



# Spirit Society of PA.

A P P A R I T I O N S

A Monthly Journal of News & Upcoming Events • Vol 10, Issue 1 - Jan 2006

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

### *Ten Year Anniversary Celebration for the SSP!*

Happy New Year! I'm looking forward to a healthy and prosperous 2006 and I wish each and every one of you much happiness!

I can hardly believe that we are now celebrating our **10th** year as a paranormal group. I started this group out of frustration and the deep need to connect with others who believed in the strange and unusual. I just **KNEW** there were other "weirdos" out there. (*Ha! I say that with fondness!*)

It all began with a \$100.00 ad in the *Patriot-News* one morning before I left for my dull and boring job in advertising sales. I *just had* to connect with people of like mind.

The company I worked had a fundamentalist Christian approach and I to them, was the devil herself for believing in anything paranormal! After some time, they actually had the company Chaplin come pray for me each and every day before I went about my sales calls. *That was the last straw for me.* I decided to dedicate my life to the spirit world and never look back. Kelly's Magical Garden was formed the same year. (1996)

The then-named *Capital Ghost Forum* got a lot of press and television coverage. I was fondly known as the *Ghost Lady*, and was a pioneer in those days, along with Troy Taylor, Rick Fisher and, yes, even the lamented "Docktor", who were forming their groups around the same time. You didn't have ghost groups all over the country and internet like you do now. At the time, there were no regular TV shows on the paranormal, except the X-Files. Today, the paranormal is absolutely everywhere in the media.

We should be very proud of our group and how we've grown since our humble days at the Historical Society in Mechanicsburg, with 14 people attending our first meeting in May 1996. We outgrew this building in a year and then moved to the Community Room in the Camp Hill Mall, then off to Boscov's where we stayed for many years. (*Who can forget the vacuuming ritual we endured each meeting!*) Today, we have graduated to a fabulous place which serves all of our wants and needs and we are going strong. My hope is to have the Senior Citizens Center be our permanent home. To me, it's perfect.

I'm looking forward to getting back into the groove of the group once again (when my back is healed in a few months) and planning more activities and events for us.

Thanks to all of you who have helped us change and grow stronger each and every month. Thank you for your articles, support financially and spiritually and I'm most impressed with the fabulous friendships we've all come to love and cherish.

Here's to another 10-plus years of the Spirit Society of Pennsylvania. Cheers!!

### **Haunted Spots and Cooking Pots**

What a cute concept as a fund raiser! Melissa, Craig and Gail have been busy collecting recipes from SSP members over the last few months. There are still pages open for your stories and recipes. We'd like to get this published in the next month so we can begin raising much needed funds for our bank account. If you have any appetizer, main dishes, baked goods, etc. please contact Melissa at [mechanicsburg13@hotmail.com](mailto:mechanicsburg13@hotmail.com). This book is adorable and I think it is a winner and a neat idea.

### **A Haunting - from the Discovery Channel**

As this is written, Jan. 3, I am planning on filming a segment with the Discovery Channel in Middletown this Friday, the 6th. A few years ago, I worked with a woman in Fla. who also has a paranormal group. They had a terrible time with a particular home and Troy Taylor suggested they contact me to see if I could be of any help. She mailed me some photos of the home and I gave her a 'reading' of the house. Turns out I was correct. She has since wrote a book and is now going to reenact the story for the Discovery Channel series entitled *A Haunting*. The series uses actors to re-enact the events involved with particularly scary hauntings, along with interviews with the actual people involved. This will be the last episode of the season. (Discovery has renewed the show for another season.)

I was impressed with the fact that they had no problem with coming to me, despite not being able to fly to FL due to my recent back surgery. We are filming in a Victorian Tea Room/Gift shop in Middletown called the Ginger Bread Gables. Stay tuned for more details.

### **The superstitions of the Calendar**

A superstition that has gathered momentum in relatively recent times is that concerning gifts of calendars at Christmas. People all over the British Isles are adamant that it is most unlucky to put the calendar up on the wall until the New Year has actually arrived, presumably because of the danger of tempting fate. A derivative of this insists that it is also unwise to turn over the page from one day, week or month to the next before the appropriate time has come.

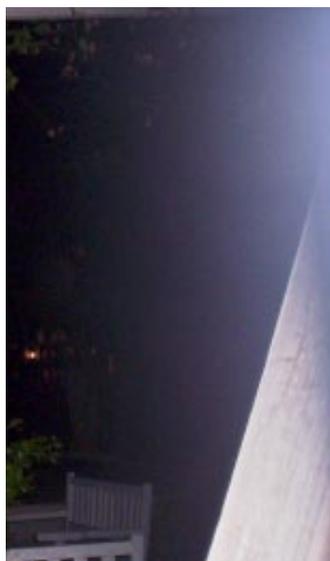
It is widely held that some days in the calendar are unluckier than others. They include the first Monday in April (which marks the birth of Cain and the death of Able), the second Monday in August (the anniversary of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah) and the last Monday in December (when Judas betrayed Christ). Most ill-omened of all is December 28, which marks the feast of Childermas.

