



# Spirit Society of PA.

A P P A R I T I O N S

A Review and Preview of SSP Activities and Items of Interest • Vol 9, Issue 10 - Oct 2005

## "ROO's" BOOS - NOTES FROM KELLY

Happy Halloween! For a lot of us, this is our favorite time of year. Ghosts, goblins, the crisp fall air, leaves blowing, OK, OK, so it's been in the 80's lately, but we'll be happy about that when the heating bills arrive this winter...Right??

This month is full of haunted dinners, lectures on ghosts and getting ready for surgery for me. Come November, I think the rest will do me good! I will be off the month of November, and will see all of you again in December. Wish me Luck!!

### HALLOWEEN PARTY

If you haven't already signed up for the food/drink list, **please do so tonight**. Our Costume party (optional, but please play along) will be held on **Saturday, October 22, 2005** at the Rudy's residence. We have directions available on the sign up table tonight. (If you missed the meeting and are reading this online, contact John for directions at [jweaver@flightssystems.com](mailto:jweaver@flightssystems.com)) **The party begins at 6:30 PM.**

There will be a prize for the best costume. Be creative and have some fun! I look forward to another great Halloween party again this year. We will need paper plates, cups, beverages, **hot food** (main dishes), snacks, and a few desserts. (We don't want to have just cookies and cake; this is our dinner for the night. Please remember that when signing up for a dish to bring.)

### GHOST MAGAZINE BOOK REVIEW

I'm pleased to announce that I received a favorable book review (On *Whispers in the Attic - Living with the Dead*) in the most recent *GHOST* magazine. (Issue #3, September 05).

If anyone is interested in reading the review, I have copies at the sign in table tonight.

### ANNUAL ALFRED'S VICTORIAN HAUNTED DINING EVENT -- WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 26, 7:30 PM

Each year, John and I host a haunted dinner at Alfred's Victorian in Middletown the week of Halloween. Once again, we will be spinning the tales of Mischievous Emma and other local haunted places. We have new EVPs to add to the lineup this year.

The seating is limited and there is room for about 15 more people. If you are interested contact Alfred's Victorian at 944-5373

#### HAUNTED DINING MENU:

- Pumpkin Bisque
- Chicken Tortellini Alfredo
- October Mixed Greens Viniagarette
- Bread & Herb Butter
- Chocolate "BOO" Sundae •Coffee & Tea
- \$32.<sup>95</sup>, all inclusive (Cash Bar Available)

### S.E.A.R.C.H. Presents ARE GHOSTS REAL? with Kelly Weaver Sat October 15<sup>TH</sup> 7-9<sup>PM</sup> 3908 Corey Rd Harrisburg

Kelly and John will present a 2 hour program featuring photo, video and audio evidence gathered during nearly 10 years of investigating haunted places. A Q/A period will follow and refreshments will be served. Donation is \$12 single/\$20 for two people. For reservations/directions, contact Steve Groff @ 566-2835 or [sgroff@paonline.com](mailto:sgroff@paonline.com)



### WHO LIES HERE?

This lonely Lebanon County grave is the final resting place of Frank Stichler, who died a "swingers" death when only 20! Find out more in Melissa Griffith's *Musings* column inside!

### +JUST FOR FUN: ORIGIN OF EXPRESSIONS

**Bring Home the Bacon** – Though today the expression means either "return with a victory" or "bring home cash" – the two not being unrelated – in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, actual bacon was awarded to a happily married couple.

At the church on Donmow, in Essex County, England, a fitch of cured and salted bacon used to be presented annually to the husband and wife who, after a year of matrimony, proved that they could live in greater harmony and fidelity than any other competing couple. The earliest recorded case of the bacon award dates from 1445, but there is evidence that the custom had been in existence for at least two hundred years. Exactly how early winners proved their idyllic cohabitation is unknown.

However, in the sixteenth century, each couple came forward to seek the prize was questioned by a jury of (curiously) six bachelors and six maidens. The couple giving the most satisfactory answers victoriously took home the coveted pork. The prize continued to be awarded, though at irregular intervals, until late in the nineteenth century.

**Give the Cold Shoulder** – Today this is a figurative expression meaning to slight a person with a snub. During the Middle Ages in Europe, however, "to give the cold shoulder" was a literal term that meant serving a guest who overstayed his welcome a platter of cooked but cold beef shoulder. After a few meals of cold shoulder, even the most persistent guest was supposed to be ready to leave.

