at longer intervals, signaling a new start for life. In the Germanic culture, Yule originally began in mid-November and went through to early January. In many northern European countries, the three days around the solstice were a celebration that included blood sacrifice of animals. The meat was eaten by the observers, and twigs were used to sprinkle the blood on both the participants and the statues of gods, as a symbol of life.

There was also the tradition of the Yule log. In Scandinavia, a log was burned at solstice in honor of Thor, and to celebrate the returning life-giving properties of the sun. The ashes were then used as fertilizer to spread on the fields, while pieces of the log were saved for good luck and to light the next year's log. In some areas of France, the peasants spread the ashes from the Yule log under their beds, to protect their homes from lightning.

In pre-Christian Rome, the solstice celebration was referred to as Saturnalia. It celebrated the father of the gods, Saturn. Shops were closed, discipline was stopped, and wars were put on hold for a seven-day period. During that period, masters served their slaves. One slave or criminal was elected to be the King of the celebration. This person could live however he chose and do whatever he wanted for seven days. After that, he was usually killed in sacrifice.

The Celtic pagans had different ways to celebrate. Their homes were decorated with evergreen boughs. Evergreens were representative of immortality, since the tree never lost its color or leaves. Boughs were hung over doorways to keep out evil. Holly was also hung in the homes. Not only was it believed to keep out evil and promote fertility, but it welcomed elemental spirits, such as brownies, into the warm home and out of the cold. It was believed that brownies would help with housework in return for the warm place to live. Not offering them a place to stay could possibly result in havoc occurring in the home...dirt piling up, pots and dishes broken, people falling and hurting themselves...it was all put down to the fault of an angry brownie! The holly that was kept in the home was then burned at Imbolg (Candlemass, Feb. 2) to send winter



on its way. A sprig was kept for good luck.

The Celtic yule log ritual was slightly different than its mainland cousins. The log had to be harvested from your own land, or received as a gift. Once pulled into place, it was covered with winter foliage, dusted with flour and sprinkled with cider—representations of the harvest, and lit with a piece of wood from the previous year's log. The log burned throughout the celebration, and at the end the ashes were spread on the fields as fertilizer. The wood of choice was Ash, which was a sacred tree.

Over the years, these ancient rituals have been changed to fit into the emerging Christian religion. Blood sacrifice is no longer in evidence, but we still hold the traditions of hanging evergreen and holly in our homes, and burning a Yule log. Most people don't know why, only that it is Christmas tradition. Now you know where those traditions started! Happy holidays to everyone and whatever religion or tradition they choose to celebrate!

## Book Review: GHOST HUNTING 2.0



Frank

A few months ago, I was listening to *Coast to Coast AM* and the guest was Chris Bores, a ghost hunter from the Toledo, Ohio, area. Since he was from Ohio, I was curious what he had to say. Radio host,

George Noory highlighted that Chris had a totally new approach to ghost hunting with a process that would go beyond the TV ghost reality shows to a new level of understanding about death and beyond. All of this was going to be discussed in-depth in Bores' new book, *Ghost Hunting 2.0: Breaking New Ground*.

I ordered a copy of the book from Amazon and began reading immediately. Soon I discovered that Chris was a tour guide at the Collingwood Art Center in Toledo and has conducted many tours there. He also claims to have made many spirit interactions there while using a K-II meter, a simple gauss-measuring device that essentially measures energy and is regarded as the "starter" device by many paranormal enthusiasts for measuring the potential presence of a spirit. But it also indicates voltage leaks in wiring which can create a false sense of activity. But Chris claimed to have been very successful with his K-II sessions at the Art Center.

But his K-II sessions weren't what gave Chris the idea to write a book. Rather, Chris was frustrated with many of the current paranormal TV programs and wanted to go beyond just making contact. He wanted to incorporate out-of-the-box thinking and apply something new in order to take investigations to the next level. In my opinion, Chris wanted to go beyond just contact and enter into a dialogue with a spirit to try and figure out what was really going on with the departed.

In order to do that, Chris claims to have explored not only alternative methods of ghost hunting, but also ancient texts,

such as the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*. Chris also states that he spent a lot of time studying psychology, philosophy and even quantum physics.