What about you? Do you have any superstitions of unlucky days or numbers? Tell us about it if you do.

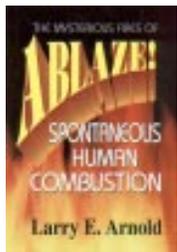
(*Excerpted from the Dictionary of Superstitions by David Pickering - Cassell publishing*)

## Paranormal Mist captured @ Key West Cemetery?

SSP member Andrea McFetridge shared this digital photo with me, which she took during a holiday trip to Key West. My initial thought was it was a reflection, but then I realized there is a shadow effect, evidently cast by the flash hitting the mist. Andrea reported "feeling like we were being watched in the cemetery" and more importantly related that no one was smoking and the temperature was 70 degrees F. We can't conclude this is truly something anomalous, but circumstances at least make that probable. Andrea will share details of her visit, which included a "ghost tour" of the historic FL resort, at our Jan. meeting. - JDW

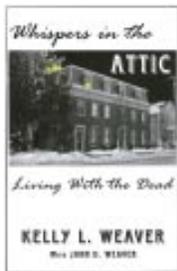


## BOOKS AUTHORED BY S.S.P. MEMBERS



**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** Look for upcoming signings at Mark Nesbitt's Ghosts of Gettysburg store on Baltimore St. and at her NJGH & ERPC appearances in Spring & Summer '06. Also available locally from Civil War and More in Mechbg.



**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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E-mail: [weaviate@aol.com](mailto:weaviate@aol.com)

S.S.P. Website: [www.spiritsocietyofpa.com](http://www.spiritsocietyofpa.com)

2006 CONFERENCE NEWS - It's not too early to make plans for the spring & summer with all these great events coming up locally and in nearby states!



PA PARANORMAL CONFERENCE - MAY 6, MARIETTA, PA  
Lloyd Auerbach, Stanton Friedman, Rosemary Ellen Guiley Frank Feschino & Ed Okonowicz will be speaking along with PSP Founder Rick Fisher at his 2006 event at the haunted, historic Railroad House!

Details at <http://home.supernet.com/~rfisher/paconf.html>



NEW JERSEY GHOST CONFERENCE

APRIL 22, HACKETTSTOWN, NJ Speakers include Kelly Weaver, Rosemary Ellen-Guiley, John Zaffis, Vince Wilson, Jeff Belanger, Charles Adams and more! Lots of "extra" events at haunted venues, too and close to the PA border, too!

Details at <http://www.njghs.net/pages/9/index.htm>



AMERICAN BATTLEFIELD GHOSTHUNTERS SOCIETY "BOOT CAMP" EVENT & EXPO - APRIL 21-23, FREDERICKSBURG, VA Speakers include SSP NE Founder Ed Dubil, Mark Nesbitt, ABGHS Founder Patrick Burke, Dale Kaczmarek & more. Ghost Tours (in the town) & Battlefield Investigations.

Details at <http://www.americanbattlefield.com/webPage54.html>

EASTERN REGIONAL PARANORMAL CONFERENCE - JULY 21 - 23  
GETTYSBURG



Vince Wilson hosts the 3rd Eastern Regional Paranormal Conference at Gettysburg Holiday Inn Battlefield July 21-23rd. Troy Taylor, Mark Nesbitt, John Zaffis, Rosemary Ellen Guiley, George Hansen, Katherine Ramsland & 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!

Details at <http://conference.marylandparanormal.com/>

NOTE: If you don't have internet access & need phone #s for events, contact John Weaver @ SSP Meetings or call me @ 932-9900 (9-5)

# BIOGRAPHIES of the STRANGE and PARANORMAL

by Gail Dull

## NEW YEARS SUPERSTITIONS

This month I bring you many common superstitions relating to the New Year and things to help you have a good year.

In Yorkshire, England it is tradition to repeat the words “Black rabbits” over and over during the end of the old year, once it’s the New Year they repeat the words “White rabbits”. Doing this is said to bring good luck for the year.

Dancing in the open air, especially around a tree on New Year’s Day is said to bring luck in love, prosperity and bring good health for the upcoming New Year.

Clocks should be wound as soon as the New Year begins to bestow the house with good fortune and prosperity.

All cleaning should be completed before the end of the Old Year. Cleaning should NOT be done on New Year’s Day and under no circumstances should anything be removed from the house, even trash. Cleaning is thought to “sweep out the good luck” and by removing things from your house, you ensure that things will have to leave your house all the New Year through. So even new things will leave you, so keep the trash until the 2<sup>nd</sup>.

