



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 11 - Nov 2005

"ROO's" BOOS - NOTES FROM KELLY

John and I made it through another *hectic* Halloween season, thank goodness. I was 'lucky' (cough, cough) enough to be given an **extended rest**.

I'm home from the hospital after much needed back surgery. I'm beginning to walk a little more each and every day and hopefully will be at the December meeting.

Thanks to all of you who sent me cards and flowers. I really appreciate all of your love and support. I've got another 7 weeks of recovery until I can feel normal (*no comments from the peanut gallery on that*) again. I'm looking forward to putting all of the pain behind me and get back to ghost hunting once again.

Halloween Party Madness!

I think our party this year was a hoot! The costumes were *above average* and I believe everyone had a great time. I was a "cereal killer" (Not too original, but hey, I've been busy and my mind set was already there, after multiple doctor visits and Halloween obligations.) OK, OK, I'd been a bit, shall we say, 'grouchy'?

Gail (RT) was a scary Lizzie Borden, (her costume photo



was selected by USA Today.com and appeared on their site! Her husband has not been seen since the date of the party. Hmmm...)

Laura made a great **male** pirate (*Is that the spirit of Edward Teach dressed as a large dust particle checking her out? JW*)



Lori was just adorable as the Medusa. Her fiance, Bert, was hysterical as Austin Powers! *Loved the teeth.*



"Cute couple" Melissa and Craig were wonderful as a Bonnie & Clyde



type gangster and gun moll (*It was too dark to see if Craig's VW Cabrio had a couple hundred bullet holes in it - JW*)

Our Grand Prize winner was the beautiful "good" witch from the Wizard of Oz played by Eileen (below) She is so talented and it really showed in her costume. DVD Hor-

ror Movies were awarded as prizes to several of the guests that night. It was really hard for to cast votes



for who was the best because there were so many creative outfits! Our host, Clark, made a funny Freddy Flinstone in his cave man garb.....*you had to see it to believe it....* Loved the legs.

Enjoy the video at tonight's meeting.

Hoping to see all of you in a month or two. Take care, Kelly

From John: *I love good, creative costumes and this party had some of the best I've ever seen - you guys rock! I also want to thank everyone for their thoughts and prayers for Kelly and understanding the stress we've been under, preparing her for major surgery and a month without working while dealing with our busiest season.*

Kelly's back has really limited her (and my) participation in active investigations over the past year and we're looking forward to being a lot more active in the near future!



Here is something just a bit different! Mike Frizzell of the Enigma Project originally found this and shared with the PSP Yahoo group. I thought this might stir some interesting debate! (I wonder what would happen to a security guard at the PA Capitol if he or she were to announce having an encounter with the apparition of one of the ghosts said to haunt the place? - Any comments from our resident Capitol Bldg employee, Gail?) JDW

MAN FIRED FOR SEEING GHOSTS

A security firm fires an Iowa man who says he saw an apparition while on the job.

By CLARK KAUFFMAN REGISTER STAFF WRITER Nov. 9, 2005

Can a worker be fired from his job because he believes in ghosts?

Yes, according to one Iowa judge — although, the judge says, such beliefs don't constitute worker misconduct, which would disqualify him from receiving unemployment benefits.

Wade Gallegos of Des Moines was fired in September from Neighborhood Patrol of Urbandale, a security company where he had worked for about five weeks. According to state records, Gallegos was in a guard house outside a gated community on the night of Sept. 11 when he reported seeing a group of apparitions standing near a car.

Gallegos summoned a co-worker and supervisor. While the two men were there, Gallegos said he still could see the ghosts, although the other men assured him they could see nothing. The supervisor saw no evidence of drinking or drug use; five hours later he fired Gallegos.

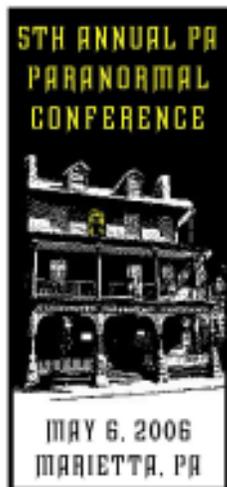
Neighborhood Patrol later challenged Gallegos' application for unemployment benefits, arguing he was guilty of misconduct.

Administrative Law Judge G. Ken Renegar ruled that "such beliefs do render the claimant unfit to act as a security guard. The employer cannot have security guards who see ghosts and apparitions and inform the employer and then the employer sends out the patrol cars."

But Renegar added that the "the real issue" was whether the sighting of ghosts was the sort of misconduct that disqualified Gallegos from receiving benefits.

