



# The ghosts of Ohio® Newsletter

www.ghostsofohio.org

October 2009—Volume 7 Issue 1

## From the Spooky Desk of James A. Willis: Happy Halloween from The Ghosts!



James

As many of you know, I was born and raised in upstate New York. And Halloween was always a very special and exciting time for me. Not simply because of the chance to dress up and scare the living daylight's out of my friends (and unsuspecting neighbors), but more importantly, because of the hours and hours of candy-snatching you could do.

That's right, there was no two-hour window for trick-or-treating in my neighborhood. You did it until you either picked every house clean of their tasty treats or your parents summoned you home. Believe me, some of my fondest Halloween memories involve me dragging an oversized pillow case bulging with goodies down a darkened street. Perhaps that's why, every year when I have to look online to see when my neighborhood's designated two hours for "Beggar's Night" is, I feel that a lot of people are getting cheated out of their Halloween goodies.

So with that in mind, all of us here at The Ghosts of Ohio decided to jam this issue full of all sorts of spooky treats,

making this issue one of the biggest we've ever had. For example, read on and you will find:

- An interview with two new members of The Ghosts of Ohio, Amy and Sean, who will give you a look at what goes on inside our organization
- The origins of Jeff Craig's amazing map, Hidden Ohio
- A peek inside the kit of the original ghosthunter, Harry Price
- A close look at Harry Houdini's adventures in the land of psychics and mediums
- A list of some of The Ghosts of Ohio team members' favorite Halloween costumes

And we've saved the coolest treat for last: the very first crossword puzzle to ever appear in any edition of The Ghosts of Ohio Newsletter!

So what are you waiting for? Dim the lights, grab a fistful of the Halloween candy you secretly took out of the bowl when no one was looking, and dig in to this newsletter.

Cheers,  
James A. Willis  
Founder/Director

## Inside This Issue



The Ghosts of Ohio visit the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Mothman Festival—Full recap on Page 3.



A frightful night at Bobby Mackey's Music Hall. Did we die? See Page 6 to find out!

## Remembering Houdini: Exposing Spiritualism and Seeking Truth



Samantha

In the world of magic and illusion, there is certainly no greater or more recognizable name than Harry Houdini. His groundbreaking escapes and expert showmanship are still well known throughout the world, and much of today's magic has its roots in Houdini's work. However, Harry Houdini was much more than a magician and escape artist. He was also an actor, writer, inventor, aviator and, most fascinatingly, a pioneer in spiritual debunking.

Houdini's passion for the subject began following the death of his beloved mother in 1913. He had been so devoted to her that he fainted upon hearing the news and then spent an entire month making daily visits to her grave. Similarly, the United States was reeling from the rising death toll of the first World War. People desperately longed to be reunited with husbands, fathers and sons who were killed in battle. It was this desperation that gave rise to a resurgence of a religious movement called Spiritualism, during which unscrupulous individuals took advantage

of those who were grieving, including Harry Houdini.

Developed in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, Spiritualism was the belief that psychic mediums could communicate with the dead. During World War I, these "mediums" came out of the woodwork, offering to put people in touch with their deceased loved ones for a price. Clients would pay mediums fees and then participate in séances during which their dearly departed's spirit would manifest with a series of knocks, ringing bells, levitating tables, and flying objects.

*Continued on Page 11*

## Mapping the Paranormal: Origins of the "Hidden Ohio Map & Guide"



Jeff

In December 2004, after almost three years in distribution, I sat down one late night to watch *The Mothman Prophecies* with my wife and two friends. One of the friends recommended it and I have to admit, I'd seen it in the video store but never realized it had a paranormal storyline. Richard Gere movies were not usually on the top of my list. The title didn't necessarily grab my attention, and the front cover didn't have a scary monster or screaming teenagers. Needless to say, after viewing the video, I was quite shocked that I had never heard the story that took place just a few hours up river from my location in Cincinnati.

The following days were spent dwelling on the Mothman story. I wondered to myself if there were other similar paranormal events and locations nearby of which I was not aware. Being a map guy, I began to consider looking up these places and plotting them on a map. This would be nothing new for me. I was already employed as a full-time cartographer. I only made standard street maps, but I did have experience creating a unique custom map on my own that located another topic of interest to me which was bagpipe bands and Celtic festivals across North America. So I envisioned a similar map, just for Ohio and surrounding states that would feature paranormal locations.

Early in 2005, I got a base map drawn for Ohio and began doing some research on the Internet. Soon I realized I was in for a challenge. Paranormal events across Ohio were not scarce. Several issues arose right away. Since I was inspired by Mothman, I wanted to include that on the map even though it was centered in Pt. Pleasant, WV, not in Ohio. Since it was just across the river, that problem would be easy to solve. I could include portions of surrounding states just by the way Ohio fit into a rectangle used to grid the map. The next issue was which paranormal events to include such as strange creatures, ghosts, UFOs and aliens. Strange creatures, or

cryptoids, were the inspiration for the map, but I certainly had always been interested in ghost stories and many other paranormal or unsolved mysteries. Growing up with *Twilight Zone* reruns, *In Search Of...* and Stephen King books and movies, how could I not be a product of the paranormal?

