



THE GHOSTS OF OHIO NEWSLETTER

www.ghostsofohio.org

Volume 11 Issue 1

FROM THE SPOOKY DESK OF JAMES WILLIS:

Gimme That Candy!



A few weeks ago, Ohio news stations were reporting that a Bexley elementary school was considering cancelling their annual Halloween celebration and replacing it with a square dance. One of the

reasons given was that some parents were concerned that Halloween might be “evil.” The Principal later decided to move forward with the festivities, but the whole thing struck me as odd. For me, Halloween was always about one thing—the candy.

Growing up in New York, Trick or Treat always fell on Halloween and went for as long as your parents allowed you to be out (none of this two-hour window stuff). If Halloween fell on a Saturday, I would be out for upwards of six hours (pausing only for a quick lunch before

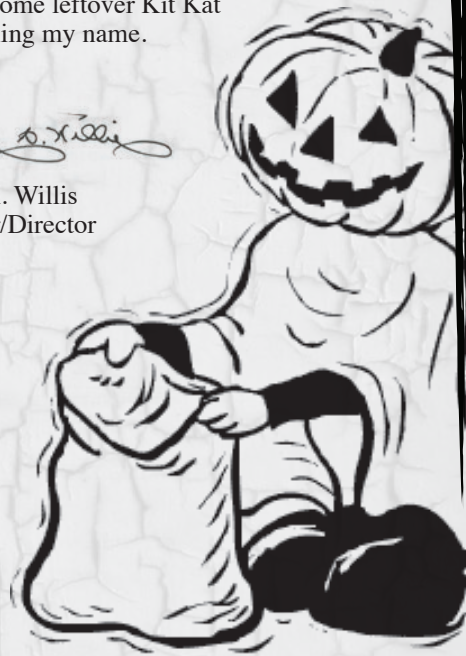
heading back out). And through it all, I never once thought “you know what would make this Halloween complete? A satanic ritual.” I never felt an overwhelming need to worship the devil. No, Halloween was always about the candy.

And you know, that got me thinking. As I was traveling across Ohio this October, for presentations and book signings, I would inevitably get questions about “demonic” spirits and even if I’d ever had “demons” attack me. Short answer, no. Believe it or not, in all my 28+ years of actively chasing after ghosts, I’ve yet to encounter anything I would consider “demonic.” Of course, that seems to be all there are on these ghost reality shows. But maybe that’s because for those shows, their aim is to frighten their audience. With me, my research is and has always been about one thing and one thing alone: ghosts. Sure, they’re not as exciting as confronting a demon in a real-world version of Mortal Combat, but I’ll take it just the same.

Now if you’ll excuse me, there’s some leftover Kit Kat bars calling my name.

Cheers,

James A. Willis
Founder/Director



GHOST WHISPERER PAYS A VISIT TO THE MIDDLEFIELD LIBRARY



Samantha

I didn't know what to expect when I arrived at the Middlefield Public Library on Wednesday, October 9th. I had heard the name Mary Ann Winkowski before, and I'd certainly heard of the TV show Ghost Whisperer. But until recently, I had never put the two together, probably because I didn't care to watch the show in the first place. Mary Ann is the real-life inspiration for Ghost Whisperer, and while my opinion of the show can't be swayed (sorry, fans!), I found Mary Ann Winkowski to be both informative and highly entertaining! Mary Ann lives in



Mary Ann Winkowski
<http://www.maryannwinkowski.com>

Northeast Ohio and, thanks to television, is known worldwide for her ability to "see spirits that chose not to go into the white light when they died."

Due to the fact that she only had an hour for her presentation, she spent the first half giving us a rapid-fire rundown of what happens when we die. She says that dead people always attend their funerals because they like to see who attends, who doesn't, etc. They usually depart once the service is over. The white light remains open for them for up to 48 hours after they've passed, so if they choose to stay (and we do have that choice), then they are stuck here on Earth unless they can find a funeral

service after which they can cross over using someone else's light.

One of the reasons she says people choose to stick around is that they are attached to their belongings, like furniture, classic cars, and jewelry. "Antique shops are a hoot!" Mary Ann said.

These shops can be so crowded with spirits that Mary Ann can find herself overwhelmed. She warns that you shouldn't buy cars at an estate sale, and "Don't buy diamonds at an estate sale!" because materialistic spirits can be a problem. If you buy anything used, her advice is to sprinkle a little bit of sea salt on it to knock the spirits off so that they don't follow you home.

