



# The ghosts of Ohio<sup>®</sup> Newsletter

www.ghostsofohio.org

Volume 8 Issue 4

## From the Spooky Desk of James Willis: The Ghosts Are Turning Twelve



James

As I sit here writing this, I'm suddenly reminded that in just a few short weeks, on May 9th, to be exact, The Ghosts of Ohio will be celebrating its 12th anniversary. That's right, The Ghosts of Ohio has been alive and kicking for 12 long years. Please allow me a moment of self-indulgence as I pat myself on the back for that feat. It's been one heck of a ride! And if there's one thing that I can point to as being the secret of our success, it would be "change." Too many times, I have seen ghost investigators and even entire groups fall by the wayside because they simply

refused to change. They got stuck doing the same old same old, yet expecting different results. When that doesn't happen, frustration sets in. So we all need change. It's a good thing!

The same can be said for The Ghosts of Ohio Newsletter. Which is why, beginning with this issue, you will start to see some changes. Most notably with the types of articles and the sections. We've already started offering you articles that deal not only with ghosts, but also with the paranormal in general; and we plan to continue that. This issue also marks the appearance of a new section: Hot Or Not. This section will let you know what or who in the paranormal community is all the rage and what's fading quickly.

As always, I encourage you to drop us a line and let us know what you think. After all, as I have tried to stress to you, this is your newsletter! So if there's something we're doing wrong (or right) or if there's something you'd like to see us include, we're all ears!

Oh yeah, and we've added one other piece of new stuff—teasers as to what's coming in our next issue. You'll find them at the end of this issue. Just don't skip over all the other cool stuff just to read ahead!

Cheers,  
James A. Willis  
Founder/Director

## Sleep Paralysis Versus the Paranormal Occurrence



Wendy

Sleep paralysis is a not-uncommon occurrence that is often mistaken for a paranormal event. Almost everyone will experience at least one in their lifetime, according to published studies. Articles by the hundreds can be found on ye olde Internet for your viewing pleasure. Scores of books have been written, many of which claim that sleep paralysis can be blamed for all paranormal events or alien abductions, while others say that they are two separate things.

If you look at these episodes culturally, you will find some sort of paranormal reason for them in every part of the world. Haggging is a common term derived from the old Euro-American belief that a witch in the form of a hag would sit on your chest at night and possibly assault you. This led to the expression "being hag-ridden," which then led to the term haggard being used

for people who look like they have had no sleep. Ethiopians call this a dukak—a demonic possession. Koreans call it gawee nulim, which is a spirit that will lie on top of a sleeping person. Exorcisms and prayers are performed in some cultures, while in others it is blamed for Sudden Unexplained Nocturnal Death Syndrome. If you go to the wiki entry for sleep paralysis, you will find a huge cultural listing of the various beliefs.

Looking at the scientific end of the spectrum, sleep paralysis occurs just before or just after the REM cycle. As you head into REM, atonia occurs, which is when the body is placed in a paralysis state in preparation for the REM cycle. This keeps you from acting out physically while in a dream state, a self-preservation mechanism. With hypnagogic paralysis, your mind remains aware while your body goes into paralysis before REM; with hypnopompic paralysis, your mind becomes aware before you have completed your REM cycle. I am a

hypnopompic sleep paralysis sufferer of over 25 years.

My first episodes occurred when I was in my mid teens. I had no idea what was happening, only that I thought I was dying. During these incidents, I would become aware that I had woken up but that I was unable to move my body. I could see through the cracks of my eyelids and even observe my mother come into the room to put away laundry, yet be unable to yell to her that I needed help and couldn't wake up. The more I panicked, the more I struggled. The more I struggled, the more it became clear that I couldn't even move my little finger. Often I felt as if I was being strangled, and almost every time, I could feel an evil presence at the foot of my bed that was just out of the line of what sight I had. It is truly the most horrifying thing I have ever felt in my life.

I began to be terrified of sleeping, for fear that I would have another one of these episodes, which I could only define as being in a coma.

*Continued on Page 3*

## Personal Encounters: The Tiffany Lamp

By Marie P., Gahanna, Ohio

About 20 years ago, I was helping my father clean out his mother's (my grandma's) house after she passed away. I came across this really cool, old tiffany lamp that I asked my father if I could have. He said that it didn't work, but that I could have it. I really liked it and since my dad was an electrician, I figured he could fix it for me. So I took it. I got it home and sure enough it was broken. I tried switching the bulb and wiggling the wires, but it wouldn't turn on. But, it

was so cool and looked perfect in my living room, so I just decided to keep it.