With a well-defined topic and precise coverage in place, I was making progress as time allowed outside of regular job hours or family activities. Soon after performing some Internet searches for ghost stories, I became aware of the paranormal research and investigative group, The Ghosts of Ohio. The website was professional and informative. I appreciated the carefully worded descriptions and lack of tackiness often associated with topics in the paranormal realm. On the website, I saw that they were also a nonprofit group which allowed people to apply for membership. Even though I was in Cincinnati and the bulk of the group was in Columbus, I felt that it would be a worthy endeavor. And after five years in the group, I can say that I was correct. The help and support of founder/director James Willis and the members of the group have been invaluable.

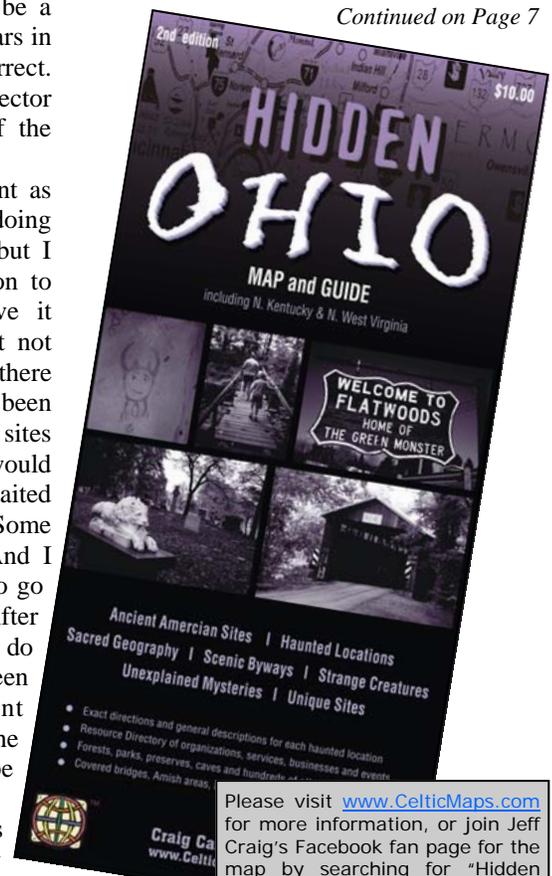
Over the next two years, I spent as much spare time as possible doing research. Much of it was online, but I also took trips. Going to a location to investigate myself seemed to give it more authenticity. Though I might not experience something paranormal there myself, I could at least say I'd been there. But with almost 300 haunted sites that I had found, I realized that I would never get the map produced if I waited to visit each spot individually. Some places would just have to wait. And I broadened the subject of the map to go a bit beyond just the paranormal. After all, it was my project and I could do what I wanted. I'd always been impressed with Ohio's ancient American legacy and decided that the earthworks they left behind would be a worthy addition.

Research continued into 2007 as the map quickly filled up in every region of the state. Each county was sure

to have at least one pinpoint, whether it was a ghost story, Bigfoot sighting, or UFO landing, if not a dozen. The later two subjects could have quickly filled up the map, so I tried to use a representative sampling to demonstrate where they were seen. For Bigfoot, I used many sources including books by Loren Coleman. But I also owed a great debt of gratitude to the people that created the website at [www.bfro.net](http://www.bfro.net). For UFO sightings, again, I used many books including *The UFO Book* by Jerome Clark, but I also found a valuable source of chronological sightings at [www.ufoinfo.com](http://www.ufoinfo.com). Here, one can browse through reports going back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century all over the world.

The last thing to do to get the map ready for publishing was to write a concise description of each ghost story and directions to that spot. I decided to make it an alphabetical listing by county. (On the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the map, it is now alphabetical by the four regions of

*Continued on Page 7*



Please visit [www.CelticMaps.com](http://www.CelticMaps.com) for more information, or join Jeff Craig's Facebook fan page for the map by searching for "Hidden Ohio Map."

## Beauty Queens and Turtleman: The Ghosts at The Mothman Festival



Sheri

Where on earth can you compete in a beauty pageant, weight lifting tournament, and pancake eating contest all in one day? Or entertain the Ghostbusters and Men in Black while you sing karaoke in the sun? Or

browse countless handmade items for sale, take a haunted hayride, and dance with the Turtleman in the rain? Where else can you celebrate your passion for a giant winged beast that is believed to wreak havoc around the world? One place and one place only...Point Pleasant, West Virginia, at the 2009 Mothman Festival.

As for the past several years, The Ghosts of Ohio joined in the festivities just over the Ohio border near the site where the Silver Bridge collapsed in 1967. It is said that just before the bridge collapse, the Mothman was seen hovering above, a prophecy sent to predict the impending doom. However, every September for the last eight years, Point Pleasant, West Virginia, has celebrated this fated creature. A Mothman statue has even been erected in the downtown square to celebrate the legend.