At midnight on New Year’s Eve all the doors of a home should be left open. This is to let the old year out and let the new one in.

One of the main themes of the New Year’s Eve superstition is how you start the year is how the whole year will follow. This means if you pay bills, repay loans, or cry, you will do that for the entire year. So pay your bills on the 31<sup>st</sup>, and celebrate on the 1<sup>st</sup>. Also, be sure not break anything for if you do a year of breakage is sure to follow. And this is the most important...don’t forget to kiss your significant other...not kissing them at midnight will ensure a “cold” year. (wink, wink)

Having empty cupboard or wallet ensures a year of poverty.

The tradition of ringing bells and making noise is based in the belief that the loud noises will scare off the Devil and other evil spirits.

You should wear new clothes on New Year’s Day so that your new year will be full of new clothes.

Now some of the favorite superstitions...

### FOOD!

Black eyed peas are said to bring their consumer good luck and money. This is common in the Southern United States.

As many of us are Pennsylvania Dutch, I am sure that you are familiar with eating sauerkraut on New Year’s. Why? It brings good luck of course.

People of Spanish decent eat 12 grapes on New Year’s, one with each chime as the clock strikes midnight. This also brings good luck.

In other regions, the food of the day is rice.

In Italy the “lucky meal” is pork sausage served over lentils.

All in all, the traditions are intended to ward off evil, keep the bad luck of the old year from continuing and start the New Year on the right foot.

And speaking of starting off the year on the “right foot” the Scots have a plethora of “first footer” superstitions...

I found this list at Snopes.com...

*The first person to enter your home after the stroke of midnight will influence the year you’re about to have. Ideally, he should be dark-haired, tall, and good-looking, and it would be even better if he came bearing certain small gifts such as a lump of coal, a silver coin, a bit of bread, a sprig of evergreen, and some salt. Blonde and red-head first footers bring bad luck, and female first footers should be shooed away before they bring disaster down on the household. Aim a gun at them if you have to, but don’t let them near your door before a man crosses the threshold.*

*The first footer (sometimes called the “Lucky Bird”) should knock and be let in rather than unceremoniously use a key, even if he is one of the householders. After greeting those in the house and dropping off whatever small tokens of luck he has brought with him, he should make his way through the house and leave by a different door than the one through which he entered. No one should leave the premises before the first footer arrives — the first traffic across the threshold must be headed in rather than striking out.*

*First footers must not be cross-eyed or have flat feet or eyebrows that meet in the middle.*

So remember when as the clock counts down to open all the doors, ring bells and scream “Black Rabbit, Black Rabbit” until the stroke of midnight. Then be sure to eat 12 grapes while kissing your sweetie and saying “White Rabbit, White Rabbit”, the close the doors to keep the New Year in and then eat rice, sauerkraut, black eyed peas, sausage and lentils. And IF you don’t die from embarrassment or indignation, you’re sure to have a wonderful New Year!

*(Gail - Any chance the lethal combination of food suggested for New Year’s consumption was secretly promoted by the makers of Pepto-Bismol and Alka-Seltzer? JDW)*

## PARANORMAL & STRANGE MYSTERIES MUSEUM

*Many of you are aware of Rick Fisher’s efforts to establish a non-profit museum of the paranormal. Along with the extensive personal collection he has gathered over the years, many others have donated items to this worthy cause.(Such as the Flatwoods Monster figure @ Rt. donated by Mike Frizzell) Rick is ready to take this project to the next level, bringing his dream closer to reality. Here’s an update, originally sent to the SSP & PSP Yahoo Groups:*



Volunteers are needed to serve on the board of directors for the planned museum of mysteries.

Must be a PA resident and be able to attend board meetings, have a knowledge of paranormal related fields or other skills such as business management, legal, or accounting. The museum will be a non profit organization dedicated to preserving histories mysteries and a research center. Before this can happen a board of directors is needed, this can be anywhere from 3 people to 30.

For those interested, a meeting will be set up to discuss and interview those who meet the requirements. The meeting will be held January 28, 2006 at 11 AM at the Railroad House in Marietta. PA. A lunch will be served at 12:30 (lunch is on your own) if you plan to have lunch contact me before the 28th so I can have a count. (E-mail: rfisher@redrose.net ) Please bring paper, pen, an open mind, and your ideas. Thanks for your support. Rick Fisher, PSP

# Musings of a Ghost Adventurer

By Melissa Griffith

## A History of Burial & Funeral Customs

Since man has existed on earth, there have been customs, traditions and ceremonies of burying the dead. In the next several months' columns, I will be exploring these strange, odd and sometimes outlandish practices from the past.

### Coffins, caskets & shrouds

Coffins were once luxuries afforded to only the wealthy. In 1580 in Sussex, England there was actually a law that would fine any carpenter that furnished any family with a coffin other than town officials. Most commoners were buried in mere linen or woolen shrouds. A casket, owned by the municipality, was used over and over again with it's only purpose being to transport a corpse to the gravesite.

