



The ghosts of Ohio[®] Newsletter

www.ghostsofohio.org

Volume 21 Issue 1

THE GHOSTS CAN NOW LEGALLY HAVE OUR TWO-BOTTLE CONVERSATIONS



James

Two-bottle conversations? When it comes to the paranormal, you've all had them, even if you don't refer to them the way that I do. They're those deep, reflective conversations that, if you're of legal drinking age, require at least 2 bottles of your favorite adult beverage to try and answer. Questions like "why

aren't there more naked ghosts?", "how do portals really work?", and "what really happens when we die?".

Over the years at The Ghosts Of Ohio, we've asked ourselves (and our readers), a lot of probing questions that would require at least 2 bottles. And now, with this very newsletter you're reading, we can do it legally as, The Ghosts Of Ohio Newsletter officially turns 21; legal drinking age!

It bears repeating that the very first issue of The Ghosts Of Ohio Newsletter was nothing more than 3 paragraphs that was sent out in the body of an email to a whopping 8 people, all of whom were members of The Ghosts Of Ohio. Today, the newsletter is a multi-page full-color PDF that is sent out to over 4,500 active subscribers. For free.

21 years ago, we had no way of knowing how much our newsletter would grow or how many two-bottle conversations we'd have with you, our readers. Personally, I initially called it a newsletter because it sounded better than "here's an email with stuff The Ghosts Of Ohio are working on right now and we'll talk about it at the next meeting." It was nothing more than an internal communication. But as I started making personal appearances and giving paranormal talks, people would come up to me and ask "do you guys have like a newsletter or something so I can follow what you're up to?". And with that, I made the jump to making the newsletter available to the general public.

After the first few years, I started dropping the occasional request for help into the newsletter: "Anyone ever been to this particular Crybaby Bridge?", "Any truth to this cemetery being haunted?", etc. And you guys never let us down; you always responded!

So thank you to all of you for being active subscribers to The Ghosts Of Ohio Newsletter. And, if you're of legal drinking age like our newsletter is, please join us in raising a glass to toast all the Two-Bottle Conversations that are yet to come.

Cheers,

James A. Willis
Founder/Director



CHEERS TO 21 YEARS!

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

THE HAUNTED WOODS



Mark D.
Beavercreek, Ohio

When I was younger, I lived not too far away from woods that people said were haunted. There were a bunch of stories going around. I was always told that a witch used to have a house back there that burned down a long time ago, but her ghost haunted the area. It sort of became the place to go, especially around Halloween. I admit I had been out there a whole bunch of times, but never really experienced anything. It was more like the thing to do when you and your friends got bored—go out into the woods and try to scare each other.

One October, I was just hanging out with a couple of my friends, and we got on the subject of the haunted woods and the witch. We all had a good laugh over the fact that each of us had been

going out there for years and never saw anything, not even the remains of where the witch's house was supposed to be. That's when we decided to go and see if we could finally locate the remains of the house.

I guess we got to the entrance to the woods about 9:30 pm. The woods aren't really part of a park or anything, so there's no parking lot or anything like that. Basically, you'd park your car behind a local store and then walk along the road a short distance until you came to a small path leading up into the woods. The path really looked like it was the result of water rushing down the hill towards the road, but I also believe it officially became known as a path from all the people like us who went into the woods that way!

(continued on page 3.)

THE HAUNTED WOODS CONTINUED

Once you got into the woods and climbed the hill, you were on your own as the path disappeared. If I were to take a guess, I'd say the woods were about 20 acres in size. So we were all just walking around as a group, trying to make out anything in the dark because of course we'd forgotten to bring flashlights and were having to rely on our cell phones to try and see.

I don't know which of us was the first to see the figures because we all sort of went "shhhhhh" at the same time and pointed in the same direction. Over in what appeared to be a small clearing, there were two figures that looked like they were digging for something. One of the figures was bent over and gave us the impression that it had a shovel and was digging in the ground while the other sort of stood nearby, watching. Keep in mind that we weren't creeped out at that moment since we thought it was just some people screwing around with us. That's why we came up with a plan to scare these two since there was 5 of us and only 2 of them. We kind of got together and decided to break into 2 groups. 3 in my group would stay where they were and I'd go with my friend, Josh, and circle around behind the people that were digging. Then we'd make some scary noises or something like that to kind of freak them out. That was the plan, really.

So Josh and I split off from the group and make our way over to the other side of the 2 people. I kept my eye on them just to make sure they didn't hear us creeping around. They didn't. The one just kept digging and the other one just kept standing there. I couldn't see much of them and, thinking back, I don't seem to recall ever hearing digging sounds. Weird.

