



The ghosts of Ohio® Newsletter

www.ghostsofohio.org

Volume 7 Issue 3

From the Spooky Desk of James A. Willis: A Ghost for Every Season



James

Winter is traditionally a slow time for ghosts. I'm not sure why that is as The Ghosts of Ohio stays pretty busy year-round. So I don't think there's anything magical in the winter air that causes the ghosts to go into hibernation. If anything, I think it's the living that go into hiding, preferring the warmth of a roaring fire and a hot toddy to the chilling world of ghosts. But for me, I love winter for paranormal research. As I mentioned, people are hunkering down under blankets and waiting for spring. So most of the world is quiet, and there's less

activity going on both inside and outside. So there's less chance of confusing the banshee-like wails of the neighborhood children playing in the yard to something from the other side. Home owners are also more content to plop themselves in front of the TV during the winter, so less getting up and walking around the house. And then there's something that I have been obsessed with for years—ghostly footprints. What better time of year to try and get some evidence of ghostly footprints than February in Ohio when there's close to a foot of snow on the ground? It brings to mind a case I worked on in 2001 when, after a storm dumped 6 inches on the area, footprints

appeared outside the window of a client's bedroom. The same window that their daughter had reported seeing a strange, ghostly figure peering in at her. Granted, we were unable to determine who (or what) made the footprints, but it at least allowed us to verify that something was happening. So just because the rest of the world is slowing down and waiting for spring, that's no reason for you to!

Until next time, try to stay warm!

Cheers,
James A. Willis
Founder/Director

Paranormal Investigations: What All Prospective Clients Should Know



Wendy

It starts out with believing you may have a haunted home or business. You have exhausted all natural explanations you can think of. Or maybe you just don't have time to research and check things out on your own, or your family is frightened and you need answers now. Either way, you decide that contacting a paranormal investigation group is your next step. How do you find a reputable group?

Some people choose groups that have a word-of-mouth reputation. Maybe someone you know or someone a friend knows used a group and they were pleased with how they handled the investigation. Maybe you saw a flyer for a group's presentation at a public event. Or you've been to a lecture and have talked to the group. Most likely, though, you are going to hit the Internet and search for who is in your area.

Right now there are close to 200 ghost groups in Ohio alone. Most are

fly-by-night groups who advertise solely through Facebook or MySpace. These groups rarely last a year. A group that wants to have staying power is going to put time and effort into an actual Web page where they can give you as much information as they can. So make sure that if you are looking for a group via the Web, look carefully at their Web page content. You can get all kinds of warning signs by carefully checking out the site. Are words spelled correctly? Do they have pictures with odd or comical poses (for example, the "gonna kick ghost butt" pose, the "I'm in college and can make all kinds of cool hand signs for the camera" pose, the "I can drink this much beer" pose). Are there pictures of



When selecting a paranormal group, be sure to ask plenty of questions to ensure they have the knowledge, equipment, and credibility necessary to perform a quality and meaningful investigation.

the group in places you know are off limits to the public? Are they showing confidential client information and photographs without client permission? Do they brag about the places they have gotten into that no one else has (i.e., trespassing)? Do they promise to find evidence or clear your house?

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Analogue Ghost Hunting Got You Down? Give Digital Dowsing A Try



Darrin

Most people have heard of the Ovilus, the electronic device that lets you to communicate with ghosts, but I bet that most of you don't know much about the company that makes it, the other products the company makes, or the man who started it all. It was created by Bill Chappell who got started by making digital dowsing rods for fun and was later asked to create a "communications device." It all started as a joke, but he found the results startling. Now, Digital Dowsing LLC, the company where he is the lead designer, has almost 30 devices and programs that he is working on. <http://www.ghostshop.com/>.

Mr. Chappell and Digital Dowsing have created and are continuing to create a lot of things. There is Gaia Speaks, which is an iPhone app that uses an array of Paranormal Pucks that are tied into special sensors to allow for a global

consciousness experiment. Image PX is a free software application you can download and use to enhance and clarify images. His gadgets range from the Therm a Sound (a cheaper version of a thermal imaging device that includes distance information) to a Biometric Reader, which is a cross between an EKG and a lie detector that records people's reactions to their environment. <http://www.digitaldowsing.com/themes/digitaldowsing/images/DBB.pdf>.