In the Highlands of Scotland a "death hamper" was once used. Basically a casket with three loops on each side through which a pole was slid for easier carrying. Once lowered into the grave it was turned over, unloaded and retrieved for future use.

An even less complicated contraption was once used in Brittany. The re-useable "coffin" was two planks—one under the corpse, one on top. Blocks of wood were then nailed through the planks on either side of the neck, at each armpit and at the ankles.

Some burials did not use a casket at all, instead the body would be laid out in a cave with slabs of stone built up around the corpse, erecting a make-shift tomb in order to preserve the body as long as possible.

Our final burying 'bed' is a personal, intimate subject. It is not unheard of for people to purchase a coffin long before their deaths. The famous actress Sarah Bernhardt kept a casket in her bedroom and was once photographed in it. As early as the 1900s, it was customary in China for sons to buy his parents coffins and they were often kept inside the home.

Purchasing your own casket may seem odd at worst, but even stranger—some order of monks would dig a shovelful of earth every day with the intent of the gathered dirt to eventually cover their own graves. Stranger still, some 'gypsies' would prefer being buried at crossroads while wearing their finest outfit inside out.

### Weird Items Placed in Coffin

An old Swedish custom was to bury a mirror with an unmarried woman so she could fix her hair and look her best for Resurrection Day. (*Married women braided their tresses, so the mirror would be unnecessary.*)

An old Irish tradition is that the corpse be buried with a hammer so it could be used to knock on the door of Purgatory.

Burying the dead with an hourglass to represent the running out of time was once a common practice.

Sometimes coins would be placed inside the coffin of a loved one so that he or she may pay Charon, the ferryman who transported the soul across the River Styx from the Land of the Living to the Land of the Dead.

### Child burials

In China a person's funeral was the most expensive period in their life. The corpse was dressed in expensive finery and elaborate ceremonies were performed; however, the bodies of infants were simply wrapped in mats and laid on pre-designated street corners where a man with a cart would regularly collect them.

To prevent a child's spirit from wandering, the Romans buried children just under the eaves of the house of his or her parents.

As late as the early-mid 1900's, a small or un-christened child would be buried in the same coffin as an adult woman so that the child's ghost would not haunt the parents with it's mournful cries.

Before the Revolution in France, it was commonplace for parents to place their dead infants in a sort of 'casket' made from bark stripped from a chestnut tree and bound with broom. Eventually this practice was outlawed as it destroyed too many trees.

### Some burying traditions & beliefs

An old tradition in Ireland was to remove the nails from the coffin's lid just before lowering it into the grave. This way on Resurrection Day, their loved one could rise unimpeded.

Some orthodox Jews believed that the time it took a body to decay was relative to the corpse satisfying his sins during his lifetime. Hence, in order to expedite the process, mourners would throw handfuls of dirt into the casket with the corpse and some went as far as drilling holes through the coffin.

Sea folks believed that death was postponed until the ebb of the tides. It was also thought that if you saved someone from drowning the water spirits, robbed of their 'booty', would seek vengeance upon the rescuer.

### Let me outta here!

So fearful were people of being buried alive (which was once a frightening reality), one dying woman actually instructed "that my body shall be stabbed to the heart to make sure that life is extinct."

During the Victorian period, strings were tied to the 'deceased's' finger and then hooked to a bell that was erected at graveside. Family members took shifts watching over the grave in case the 'dead' suddenly came back to life and rang the bell for assistance.

In 1896 the Association for the Prevention of Premature Burial was founded. This was a group of 'certified' officials who would, by various tests, deem someone 'officially' deceased.

## AN "ORBSESSION" FROM NEARLY 10 YEARS AGO

The year was 1997; I had just spent a small fortune on my first digital camera (640 x 480), adding instant gratification to the art of ghost hunting Kelly and I were learning. No more paying for roll after roll of 35mm film and having it developed... with rarely an anomaly to be seen!

Now the realm of the paranormal was right there on my tiny LCD screen - ORBS! Everywhere! Oh, yes, we followed protocols: No photos in rain/snow; no smoking; hold your breath... even avoid pics on a dusty road! This pic was taken at a dilapidated, semi-furnished house near Dillsburg where activity had been reported. I forget the details, but I believe Kelly felt a single presence in this room... I thought I was one up on her when my photo instantly showed *several* "spirits". What a shot -- it even made it to the IGHS website! Of course, I took me a while to figure out that the close proximity flash was simply illuminating dust particles close to the lens (moved about by air from the open window... duh!). Looking back at the "Orb-session" that drove the mid-90s ghosthunting boom, I feel it ultimately caused us to be more precise and methodical in our investigations, especially with photos. I just wonder what we'll learn in the next 10 years? - JDW

