



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 8, Issue 11 - Nov 2004

"ROO's" BOOS - NOTES FROM KELLY

The Lincoln Theater, located in downtown Decatur, Illinois was the backdrop for my Halloween this year. The theater opened in 1916 and holds many secrets and GHOSTS.

I found this building to be a spooky place. I was brought into town by author and American Ghost Society founder, Troy Taylor. I was asked to hold a séance to contact the mysterious Harry Houdini. Houdini performed in this theater many times during its long history. It seemed like a good place to try to get his attention. (Troy and I figured that he would NOT make his presence known, but it was a good theme to get the people into the theater for Halloween).

The Lincoln Theater was not the first building to stand on the site it now occupies in downtown Decatur. Aside from frontier construction by the early settlers, the first real building on the site was the Priest Hotel. In 1880 another owner changed the name to the New Deming.

In 1802 another owner changed the name to the Arcade Hotel. Eight years later he would remodel the building and change the name to the Decatur Hotel. There was a terrible fire in 1904 that destroyed the building. There was one man killed in the fire and there were several others believed to be dead. Some people were not found at all.

Are these the spirits that haunt the hotel? The new theater was constructed in 1916 on the land where the former hotel stood. The Lincoln held standing only performances for some of Decatur's finest citizens, dressed in black tie and formal wear. (The photo above shows the theater during the 1940s; Kelly's 35mm shots are not yet developed)

In the early days the main emphasis was on stage shows and vaudeville acts. The theater also hosted community functions as well. Many stars appeared here, including Ethel Barrymore, Al Jolson. Jeanette MacDonald, Jack Dempsey, Bob Hope and the mysterious magician Harry Houdini. There is still a hole in the stage that had been cut for the magician to escape through during one of his illusions.

After Troy gave the audience a brief history of Houdini's life, he recounted his own personal experiences with the theater's ghosts. One man, named Red, who used to work there, is a steady presence on the stage. He fell to his death from the catwalk above the stage and it seems he 'never left' the place he loved so much. Mysterious footsteps are heard by many people on the spiral staircase behind the stage. Troy, himself has had many encounters with the ghosts in this theater. He told us that he still feels very comfortable there. He grew up going to shows and movies at the Lincoln. A shadow of a man has been seen by people walking across the balcony. It is said that the restrooms are haunted as well. I felt ghosts in almost every nook and cranny of this once beautiful theater. It needs a lot of work, but it's a

really neat place, right down to the old movie cameras displayed by the front entrance.

It was now my turn to begin the séance. I chose 5 members from the audience and judging by what happened to us that night, I chose the right people. I decided to build the cone of power in the audience and get their participation in the seance. I had everyone stand up to clap and stomp their feet. I shook my rattle to get rid of any negative energy. By now, I'm sure some of the audience thought "This lady is batty for sure!" We then sang some children's songs to build the energy in the room to an all time high. We sang "Humpty Dumpty", "Itsy Bitsy Spider", "Row Your Boat" and "Jack and Jill Went up a Hill." We were all laughing by this point and put serious feeling into our songs. It seemed to loosen all of us up and get us ready for the big event.



The audience was amazingly quiet as I requested, before I began the serious part of the night. You could've heard a pin drop. The mood in the theater was creepy.

It was lit by only 1 white candle on a round table covered with a black cloth on the stage. All other lights, except for the 2 video cameras were out. No one was allowed to have any cell phones on or to use their cameras to avoid any distractions on stage.

I began the séance with a prayer of protection. We all took deep breathes in and out and then I was ready to begin. I asked Houdini to come to us and give us a sign of his presence. Nothing. I asked over and over in different ways, and Houdini wasn't going to play along. There was however, other Spirits floating around the stage. Audience members came up after the séance to tell us that they saw balls of red and blue lights flying around our heads. At one time, I asked my group to think of the color red to heat things up. (The theater was very cold.) We all got so hot we had sweat pouring down our faces. Many people in the audience (who did not know what we had done) were so hot; they had to leave the theater for a few minutes.

I must say I was surprised to have a lot of information come through for audience members by their loved ones. After the séance, many people came up to tell me that they understood their message. Even Troy received a message that shocked him quite a bit. (I gave myself 10 points for that one!)