The Mothman Festival is a two-day extravaganza that includes dozens of vendors that specialize in everything, including things such as ghost investigating, spooky map making, historical research, Mothman photography and making any product in the world look like a Mothman souvenir. Saturday was a beautiful sunny day and drew thousands of locals and paranormal seekers from across the region to

peruse the booths and attend various speaking engagements throughout the day. The Ghosts of Ohio set up a joint table with James Willis' "Weird" collection of books. We enjoyed the hundreds of visitors we had that weekend, as well as the dozens of new newsletter subscribers.

Throughout the weekend, The Ghosts of Ohio members participated in a Mothman-shaped pancake eating contest, the Turtleman private snapping turtle show, and the TNT haunted hayride. Every minute of the weekend was entertaining and the



Mothman costume contestants pose with a "Woman in Black."

activity did not start to settle until late on the rainy Sunday afternoon.

Speaking as a Mothman Festival first-timer, the 2009 Mothman Festival shattered my expectations and left me thinking about next year. It left me longing for the delicious taste of the Mothman-shaped pancake and another dance with the Turtleman in the rain. For information about next year's festival, visit <http://www.mothmanfestival.com>.

Rating: 🧟🧟🧟🧟🧟



Adam atop one of the sealed TNT bunkers outside Point Pleasant, West Virginia.



The Turtleman shows "no fear" at the annual Mothman festival.



**Now Available: 2010 Green Lawn Cemetery Calendar**

Just in time for the upcoming holiday season, the 2010 Green Lawn Cemetery calendar is here! The 8 1/2 x 23 wall calendar showcases photo submissions from the annual photo contest and contain important dates, scheduled activities at Green Lawn, historical and general information about Green Lawn, as well as phases of the moon.

All proceeds go to help the volunteers and can be purchased at the office for \$10.00 each or mailed for \$12.00 each.

Email: [contactus@greenlawncolumbus.org](mailto:contactus@greenlawncolumbus.org)

Phone: (614) 444-1123

## Darrin's Tools of the Trade: Harry Price—The Original Ghosthunter



Darrin

Today we have at our disposal all types of equipment to use, but how is it different from what was first used by ghost hunting pioneers? One of the very first paranormal investigators to use a tool kit was

Harry Price. Harry was an English gentleman who was born in 1881. He spent his life investigating psychic and paranormal phenomenon. In 1920, he was accepted as a member of the Society for Psychical Research (SPR.) He spent the next several years investigating psychics and mediums. It was doing this that helped hone his investigative skills. Because of a difference with the SPR, he formed his own group called the National Laboratory of Psychical Research (NLPR.) It was with the NLPR that his notoriety grew. He had his fair share of fans and critics throughout his career.

In the 1930s, he started his famous association with a property called the Borley Rectory. It was during his investigations of what he called “the most haunted house in England” that we now have the basis for our modern-day paranormal research methods and tool kit. He started such things as always having another qualified person with you when you conduct an investigation and of making sure that if you experience anything you feel is strange or unusual you communicate it right away to others in your group so it can be properly recorded using tools to help you collect data. One of his most important demands of his associates was to always conduct oneself in a professional manner while conducting an investigation.

For this article, we are most concerned with his infamous tool kit which consisted of things like: cameras, devices to measure and record the size and layout of rooms, temperature measuring devices, mercury, string, flour, paper and pencils, a telephone system, felt shoe covers, and a first aid kit. The purpose of all of these things was so significant that we still use some

sort of variant of them today in our investigations.

In Harry’s opinion, in order to properly conduct an investigation, you had to record the environment you were in so you could document what happened and where it happened. In order to do this, he included in his kit a steel measuring tape, pencils and paper so he could record the size of the rooms and what happened during the course of an investigation just like we do today. Now we do the same thing but we have electronic tape measures that we can use to get our measurements. We still use pencils or pens and paper to record the size and dimensions of rooms and what occurs in them throughout an investigation. He would wear felt shoe covers to keep from making too much noise as he moved around throughout the investigation. While we don’t have to go to such extremes, we still try to be as quiet as possible so as not to make any noise that someone else could hear and possibly misinterpret as something strange or unusual. Today we have digital cameras, 35mm cameras and all sorts of video cameras that can even see in the dark to try and capture ghostly images. We use these because Harry used cameras to try and capture both still and moving images of paranormal phenomena. Just like today, he felt it



Harry Price demonstrating his electrical controlling apparatus used in investigations.

Photograph courtesy of [harryprice.co.uk](http://harryprice.co.uk).

was one of the best ways to show proof of something paranormal occurring. He used flour and string to try and seal off an area to make sure that no one was trying to tamper with evidence or set up a hoax in a room. Today, we don’t have to try and seal off the room and use flour to see the footprints of human tampering, we use motions sensors with audible alarms and video cameras to detect if anyone has entered an area.