In order to purchase one of his devices, you have to fill out a disclaimer. He will only sell to adults, and they are sold for "entertainment purposes only." He correctly says, "That is all we can say until somebody has absolute proof one way or the other." Although results for his most well-known device, the Ovilus, have been reported to be shocking, it is statistically possible to get correct answers from it by sheer chance. His own calculations show that when asking for a one-word answer in phonetic

mode, the odds are 1 in 71 that you will get an accurate response. As you change modes and ask for multiple-word responses, those odds go down significantly, so you should put some thought into what you are asking and what mode you use it in. www.ghostshop.com/about-the-products.

He is not sure how his devices get some of the results they do. As with all equipment paranormal investigators use, there is no clear explanation as to what causes a piece of equipment to work or not work a certain way. We use various devices that can detect or can be affected by what we assume to be a ghost. This is what Mr. Chappell has done with the various devices he has developed. "I'm just asking that people take a hard look at anything they are doing. Be objective and don't allow your emotions to mislead you when using one of the Digital Dowsing devices." That alone may be one of the best things Mr. Chappell offers—good sound advice.

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 rent out is 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>.

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 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>



The Ghosts Are Planning Where to Spend the Night in 2010

We are still continuing to confirm reservations at several locations for our 2010 Spend the Night program. We do, however, have at least one confirmation to share with you: we're heading back to Mansfield Reformatory! There was so much interest in going back to Mansfield, both from our fans as well as within The Ghosts of Ohio, that we had to make a return trip our #1 priority.

As more Spend the Night confirmations come in, they will be posted on our Web site. And as you'll see below, we'll also list them in the newsletter, along with what issue of our newsletter our Spend the Night winners will be revealed. So keep an eye on The Ghosts of Ohio Web site and this newsletter for more details as they become available. Until then, keep your fingers crossed that you'll be one of the lucky winners who gets the chance to spend the night with us!

August 6, 2010: Mansfield Reformatory Newsletter Winners Announced: June

New Equipment: Superlux Microphones Added to The Ghosts' Gear

The Ghosts of Ohio organization is now the proud owner of two new Superlux Platinum Series microphones, complete with shock guards. Without sounding like too much of an audio geek, the microphones are cardoid condensers that have large 1" diaphragms. In layman's terms, these are some killer mics! The mics have shock guards that help cut down the vibrations and noises that could potentially come about by someone bumping the mic or the mic stand.

The acquisition of the two microphones is the latest step in a massive experiment taking place with The Ghosts of Ohio organization. Namely, is there a way to determine or pinpoint where a sound is coming from? This experiment stems from the idea that on many investigations, an odd noise is often deemed "paranormal" without much effort being given as to where the sound originated from. The Ghosts of Ohio wants to use these two microphones along with an external microphone connected to a video camera to see if we can triangulate a room. In other words, we will set up three microphones (the two Superlux and the external one from the video recorder) in

a triangular fashion inside a "haunted" room to see if we can cover every inch of the room audio-wise. The video recorder will help give us visual documentation of what is happening in the room, too.

The next step in the process is to look into acquiring a mixing board that will allow us to feed all the microphones, stand-alone or attached to a video source, into one location to record them and, if need be, listen to them in real-time. We've narrowed our search to two mixers that fit our needs, so keep an eye on the newsletter to see what we end up with. We'll be sure to give you some field reports, too, as we begin to test our new system.

In the meantime, we'd like to thank Kory at Mid-Ohio Music for hooking us up with the microphones and doing research on the mixers for us (and for tweaking the neck on Jim's guitar, but that's another story for another day). Suffice to say, Kory and Mid-Ohio Music have everything to meet your audio and musical needs, even the non-ghostly ones. Visit them at www.midohiomusic.cc or give Kory a buzz at 614-863-5264. And be sure to tell them The Ghosts of Ohio sent you!



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 Web site 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>.

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?



Shutter Island - An Intense Journey Through The Human Mind



Sheri

Shutter Island is a psychological thrill ride of a movie that leaves viewers speechless and wanting to see it again. In one of director Martin Scorsese's more artistic, cinematographically beautiful pieces, he tells the story of U.S. Marshals Teddy Daniels (Leonardo DiCaprio) and Chuck Aule (Mark Ruffalo), who are sent to the remote, highly guarded Shutter Island, home of the Ashecliffe Hospital for the criminally insane, to investigate the disappearance of gruesome murderess Rachel Solando, a patient at the facility, there for murdering her three children and arranging their bodies around her dinner table for a meal.