Josh and I get to the other side and just sort of squat down and listen. We did have a brief discussion about how we couldn't make out anything specific about the 2 figures. Couldn't even tell if they were male or female. They were just shadows but definitely looked like people. As we were chatting about whether or not we were supposed to go first and make spooky noises or

wait for the other group, Josh and I heard this loud scream from the other group. Josh and I were shocked at how loud it was and I remember looking over to where the scream came from, waiting to hear my friends laughing. But I didn't hear anything. But guess what? When I looked back to where the 2 figures were, they were gone! I asked Josh "where did they go?" and he said he didn't know; they he just looked away for a second and when he turned back, they were gone.

Of course, we were now curious as to what they had been digging for, so Josh and I walked up into the clearing, half expecting to see or at least hear the 2 figures, but we didn't hear or see anything. When we got to the clearing, there was no sign that anyone had been there at all, let alone digging. The ground wasn't disturbed and there were sticks and leaves all over the place. There were absolutely no signs of anyone having been there.

The other group of my friends eventually came into the clearing and they were also curious as to where the 2 figures had gone. One of my friends said "they probably got scared off when you and Josh screamed like that." When I told him we hadn't screamed and that we thought the other group had screamed because it came from where they were hiding, they all disagreed. They said when they heard the scream, it had come from where Josh and I had been hiding.

We hung around for another 15 minutes or so, trying to find any evidence of digging or where those 2 mysterious figures went, but there was nothing. That's when we all decided we'd had enough of those woods and decided to call it a night.

Over the years, my friends and I would still bring up that night in the haunted woods. It's kind of funny because while we all individually considered going back out there to see if we could find exactly where they were digging (or maybe doing a little digging ourselves), none of us were brave enough to set foot in those woods again.

MEXICAN HORROR: LA LLORONA



Wendy

Since the haunting season was upon us, I began thinking about horror movies to watch to get into the spirit of things, if you will. One of the movies that came to mind was *The Curse of La Llorona*, which came out in 2019. Creepy murder story involving children... you have been warned. I had never heard of this spirit and wanted to delve a little deeper

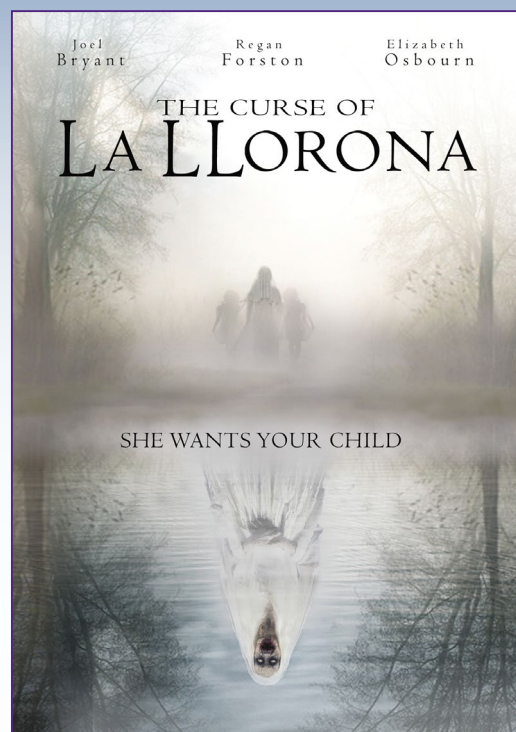
into the myth.

La Llorona, or Crying Woman might seem to some to be similar to a Woman in White or a banshee, because she wears a long white dress and wails.

In the case of La Llorona, the dress is usually wet, and while she is after children, she may also take the unwary male adult. The basis for La Llorona seems to have been born prior to Spanish colonization of Mexico with a spirit called The Hungry Woman, who walks around crying constantly for food. From here, that myth twisted.

Once the Spanish began settling what is now Mexico City, the story morphed into an indigenous woman (which would be Aztec in this case) who had children with one of the Spanish Conquistadors who then abandoned her. In her rage, she drowned her two sons in a river. Seeing what she had done, she drowned herself, and was then doomed to wander the earth, calling for her sons. She is seen by rivers and other bodies of water wearing a long white shroud or dress, and she will be heard crying for her children. According to the legend, when she calls out to children to replace her own dead sons, any children that come to her will then be drowned. An adult male that hears her and comes to her aid may simply disappear.