*Continued on Page 8*

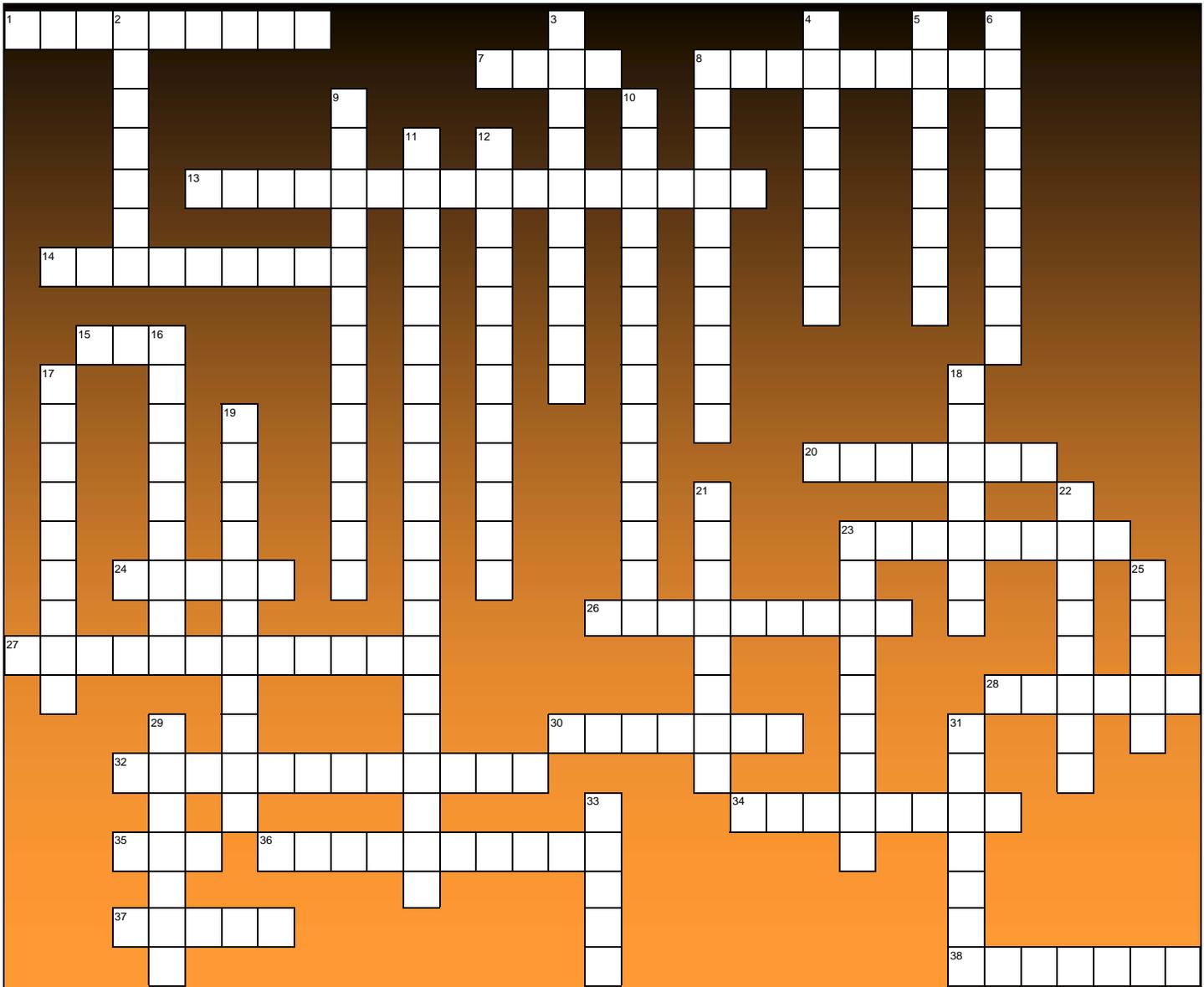


Harry Price’s infamous tool kit contained items that serve as the basis for many of the devices used for modern ghosthunting.

Photograph courtesy of [harryprice.co.uk](http://harryprice.co.uk).



# Spooky Spectacle: The Ghosts of Ohio Crossword Puzzle



### Across

1. Reality leader of the lockdown
7. Negative emotion? A little bit of this is a good thing
8. Your favorite author likely didn't use this writing style (not manual)
13. Josh Gates will take you there
14. See you on the other side
15. Listen to it later
20. Winged legend or prophecy?
23. A spooky visitation
24. Not your average Willis
26. He is a seeker, sometimes a warrior
27. Evil twin? A harbinger of bad luck
28. Whirling epicenter of natural energy
30. They ate my neighbors—video game
32. Plumbers by day, this by night

34. Groundhog Day type of spirit
35. It's probably dust
36. A supernatural appearance
37. Friend of the Hendersons
38. Rods to locate water, perhaps more

### Down

2. Mysterious creature and monster truck
3. Certainly not normal
4. Localized drop in temperature
5. Dr. Ray Stantz chose a man of this nature
6. Produced by mediums, can also be used to animate the Statue of Liberty
8. Horror in New York
9. Take this to Chernobyl, *count* on it
10. Dr. Venkman's field of expertise

11. Shawshank Redemption locale
12. West Virginia tragic structure
16. Hosting school of reality team PRS
17. Telephone to the dead
18. Not a friendly type of entity
19. "They're here..."
21. Are you getting sleepy?
22. Ghosts cannot hide in the dark with this camera
23. Synonym for full-body apparition
25. Interview with a ghost? Try a K-II \_\_\_\_\_
29. Extreme heat or cold? It's called a "hit" on this device
31. End of the road
33. Send me one, right now

Please See Page 10 for the Solution



## Bobby Mackey's: "Not Responsible for the Actions of Our Ghosts"



Sheri

Last month, The Ghosts of Ohio and their special guests got the unique opportunity to investigate one of the supposedly most haunted locations in the United States—Bobby Mackey's Music World in Wilder,

Kentucky. A sign posted at the country western bar, which decades ago was a slaughterhouse and speakeasy, warns that the owners will not be responsible for the actions of their ghosts. The Ghosts of Ohio were ready to see just what those actions were.