Well, for the next 20 years, whenever my dad would come over my house to visit, I would remind him of his promise to fix the lamp for me. I told him that if he didn't have time, I would just take it to the repair shop, which always made him a little crabby. He would tell me that I was his daughter and that if anyone was going to fix that lamp, it would be him. He never did, though.

Last month, my father passed away after a long fight with cancer. That night, after the funeral, I was laying in bed crying and thinking about my father when I heard a couple of weird clicking noises coming from the living room. Right after that, I saw a weird glow coming from under my bedroom door. I got up and finally got up the courage to open the door. As I looked out into the living room, I couldn't believe my eyes. My grandmother's old lamp was on! The glow I saw was from the lamp! I went over to the lamp and turned it off and then back on. It still worked! It was at that time that I realized that the clicking noises I heard were the sounds the lamp's chain makes when you pull it to turn it on and off!

For me, there is no doubt that before he went to the other side, my father's ghost stopped by to say goodbye and finally fix the lamp for me. That night will be something I will never forget and I think about it often. Oh yeah, and since that night, the lamp has continued to work perfectly.

## 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](mailto: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 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!



## Ruined—More Ghostly Fiction



Janine

*Ruined* by Paula Morris is a teen novel. One of the best things about this book is that it takes place in New Orleans, a great place for a ghost!

The heroine, Rebecca Brown, has problems. She's not originally from New Orleans and feels like such an outsider with the family she's living with while her father is in China for business. She is even more an outsider in a school attended by many of the oldest and richest families of the area. The old above-ground cemetery in her neighborhood is her refuge. It is also a place to hide behind tombs to spy on the popular kids, as well as Anton, a boy she feels attracted to. Lisette, a black girl, catches her at this activity. The two girls talk, become friends, and only after that does Lisette claim to be a ghost who died in 1853 during a yellow fever epidemic.

Anton begins to show interest in Rebecca as the Mardi Gras season steps up. Through him, we learn some of the history of New Orleans and Mardi Gras custom among the top families. Rebecca's relationship with Anton angers others in the "in" crowd, and makes her an outsider again with the friends she has made. Meanwhile, Lisette hints that she was murdered. She takes Rebecca on a walk. While holding Lisette's hand, Rebecca can see many of the ghosts of New Orleans. The eerie walk is one of the highlights of this novel, again showing us some of the history of New Orleans.

Tension builds as Rebecca, despite warnings from all sides, continues her friendship with Anton. She attends a party with him in the house where Lisette had once lived, and this leads to a wonderful line. Mixed marriages were illegal in New Orleans. Everyone was careful to claim pure bloodlines with no

skeletons in the closet, although "all skeletons were white."

The tension leads to a climax with major surprises and the revelation of Lisette's murder. The twists and lovely atmosphere makes this a 4-skull novel.

Rating: 4 skulls



## Sleep Paralysis Versus the Paranormal Occurrence

Continued from Page 1

Back in the late 70s/early 80s, no one really knew about sleep paralysis. I did notice that my episodes increased with the use of an electric blanket. Quite possibly the combination of excess heat and electricity running across my body contributed to it. I gave the blanket to Goodwill. Also by that time, I was in my early 20s and going out late on weekends, sleeping in long the next day. This caused a disruption in my sleep pattern, which continued to contribute to my episodes.

Then, about 14 years ago I read my first article on sleep paralysis and realized I had an answer to my coma episodes. I saw that sleep pattern disruption and stress were a leading cause, so I immediately made sure I stabilized the hours that I slept. That article specified that when you felt yourself trapped that you needed to calm yourself, realize you were having a sleep paralysis episode, and allow yourself to relax, which would naturally push you either into REM (if hypnagogic) or out of REM (if hypnopompic). I tried it, and surprisingly it worked. And just to be safe, I ALWAYS set my alarm clock... even when on vacation. I figure that way something will definitely shock me awake! My episodes occurred on a weekly basis for almost 15 years. Now that I have controlled my sleeping habits, I rarely have a problem.