The story of La Llorona is often used to scare children into not wandering off in the dark, especially near bodies of water, and is popular in the US southwest. There are multiple versions of the story, some that say her dress is dry and she walks around quiet streets, while in others you can see her in any reflective surface...whether it is a puddle or a mirror or window. And if she sees you or your children from her vantage point in the reflecting object, she will lock on to you and follow you until she exacts her revenge. In Guatemala she is a woman who has an affair, gives



birth to a child that she then drowns so her husband won't find out. She was condemned in her afterlife to search for her murdered child in pools of water. In Venezuela she is simply a woman who dies of sorrow after the murder of her children by either her or her family. People there will put a cross over their doors for protection.

Other interpretations of the La Llorona haunting say she will chase you, some say she comes in a wagon to threaten you for bad behavior, some say she simply wanders around at night on lonesome roads, wailing. In some cases, she is seen as a woman walking the empty streets in a white skirt with a white reboso (shawl) over her head, hiding her face. Men should not call out to her to see if she needs help, because if they do, she may turn around and present a skull for her face. The icy breath of the skull will kill the man. No matter what story you follow, she brings death. Her story has spread through Mexican juvenile detention centers where the guards tell her story to keep prisoners in line. One of the stories coming from there says she is a woman in white who killed her 3 daughters. Their bones were imbedded into her back, and as she walks the streets she calls and cries for them, never knowing where they are; a ghostly example of carrying your guilt on your back.

It is quite possible that the European tradition of a Woman in White was brought over to the new world with its conquerors and immigrants. From there it was adopted into the indigenous culture where it morphed into a new ghost story to frighten and enthrall its listeners. It truly is a small world after all.

RESURRECTING HALLOWEEN MOVIES AND SPECIALS



James

Those of you who've been reading this newsletter for any amount of time know that I try to pack as many Halloween specials and scary movies into my October. There are some that are annual favorites—the original *Halloween*, *The Halloween Tree*, *Mr. Boogedy*, *Trick 'r Treat*, *Halloween III: Season of the Witch* (there, I

said it). But every year, I go back through my ginormous stacks of Halloween/horror movies and specials and resurrect a few that might have inadvertently been left out for a few years. Here's the list of the ones that got brought back to life this October at Willis Woods:

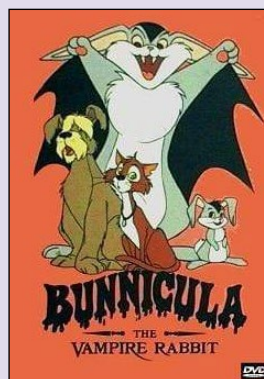
ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN [1948]



After this film's initial release in 1948, the comedy duo of Bud Abbott and Lou Costello would go on to star in several others where they'd "meet" other famous monsters. But *Abbott And Costello Meet Frankenstein* is, IMHO, the best. Plus, in addition to Frankenstein's monster, Dracula (Bela Lugosi) and the Wolf Man (Lon Chaney, Jr.) also make

appearances, as does an uncredited Vincent Price as the Invisible Man. Well, Price's voice makes an appearance as the Invisible Man is, you know, invisible.

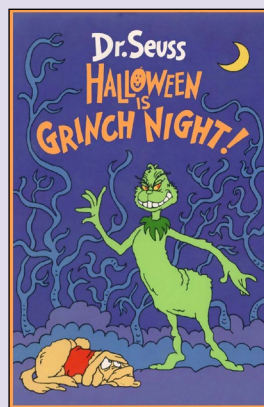
BUNNICULA. THE VAMPIRE RABBIT [1982]



Originally airing as an ABC Television Special, *Bunnicaula* was brought to life by Scooby-Doo, Where Are You! creators Joe Ruby and Ken Spears. So this animated special has everything you'd expect from a Scooby-Doo mystery, right down to the talking dog. The plot also centers around a rabbit found

sleeping in a shoebox that some come to believe is a vampire, sucking the juice out of tomatoes.

HALLOWEEN IS GRINCH NIGHT [1977]



This one freaked me out as a kid. I was already well-versed in all things Grinch... or so I thought...due to the whole stealing Christmas bit. But *Halloween Is Grinch Night* was just so dark and twisted. Essentially, when it gets close to Halloween, a "sour-sweet wind" blows through Whoville, which causes creatures known as Gree-Grumps and Hakken-

Krakks to wake up the Grinch, who loads up his paraphernalia wagon and drive down into Whoville to raise some hell. As soon as the Whos catch a whiff of the sour-sweet wind, the whole town goes into lockdown.