He explores EVPs, electronic voice phenomena and has serious questions why some types of EVPs occur. He relates an experience at Mansfield Reformatory that captures an EVP of a young girl. Why is she here among the inmates? Does she live here or is she just passing through? Was it an imposter posing as a young girl? These are valid questions for an investigator. Chris, however, never really finds any answers here.

Chris moved on to other investigations such as Longwood Manor in Macedonia, Ohio. Again collecting EVP evidence and trying to make sense of it. He used singing and toys to try to generate some responses and felt applied psychology would generate more data. This tactic is also known as placing trigger objects in an area to get a response. Some people also sing, yell, and ask questions to achieve the same results. Again, despite what Chris states, none of this is anything new in paranormal research.

Chris goes on to explain how quantum physics relates to paranormal investigation. He explains the uncertainty principal where a spirit can exist when we are not present, but when we are present, it can't be seen. Sounds like the mother of all investigation challenges to me. He further states this effect can be reversed as spirits manipulate camera feeds, drain batteries and cause other manifestations.

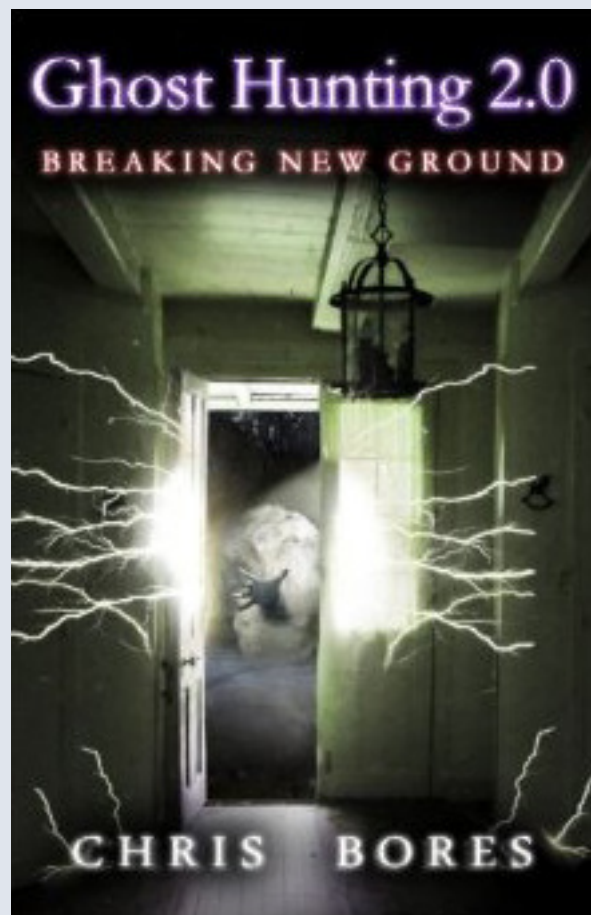
He relates how they used a ball at a location as a trigger object. After some time, the ball did not move. He instructed everyone not to look at the ball and turn around. After a few moments they turned back around to

notice "the ball had moved a few inches and was vibration like crazy." This was evidence of the uncertainty principal in action. There was no discussion to see if there was a draft of air or other floor vibration that could have caused the movement.

A full chapter was spent on other types of paranormal investigation equipment used by many enthusiastic seekers of truth. There was discussion on the EMF meter, Mel meter, REM pod and Ovilus, and more. These are other devices people are willing to shell out money for that may or may not be effective in their pursuit of the unknown. In my experience, everyone seems to have a favorite device they like to use.

There is a chapter devoted to the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*. This tome, allegedly the first of its kind, explains what happens to the soul moments after death and all the pitfalls it can encounter in the process. I found this hard to swallow. Who has ever verified any of this?

(continued on page 4.)



## Book Review:

## GHOST HUNTING 2.0 CONT.

Chris totally embraces this concept and develops a flow chart of the afterlife that includes the six classification of spirits. For someone that wanted to take a scientific approach to paranormal investigation, we seem to be speeding down the deep path of FICTION. Much of the discussion in this area, about the spirits state of being, is covered in several chapters. In my view this is conjecture at best, and outright nonsense at least. He really is thinking out of the box.