Various factors can contribute to sleep paralysis episodes including disrupted sleeping patterns, migraines, being too warm while sleeping, eating certain foods or drinking alcohol right before sleep. Also, life changes will cause them. Losing or obtaining a new job, moving, getting a divorce, buying a new house...all of these induce stress. Stress is a high contributor to paralysis

episodes, just as they are a contributing factor to negative haunting episodes. (Starting to see the correlation?) I had a nasty block of them when I purchased my home 16 years ago. Sleeping in a new home in a new neighborhood, surrounded by people I didn't know (even though I had a roommate), was enough to put me into a stress induced sleep paralysis pattern. So now I try and externalized the stress *as I am feeling it* rather than holding in my emotions, which can trigger an episode. And yes, that is my official excuse for being such a drama queen!

While suffering from a true paralysis episode, the people afflicted report a variety of symptoms. Besides being able to move only their eyes, they can feel as if something is holding them down on the bed, something is strangling them, something evil—demonic or alien—is near them. Some people feel a violent shaking or hear a very loud buzzing sound, or the sound of someone talking at high speed in a high pitch. What is odd is that these symptoms are also described by people who are suffering from genuine paranormal phenomenon. (Again, these events seem to correlate.) This is where the scientific and paranormal community split. Science says all the events are hallucinations triggered by sleep paralysis, while the paranormal community says not so fast.

Physical evidence is really the key here. If you are working with a client and they are describing the above events, it is likely they are suffering from sleep paralysis. A little education for them can go a long way to making them feel like they are in control of what is essentially a medical situation. But don't be so quick on the trigger finger. Really look at all other surrounding

evidence. It could be a genuine paranormal event being masked by a scientific reason.

When a person says they are an alien abductee, their symptoms of being unable to move but being able to open their eyes, seeing a bright lit room with humanoid forms can very well be part of a sleep paralysis hallucination. But that is not the explanation for the odd puncture marks in the shape of a triangle on their lower back. It doesn't explain the near microscopic aluminum cylinder their doctor dug out of the back of their neck. It doesn't explain skin burns and other forms of radiation symptoms. If they are hearing a sound...is it waking them up from sleep (a possible sleep paralysis episode), or are they still awake and actually get out of bed to investigate (possible paranormal episode)?

And what about the person who says that a demon is sitting on the edge of their bed at night? That too is a symptom of sleep paralysis. But when you have an IR camera showing a dark shadow figure sitting on the edge of the bed...I'm going to have to go with paranormal event on that one. Sleep paralysis doesn't explain that bite mark just below the shoulder blade. It doesn't explain why a person is actually seeing their sleeping partner being pushed down into the mattress by an unseen force, after which the partner awakens to describe what would be taken as a sleep paralysis episode (holding me down, pushing me into mattress). Could a non-human entity possibly be manipulating the REM atonia in an effort to control the sleeping human? If this is some sort of victimization, does the victim need to be

Continued on Page 7

### Investigations and Consultations: Continued Scheduling for 2011

The Ghosts of Ohio is continuing to schedule investigations for 2011. 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.

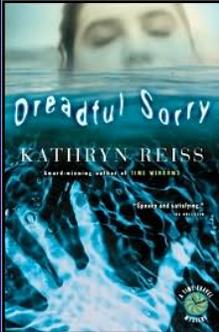
For more information, please visit <http://ghostsofohio.org/services/investigations.html>.

## Sam's Spooky Selections!



Samantha

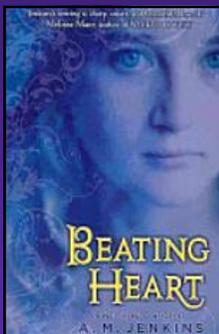
I've been a bookworm all my life, as well as a fan of everything supernatural; so it's no wonder that I grew up to be both a librarian and a paranormal investigator. As a librarian, I've spent the last four years focusing on young adults, and I can easily tell you that there is no shortage of the supernatural in teen fiction. You can find everything from ghosts and demons to angels, vampires, pixies, faeries, psychics, werewolves, etc. In fact, I enjoy reading teen books more than any others. They're generally quick reads, they have less extraneous clutter than adult novels, and they're highly entertaining! That's why I've decided to take this opportunity to recommend some teen titles that I have enjoyed that you may have never heard about. Don't worry—no spoilers here!