Gallegos was awarded unemployment benefits. He said Tuesday he's still at a loss to explain the incident. "It was kind of like one of those out-of-body experiences."

Source: <http://desmoinesregister.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=20051109/NEWS08/511090344/1010>



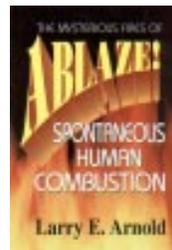
2006 CONFERENCE NEWS Lloyd Auerbach, Stanton Friedman, Rosemary Ellen Guiley & Ed Okonowicz will be speaking along with Rick Fisher at his 2006 event! Details at <http://home.supernet.com/~rfisher/paconf.html>

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/>

How NOT to Hunt Ghosts Take all the photos of dust, cigarette and exhaust smoke you wish. Play with your camera settings and get "anomalies" from light refraction. Pass off double exposure photos as paranormal. Keep yapping and record your bogus "EVP". Refuse to use any instruments to correlate your observations; refuse to document anything specific about the location and circumstances under which your "evidence" was gathered. As I said in my Aug. column, "*if people insist on ignoring the practices universally accepted by those serious about investigating the paranormal, they're not fooling anyone but themselves!*" Being a fool, however, is one thing; bad-mouthing Kelly, Ed, myself and our group is another - it compromises the *respectability* and *accountability* SSP has earned over nearly 10 yrs.

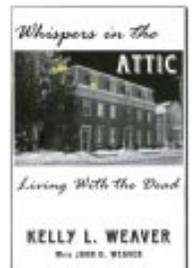
On a recent visit to Gettysburg, Ed Dubil encountered a group of "ghosthunters" who did all of the above. These geniuses even said things about him and Brutus, unaware of who he was! I am not about to start the sort of group bashing that "Docktor" Dave has become known for, but I will not tolerate any individuals saying anything negative about our group. Most regulars know who I'm talking about -- please inform me if you hear of them doing this again. 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

Whispers in the Attic - Living With The Dead by Kelly Weaver Upcoming book signings with Kelly include Sept. 3 at Mark Nesbitt's 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.

A P P A R I T I O N S

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Musings of a Ghost Adventurer

By Melissa Griffith

A Haunt Jaunt to Bedford, PA.

On a mild, overcast mid-June Friday, my sister-in-law, Christina, and I ventured to Bedford. Our first stop was the Espy House—a registered national landmark that was built in 1766 by Colonel David Espy. In 1794, the house was used as President George Washington’s headquarters when he led his Constitutional Army into Pennsylvania to suppress the Whiskey Rebellion.



Rebel rousin’ farmers who did not wish to pay taxes on their whiskey were taking matters into their own hands by violently attacking tax collectors, intimidating government officials and rioting. Washington, knowing the young government’s survival depended on being able to enforce its own laws, led over 12,000 soldiers to occupy western Pennsylvania in this first test of power of the United States government.

The impressive army (mockingly nicknamed “The Watermelon Army” by whiskey rebels) made quick work of dispersing the rioters. Several people were arrested but were released by either lack of evidence or pardoned by President Washington, who, perhaps, did not want to perpetuate even more animosity in the area. (It’s interesting to note that ‘taxing sin’ - tobacco and alcohol - continues to be a common practice.)

Though I hadn’t heard any stories of the Espy House being home to any spirits (although I wouldn’t doubt it), its historical significance alone makes it worth checking out.

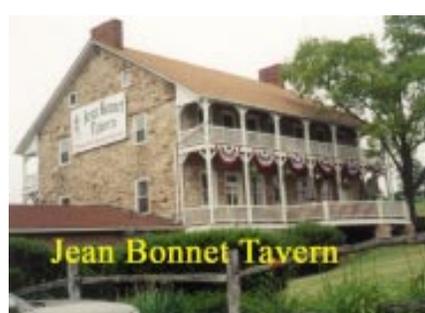
It’s currently being rented out as apartments and the bottom floor operates as the “Washington Bakery.” Chris and I, eager to see the inside of the building, entered the bakery under the guise of actual customers.

In contrast to the well-maintained outside of the building, the inside (oddly painted pink) was dimly lit and dingy. The room had a gorgeous, pressed-tin ceiling and old reproduction prints of George Washington hanging in conspicuous areas

Then it was off to the famously haunted Jean Bonnet Tavern. The land the tavern sits on has had a myriad of owners over the centuries—beginning with the Native Americans and ending with its present-day owners, Shannon and Melissa Jacobs. The actual building has been used for a temporary fort, a make-shift courthouse and, of course, a tavern and inn.