**Take the Cake** – Meaning with a sense of irony, "to win the prize" the American expression is of Southern black origin. At cakewalk contests in the South, a cake was awarded as first prize to the person who could most imaginatively strut – this is, cakewalk. Many of the zany walks are know to have involved tap dancing, and some of the fancier steps later became standard in tap dancer's repertoires.

## THE HALLOWEEN GHOST of CARLISLE in 1872 - Melissa Griffith

Today, ghosts and the paranormal are a 'hot topic'—and, dare I say, envogue—but even way back in 1872 a ghost was the talk of the Cumberland County.

The “ghosts” reign of terror lasted only a few weeks from mid-October to Halloween 1872. Although most level-headed citizens realized the entire ‘haunting’ was an obvious Halloween prank, businesses suffered loss of profits when townsfolk refused to leave their homes after sundown for fear of a frightening encounter with the white-draped spook.

Despite being chased, stoned, fought and even shot at by the braver men in town, the tenacious ‘ghost’ continued to terrorize the streets of Carlisle. Inevitably, the entire shenanigan culminated into a vigilante group determined to oust the prankster. Brave hearts soon turned to quick feet when the ghost put in an appearance. The vigilante group scattered and beat it to safety of their doorsteps.

Either intimidated by the community’s dedication to ghost busting or perhaps simply because Halloween was over—it was never seen again.



### WHY THIS “ORB” MAY BE LEGIT

Taken by Melissa during last year’s haunted dining event, here are several reasons why this 35mm pic (cropped from original view) may show something paranormal:

It is more solid or dense — not “translucent” like most dust orbs.

Notice how well-defined the highlight from the flash is on the railing directly below the anomaly - the flash is intense and broadcast over a substantial range. If this object were something close to the lens (like a dust

particle) it would be much brighter. Again, it is solid, but not intensely bright, just barely illuminated by the flash. Kelly as well as her late Uncle Cecil both described “Emma” regularly moving throughout the various floors and there are many reports evidently confirming this including smelling her signature lavender moving up and down the stairs. Also consider the “classic” photo on our site taken by Pamm several years ago from the top of the landing: In this case, captured as a streak, the anomaly has turned at the first, lowest landing and is following a path just slightly above the railing — similar to this orb. 200 film was used and may be the difference between this “frozen” anomaly and the streak in Pamm’s pic, taken with slower 100 film.

The more I analyze this pic, the more I think its a legit anomaly - JDW



**2006 CONFERENCE NEWS** Lloyd Auerbach, Stanton Friedman, Rosemary Ellen Guiley & Ed Okonowicz will be speaking along with Rick Fisher at his 2006 event! Details at <http://home.supernet.com/~rfisher/paconf.html>

Vince Wilson hosts the **3rd Eastern Regional Paranormal Conference** at Gettysburg Holiday Inn Battlefield July 21-23rd. Troy Taylor, Mark Nesbitt, John Zaffis & more, plus: A bus tour hosted by Mark Nesbitt, a Spirit Circle hosted by Kelly Weaver, a Haunted Pub Crawl hosted by Vince Wilson, an investigation of the G.O.G. HQ and a Haunted Train Ride! <http://conference.marylandparanormal.com/>

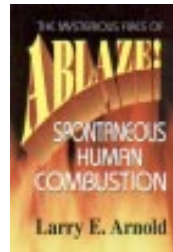
## CARLISLE BARRACKS GHOST WALK - OCT 28 @ 7PM

Join SSP Member and *Ghosts at Carlisle Barracks* author Allen Campbell for his annual walk sharing stories of true encounters with the unexplained at this historic US Army Post. Free mini-readings from Kelly Weaver, Sue Woolford & Mark Whalen. Meet at LeTort View CC; photo ID for all and proof of vehicle insurance/reg required by base security. Questions? Call Allen @ 245-3354 or 728-1999.