### *Dreadful Sorry* by Kathryn Reiss

This mystery is about a girl named Molly who has spent her life plagued by nightmares and an overwhelming fear of water. Little by little, she begins to piece together clues and local history, only to discover the tragedies that happened in her past life.

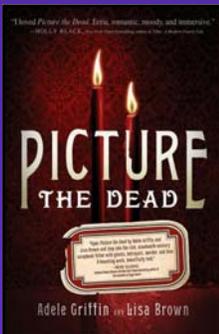
Rating: 🦴🦴🦴🦴



### *Beating Heart* by A.M. Jenkins

When 17-year-old Evan's parents divorce and he moves with his mom to an old house, he discovers a spirit there that not only plagues his dreams at night, but also wants him to pay for what happened to her.

Rating: 🦴🦴🦴



### *Picture the Dead* by Adele Griffin

Set during the Civil War, this mystery is about a girl named Jennie who is told that her fiancé, Will, had been killed in battle. However, strange dreams and visions have convinced her that there's something more to the story, and that her own cousin may have been involved.

Rating: 🦴🦴🦴🦴



### *Project 17* by Laurie Faria Stolarz

*The Breakfast Club* meets *The Blair Witch Project* in this page-turning thriller. Derik is an aspiring filmmaker who, on the eve of the demolition of the Danvers State Mental Hospital, has decided to take a few friends with him and break into the hospital in order to experience and film paranormal activity. This is a great example of being careful what you wish for...