What astounded me (and the others who participated in the séance with me), was the fact that we appeared to 'move' on stage. No, not just moving as people normally move, we were told, by separate people, (who sat in different parts of the theater and DID NOT know each other), that at different times during the séance we appeared to be moving down and over to the right as a group. There was a haze that surrounded all of us. What had happened? All I can say is that after

we were finished, I asked the participants to tell the audience how they felt as we did the séance. All of them said that they felt as if they were in an altered state of mind, felt very peaceful, calm and centered. When we were done, we were all extremely tired as you can well imagine.

As I was chatting with the audience members, Len, the camera man came over to me holding a large white feather that mysteriously appeared by his camera. (I told all of you that I'm the "feather queen!") I received an E-mail from Len on Tuesday, telling me that he found three more feathers on the haunted spiral staircase during his investigation after the séance. Who gave Len these feathers? I believe it was the spirits acknowledging their presence, letting Len know they were indeed there. Len was blown away for sure.

When I looked at the clock, 2 hours had passed! Time seemed to stand still while I performed this event. It was an incredible experience that I'd love to do again. I proved to myself that I can do platform mediumship, which is the next step in my Mediumship studies. I'm proud of my accomplishments and would love to visit the ghostly Lincoln Theater again someday.

(The history of the theater is based on Troy Taylor's article in his book- "Haunted Decatur Revisited".)

KELLY'S SEANCE - Observations from an Attendee...

On the night of her seance and investigation of the Lincoln Theater in Decatur, Len Adams was in attendance. Here is his account of some curious events involving feathers on that night:

"Hi Kelly, This is Len Adams. I am an area rep for Troy Taylor and was the guy filming you Saturday night. My wife, Kim, was the second person to your left at the table. You meet so many people during an outing that I'm just trying to narrow it down for you.

I wanted to let you know that I will make a copy of my film for you as you requested. I am slow, so it might take a bit, but you will get one.

Next, the white feather that appeared in front of me during your reading wasn't the only one. After you left, and the theater investigation had begun, I was at the staircase behind the stage. Six people were with me as we checked out the stairs. We had several orbs and a lot of cold air. As we turned to leave, I had forgotten my tri-field meter and went back for it. Right in front of me, on the stairs, were three more white feathers. I gave them to other people, but kept the first one that appeared before me on stage.

Kim just keeps raving about you. She normally doesn't do that because most of the mediums that we have come across are fakes. As Troy says, 'You're the real deal!'"

I have listened to the audio tape of Kelly's seance and the comments from those present which followed. Some sounds with possible EVP characteristics were noted, but in a large theater with hundreds of people, these would be hard to authenticate. What really intrigued me was the numerous people from different parts of the audience who stated they had witnessed strange movement, lights and haze surrounding Kelly and the participants on stage. I really look forward to seeing what was captured on IR video. If we don't receive the video in time for tonight's meeting, we'll show it at a future meeting.

After what I've heard about the event (and what I've listened to) I'm even more dissatisfied I could not have gone along, but it was just not financially feasible at the moment, between airfare and pet sitter expenses. Of course, by staying home I got to enjoy another splendid night with Allen Campbell at the haunted Carlisle Barracks and even learned the truth about his oft-mentioned "lock-downs"! - JDW

Paranormal Pennsylvania & Beyond PP & B returns featuring a New Look with Full Color Photos. Copies sold at SSP Meetings, Civil War and More & Kelly's Magical Garden \$6 ea.

Larry Arnold Local Appearance Sat. Nov. 20th, Larry Arnold, author of **Ablaze** will present a program on **SHC - Spontaneous Human Combustion. 7:00-9:30PM at the CP Food Bank; Donation is \$12.00 per person or \$18.00 per couple. Refreshments will be served.** (If you missed Larry's superb presentation at the 2003 PA Paranormal Conference, here's another chance to see the leading researcher on this gruesomely fascinating subject!)

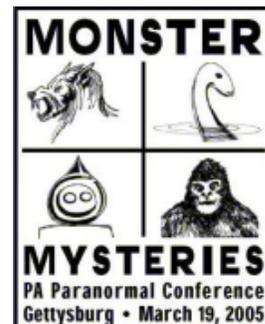
For reservations or further details, call SEARCH President Steve Groff at 566-2835 or e-mail sgroff@paonline.com.