## INVITATION FROM RICK FISHER & THE PSP:

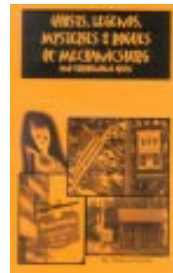
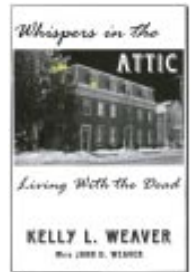
Join Rick Fisher and the PSP Sat. Oct. 29th at the Railroad House in Marietta, PA from 6:00 PM to 9:00 PM for our annual **FRIGHT NITE**. Refreshments served and prizes to be given away for the best EVP. *Not open to the public, invitation is for SSP & PSP members and those who actively attend PSP meetings.* Think you have the best EVP? find out at Fright Nite. Respond no later than October 22 to [rfisher@redrose.net](mailto:rfisher@redrose.net) You are more than welcome to bring some treats. (If you’ve never been on Rick’s Marietta Ghost Tour, this is the perfect season - call the Railroad House for Friday or Sat night reservations at 717-426-4141)

## BOOKS AUTHORED BY S.S.P. MEMBERS



**Ablaze by Larry Arnold** Perhaps the world’s leading authority on SHC - Spontaneous Human Combustion - and a dedicated paranormal researcher, Larry is a long-time supporter of local groups such as ours, S.E.A.R.C.H. and the former Harrisburg SKYWATCH. Larry’s site is [www.parascience.com](http://www.parascience.com)

**Whispers in the Attic - Living With The Dead by Kelly Weaver** Upcoming book signings with Kelly include Sept. 3 at Mark Nesbitts Ghosts of Gettysburg store on Baltimore St. 7-10pm each night. (*Mark Nesbitt will also be signing on those dates*)



**Ghosts, Legends, Mysteries and Rogues of Mechanicsburg by Melissa Griffith** Melissa is planning our June “Haunted Tent Event” at Sickmans Mill in Lancaster Co. and the delightful “GORE TOUR” in spring 2006 to the Lizzy Borden House and Salem, both in MA. Her book can be purchased locally at Civil War and More in Mechanicsburg

**Ghosts at Carlisle Barracks by Allen Campbell** is also available locally at Civil War and More. (*Had no image of Allen’s book, thus I chose the famed MP LeTort photo rather than a really scary one - Allen himself! - JDW*)



## Spirit Society of PA.

# APPARITIONS

*Story & Photo Contributions are Solicited - send to:*

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# BIOGRAPHIES of the STRANGE and PARANORMAL by Gail Dull

## The “True Story” behind The Exorcist

*This is the first part of a two-part article; the conclusion will appear in next month's Apparitions...*

William Peter Blatty's *The Exorcist* is a book and movie that has literally terrified millions was rumored to be based on a true story. But is it?

As in many horror movies that claim to be based on true stories, I searched long and hard to try to get at the actual “kernels of truth” that the story was based on. I found many interesting and conflicting stories. Amazingly enough, I even found a version by a Catholic priest that was published in the *Arlington Catholic Herald* in 2003 as well as online reprints of the 1949 *Washington Post* newspaper articles.

The version that is accounted in the *Arlington Catholic Herald* and the Post's articles are the most common versions I found during my research. The more common details go something like this...

The story will begin around 1949 and centers around a 13 year old boy named Robbie. Robbie lived with his parents and grandmother in a town in central Maryland, near Washington, D.C. called Mount Rainier. He was especially close to his aunt who is alternatively called a “spiritualist” and/or a “medium”. This aunt teaches the boy to use the Ouija board and soon afterwards, mayhem ensues.

Much of the events are what one would call traditional poltergeist haunting, raps on the walls, scratching in the walls, furniture that moves on it's own and similar events. Less than a month after the aunt teaches young Robbie to use the board, she suddenly dies. Robbie, distressed by her unexpected passing, begins to use the Ouija board to contact her and other relatives. It is about this time his disposition changes from a quiet, studious, boy to an angry, agitated boy.

Knowing that their Lutheran minister was interested in the paranormal phenomena, the mother takes young Robbie to see him and he recommends a full psychiatric evaluation. After two rounds of testing, the psychiatric investigation turns up nothing, nothing but a healthy boy. Unsatisfied, the minister recommends the family take Robbie to see a local priest.

The local priest experiences much of the phenomena and after further review; the local Cardinal authorizes the rite of exorcism. Robbie was admitted to a local hospital where many of the movie's events are found. Robbie was violent, was able to projectile vomit, was screaming obscenities and blasphemies, and was able to break one of the bedsprings and using this sharp metal scratched the priest so horribly on his arm that it took over 100 stitches to close the wound. Some sources state that the priest was unable to use the arm afterwards and suffered a nervous breakdown and had to be removed from his parish. Soon after this violent act, Robbie relaxed and they deemed him “cured”. He returned home and the phenomena began again.

Words began to appear scratched into his skin. One word was “Louis” and when Robbie's mother wondered if it meant St. Louis, the word “yes” appeared as if carved in Robbie's skin.