For me, one highlight in the book was Chris' 90-minute conversation with a spirit in the St. Augustine lighthouse. He evidently rented the lighthouse for an evening with a cameraman, his sidekick, Alan, and Matt, a lighthouse guide. I'll admit the dialogue was interesting eventually connecting with spirits Eliza and Peter. Peter was a lighthouse keeper from the 1920s. Eliza lived there with

her family and was killed with her sister in a tragic accident in 1873. The guide, Matt, seemed to be the spiritual magnet as a possible romantic relationship with Eliza may exist. Matt had worked in the lighthouse for over two years and evidently the longtime residents were familiar with him.

They connected off and on for about 90 minutes exclusively using the K-II meter. Eliza would stop communication at times because she indicated she was not allowed to answer some specific questions. The areas she would not discuss concerned the afterlife. She would stop communicating when questions were posed about death itself. She would indicate her location to them, recognize them and consistently answered yes or no questions to general inquiries like can she move to different locations, the answer was yes.

They even used fudge as a trigger object to reinvigorate the conversation.

Chris seems to have overdone his achievement by stating, "Only by using concepts pulled from ancient texts, psychology and classifying spirits were we able to stumble across them." He even claims to have coined the phrase, "Discarnate Psychology," as his own. This term means the study of how humans can act and react after the point of death in the afterlife. I did not see any description within his writing as to how this is accomplished in any scientific manner whatsoever. There was nothing about his experience that stood out to me that any other competent investigator would have done. If the encounter occurred, I think that is a great experience and compliment him on it, however I think it falls short of the Nobel Prize.

## BOOK REVIEW:

## KRAMPUS THE YULE LORD



Samantha

Nothing gets me in the mood to tolerate another Christmas season more than a horror novel with a deliciously twisted sense of holiday humor. If you feel the same way I do about Sale Season...I mean,

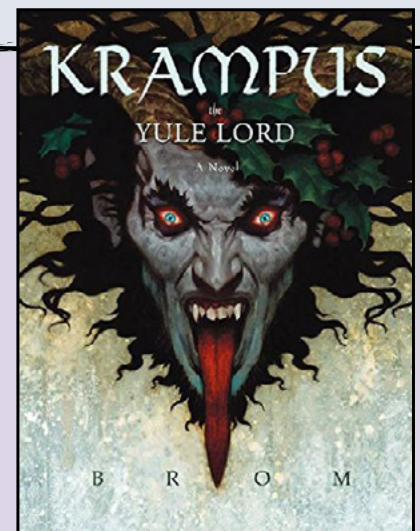
Christmas...then this dark tale of Krampus vs. Santa is perfect for you!

Jesse Walker is a down-and-out wannabe songwriter with a world of problems. His wife, disappointed with his lack of ambition, took their daughter and left him for the crooked town sheriff. His get-rich-quick schemes backfired and left him deep in debt, causing him to pawn nearly everything he owns just to pay the rent on his rundown double-wide. His ancient pickup truck barely runs, and on top of

everything else, his last gig paid him in booze, making it impossible to buy his daughter the doll she wanted for Christmas. It's little wonder that Jesse wants to end everything by putting a gun in his mouth.

But a jingle makes him look up from the dash of his truck. "What...in...the...hell?" Jesse sees a sleigh parked in his street, led by a team of reindeer. Then, he hears the sound of pounding feet, followed by the sight of a wide-eyed Santa running for his life toward the sleigh, several darkly cloaked, horned devils on his heels. What ensues is a battle that takes to the night sky, bodies and objects plummeting back to earth as they fall from the flying sleigh.

This is how Jesse comes into possession of the one object at the very center of the war—Santa's sack. It slams through Jesse's trailer and into his bedroom; and he soon learns that Santa isn't the jolly character depicted in story books and shopping



malls, and the sack isn't an ordinary bag of goodies. Santa has been naughty over the centuries, and the imprisoned Krampus is determined to break free, get his revenge on Santa, and reclaim his rightful place as Yule Lord once again. But first, he'll need the sack, and with it, Jesse.