A Word About SEARCH If anyone is interested in the Paranormal group called **S.E.A.R.C.H. (Science Evaluating Anomalies Research Center of Harrisburg)** you can contact President Steve Groff at: sgroff@paonline.com Steve has started attending SSP meetings and enjoyed speaking with several members about a wide range of paranormal subjects during our Halloween party. Their meetings are the third Wednesday of every month at the Colonial Park Library at 7:00 pm. (This month is an exception; Nov. meeting is Tue. the 16th) When we are able, John and I plan on attending. (This group evolved from Harrisburg Sky Watch which we were a part of in the early 1990s).



Notes from Oct. activities: Those attending the annual "Haunted Dining" at Alfred's Victorian heard several EVPs captured the week before during an "update" investigation by Kelly and I. (Two of these are now posted on the SSP site) What I found so interesting about these is that while numerous attempts were made during late night investigations, we had **never** gotten any clear EVP at this haunted place we know so well. The only thing I did different on this evening was to wear my external microphone on the back of my collar. I've been doing this for over a year now, as it picks up less breathing/nasal sounds. I really don't know why this particular night was so successful.

At Allen Campbell's Carlisle Barracks walk, I got some really curious EM readings toward the right side of the bandstand - the side facing the Thorpe gym. There is a power line & outlet toward the rear of the bandstand and this area understandably showed elevated, steady readings, as such a source would. The spike on the right side was very strong (6.5-7 on the scale) and quickly dissipated. I later learned that someone attending the walk had her camera battery fail after this stop on the tour, where she also reported "feeling" something at this point. I also noted the unexplained "laundry" smell on Lovell Ave. (Congrats to Allen, plus readers Gail & Sue for another great event)



Its not too early to plan for the 2005 PA Paranormal Conference, March 19 in Gettysburg. Topics covered incl Bigfoot, "Chessie", The Flatwoods Monster, Werewolves, The Carbondale Incident & more. Speakers include Stan Gordon, Rosemary Guiley, Mike Frizzell, Eric Altman, Mark Nesbitt & Rick Fisher. For details or to register go to - <http://home.supernet.com/~rfisher/conf.html> (or call Rick Fisher @ (717) 684-3643)

Musings of a Ghost Adventurer

By Melissa Griffith

HAUNTED: CURSED or COVETED? Let the Buyer Beware!

Did you know that almost half the states in America have a “haunted house law” that legally forces house sellers to disclose to prospective buyers if the house is haunted? They use the term “stigmatized” which also includes whether a murder, suicide or AIDS-related death occurred on the property. The disclosure statement ensures that a seller must divulge any “material defect that could have a significant adverse impact on the value of the property.” What defines “material defect” seems to be open to interpretation.

Although Pennsylvania does enforce a formal seller disclosure, it does not include the realm of the paranormal. So if you plan on buying a house in Pennsylvania, the seller does not have to inform you if it has a resident ghost or the reputation of being haunted (and just try proving that in a court of law).

Do Ghosts Decrease or Increase Value?

This all depends on your prospective buyers. In August an ad in *The Register-Guard* in Oregon touted a house for sale that included a “resident ghost.” The other worldly experiences in the 80-year-old home ran the usual paranormal gamut—strange noises, knockings, lights turning on and off by themselves and the mysterious sound of a rubber ball being bounced down the stairs.

But was advertising the ghost a smart move? According to the real estate agent selling the house, it was. She says that it’s a good idea to disclose such things because the seller would not want any legal ramifications coming back to haunt them (so to speak). One curious house hunter who came to see the house admitted she loved vintage houses and was fascinated by the resident ghost.

One seller in Fanwood, New Jersey, did not advertise her ghost, but when asked by prospective buyers if her eight-bedroom, 111-year-old Victorian house was haunted, she responded with a “Well, yeah.” Although the seller did not go into much detail, the couple was intrigued by the haunting and decided at that moment to purchase the house at the asking price.

However, one potential house buyer admitted that after being ‘on the fence’ about purchasing a so-called haunted house, learning that a suicide had taken place in the house pushed her over the edge and she did not bid on the property.

Time Heals All Wounds

The value or devalue of a haunted home may depend on how long ago the stigmatizing incident occurred. A nineteenth century ghost can be seen as quaint, whereas a family of four being murdered merely five years ago is not so charming.