So Robbie's family packed up and went to St. Louis to stay with family there and took him to another priest who was a professor at St. Louis University.

This priest and several others observed the phenomena and after reviewing the prior psychiatric exams, the Cardinal there also ordered an exorcism. This time in addition to the violent behavior and other

behaviors that Robbie had exhibited during his previous exorcism, more words appeared, scratched into his skin. More amazingly was the “image of Satan”.

The priests moved Robbie from the local hospital to a local psychiatric ward for not only Robbie's safety, but the safety of the priests as well.

The priests baptized Robbie as a Catholic and attempted to give him communion. Five times he spit it out. Then the priests prayed the rosary and he accepted communion. On Easter Monday the ritual came to a climax where the demon was expelled from Robbie with a sound like a gunshot that was heard throughout the hospital.

But was the story true? Were there kernels of truth hidden in the fictional embellishments of the story? In next month's article I will outline one man's quest for the truth and the shocking things he uncovers.

Sources:

<http://www.catholiceducation.org/articles/religion/re0137.html>

[www.strangemag.com/exorcistpage1.html](http://www.strangemag.com/exorcistpage1.html)

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/style/longterm/movies/features/dcmovies/exorcist.htm>

## Ghoulie Girl's Movie Review

### Just Like Heaven

Starring: Reese Witherspoon, Mark Ruffalo, Jon Heder

Running time: 1hour 41 minutes Rated: PG-13

Ghoulie Girl recently screened Just like Heaven and boy oh boy, this ghoulish was one happy ghoulish.

The premise is this, Reese Witherspoon plays Elizabeth, a hard driving, over achieving doctor who has no friends and no social life, her entire life consists of her work an ER doctor and visiting her sister. Things change one night after she works a marathon 26-hour shift at the hospital, Elizabeth is involved in a head-on car crash.

Next we see Mark Ruffalo as David a depressed and almost reclusive landscape architect who is desperately searching for a new apartment in San Francisco.

That wacky fickle finger of fate intervenes and David ends up subletting Elizabeth's apartment. Soon afterwards David begins to see what he thinks is a ghost haunting ‘his’ apartment.

Elizabeth is furious that David is living in ‘her’ apartment and hilarity ensues as her spirit tries to get David to move out. David takes to seeing out a psychic, played by Jon Heder, to help him get her out of ‘his’ apartment.

The psychic tells David that Elizabeth is the “most alive spirit I've ever felt.” David is unable to have Elizabeth removed so they agree to try to get along...but as this is a comedy/romance you know what's next, love.

Ghoulie Girl won't say much more about the plot for to do so would give away some really key and hilarious moments. There were laughs along with a few tears but it is a thoroughly entertaining flick. In the Ghoulie Girl's list of favorites, Just Like Heaven now tops her list of “chick flicks” way above such standards as *Fried Green Tomatoes* or *Steel Magnolias*.

Ghoulie Girl's Rating:

Three & a half tombstones out of four.





# Musings of a Ghost Adventurer

By Melissa Griffith

## Legend of the Blue Eyed Six

On December 7, 1878 an incident so immoral occurred in Lebanon County it prompted this description from *The Philadelphia Inquirer*: “After one leaves the beautiful and romantic Lebanon Valley and turns to the base of the Blue Mountains of the north, he finds himself in a desolate region, wild, bleak and sparsely inhabited. The creek is a lazy, sullen stream and dark and mysterious deeds seem to be associated with its tortuous and rugged course.”

It was on that date that a destitute 59-year-old Joseph Raber was murdered by the infamous Blue Eyed Six for his insurance money. Four of the men had policies on the poor man totaling either \$8,000 or \$13,000—depending on the source. The other two men were contracted by the foursome to actually perform the murder.



This practice known as “graveyard” or “deathbed” insurance was quite rampant at the time. According to *The New York Graphic*, “The Raber case shows the opening of a new and profitable industry in Pa.”

The trial of the six conspirators was a worldwide media event. It was the press who dubbed them “The Blue Eyed Six” after a court reporter noticed the similar colored eyes of the bunch.

The Blue Eyed Six were: **Israel Brandt**—generally considered the “mastermind” behind the scheme. 44-years-old at the time of the crime and was manager of a tavern near St. Joseph’s Spring where the conspirators often met to plot their evil deed. Brandt had lost his left arm in a farming accident; **Charles Drews**—58-years-old; served in the German Army as well as in the 93<sup>rd</sup> Regiment Pennsylvania during the Civil War; **Josiah Hummel**—29-years-old; **Frank Stichler**—19-years-old, the youngest of the group; **Henry F. Wise**—33-years-old and **George Zechman**—29-years-old.