As for spirits that are already in homes and other locations, Mary Ann says that Earthbound spirits need human energy to keep going. Spirits are very seldom found in cemeteries because there aren't any living people there from whom to draw energy. Therefore, spirits exist primarily where living people are. And the more energy they have, the more problems they can cause. Fighting and fear in the home are two major sources of energy that spirits can use. Also, spirits can draw on your energy when you acknowledge them and try to communicate with them. If you believe that you have spirits in your house, Mary Ann says that you're better off ignoring them. If you feel the need to get rid of them, smudge sticks are a good start. They are what Native Americans use to get rid of negative energy. They disgust spirits, and if you completely smudge your home at least every two weeks, they will usually leave on their own without any trouble. If that doesn't work for you, then it may be necessary to call upon the services of an ordained priest to cleanse and/or bless the property.

So far, this is a lot of information, right? This is about the time when Mary Ann opened the floor to questions from the



Middlefield Library
<http://geaugalibrary.net/newsite/locations/middlefield-library>

audience, and it was like throwing open the floodgates. One of the most popular questions was what spirits looked like. Mary Ann said that everyone perceives spirits differently. Some people see black shadows, which doesn't mean that they're seeing something evil. "Everybody has the ability to do something," and it's up to you to listen to it or ignore it. Mary Ann sees spirits as regular people except that she can see through them. Most of them appear wearing their burial clothing, and they usually look younger and healthier than they were when they died. Interestingly, she says that she has "never seen a child ghost under the age of three." She says this is because deceased family members are always waiting to take those children into the light because children that young aren't able to choose whether to go or stay. She also says that pets are offered the white light, but if they're still around when their human dies, the human can take their pets with them when they cross.

Another popular question was about communicating with spirits. Mary Ann says that she doesn't have to speak out loud to communicate with spirits, and it seems that in her mind she can communicate with them in any language. Since not everyone has developed this ability, however, she was quick to emphasize her opinion of another form of communication. "Do NOT mess with Ouija boards!" she said. You never know whom you're contacting; and if a person's a liar when he's alive, then he's still a liar when he's dead.

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GHOST WHISPERER PAYS A VISIT TO THE MIDDLEFIELD LIBRARY (CONT.)

She says that spirits have various ways they can communicate with us. "If you dream of someone who has died, it means that they're where they're supposed to be. They're not stuck." If you find coins on the ground, the ones that are heads-up are for you and are a clue about the person trying to contact you. (If the coin is face-down, turn it face-up and leave it for someone else.) If you take a picture and there's an orb with a design in the middle (like a profile or likeness of a person), then it's a message from someone who's crossed over.

What about children and animals? Can they see and hear spirits? Mary Ann says, "Not all dogs are as tuned in" to ghosts in the house as we'd like to think. They're a lot like humans—some have a stronger ability than others. If the animal is looking up, it's usually looking at a spirit who has crossed over and is visiting. If the animal is

looking straight ahead, then it's usually focused on something else. As for children, Mary Ann says, "Listen to your children." Sure, children can be sensitive to spirits, but if they're afraid of something, you might have an issue you'll need to deal with.

Other fun responses Mary Ann offered were that condos and apartments can contain spirits that roam from apartment to apartment, that working in a nursing home is one of the most popular jobs for bringing spirits home with you, that spirits have the most energy during the full and new moons, that ghosts can't put curses on you—only live people can, and that while husbands will often wait for wives to die before crossing over, the wives seldom wait for their husbands.

All in all, I found Mary Ann to be funny, easygoing, and knowledgeable about her subject. I believe that she has been a great

help to the people who have requested her services; and the information she provided (although I'm always skeptical) was thought provoking. I'm especially finding myself mulling over the idea that communicating with spirits is giving them energy—energy that could lead to an increase in activity, which isn't usually the desired outcome of an investigation. Have the paranormal community's attempts at spirit communication been doing more harm than good? By trying to solve problems, have we been inadvertently adding to them? This is certainly a topic worthy of further consideration; and it goes to show that even if you're not sure whether to believe Mary Ann or not, you can still come away with the ever-present question, "I wonder..."

PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

I Didn't Mean It

Marie A., Dublin, OH

I'm shaking as I write this. It isn't something that I share with many people. But I was recently at a presentation by your director James Willis and he said something that struck a chord with me. He said that if we were listening to him and believed in ghosts that we were all part of one big, weird family. I liked that. So I am sharing my story with my new ghost family.