We arrived at our destination just before sunset and immediately carted in our three carloads of equipment and began to set up the gear. We were given a tour of the "hotspots," which included Johanna's dressing room, the Hell's Gate Well, the Wall of Faces room, the Stairs to Nowhere, and the bar area where an unplugged jukebox had mysteriously played. Within an hour we had every corner of the place covered with infrared cameras, night vision handheld cameras, voice recorders, EMF meters, radiation meters, black lights, temperature gauges, and investigators. There was no way a ghost could get past us!

As we typically do, our team broke up into small investigation groups to cover all parts of the bar—inside, in the



Ghosts of Ohio members and contest winners at Bobby Mackey's Music Hall.

basement, and around the property. Overall, the night seemed quite uneventful in the paranormal activity realm. However, we did have quite a bit of excitement when several group members stumbled across the opening of Hell's Gate by the river. We had an adventure as each team climbed through several sections of the well (resembling a sewer), each progressively getting narrower and narrower.

As with all of our "Spend the Night" investigations, we drew several contest winners from our newsletter subscribers to join us on the investigation. Contest winner Darcey said, "We had a blast investigating with your group. Everyone was so nice, even when I thought I was gonna die from the Death Tunnel. Troy and I are still talking about what fun we had! Thank you for the fun night!"

Although our paranormal personal experiences were few and far between, we did come home with a mysterious EVP. Was a lingering spirit trying to communicate something to our investigator when it whispered, "It hurts..."? Unfortunately, we never found out what hurts and we will never know who was in pain, but the voice was enough to send chills down anyone's spine.

The night wouldn't be complete unless we were stranded in the middle of nowhere—*Destination Truth* style—with a truck full of our equipment and a dead car battery. Maybe someone at Bobby Mackey's—excluding our tour guide—just didn't want us to leave. Fortunately, we were able to jump start the truck and head home to our warm, ghost-free beds.

The building was quite unique and in dire need of maintenance. However, the history and stories of the century old building still fascinate travelers and ghost hunters across the nation. In conclusion, our analysis of evidence from Bobby Mackey's Music World leads us to think that maybe patrons should be more concerned about falling through the collapsing floor than being accosted by a ghost.



The old slaughterhouse well was monitored by LabPro sensors for the duration of the Bobby Mackey's investigation.

Rating: 🧟 🧟 🧟 🧟 🧟

## Spend the Night with The Ghosts of Ohio!

As part of the Spend the Night with The Ghosts of Ohio program, we are renting out some of the most haunted buildings in Ohio for an entire night. Unlike traditional "ghost hunts," where you are often forced to share the location with total strangers, every building we rented out was totally ours.

How do you get in on all this spooky fun? It's simple, really. All you need to do is sign up for The Ghosts of Ohio newsletter—which is free...and which most of you have already done!!

For each investigation, we'll be picking several names from our list of newsletter subscribers and giving them the first shot at spending the night with us. All they need to do is pay the same registration fee that the members of The

Ghosts of Ohio have to pay in order to rent out the building (dollar amount subject to change based on individual venue).

In addition, we'll be drawing at least one lucky Grand Prize winner who will get to come along for FREE!

That's all there is to it! Of course, we might want to take a few pictures of you on the investigation and post them on our site so you'll be the envy of all your friends. But hey, that's a small price to pay for the chance to spend the night with The Ghosts!

If for some reason you don't have your own subscription, what are you waiting for? <http://ghostsofohio.org/services/newsletter.html>.

### The Ghosts are Planning Where To Spend The Night in 2010

Bobby Mackey's overnight officially ended our 2009 Spend the Night program. But if you weren't one of the lucky winners, have no fear. As long as you are subscribed to our newsletter, you are eligible to win in 2010 and beyond!

Plans are currently underway to book several locations for our 2010 Spend the Night program, including a return visit to Mansfield Reformatory. So keep an eye on The Ghosts of Ohio website and this newsletter for more details as they become available. Until then, keep your fingers crossed!

## Mapping the Paranormal: Hidden Ohio Map

*Continued from Page 2*

Ohio: Northwest, Northeast, Southwest, and Southeast.) Keeping the descriptions concise proved difficult and I struggled with which facts to use in each of the 300+ haunts. After all, I am a cartographer, not a writer. But I tried to give a sense of the main storyline and keep directions basic from a well-known spot. Space on the sheet of paper just did not allow for elaboration. It isn't the

purpose of the map to tell a good story, but rather to pinpoint the location for those who wish to go see for themselves. If people wish to get the detailed story, I've listed a bibliography on the map for them to seek further information on each subject such as *Weird Ohio* by James Willis et al.