As an adult, it blew my mind when I discovered that while *Halloween Is Grinch Night* was released roughly 10 years after *How The Grinch Stole Christmas*, Halloween was actually intended to be a prequel to the Christmas special. Sort of gives more meaning to the Grinch's last line in *Halloween*: "I'll be coming back someday!"

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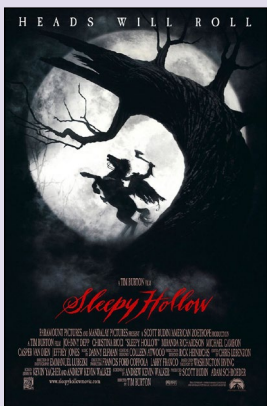
RESURRECTING HALLOWEEN MOVIES AND SPECIALS CONTINUED



THE PAUL LYNDE HALLOWEEN SPECIAL [1976]

I can remember watching this show when it first aired on television and not understanding any of it. But at least KISS sang a couple of tunes, so that was cool. To be honest, time has not been kind to this special and the whole thing comes off and stilted and contrived. Still, it's hard for me to watch it without immediately being whisked away to my childhood and the overwhelming sense of excitement I felt when I read the new issue of TV Guide and saw that KISS was going to be performing on the Halloween special. I still remember my repeatedly circling it in the *TV Guide*, to the point where the pen broke through the page.

SLEEPY HOLLOW [1999]



For many years, this Tim Burton flick was a staple of my Halloween viewing list. Not sure why, especially since as far as I'm concerned, *Sleepy Hollow* nails the atmosphere and overall creepy vibe of Washington Irving's Hudson Highlands, as well as including more than a few bloody nods to the Hammer Films that I would sneak

downstairs to watch as a child after my parents had gone to bed.

WE WANT TO HEAR ABOUT YOUR GHOSTLY EXPERIENCES!

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 e-mail 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!



INVESTIGATION TEASER: THE ABNER GAINES HOUSE

One of the most endearing things about Ghosts Of Ohio member, Frank, is that when he's out and about and he sees a potential opportunity for an overnight private investigation, he doesn't hesitate: He jumps right in and goes for it. That's the main reason why, several months ago, when Frank announced at a Ghosts Of Ohio meeting that would be doing an overnight hunt at the Abner Gaines House, the rest of us had the same question: What's the Abner Gaines House?

Located along Walton, Kentucky's Old Lexington Pike the Abner Gaines House stands as the oldest house in Walton. It was built in 1814 by Boone County Justice (and later sheriff) Abner Gaines and his wife, Elizabeth. The property was also home to a tavern, which was in operation as early as 1795. The house proved prosperous in more ways than one in that Abner Gaines



would become the proprietor of the first stagecoach line that carried mail and passengers between Cincinnati and Lexington. He and his wife, Elizabeth, also raised a total of 13 children at the Gaines House.

Oh yes, and locals today refer to the Gaines House as the Kentucky Horror House due to the numerous documented murders, suicides, and unexplained deaths which took place on the property over the years. Needless to say, the Abner Gaines House is said to be home to multiple ghosts, including men, women, and children. And they are said to make their presences known by moving objects, speaking out loud, and even appearing in photographs. Needless to say, when The Ghosts Of Ohio packed for this overnight investigation, we brought every piece of equipment we could jam into our cars!

So what, if anything, did we find? Well, you'll have to wait until the December newsletter to find out!



THINKING OUTSIDE THE GHOSTLY EQUIPMENT BOX



We devote a lot of newsletter time and space talking about all sorts of equipment one can take on an investigation. Here at The Ghosts Of Ohio, we sometimes prefer taking a look at an existing problem and then thinking about

solves for it—and not necessarily solutions that can be found in the paranormal field. By that, we try not to limit ourselves to devices and equipment that’s being used solely by paranormal researchers and investigators. Such is the case of the solution to our Trip Wire woes.

In previous newsletters, we spoke about the Trip Wire—a series of microprocessor-controlled EMF sensors spaced out along a length of cable—12 feet or 36 feet long that enables investigators to place the Trip Wire on the ground and monitor a large area like a hallway. It works great, except when it comes time to move it or to use the Trip Wire to monitor areas off the floor or higher than ground level. That was all solved when a mysterious package showed up at The Ghosts Of Ohio headquarters. Sent by long-time Ghosts Of

Ohio member, Wendy, the package contents consisted of two metal extendable poles with hooks on the end. No note or explanation as to what we were supposed to use them for. Truth be told, we even had to do a Google image search to find out what they were called: Reach hooks.