I'm in my 50s and ever since I can remember, I never had a great relationship with my father. He left my mom and me when I was only five. He didn't say goodbye or anything. Just one day, he wasn't there. Then, almost 20 years later, he shows up on my front doorstep asking me for forgiveness. Said he was young and didn't know what he was doing but that he never stopped thinking about me. He said he loved me and wanted to try and rebuild a relationship with me. I told him to just go away. He just nodded and walked away.

From time to time, my father would send me cards in the mail. He would just sign them "Love Dad." I could tell it was his attempt to get some sort of response from me, but I wasn't interested in that at all. Maybe that's not entirely true, though, because I kept some of the cards. I really don't know why I did that, other than the fact

that maybe I really did want my father back in my life.

About two years ago, I got word that my father had died. No nice way of putting this except to say that he had been drinking and was out walking on a busy road in the middle of the night when he was hit and killed by a truck. All that day, I kept sitting there wondering if my dad had been walking over to see me. Maybe to try once again to get my forgiveness. So it was a really rough day for me and I decided the best thing to do would be to have a couple of stiff drinks and go to bed, which is what I did.

I don't remember exactly what time it was, but I had clearly been asleep for a couple of hours when I heard this weird tapping noise on my nightstand. I probably should have explained that I live alone with the exception of my very overweight cat, Sir Thomas. Sir Thomas loves his food and will often do things on purpose to wake me up when he's hungry. Some of his favorite things to do are to knock things off my nightstand or to smack the lamp cord with his paws. It's very annoying.

So when I first heard the tapping, I thought it was Sir Thomas being annoying. I just kept my eyes

closed and tried to ignore him. But it kept going on and on and on until I got so mad that even without lifting my head up or opening my eyes I yelled out "Will you stop!! Go away!!" As soon as I did that, the noise stopped. But as I was laying there, something suddenly hit me and I realized that the sound I was hearing didn't sound like one of Sir Thomas' typical noises. With that, I sat up in bed and looked around. Even in the darkness, I could make out Sir Thomas' form laying at the bottom of my bed, sleeping soundly.

Turning on the light, I saw something on my nightstand that was not there when I went to bed. It was an old birthday card, out of its envelope and standing up in the corner of the nightstand. I actually recognized the card. When I opened it, down at the bottom of it just said, "Happy birthday. I miss you. Love, Dad." That was when I realized that my dad's ghost had just come and paid me a visit. Perhaps he just wanted to try one last time to be a part of my life and I told him to go away, even though I didn't mean to because I didn't realize it was him. I haven't heard from him since.

Please come back dad. I'm sorry and I didn't mean to send you away.



LEGEND TRIPPING AT ELIZABETH'S GRAVE



James

Far and away, when young people want to go legend tripping in central Ohio, one of their most popular destinations is Mount Union-Pleasant Valley Cemetery, just outside

Chillicothe. For this cemetery is home to several dark tales, all centering around a young woman who allegedly met an untimely death here and whose ghost still restlessly roams the grounds, often picking up and moving the tombstones from one side of the cemetery to the other.

Even in broad daylight, the road up to the cemetery is bound to give you a few frights. That's because as you travel down it, it will suddenly turn from concrete to gravel, complete with large, gaping potholes. As you drive down the road, with thick woods along both sides, you can see how, in the middle of the night, the trip would be incredibly unnerving. And when the cemetery finally comes into view when you reach a clearing on your left, you can almost feel the negative energy lurking within.

There are several versions as to why this cemetery is reportedly haunted, all involving a young woman named Elizabeth (although it is sometimes spelled Elisabeth) dying inside the cemetery grounds. In the earliest known version, which has been traced back at least to the early 1970s, Elizabeth becomes despondent over the loss of her husband and commits suicide by hanging herself from one of the trees at the rear of the cemetery. In another, more modern, version, after her husband passed away, Elizabeth inherited the family farm, which was said to be very large. Angered by the fact that a woman was able to own such a large piece of property, several local farmers dragged Elizabeth out of her house, said to have been close to Mount Union-Pleasant Valley Cemetery, and brought her to the rear of the cemetery. There, the angry locals beheaded Elizabeth, leaving her headless body lying in the woods behind the cemetery.