Cases in point: Nicole Brown Simpson’s house didn’t sell for 2 1/2 years after the double murder and, even then, at a cut-rate price. The home where the members of the “Heaven’s Gate” cult committed suicide was so tainted that, by the efforts of neighbors, even the name of the street was changed.* The “Heaven’s Gate” property sold for a ridiculous bargain and the house was destroyed. However, the home once owned by Sharon Tate who, along with others, was murdered by the Manson family in 1969 sold in the early 1990s (about 25 years later) at market price.

*This is not a modern movement. Back in 1888 when Jack the Ripper murdered and mutilated his (generally accepted) first victim, prostitute Mary Ann “Polly” Nicholls, in Bucks Row, residents there were

so aghast at their new notoriety (as the Bucks Row area had acquired the nickname of “Murder Row”), they petitioned for a name change. By the end of the year (which was the duration of a mere four months), “Bucks Row” became—and still is—“Durward Street.”

Publicity Pains

Some hauntings receive so much publicity, thrill seekers become a hazard. Take the Amityville Horror house, for example. The new owners of the house were besieged with the curious who constantly trespassed on their property. Throngs of tourists would crowd the sidewalks to get a photograph of the infamous house on Ocean Avenue. The owners felt so harassed, they replaced the tell-tale, ‘evil eyes’ windows in the attic, had the house painted a different color and even relocated the main entrance in order to secure a different street address. A remake of the 1979 movie, “The Amityville Horror” is due out in April of next year; unfortunately, this will probably mean more woes for the family currently living in the house.

Owners of uninhabited dwellings are sometimes forced to take extra security measures, as well, from purchasing special insurance to hiring security guards in order to avoid vandalism, injury and/or legal suits. Abandoned properties touted as ‘haunted’ are broken into and vandalized. Even more dangerous, they are usually unsafe and can cause serious injury.

Case in point: In Spain, a teenaged boy was rescued after falling into a well on the property of an abandoned mansion that had the reputation of being haunted. The accident caused the boy serious injury and possibly permanent paralysis. The house named “Cortijo Jurado” was featured on a Spanish t.v. program about ghosts and for weeks afterward it was besieged by hundreds of curiosity seekers. The company that owned the property spend over \$700 on padlocks alone as disrespectful “ghost hunters” were helping themselves to doors, ceramic decorations and even some window frames.

Also, residents of Burkittsville, Maryland were annoyed by tourists flocking into their community after the ‘fakeumentary’ film, “The Blair Witch Project” was released. The movie supposedly took place in the small town—but the Blair Witch story was pure fiction! Horror buffs, believing the story was true, stole road signs and desecrated graveyards. The mayor, Joyce Brown, received so many phone calls she had no alternative but to design a voice message system stating, “This is the town office, Burkittsville, Maryland. If this is in regards to The Blair Witch Project, it is fiction.” The uproar also prompted the Frederick County Sheriff’s Office to release a statement that “Although potentially entertaining, the Blair Witch Project movie is a work of fiction. The events portrayed did not occur in any manner in the town of Burkittsville, Maryland or Frederick County, Maryland.”

People will always be fascinated by the supernatural; and the gullible and disrespectful will probably continue to cause problems for haunted (or pseudo-haunted) venues. But before you start feeling sorry for the towns and property owners connected with ghost stories—hauntings can also be highly profitable. But that’s for next month’s newsletter.

Melissa makes some good points in this excellent and well-researched article. Kelly and I know first hand the issues involved with trying to keep residents in the oft-mentioned “Evil House” in New Cumberland that has a history of negative activity. Once again, it is for sale! (Research confirms this is the norm for this property) As for those “ghosthunters” who invade private property thought or known to be haunted, they not only affect the public perception of responsible paranormal investigators, they can jeopardize their own safety! - JDW



This MAY be one of the more spectacular apparition photos ever taken, or it may turn out to be explainable. At this point, here is what we know (this first part was written the day it was sent it to me, 10/27):

It was taken by an MP at Carlisle Barracks approx a year ago, while on night duty and just recently shared with SSP member Allen Campbell, who works at and is the author of a book on hauntings at the historic Army post. She had entered a guard hut and her camera accidentally took a picture as she removed it from her bag. The flash did not go off - the original is quite dark. The MP recalled no unusual activity at the time but told Allen she sometimes heard knocking and banging in the hut, as if someone were trying to get her attention. She mentioned the sounds of pebbles hitting the hut for no reason. Allen reports that the "apparition", which appears to be a male Native American, is not familiar to anyone on post who has seen it thus far.