A quick note to Wendy cleared everything up: She has bought them for us to use with the Trip Wire. All we needed to do was loop each end of the Trip Wire to the Reach Hooks, extend them out as needed, and two investigators would very easily maneuver the Trip Wire up overhead and into any hard-to-reach places. Plus, if we wanted to monitor an area of wall that was off the ground, we could simply lean the Reach Hooks against the wall with the Trip Wire spread out across the wall. Brilliant!



Thanks, Wendy!



EQUIPMENT REVIEWS

Got a piece of paranormal equipment you’ve always wondered how it works? Does it really do what it’s supposed to be doing? Or maybe you’ve created some paranormal equipment you’d like field tested? Either way, let us know because The Ghosts Of Ohio would love to help! Drop us a line at info@ghostsofohio.org with the subject line “Equipment” and we’ll take it from there!



WHAT A STRANGE AND SPOOKY SEASON IT WAS!

2,301 miles traveled. Costumes and trivia in Fairborn. Exploring the secrets of Hangar 18 in the shadow of Wright-Patt. Sneak peeks of *Ohio's Historic Haunts II*, *Northern Ohio Legends & Lore*, and *The Frogman Amalgam*. Toothsome treats around a campfire in Oxford. Hundreds of smiling faces and even gifts from fans.

To say that the 2023 Strange & Spooky Tour was a success would be an understatement. Thank you to each and every one of you who came out to support us and share your personal stories.



AND WE'RE NOT DONE YET!

We had so many requests for presentations in October that a few spilled over into November. So just because Halloween is over, that doesn't mean you can't come out and get strange and spooky with us!

As always, unless an event is marked with a "\$", it is free and open to the public. But in all cases, seating may be limited, so it's always a good idea to check with the venue regarding the need to pre-register. Also, while the following dates, times, and topics were current when this newsletter went to press, it is all subject to change, so please check with the individual location to be on the safe side. Additionally, we post any changes to all of our social media accounts, so give us a Follow/Like to stay in the loop.



Saturday, November 4th @ 3:00 pm

The Strange & Spooky World of James A. Willis presentation

Columbus Metropolitan Library—Franklinton Branch

1061 W. Town Street

Columbus, OH 43222

[More information here](#)

Saturday, November 11th @ 11:00 am

The Strange & Spooky World of James A. Willis presentation

Defiance Public Library

320 Fort Street

Defiance, OH

[More information here](#)

Thursday, November 16th @ 6:30 pm

Just How Weird Is Ohio presentation

Wagnalls Memorial Library

150 E. Columbus Street

Lithopolis, OH 43136

[More information here](#)

Friday, December 1st–Sunday, December 3rd

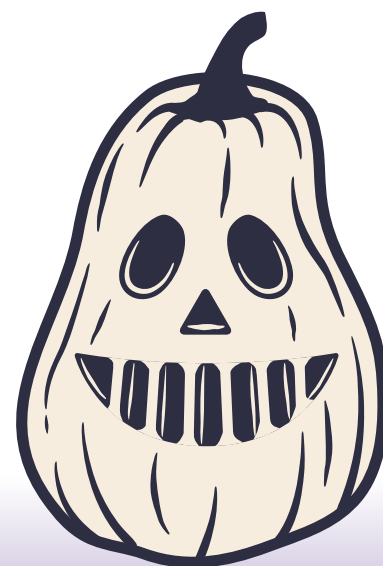
GalaxyCon Columbus (\$)

Greater Columbus Convention Center

400 North High Street

Columbus, OH 43215

[Tickets on sale now](#)



Investigations & Consultations

The Ghosts Of Ohio have begun scheduling investigations and consultations for 2024. So, 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>

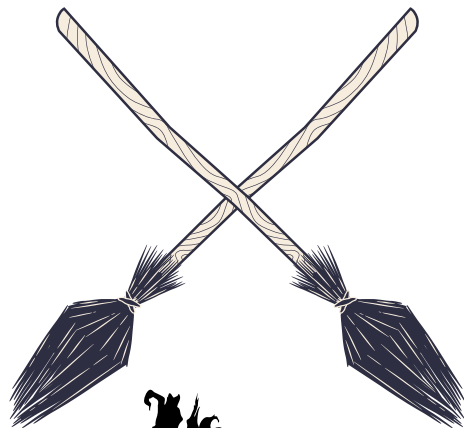
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In addition to our website, here are a couple of places where you can find The Ghosts Of Ohio lurking online:

 [FACEBOOK](#)

 [TWITTER](#)

 [INSTAGRAM](#)



Administration

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