Ever since Elizabeth's suicide (or murder) took place, people have reported seeing all sorts of weird things happening out at the cemetery. Shadowy figures moving in the woods, strange noises, ghostly cries, and even screams have all been reported here. But the most common denominator that ties all the different versions of the legend together is the part where it is said that after she died, Elizabeth was buried at the front of the cemetery. Be that as it may, the popular legend is that, for reasons never fully explained, Elizabeth's gravestone will move from the front of the cemetery, where she is buried, all the way to the back, where she committed suicide/was murdered. And that no matter how many times groundskeepers keep moving the stone back to its rightful place, it's only a matter of time before it is once again found at the back of the cemetery.

So are the stories true? Well, that really depends on who you ask. Resident skeptics will tell you that it's next to impossible for ghosts to pick up something as large and bulky as a tombstone and move it several hundred feet. And yet, I've interviewed people over the years that will swear that they have personally seen the stone move from the front of the cemetery all the way to the back.

Now, before we get into the "why" of this story"—namely, why a ghost would choose to behave the way it's said to and drag poor old Elizabeth's tombstone around the cemetery grounds—let's focus on the "how." Specifically, how a ghost could manage to move Elizabeth's stone. To be honest, I don't have any sort of scientific study regarding how much weight a ghost can lift (but I'll let you know if I find such a thing), but of all the things I've

seen over the years that have appeared to have been touched/pushed/generally moved by a ghost, the heaviest thing I've encountered is a water glass, filled about halfway up. In other words, a ghost is really going to have to exert a lot of energy to be able to try and lift an entire tombstone. And we are talking "lift" here as there have never been any reports of drag marks being



Mount Union-Pleasant Valley Cemetery

discovered in the cemetery. So if a ghost is really moving the tombstone, it's literally lifting it in the air and transporting it several hundred feet. A wee bit far-fetched, wouldn't you say?

OK, so why would Elizabeth's ghost want to move her tombstone? Those who believe the story say that it's because her ghost wants people to remember that although Elizabeth might be buried at the front of the cemetery, the spot where she died is at the back. So she keeps carrying her tombstone to the rear of the cemetery in order to mark the spot where she met her demise.

So who was Elizabeth? Good question. And one that no one seems to have an answer to. True, there are several "Elizabeth's" (and one Elisabeth) buried in Mount Union-Pleasant Valley Cemetery. There's even one tombstone marked "Elizabeth" lying near the woods at the back of the cemetery. However, none of these women met their untimely demise via the manner(s) described in the legends. Indeed, there are no historical records that mention any type of murder or suicide taking place in the cemetery.

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LEGEND TRIPPING AT ELIZABETH'S GRAVE (CONT.)

After all is said and done and one has reviewed all that is known about Mount Union-Pleasant Valley Cemetery, one would be hard pressed to still believe that there really is a ghost wandering the cemetery. And yet, the stories survive. Why? Well, a quick trip to the back of the cemetery will provide all the answers you'll need. For in the far corner of the cemetery is a pile of tombstones,

unceremoniously dumped and/or thrown there. Wandering back through the cemetery, the number of tombstones that have either been toppled or else tagged with spray paint outnumber the stones that are unscathed.

The answer is simple: the ghost stories remain because people keep coming out to the cemetery to scare each other. That in

and of itself wouldn't be so bad. It's when those thrill seekers decide to "entertain" themselves by vandalizing the cemetery that I take issue. I've never understood why some people feel the need to come to peaceful places like cemeteries and destroy things. And I guess I never will.



THEY HAVE BEGUN!

The Ghosts of Ohio Experiments



Samantha

We've talked about it, and now we've taken action! During our last monthly meeting, members of The Ghosts of Ohio participated in several experiments meant to test the capabilities of our

minds by using our collective brainpower to raise the temperature, turn on lights, and manipulate a candle's flame.

Experiment #1 was all about temperature. We set up our Vernier system with two temperature probes—one to be the control, and one to be our variable (the one we would try to manipulate with our minds). The goal was for everyone to focus on raising the temperature of the variable. Our first attempt lasted five minutes and was done without any prior centering exercise or meditation. Our second attempt also lasted five minutes, but was done immediately following a 15-minute meditation session. Unfortunately, neither attempt garnered any noticeable results. We are theorizing that we need to have consistency with our visualizations, and that the experiment may have to be repeated many times before we are comfortable enough with the process to get results.

Experiment #2 was about making the lights light up on our KII meter. Again, the time period was five minutes. Unfortunately, we saw no results.