Colorfully written and engaging at every turn of the page, this novel quenches the thirst of anyone longing for something a little darker during the holiday season. Brom is a master storyteller, and I'm looking forward to enjoying more of his novels.

# HERE COMES KRAMPUS TO DRAG YOU TO HELL



James

My daughter, Courtney, recently turned 5...going on 15. Just a few weeks ago, for the first time ever, I pulled out the old clichéd “you know, Christmas is coming, so you need to be good.”

And because I have a daughter who takes after her Old Man, Courtney immediately asked “why?”

I thought for a moment and then said “because if you’re bad, Santa’s not going to bring you any presents.” Courtney sat and pondered that scenario for a while and then said “OK, I’ll be good.”

Later that night, I sat and wondered how the conversation would have progressed if, instead of my invoking Santa Claus, I had answered with “because if you’re bad, Krampus will come and whip you. He might even chuck you in a basket and bring you back to hell with him.”

I could just see the looks on the faces of the all the Social Services employees who would be lining up at my front door.

So who, or what, is Krampus. Good question. You see, the origins of Krampus are a bit cloudy. There are some who believe the origins of Krampus date back to ancient times. However, the first real documented appearances of Krampus date back to the 17th century, when he acted the role of “Bad Cop” to “Good Cop,” St. Nicholas.

You see, way back when—all the way back when St. Nicholas was still just a saint and wore saintly robes as opposed to a big red suit—during the Feast Of St. Nicholas on December 6th, it was said that the saint himself would travel to the home and, if they were good, bestow candy and gifts upon them. And what of the kids who hadn’t behaved themselves? Well, that’s where Krampus came in.

Put it this way: If you were a kid on December 6th and St. Nicholas came walking in your house, you were golden.

But if Krampus came walking in with St. Nicholas, you knew someone in the house was in for it. That’s because Krampus’ job was to teach all the bad kids a lesson. He would do that simply by scaring them or, if the child was a lost cause, Krampus would literally carry them off to hell with him in the



basket he carried around on his back for just that reason.

Sometimes, Krampus could be seen toting around big bundles of birch sticks in that basket, too. These were known as Ruten, and Krampus would sometimes leave these bundles behind for children who were “on the fence,” as it were. Rather than dole out a punishment, Krampus would leave the Ruten as a constant reminder of how close the child had come to being punished and how they should be good all the time... otherwise, Krampus was coming back to get them! Oh yeah, and Krampus apparently wasn’t opposed to using one of those birch branches to hit any disobedient child who needed a somewhat more painful reminder to be good.

In terms of appearance, there are some similarities between Krampus and the Greek god, Pan. Both have cloven

hoofs, horns, and appear to be some sort of half-man, half-beast creature. Both are also quite hairy, although while only Pan’s lower extremities are hairy, Krampus is covered from head to toe in dark brown or black hair. Perhaps Krampus’ most noticeable distinct feature is his long, pointy red tongue, which is almost always depicted hanging from his mouth.

Krampus remained immensely popular throughout the years, albeit in an underground sort of way. Sure, Krampus worked to keep the kiddies in line all year round, but it was in a much more extreme way than, say, singing *Santa Claus is Coming to Town* to your kids and bringing up the whole notion that Santa can see what your doing no matter where you are and even looks at you when you’re sleeping (which, for the record, I find sort of creepy, too. But I digress).

I guess things just got so PC in the world that the whole idea of telling your kids that they’d better be good or a monster was going to come and drag them down into hell started to be frowned upon.

As time went on, however, a strange thing started to happen: People started



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# HERE COMES KRAMPUS TO DRAG YOU TO HELL CONT.

putting a bit of a gothic twist to their Christmas celebrations. Some point to Tim Burton's cult classic of 1993, *A Nightmare Before Christmas*, as the tipping point. But whatever caused it, more and more people started returning to their roots and incorporating ghost stories into their holiday parties. Heck, I even know of one weird group in Ohio that combines Halloween and Christmas ever year for their Merry Scary Holiday Party. And what better way to put a little scare into your holidays than a half-man,

half-beast who wants to whip you and/or bring you back to hell with him?