Joseph Raber, unemployed, had lived in a shack with a German woman who did not speak English. He survived only through the kindness of neighbors. He was found drowned at St. Joseph’s Spring behind Brandt’s tavern. (Seen at right)



Charles Drews and Frank Stichler were tried for murdering Raber; Israel Brandt, Henry Wise, Josiah Hummel and George Zechman were tried for conspiracy to commit murder/accessory to murder as the foursome all had insurance policies on Raber’s life.

Stichler, young and handsome, had spent much of his time at the Drews household and it’s postulated that he had an affair with Drew’s 19-year-old daughter, Lena, who was married to Joseph Peters who was in the Army stationed at Fort Adams in Rhode Island.

Much of the eyewitness testimony against Drews and Stichler was from Peters who was staying in the Drews home while on furlough from the military (to which he never returned). Due to Peters’ jealousy of Stichler and difficulties with his father-in-law, Charles Drews, his testimony could be considered suspect.

Judge Henderson granted Zechman a new trial after he decided “he could not find an act or declaration of this defendant which fixed upon him beyond a reasonable doubt a complicity in this murder.”

Drews, believing Wise had talked and struck a deal, confessed to the conspiracy to murder Joseph Raber, but (perhaps conveniently) claimed

Stichler alone murdered Raber and that he, Drews, was innocent. Stichler was the next to crack—claiming both he and Drews killed Raber. Brandt and Hummel then talked. Both claimed to have received the insurance policies from Wise but knew nothing of the plot to drown Raber. Regardless, all except Zechman, who was acquitted (most believe due to the silver tongue of his lawyer), were found guilty and sentenced to hang.

Drews and Stichler were hanged on November 14, 1879. Drews told Sheriff Deininger (an inexperienced executioner) to “Do a good job.” In fact, as the two men were tied, hooded and noosed in anxious trepidation of death and the time came for the sheriff to release the spring that controlled the trap door—nothing happened. The crowd gasped and the two convicted criminals waited in unimaginable agony until a prop, accidentally left in place, was removed from under the trap door. Thirty minutes later it was announced that Drew’s neck had been broken and Stichler suffered death by strangulation.

Charles Drew’s body was sent to Mt. Lebanon Cemetery and Frank Stichler was taken to his parents home a quarter mile from St. Joseph’s Spring where Raber was murdered. He was interred on the property. A story goes that Frank’s mother would get out of bed every night and go to the garden to check on his grave.

Both men had hand wrote long confessions which were printed in the newspapers after their deaths. Both admitted to being a part of a gang with Israel Brandt as the ring leader. They stole neighbors’ livestock, passed counterfeit money and other petty crimes. Drews also admitted that this son-in-law’s testimony was accurate.

Brandt, Hummel and Wise were hanged on May 13, 1880. While Brandt and Wise were immediately placed in their caskets—Hummel’s body was laid on the ground while the authorities awaited the arrival of his coffin. Suddenly, the crowd broke free and began kicking and beating Hummel’s still-warm body. Had the sheriff not gained almost immediate control of the group, it surely would have escalated into a full-scale riot.



Wise was buried at the Meetinghouse Cemetery in Greenpoint; Brandt, in Mt. Lebanon Cemetery beside Charles Drews and Hummel was buried on his parents’ property (although other sources claim he is buried near Zechman, who died in 1887 at age 39, at Sattazahn Luthern Church Graveyard).

Joseph Raber was buried near Fort Indiantown Gap in Moonshine Church Cemetery (Rt) which is said to be haunted by Raber himself and his murderers, the Blue Eyed Six. Rumor has it that if you visit the cemetery



at night, you will see six pairs of blue eyes glowing in the nearby woods. It seems that, even in death, the Blue Eyed Six continue to torment Raber or, perhaps, they are doomed to haunt the area for an eternity waiting for forgiveness of their crime. *Pics courtesy Gail Dull*

*Long-time CGF/SSP members may recall our trip to the Moonshine Church several years ago. We saw no eyes but an interesting EVP was captured at a child’s grave. A photo showing the possible apparition of a child in that cemetery is posted in the “Older Pics” section of the SSP website. - JDW*