Experiment #3 involved manipulating a candle's flame. We attempted to angle it toward a couple of different people in the group, and the flame seemed to waiver more than once. We also attempted to make the flame bigger and smaller. Again, the flame seemed to change slightly. Finally, we tried to snuff the flame out altogether, but we were not successful. While there seemed to be a slight effect on the flame during these experiments, we decided that the results were not conclusive since we couldn't be absolutely sure that there was no air movement in the room at the time of our experiments. We're hoping to prevent this problem in the future.

These experiments were just the tip of the iceberg for us. We're not only planning to try these again, but we have a lot of ideas for other experiments. Some examples include the use of Zener cards, making a pendulum move, having a box of objects and determining to whom each belongs, locating where someone is standing in the room while blindfolded, projecting an image into the mind of someone else, etc.

If you have an experiment idea you'd like us to try, or if you have any tips you'd like to share, please contact us!

GOT A SCARY STORY TO TELL?

Have you had a ghostly encounter in Ohio? Want to see it featured in a future issue of The Ghosts of Ohio Newsletter? Then here's all you have to do:

Just write down your story and send it to info@ghostsofohio.org with the subject line "Newsletter Ghost Story." Be sure to also include your name as you'd like it to appear with the story. We'll take it from there and send you out an email letting you know which issue it is going to appear in. That way, you can get all your friends to sign up for the newsletter so they can see how famous you are!



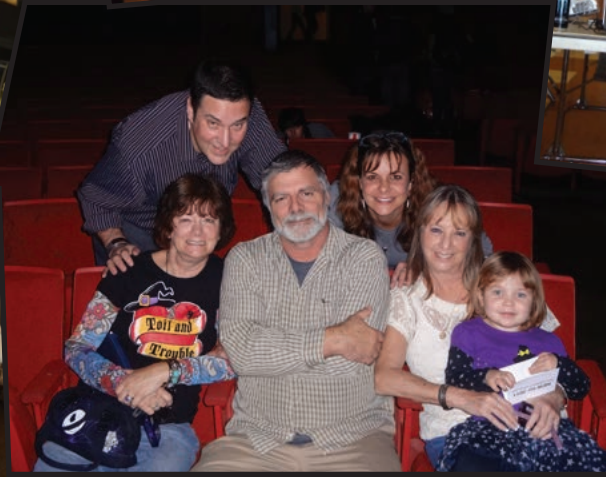
A BIG GHOSTLY THANK YOU FROM THE GHOSTS!

This past month, James A. Willis and The Ghosts of Ohio were crisscrossing the state of Ohio, spreading thrills and chills everywhere we went. This year was an especially successful one, with an estimated 1,500 people coming out to see us.

If there's one thing that can top seeing so many familiar faces in the crowd, it's

looking out and seeing so many new faces staring back at you. Young and old, male and female, skeptics and believers, you all turned out expecting nothing more than to hear some great ghost stories. And if the smiles on your faces were any indication, I'd say you went home with that and a whole lot more!

So whether you're an old friend or a new one, everyone here at The Ghosts of Ohio would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for coming out and sharing part of your Halloween season with us. And here's hoping you'll treasure the memories as much as we will.



GOT GHOSTS?

REQUEST FOR MORE INFORMATION

From time to time, The Ghosts of Ohio learns about a haunted location that, try as we might, we just can't seem to dig up any additional information on. That's when we turn to one of the largest group of Ohio ghost experts out there; our newsletter readers! That's right, we're asking you to let us know if you have any information (or better yet, have had a personal experience) at any of the following locations. If you have, shoot us an email at info@ghostsofohio.org. And who knows? You just might get the chance to investigate the location along with The Ghosts of Ohio!

Black Mary Ann (Cleveland/Cuyahoga county)

Buffington Island (Portland/Meigs county)

Buckeye Belle (Beverly/Washington county)

COMING IN THE DECEMBER NEWSLETTER

The Ghosts' Ongoing Experiments

The Ghosts of Christmas Past

A Holiday Present From Beyond The Grave

Investigations & Consultations

The Ghosts of Ohio has already begun scheduling investigations for 2013. If you or someone you know is experiencing something unexplained in a home or place of business, contact us at 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 also 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>.

Interact with The Ghosts of Ohio

In addition to our website, here are a couple of places where you can find The Ghosts of Ohio lurking online:



MYSPACE

www.myspace.com/ghostsofohio



FACEBOOK

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



TWITTER

<http://twitter.com/ghostsofohio>

Administration

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