Today, Krampus is more popular than ever with entire festivals being devoted to him around the world. Even Hollywood has jumped on the Krampus bandwagon with the December release of the appropriately-named flick, *Krampus* (reviewed on page 7 of this newsletter). Some even believe that Krampus has never been as popular in his entire history as he is today.

And that's something we should probably all keep in mind all through the year. For while Santa wants kids to be good "for goodness sake," the worst thing to come out of that might be a lump of coal in your stocking. With Krampus, the stakes are much, much higher.



## DVD REVIEW: KRAMPUS: THE CHRISTMAS DEVIL by Samantha Nicholson

Krampus, St. Nick's brother and "executioner of the wicked," abducted Jeremy Duffin in 1983 for being a bad little boy. Somehow, Jeremy escaped. Now, he's a police officer obsessed with stopping Krampus from abducting and killing more children. The beast "only has until the stroke of midnight on Christmas Eve to complete his tasks." Can Jeremy stop him before time runs out?

This low-budget horror flick leaves a lot to be desired. The acting's awful, the story has holes, and there are obvious continuity issues. I'm also confused about the need for Krampus to be depicted as a pervert. As if killing children wasn't heinous enough, it seems that he keeps girls as sex slaves, too!

Like a bad child escaping Krampus, run. Run fast, run hard, run far away from this dud!

**GENRE:** Horror

**STARRING:** Jay Dobyns, Paul Ferm, and Andrew Ferrick

**WRITTEN, PRODUCED, AND DIRECTED BY:** Jason Hull

**RATED:** Unrated

**RUNNING TIME:** 82 minutes

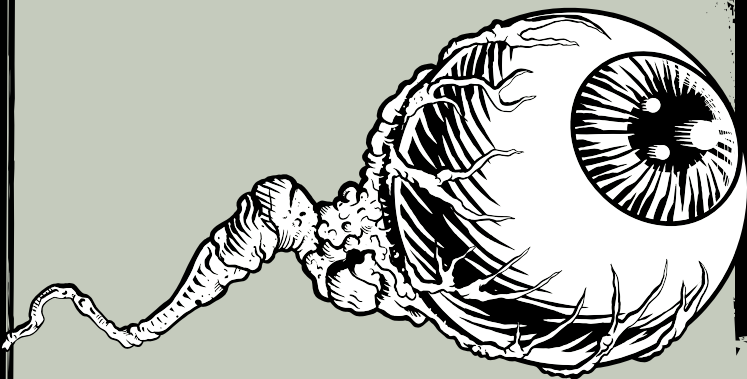
**RELEASE DATE:** 2013

**AVAILABILITY:** Streaming online

## HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

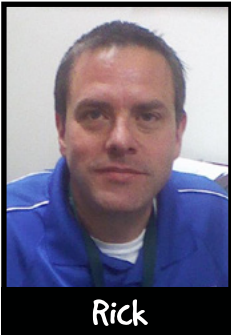
As this is the last newsletter of 2015, we'd like to take a moment and congratulate all the members who have been with The Ghosts of Ohio for 5 years or more!

Darrin Boop	11 years
Julie Black	10 years
Wendy Cywinski	10 years
Sam Nicholson	10 years
Stephanie Willis	10 years
Jeff Craig	10 years
Mark Delong	9 years
Kathy Boiarski	7 years
Sean Seckman	7 years



## MOVIE REVIEW:

## KRAMPUS



Rick

**GENRE:** Horror/Thriller/Comedy

**STARRING:** Adam Scott (Black Mass, Step Brothers, and The Secret Life of Walter Mitty), and Toni Collette (The Sixth Sense, Little Miss Sunshine, and the television series, Hostages).

**DIRECTOR:** Michael Dougherty (X2, X-Men: Apocalypse, Superman Returns, and Trick 'r Treat)

**RATED:** PG-13

**RUNNING TIME:** 1 hour and 38 minutes

**RELEASE DATE:** 2015

**AVAILABILITY:** Currently in theaters

*Krampus* is a 2015 American horror-comedy film based upon a character from Alpine folklore.