The Jean Bonnet (named after a previous owner) seems to be home to a gaggle of ghosts and, knowing its history, this would certainly not surprise anyone. Who are the identities of these spirits that roam the popular tavern? Well, as with most ghost stories—the tales aren’t pretty.

When being used as a courthouse, many criminals were hung in the tavern and on the surrounding grounds. But one man’s unfortunate story seems to be the focus of one of the hauntings. The man pleaded



to use the court as a safe haven as some Native Americans were tracking him down. He was recognized as a horse thief who, those in attendance postulated, had probably swindled the Indians in order to provoke them to chase this man into their courtroom. He was given an

impromptu trial and hanged from the staircase. This gentleman is probably the ghost that haunts the staircase and the (present-day) closet where he was hanged.

One pitiful story may explain a woman spirit that seems to be earth bound at the Jean Bonnet. A man named Robert Callender owned the tavern during the Revolutionary War. Although Callender was married, it was said that he kept a mistress who worked at the tavern. He had strung her along with empty promises of marriage. The gullible woman would perpetually watch for him returning from the war in hopes of becoming his bride. She eventually passed away, still believing that Callender would come for her.

Another equally tragic legend lays claim to yet another of the hauntings. In 1758 when the tavern was being used a temporary fort, rumor has it that a spy was executed and his body was hidden under the floor. Lending credence to this story is the fact that owners of the building in the mid-1950s unearthed a 200-year-old, male skeleton in the basement.

The odd occurrences at the John Bonnet Tavern run the paranormal gamut: visits by apparitions, customers are touched by unseen hands, sounds of ghostly patrons partying after the bar is closed down for the night, the wail of a non-existent baby, the sound of unearthly footsteps are heard, objects being moved, doors open and close seemingly of their own accord and cold spots are experienced.

We arrived at the tavern in the early afternoon and the building was much more massive than I had envisioned, even though I had seen many photos of the place. We were seated in a more than ample booth beside a huge fireplace. I was relieved to see there was no ‘frilly’ decor in this historic building. If not for the electric lights, from our viewpoint, we could have been in the 1700s. It was cozy, homey and charming.

Then it was off to the Old Schellsburg Church. However, we were once again sidetracked by a fantastic shop called “Piper’s Place”—which we couldn’t help but notice since there was a gigantic piper placed at the beginning of the driveway. A gorgeous store filled to the brim with country collectibles, decor, candles, ornaments and the like. After asking directions to the church from the clerk, we realized we actually just passed Cemetery Road, so we would have to back track a few hundred yards. The church doesn’t really look much like church, but more like a log cabin. It was built in 1806 and I find it remarkable that it is still standing. Not only that, it seems to be in perfect condition.

The graveyard had some extremely interesting, ancient tombstones. A lot of them had beautiful inscriptions and poems engraved on them. I wondered why we don’t continue this practice today (probably too expensive, I imagine), as the ones we read made me tear up. A heart-breaking site was five tombstones in a row—all five of these graves belonged to the children of one set of parents; all passing away within the timeframe of eight years. Infant mortality rates of centuries past astounds me and I wonder how parents kept from going completely mad.

I heard vague rumors of the church being haunted, but by whom or what, none of the stories seemed to mention. I suppose a building being almost 200 years old in the middle of a churchyard sporting graves from the 18th and 19th century is enough to deem almost any place ‘haunted.’

Other places worth checking out in/near Bedford: Gravity Hill in New Paris; Coral Caverns in Mann’s Choice—home to the only fossilized coral reef known to be in existence; The Bedford Covered Bridge Tour; Old Bedford Village; and Fort Bedford.



BIOGRAPHIES of the STRANGE and PARANORMAL by Gail Dull

The “True Story” behind The Exorcist (Part 2)

This continues Gail's article from the Oct. 2005 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? Last month I reviewed the common versions of the exorcist and the supposed events of 1949.

In every story that is supposedly “based on a true story there is a point where truth, the reported story and creative license diverge. Mark Opsasnick wrote an article for Strange Magazine where he went in search of the details surrounding this case. I recount some of his evidence in the following paragraphs...

The priest that conducted the initial exorcism kept a diary, but used pseudonyms for the people involved. Was this why a different city was named as the location and a vacant lot named as where the home formerly stood?

Opsasnick traveled to Mount Rainier to find the home where Robbie reportedly had lived. Local teens referred him to an empty lot in a quiet neighborhood where the house had stood but when Opsasnick interviewed neighbors and other townspeople who were old enough to have lived there when the phenomena had taken place, no one knew the family nor how that the empty lot had been named as the site of the possessed boy's former home.