As the summer of 2007 ended, I thought that there would be a chance that the map could be ready by Halloween. I hurried to finish writing the descriptions for each haunt, perhaps too quickly, as there were a few typos which found their way onto the final map. Finally, the files were sent far away from Cincinnati to the printer near Washington, D.C., in mid-October. The preparation required to get the files onto the huge four-color press would take about two weeks including a draft being sent to me for approval. It was evident that the map would not make my

### The Newsletter is a Robot!

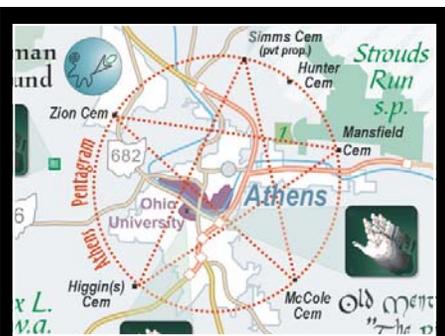
We'll stop reminding you when you stop sending emails to the newsletter address! If you send anything at all to the newsletter address, our surly robot will eat it...and that will make us all sad. So please don't do it, OK? Promise?



Halloween deadline. I got word the maps were ready and decided to make a road trip to pick them up myself in early November 2007 and made it back with 5,000 maps and one new tire later on time for a festival in Cincinnati to debut the product to the public.

After a 2<sup>nd</sup> edition in April 2009, the maps are continuing to sell well. Check my website at [www.CelticMaps.com](http://www.CelticMaps.com) for more info about the maps or join my Facebook fan page for the map by searching for "Hidden Ohio Map."

If you have any updates or changes, please feel free to email me at [celticmaps@gmail.com](mailto:celticmaps@gmail.com).



The Athens Pentagram, as seen in the "Hidden Ohio Map and Guide."

## Investigations and Consultations: Continued Scheduling for 2009

The Ghosts of Ohio is continuing to schedule investigations for 2009. If you or someone you know is experiencing something unexplained in a home or place of business, contact us at [info@ghostsofohio.org](mailto:info@ghostsofohio.org) or visit our website to fill out an investigation

request. All investigations are offered free of charge, and confidentiality and discretion are assured.

Not sure if you want or need an investigation? The Ghosts of Ohio now offers consultations. Let us sit down with you to discuss your current

situation and what help we may be able to offer.

For more information, please visit <http://ghostsofohio.org/services/investigations.html>.



# Dressing Up For Halloween

Ever wonder what a paranormal researcher dresses up as for Halloween? Well, wonder no longer! We asked members of The Ghosts of Ohio what their favorite costume was...and you just might be surprised at some of the answers we got!



James

One year, I hosted a Halloween party and dressed up as Delbert Grady, the former caretaker in *The Shining*. Despite continually walking up to people and saying, "You have always been the caretaker here, sir," nobody knew who I was supposed to be.



Neil

Last year, I dressed up as Nosferatu. I used the '79 Werner Herzog remake, *Nosferatu the Vampyre*, as my model. I was quite horrifying and hideous!



Janine

One year, I made myself a *Shining Example*—I poured glitter all over myself!



Eric

My favorite was when I went as a piece of gum stuck underneath a shoe. I went to the Salvation Army and bought pink clothes and one shoe. I tied the shoe to the top of my head.



Wendy

My best costume was a haunted school bus, when I was 12. We painted a refrigerator box like a bus, adding another box for the nose, and then my friend and I wore sheets and put our arms out the window to carry the bus to each house. Our driver was my friend's seven-year-old sister, who was a witch.



Tina

One year, my husband and I dressed up as Bonnie & Clyde.



Kathy

My favorite costume was when I dressed up as ET—yeah, that rocked!



Samantha

I think one of my favorite costumes was "Vampire Victim." I wore my work uniform and had a couple of bloody band aids on my neck. When the sun went down, I put in vampire fangs that my orthodontist made me.

## Darrin's Tools of the Trade: Harry Price—The Original Ghosthunter

*Continued from Page 4*

He used a small amount of mercury in a bowl to detect seismic movements that could make things move. Today, we don't have to worry about using a heavy metal to do this; we use electronic equipment to do the same thing. He had a two-way telephone system that could be used between rooms so he could stay in contact with associates in another room during and investigation. Today,

we of course have walkie-talkies that we use. The last thing that he kept with him was a first aid kit just in case someone got hurt, the same as today.

Just about everything he had in his toolkit is still used today, even after almost 80 years. Sometimes it is a newer high-tech version of what he had but there are other items that are exactly same. I guess that's what truly makes

someone a pioneer—when your ideas still are being used and influencing people so long after you are gone.

For more information on Harry Price, including his work with the famous Borley Rectory haunting, please visit [www.borleyrectorycompanion.co.uk](http://www.borleyrectorycompanion.co.uk).