The film starts in modern times with a suburban family getting together to celebrate the holidays. Tensions flare, which starts to keep everyone from enjoying the season. Max, the family's younger son, finally has had enough and screams that he hates his family. He tears up his letter to Santa and throws the pieces out the window. A snowstorm soon appears and cuts the power to the entire town.

As a dark cloud consumes the village, strange happenings begin occurring. Like snowmen that suddenly appear in their front yard, a mysterious large bag of presents left by the front door, and neighbors nowhere to be found.

Mayhem continues as a horned figure bounces from rooftop to rooftop and a demonic jack-in-the-box suddenly appears begging to be played with. Strange noises, goat-like hoof prints, unseen monsters, and mischievous gingerbread cookies join the holiday celebration. As the family realizes the whole neighborhood is abandoned, the grandmother finally reveals what is happening—they are being tormented by Krampus, an ancient demonic spirit that punishes children who

stop believing in Christmas, and serves as the shadow of Santa Claus.

The grandmother admits that when she was young, her family's poverty caused her to lose her love of the holiday, which summoned Krampus and resulted in her parents, and the entire town, being dragged down into hell. She alone was spared, and was given a holiday bell bearing Krampus' name as a reminder of what happens when one loses their Christmas spirit.

Soon after this revelation, a horde of dark elves break into the house, and Krampus is heard landing on the roof. The remaining family members quickly decide to make a run for it through a gauntlet of monsters that appear beneath the snow. Krampus suddenly appears before Max and gives him a holiday bell wrapped in a piece of the shredded Santa letter Max discarded earlier. Max now realizes that he is the reason why Krampus came.

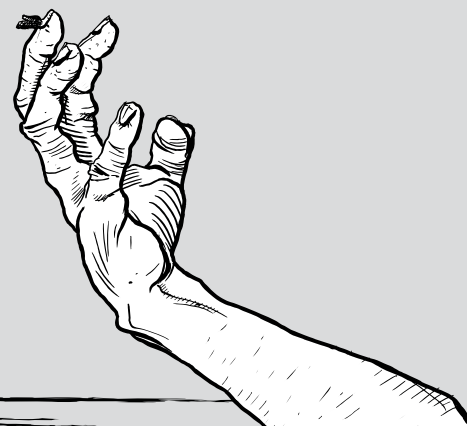
Krampus and his dark elves prepare their sleigh to return to hell, when Max confronts Krampus demanding everything return back to normal. The final confrontation begins and the outcome becomes quite predictable.



This movie is listed as a horror/comedy, but I wasn't scared at all and found that most of the attempts at humor fell flat. Aside from a few entertaining moments, *Krampus* missed the mark for me.

This film is also comparable to the 1984 movie *Gremlins*. However, whereas the story line in *Gremlins* was compelling and the creatures likeable, *Krampus* has none of that. You will not be scared, you will not be compelled and you will only be left scratching your head asking why you just wasted two hours of your life.

I chalked this up to taking one for the team.



# THE 2015 MERRY SCARY CHRISTMAS



Another year draws to a close, which means there was yet another Merry Scary Christmas Party to be had!

On Saturday, December 12, a multitude of merry and scary creatures came crawling out of their holiday crypts to hang with The Ghosts Of Ohio and their family and friends. And by the looks of things, a fun time was had by all!







## 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](mailto: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!

*Coming in the  
February Newsletter*

Famous Poltergeist Cases

On The Road With  
The Ghosts Of Ohio



### Investigations & Consultations

The Ghosts of Ohio have already begun scheduling investigations for 2016. If you or someone you know is experiencing something unexplained in a home or place of business, contact us at [info@ghostsofohio.org](mailto: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

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

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

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**NEWSLETTER STAFF:** Editor-In-Chief: James Willis   Copy Chief: Kathy Boiarski   Designer: Stephanie Willis  
Contributing Authors: Wendy Cywinski, Samantha Nicholson, Rick Tarantelli, James Willis and Frank Yensel