Using public records for the area, Opsasnick researched the property records for the house that had stood on that lot. No young boy had ever lived there. In 1950, an elderly man who had never had any children died leaving no survivors. So where was Robbie?

Opsasnick even went so far as to track down neighbors of the empty lot and managed to find a neighbor who grew up next door to the “exorcist house” in the 1940s. This woman stated that the couple that had lived there was elderly and that the old woman had given her piano lessons every day. She confirmed that no young boy had ever lived there.

Additionally, after the death of the elderly man, no one family lived there for any length of time and in the early 1960's the house was in such neglected condition it was used for a firemen's training session and was burned.

One local interviewed stated that they knew the priest involved and the priest had only told him two things, “one was that the boy lived in Cottage City, and the other is that he went on to graduate from Gonzaga High and turned out fine.”

Opsasnick had reviewed the priest's diary which did give a date of birth for Robbie. Using that, Opsasnick surmised the year that Robbie would have graduated as 1954. He was able to obtain a Gonzaga High yearbook for 1954 and was surprised to find that not only was every senior's picture in the book but also their home address and the Catholic Church they attended. There were only two boys who lived in Cottage City that graduated that year. Opsasnick checked the names against public birth records...and one of the boys birth date matched the date given by the priest!

Now he had a name. Using other public records, he was able to learn that a family by that name had lived at the Cottage City address from 1939 until 1958. He was also able to use the section of the local paper that detailed local life to follow the family's happenings for most of that time, including mention of relatives visiting from St. Louis, further authentication of the story.

Opsasnick then began tracking people down that had either lived near Robbie's family or had gone to school with him. All of them further authenticated the story that Robbie had lived on 40th Street in Cottage City.

Even more interesting was that one boy was repeatedly brought up as being Robbie's best friend, Opsasnick was able to track him down and interview him, the information the man only identified as B.C. related is shocking to say the least.

In B.C.'s words, Robbie was a bully and a downright mean kid with few friends. His mother and grandmother were religious fanatics that saw evil everywhere. His father was ineffectual and had little to do with Robbie, leaving him to his mother and grandmother. As for the stories of Robbie's bed shaking, B.C. stated that it was a bed that was on little wheels that was so wobbly it was harder to keep it in place than make it move.

B.C. went on to note that Robbie was the kind of kid that would sic his dog on other kids in the neighborhood and was known for getting in trouble. B.C.'s older brother only known as J.C. related this to Opsasnick, “No, I don't think he was ever possessed. I think it was psychological. As far as any real possession or anything like that, I don't think so. There are some interesting psychological aspects to it.”

So what ever happened to Robbie? Opsasnick, the relentless researcher, was able to track him down and called him. Robbie confirmed that he had lived in Cottage City, never Mount Rainier and refused to say any more.

Finally, Opsasnick researched the priest who had been “injured” by the bedspring and was able to find many students who had had this priest as their gym teacher the year that the supposed attack had happened. NONE of these people ever remembered the priest being hurt that year and as their gym teacher, he was able to conduct class and no one ever noticed any injury to the priest's arm. Additionally, the priest did not leave the church for many more years.

The truth? None of the priests involved had ever been involved in an exorcism. Psychiatric care in the 1950's was not what we today would call effective or as evolved. Was Robbie just a spoiled, mean child whose behavior got him the attention and not to mention traveling he craved? Or was he a misunderstood boy who was taken by a demon? I'll leave that up to you to decipher. If you want to read some reprints of the original 1949 articles from the Washington Post, they can be found from links here: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/style/longterm/movies/features/dcmovies/exorcist.htm>

Sources: <http://www.catholiceducation.org/articles/religion/re0137.html> www.strangemag.com/exorcistpage1.html

Another Child EVP at Carlisle Barracks?

On the night of Allen Campbell's annual Ghost Walk at the historic & haunted Army Post, a person approached me after the second tour and played a short video clip taken with her digital camera which including plausible audio of a child's voice that was not heard until the clip was reviewed. She sent me this later and it indeed does sound like a child (I think female) answers “Yes” to Allen's question: “Do you know you are dead?” (I will play this clip at tonight's meeting)

I believe this was recorded near the former basement morgue where I recorded a child's voice 2 years ago. She has yet to answer my e-mail confirming the location. Unlike the first tour (which had a record number of people) the 2nd was small and I believe the only children were this person's own. If this was indeed captured at the same approx. location, it merits further investigation. - JDW