The movie gets off to a choppy start with Marshals Daniels and Aule on a ferry to the dismal, looming island off of the icy waters of the Massachusetts shore. Once the viewer becomes accustomed to the 1950s mystery-drama style of story-telling and fleeting New England accent of DiCaprio, the story begins to take off. From the start of their investigation, head psychiatrist Dr. Cawley (Ben Kingsley) and his tight-knit staff of nurses, orderlies, and guards seem to be avoiding the truth around Solando's disappearance. As a hurricane hits the island the first night, the Marshals begin to gain suspicion around the unconventional humane treatment of the "patients," and Marshal Daniels begins to feel like the staff are withholding information from him.

As the mystery becomes more complex, Marshal Daniels' own demons come to light—flashbacks of the violence of WWII and images of his late wife Dolores (a haunting Michelle Williams) who was killed in an apartment fire two years prior. As his flashbacks get more intense, Dr. Cawley attempts to treat Daniels with "aspirin" for his pounding migraines and hallucinations. At this point, Daniels realizes he can trust no one but himself and his partner Aule, as he falls into a trap in their sick WWII Nazi-like human experimentation.

Shutter Island is a movie filled with twists, turns, and thrills that leave the audience figuring out what will happen next only seconds before the story unfolds on screen. Despite the complexities of the plot, the filmmakers explain the movie and carry the events and flashbacks in a seamless way. DiCaprio provides a versatile performance in a new genre for him, and DiCaprio fans will not be disappointed by their man. The ending is one in which audience members could never guess, and the finale leaves an impression on your mind. The mystery unfolded leaves you longing to see it again.

Rating: 🧠 🧠 🧠 🧠 🧠



The Lighter Side of The Ghosts of Ohio



James Willis encountered a collective of spooky apparitions at a presentation in Delaware, OH.



Mark always measures for cognitive anomalies prior to investigations.



We are students. We are seekers. Sometimes, we are warriors. Other times, we impersonate super heroes.



Jeff channels his inner Mothman at the annual Mothman Festival in Point Pleasant, WV.

Things That Go Debunk in the Night



James

In recent years, there has been a surge in paranormal groups and individuals who openly state that they seek to debunk a haunting. To be honest, even though I have been involved with the paranormal field for close to 25 years and have a personal library of more than 700 volumes on various paranormal-related topics, I never heard the term “debunk” associated with ghost research until the show *Ghost Hunters* premiered. Since then, it seems like not a week goes by without my being asked if The Ghosts of Ohio organization debunks things. For the most part, we do not.

The reason why, to begin with, is that I don't like the word being applied to ghost research, especially since people rarely use it in the right context. Take a look at any dictionary and you'll see what I mean. By its very definition, the term “debunk” means to “expose or ridicule exaggerated claims as false.” In other words, you're calling someone out for exaggerating something or just flat-out lying. In my experience, there is rarely the need to do this. Look at it another way; someone asks a group to come out because their bedroom door keeps closing, apparently on its own. The group comes out and proudly proclaims that they have debunked the whole thing because the door frame is off level and slight breezes are causing the door to close. But what has been debunked? Nothing. There were no exaggerated claims to expose. The client said the door appeared to close on its own, and that's exactly what was happening. The fact that the investigators found a rational explanation in this case does not mean they debunked something. They simply found a non-paranormal reason for why the door was closing. Now, had the owner called the investigators because they said ghosts were closing the door, then and only then could investigators

say they debunked something; namely, the exaggerated claims that ghosts were closing the door. But even then, stating that you have exposed exaggerated claims of a client who was reaching out to you for help seems, well, rude.

Perhaps that's the reason why there has been a rise in groups stating that they seek to validate hauntings rather than to debunk them. In my opinion, there's a downside to this as well. If you're going out to a location to validate a haunting, you have already predisposed yourself to experiencing paranormal activity. Plus, by telling the client you are coming out to validate a haunting, you are subconsciously telling them their location is indeed haunted before even setting foot inside the structure.