## The Ghosts of Ohio: An Insiders' Perspective By Our Newest Members



Wendy

When The Ghosts of Ohio recruit new members, it's a lengthy process. First, we have our form online that needs to be filled out. That form is then scrutinized by Jim Willis and if he feels he has a viable candidate, he passes the form on to the team leader of the appropriate area; Columbus, Cleveland, or Cincinnati. That team leader and fellow members meet with the proposed investigator for a face-to-face interview. If that person is seen as a good fit for The Ghosts of Ohio, Jim will extend the invitation to join, which involves signing our by-laws and posing for a photo ID tag that is worn for all client interactions.

The process is involved, but it has certainly rewarded us with quality investigators with unique personalities who like and respect each other and work well in a team environment. And trust me, that is important when you are sitting in a dark room for hours on end, waiting for Casper to make an appearance!

Since most people are curious as to why a person would want to be a paranormal investigator, I sat down with our two newest members to pick their brains. Sean has joined the Columbus team and has never worked with a paranormal group before, while Amy, who is a member of the Cleveland team, has. What brought them to The Ghosts of Ohio? Both of them grew up in homes that had paranormal activity.

Sean said, "My parents were interested in watching all of the haunted location programs that always come on TV around Halloween, so living with activity and watching those shows, I had a very high interest in the paranormal. My friend and a group of his friends would go out late at night to supposedly haunted locations, but I could never join them because I had to get up early to go to work. As a service repair man, I do a lot of driving, so I would take note of any haunted locations that were on my route, and give them a quick look over

as I passed by. But I never had time to stop and actually investigate. I didn't know there were legitimate groups out there that did full-scale investigations until my wife saw a brochure for one of Jim's Ghosts of Ohio presentations at our library. I went to two of his talks and was very impressed with the professionalism. Compared to another presentation I saw, The Ghosts of Ohio were in a league of their own. Looking at groups on the Internet, I found that most were too new and inexperienced, or were claiming friendships with famous people or groups, wanting to 'hunt demons' and get their own TV show. The Ghosts of Ohio in comparison were serious about what they were doing, and didn't want all that glamorization. So after a couple years, I found I had the time to put into actually joining a group, and sent in my application for The Ghosts of Ohio. I'm really excited to be a part of the group now!"

Amy came to us from another group. Why make the switch to The Ghosts of Ohio? "The previous group I was with really lacked structure. The leader didn't do much to provide us with good investigations. Their focus was mainly outdoor locations, which are fun to a point. When that is all you do, it gets old. I wanted the opportunity to investigate well-known locations as well as private homes. Jim works very hard to provide us with a good variety. He also strives to have a respectable group with no gimmicks. He has created a group that is very well-respected, and that's because our work speaks for itself. One other thing that stood out to me was the fact that no evidence results are shared on the website for all to see. Many groups do this. Although they post them as anonymous locations for the most part, I find this is still disrespectful to homeowners. Their details should remain strictly confidential. This is The Ghosts of Ohio policy, and Jim should be applauded for taking this stance. The professionalism of this group always



Sean



Amy

makes me proud to be a member. And the vast variety of equipment that The Ghosts of Ohio has is extremely impressive."

Both Amy and Sean have attended investigations since joining. Amy has been involved in a private investigation, along with several of our Spend the Night programs, and Sean's first actual meeting with his fellow Ghosts of Ohio members was at our Loveland Castle Spend the Night event.

"It was really easy to just jump right into the investigation," Sean told me before our October group meeting. "It was a completely new experience for me, and it's a little scary to just come into a group of people you don't know, and have no idea what you are doing. But everyone was very helpful leading me through that first investigation, showing me the equipment and techniques. I really enjoyed the evening, and can't wait for more investigations!"

"My favorite thing has always been EVP work," Amy told me. "There is no bigger rush in the world for me than to listen to my recordings and actually hear an answer to a question. That never gets old for me." So does any aspect of investigating annoy you? "So far, nothing," says Amy. "However I have not had the job of analyzing video. I hear that staring at hours of video from static cameras is pretty difficult."

Welcome aboard, fellow Ghosts!!



## Remembering Houdini: Exposing Spiritualism and Seeking Truth

*Continued from Page 1*

To the general public, these mediums seemed to possess real supernatural abilities. The unfortunate truth, however, was that the vast majority of them were nothing more than ordinary individuals skilled in the arts of magic and deceit. Harry Houdini, a master of such skills and more, knew this and firmly believed that what the mediums were doing was wholly immoral. Such trickery should be reserved only for entertainment and not for taking advantage of people when they're at their most vulnerable. His own personal experience as the victim of such fraud was what fueled his crusade against these "mediums."

In the early 1920s, the medium who took advantage of him was the wife of friend and Spiritualist Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Knowing how much Harry still grieved for his mother (and seeking to convert him to Spiritualism), Lady Doyle offered her services to him free of charge. A self-proclaimed medium, she claimed to be able to reach Harry's mother's spirit through automatic writing. Skeptical but curious, Houdini accepted. Unfortunately, Lady Doyle's abilities proved to be nonexistent. Houdini knew this the moment she began to "channel" his mother by drawing a cross at the top of the page. Since his family was Jewish, the cross was completely wrong. Lady Doyle then proceeded to write sentences, quickly filling the page. However, no familiar subjects were touched upon, and all of the words were in English, a language that was completely foreign to his Hungarian mother. Needless to say, Houdini was outraged. It was from that moment on that he dedicated much of himself to exposing fraudulent mediums and educating people about their tricks.