Allen cautiously suggests that this photo may be "too good to be true" and I concur, but we must keep in mind how rare apparition photos are. I am not suggesting fakery, but such an image may be possible for a highly skilled Photoshop user to replicate -- we must keep this in mind. It could also be a double exposure - this can happen as a malfunction with digital cameras (and even be purposefully created with certain models.) Close inspection reveals the facial image to be very "soft" and indeed transparent; the other objects in the photo are much sharper, despite the limited light provided by exterior street lights. The fact that many of the reported hauntings at Carlisle Barracks involve Native American spirits from the Indian School days make this something we really must closely investigate.

Update (11/4) I've had time to look over the image even more closely; here are some further comments: I had hoped to visit the exact location during Allen's ghost walk on 10/29, but just that day we learned the hut it was taken at had been removed. Security considerations made Allen suggest a pre-approved visit should be scheduled thru the MPs thus I was unable to see it then. I've asked him to see about arranging this in the future, where various instrument readings will be taken as will photos, video and audio. I would also like to get Kelly's "read" on the area. Even with investigating the exact location and finding correlating evidence of activity, it will be hard to truly authenticate this image. Perhaps only capturing the same "spirit" in another photo would confirm that is what it shows.

In my profession as an Art Director, I've used numerous types of photo editing software since its inception and without going into a wealth of technical details, I simply do not believe this was an altered image. As to possibly being a "double exposure", as mentioned above

it is possible, either by accident (or with some digital cameras, intentional) but there are elements which suggest to me it is not: A double exposure, be it with a film or digital camera, will cause 2 images to appear on the same frame of film or (in the case of digital) written to the same file. Assuming we have the interior shot of the hut as one exposure and the facial image as the other, where is the rest of the background with the facial image? If it were totally dark, this would obscure the brighter areas inside the hut, which are caused by streetlights; I see no evidence of this.

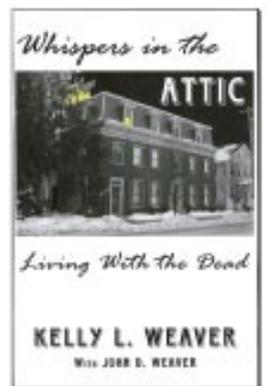
Here are excerpts from the MP's note to Allen, altered only to ensure anonymity: *"I don't really have an answer or a response to many of the questions that may be asked. The only thing I can do is simply state that I took the picture with my digital camera by accident and this showed up on it. The camera is a Casio Exilim EX-S2 2.0 Megapixels digital camera. I had it with me because it was in my bag from a trip I took with my nieces and I forgot to take it out before I went to work. I was pulling the camera out of my bag when it went off. This showed up.*

I didn't have to adjust any contrast/brightness to see the picture as it was clearly visible on the lcd display of the camera immediately after it went off. Like I said, I probably will not respond to any comments about it. I didn't share it with anyone because I didn't really think anything about it until ___ (another sgt. who works with me) and I were talking about ghosts one night and I sent him the picture.

Sorry I can't offer a better explanation. I'm not a ghost hunter (but it does interest me now). I will be working the night of the ghost hunt so I won't be able to go on that. If you have any questions you can call me at ___."

I've posted this photo on the SSP site and some lively debate has already ensued -- good points have been made for and against its authenticity. Allen has spoken to the MP who took the photo and feels she is sincere and genuine. This, and her position as a military law enforcement professional do have some merit in my opinion. We may never be able to fully prove this photo is or is not paranormal in nature, but at this point, I tend to lean toward the "is" side. - JDW (Does anyone have access to a Casio Exilim EX-S2 camera)

Whispers in the Attic - Living With The Dead Kelly's long-awaited first book is selling well! Copies are available at SSP meetings, Ghosts of Gettysburg Headquarters, Troy Taylor's History & Hauntings Book Company, The Inner Connection in New Cumberland, Borders in Camp Hill and Cupboard Maker books in Enola. Also available at Amazon.com *"...This is a must-read book for anyone who has an interest in psychic phenomena, ghost hunting or with a desire to better understand the mysterious world that we live in."* - Troy Taylor, Author/Founder, American Ghost Society



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A P P A R I T I O N S

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