That's why, when it comes to cases The Ghosts of Ohio conducts, we do not go into a location trying to debunk or validate any of the client's claims. Rather, we access each situation individually and then see what sort of documentation and/or evidence we can collect that will either prove or disprove a haunting. The interviews we do beforehand with the clients are extremely important, but they are only one part of the story. They are only telling you what they know or believe to be true. So take what they say and then go about putting the rest of the story together. Then, when you have gathered all the facts and considered them, just present it to the client without telling them you've debunked or validated anything. Just show them the evidence, and let them decide for themselves. After all, it's their property, not yours. And just because you found evidence to suggest that their ghostly claims had a rational explanation, that doesn't mean they were exaggerating. They were only explaining things as they believed them to be. Just something to consider the next time you're hopping in the car and heading out to an investigation.

Paranormal Investigations: What All Prospective Clients Should Know

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Do they claim to be exorcists? Are they charging money? Do they brag about knowing famous investigators or talk about how all they want is their own show/movie? These are all warning signs that the group is in it for their own thrill or personal gain. If you are serious about having a group investigate your home or business, then you want a group that is serious about one thing: trying to get you the answers you need.

When you do have a group in to investigate, be skeptical about what you are being shown and ask questions! After all, this is *your* investigation. A good investigation group is going to make sure you are comfortable with them being in your home or business and will have no problem explaining every detail of what is happening throughout the investigation. When you are presented with evidence, keep a close eye out for fakery. We are all rational people, but if you really want your home to be haunted, some groups may present things as evidence just to have something to give you, even to the point of faking it. Especially be wary of evidence that is presented via the K2 meter. This handheld instrument is easily manipulated with even the slightest finger pressure. The button should be held into position with a coin so that human causes for its reactions are eliminated. Also know that the K2 is very susceptible to radio frequencies. It can be set off by the presence of a blackberry, cell phone, and walkie talkie. And finally, know up front that any investigation group that promises you any kind of result is probably one to be avoided.

The Ghosts of Ohio are very procedure driven and always has the client in mind. Sticking to procedure gives us a constant base that we work from to ensure consistency in our investigations. And confidentiality is our highest priority. You will never see your name, address, or evidence presented in a public format (Web page, public presentations) unless you allow it.

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For example, we can play an EVP from your investigation if we have your permission, but no one will know where or when we got it.

If you choose to have The Ghosts of Ohio handle your investigation, the process starts with your investigation request. Please make sure everyone in your home or business is okay with you proceeding in this manner. Your request will be handed off by Jim Willis to the team investigator for your area. You will then be contacted by that person via e-mail to set up a time to do a phone interview. During this phone interview, the lead investigator can document all the happenings, and you can ask questions about the group, our procedures, or what is going on in your home.

Next, we will schedule a face-to-face meeting and have a walk-through. Let's face it, you don't want seven unknown people showing up with three carloads of equipment and taking over your house, and we don't want to walk into a meth lab or Texas Chainsaw Massacre-type of situation. We want you to feel safe and comfortable, and we want to feel safe, too. So our face-to-

face will consist of two investigators coming out to meet you. You will then be able to walk us through your property, showing us the areas where unexplained activity is occurring. We will take readings with handheld devices in preparation of a full investigation and noting where we would like to set up equipment.

After this, your lead investigator will contact you to discuss when to have your investigation. Depending on the size of the property, the investigation can involve anywhere from 5 to 10 investigators. Most homes investigations, however, have 6 investigators. When we arrive, the lead investigator will take the team on a quick tour to point out where equipment should be set up and familiarize them with the events that have been occurring. Then setup will begin. Generally expect us to be in your home for at least 6 hours.

The Ghosts of Ohio will never ask you to leave your home or business when we investigate. Again, this is *your* investigation. You can sit at the command center all night and keep an eye on the investigation and see your

home on the camera screens. We need to keep the environment quiet and controlled, so keeping people to a minimum is crucial. If you want to participate more, you are always welcome to join an EVP session and ask questions or sit with us in a room using a handheld. If at any time you feel uncomfortable or decide you want to end the investigation, you say you want the investigation to end, and we will end it at that time.

Once the investigation is over, we will review all of our recordings, and, when that is complete, your lead investigator will contact you with a time to come back and review the evidence. We will let you know if we found natural causes that explain your unusual activity or that we have no explanation at all. All the information will be burned onto a DVD for you to keep. Your case file will always be kept, and we can and will come back at any time you wish for further investigation. We are just an e-mail away if you have any questions. We never just drop our clients when the main investigation is over. Our relationship is ongoing.

ADMINISTRATION

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