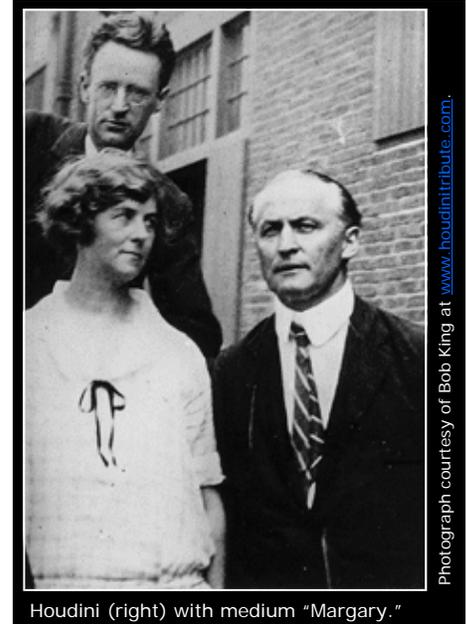
By 1923, Houdini was well known for exposing "spirit" phenomena. Not only did he write articles, hold lectures, and perform demonstrations, but he also attended séances undercover as "Mr. White" in order to discover the mediums' tricks and have them arrested. It was because of his reputation that Houdini was approached by Scientific American in 1924 to participate on a five-member committee that would

award \$2,500 to anyone who could prove that spirit manifestations were real. In Harry's own words, "It takes a flimflammer to catch a flimflammer." He accepted the position.

Houdini's expertise proved to be a valuable asset to the committee. Every "medium" tested was proven to be a fraud, including a woman who had fooled the other committee members so well that she almost got away with the money. Her name was Mina Crandon, otherwise known as "Margery." When Margery held her séances, bells rang, lights flickered, and objects seemed to fly across the room of their own accord. She was so skilled that none of the other committee members were able to detect her trickery, and they believed that she was the real thing. However, Houdini knew better. When Margery was out of the room, he was able to duplicate everything she had done in her séances. He also devised another kind of test for her. He placed her inside a box of his own design so that she couldn't touch anything in the room, including her hidden strings and electric devices. Because of this, she was unable, of course, to conjure any "spirits." Margery was a fake, just like all the others.

In the following years, Houdini continued his crusade, and was quoted as saying that he had "never seen or heard anything that could convince [him] that there is a possibility of communication with the loved ones who have gone beyond." Having said that, however, he had made a private pact with his wife Bess that, if he should die and there was a way for him to return to her, then he would communicate with her through a secret code that only she would know. Little did he know that this opportunity would come sooner than later.

Harry Houdini died on Halloween in 1926 from acute appendicitis, or peritonitis. After giving a lecture 10 days prior, a young man approached him backstage and asked him if it was true that he could take a hit to the stomach and not get hurt. Houdini, who was always in top physical shape, said that it was true. The young man then asked if



Houdini (right) with medium "Margery."

he could see it for himself. Unfortunately, Houdini was not given a moment to prepare and the young man punched him in the stomach several times, causing damage to his appendix. Houdini didn't know the extent of the damage, didn't seek medical treatment, and died at the age of 52. It was a shock to the entire world, including his devoted wife Bess. For 10 years after his death, Bess held a séance every year on Halloween, hoping to hear from her beloved husband. Tragically, Harry never contacted her, and she stopped trying.

Despite the fact that no one has ever been able to communicate with the spirit of Harry Houdini, his legacy lives on today, even 83 years after his death. He will always be an influence on the world of magic, he'll always be the first person to fly an airplane successfully in Australia, and we still watch his movies and read his books, rare as they may be.

This Halloween, however, every paranormal investigator should also take a moment to give credit to the man whose bold skepticism wouldn't allow him to take "it's gotta be paranormal!" for an answer. Imagine how immoral and corrupt the field—and the world—would be if he had.

# Ghosts on the Go: The Ghosts of Ohio Hit the Road



Mothman Festival presentations occurred at the State Theater in downtown Point Pleasant. James A. Willis spoke on both days of the event, providing a unique look at the spooky side of Abraham Lincoln on Saturday, followed by a ghostly themed overview on Sunday.



Pictures from outside the Delaware Ghostwalk on October 17<sup>th</sup>. Attendees received a presentation from the Ghosts of Ohio before taking a tour of the historic downtown area, and were treated to a spooky movie at the conclusion of the evening.

## Interact with The Ghosts

Need a spooky friend? If you have a MySpace account, swing by and add The Ghosts of Ohio to your friends list: [www.myspace.com/ghostsofohio](http://www.myspace.com/ghostsofohio).

And for those of you who use Facebook and/or Twitter, you can now find The Ghosts of Ohio on those sites, too:

### Facebook

<http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#/pages/Columbus-OH/The-Ghosts-of-Ohio/60704381381?ref=mf>

### Twitter

<http://twitter.com/ghostsofohio>

Whichever online community you prefer to use, you can always find us!



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