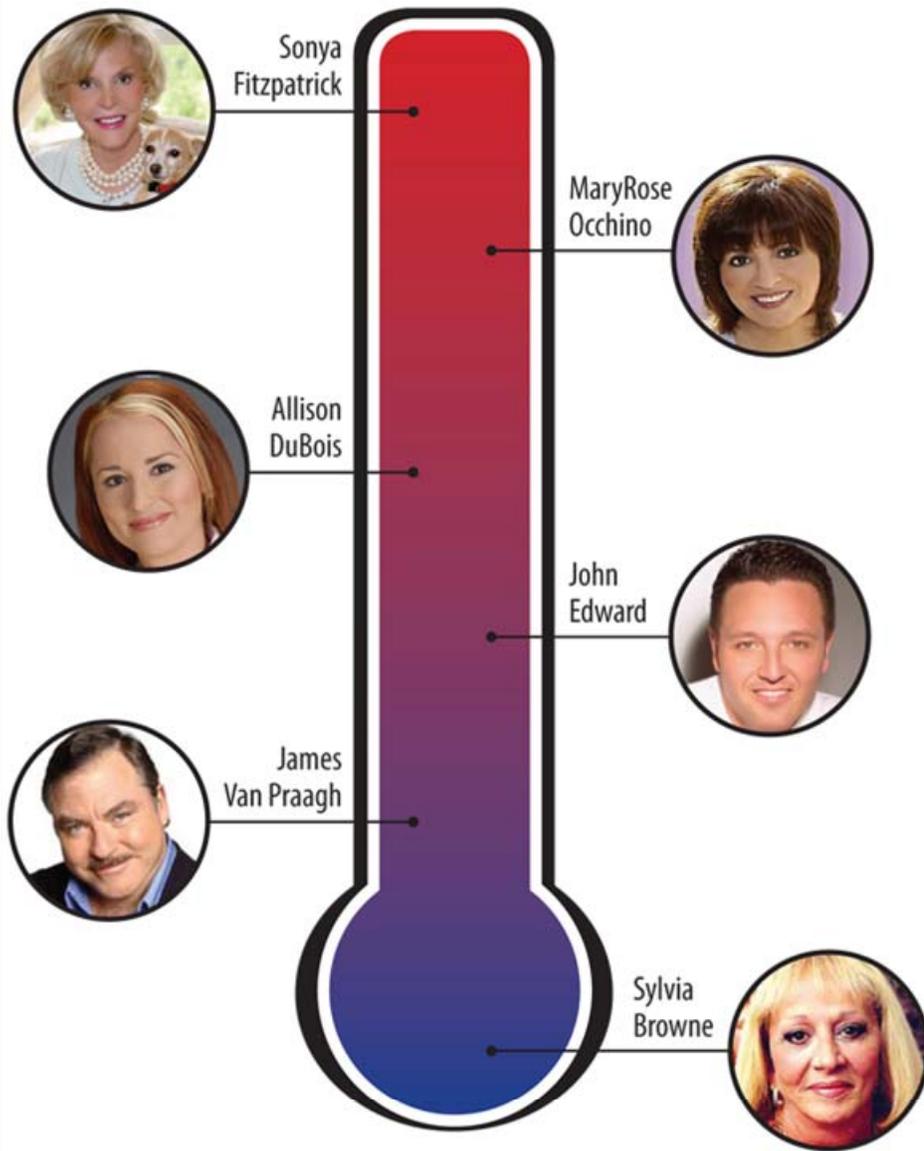
Rating: 🦴🦴🦴

Continued on Page 6

## HOT or NOT: Checking the Temperature of the Paranormal Community

Long before Derek Acorah got possessed and started yelling about “confrontation!,” psychics were taking to the TV and radio waves giving their predictions and relaying messages from the other side. Today, it seems that you (or Acorah) couldn’t throw a lamp without hitting a psychic. But which ones are red-hot and who’s ice cold? Have a peek and see for yourself!

### HOT or NOT: PSYCHICS



#### HOT

##### *Sonya Fitzpatrick*

Clearly a psychic with a niche audience, Fitzpatrick calls herself one of the “most widely recognized and respected animal communicators in the world.” Fitzpatrick has appeared on Good Day Live, Anderson Cooper, and the Ellen show. She also hosted two shows on Animal Planet, Pet Psychic Encounters and The Pet Psychic, as well as on Sirius/XM radio with her Animal Intuition show.

##### *MaryRose Occhino*

MaryRose walked into the psychic spotlight in 2005 with her first book, *Beyond These Four Walls: Diary of a Psychic Medium*. At one point, Occhino had her own talk show on Sirius/XM Radio, “Angels On Call” and in 2010, she was the focus of Syfy’s series “Mary Knows Best.”

#### LUKEWARM

##### *Allison Dubois*

A virtual unknown, once it was discovered that Dubois was the inspiration for the TV series, *Medium*, she was immediately in high demand. Not even critics’ claims that Dubois had not helped solve a single crime diminished the demand for her to make public appearances. However, the recent cancellation of *Medium* may signal a cooling-off period.

##### *John Edward*

John Edward erupted out of the gate around 1999, resulting in not one but two syndicated shows, *Crossing Over* and *John Edward Cross Country*. Both shows have since been cancelled, although Edward still makes public appearances across the country.

#### NOT

##### *James Van Praagh*

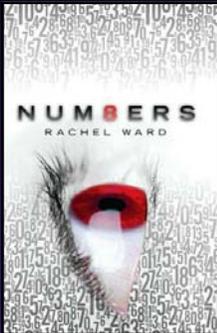
At one point, Van Praagh was Larry King’s go-to psychic and was very sought after. Van Praagh even managed to put out six books in a three-year period from 1999 to 2003. Things got a little dicey for Van Praagh in 2003 when the Independent Investigations Group attended a taping of Van Praagh’s show “Beyond” and began to question differences in the finished product. Van Praagh released two books in 2009 to luke-warm response.

##### *Sylvia Browne*

Once a staple of Larry King Live and the Montel Williams Show, multiple incorrect predictions, including her agreeing live with the (incorrect) breaking news on the Coast to Coast AM show that the Sago miners had been found alive, have resulted in more and more of her public appearances being cancelled.

## Sam's Spooky Selections!

Continued from Page 4



### **Num8ers by Rachel Ward**

How would you live your life if you could predict when people will die simply by looking at them? This problem has plagued 15-year-old Jem since childhood, and her solution has been to avoid people altogether. But now she's fallen in love with a boy named Spider, and she's seen the date of his death. The date is only two weeks away.

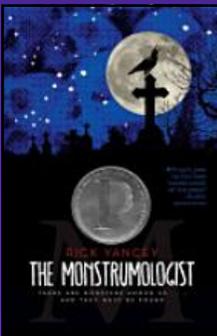
Rating: 🦴🦴🦴🦴



### **Meridian by Amber Kizer**

On her 16th birthday, Meridian learns that she is a Fenestra—a being that serves as a door between the living and the dead. With the help of her aunt, she learns how to live her life with the responsibility of guiding human souls into the afterlife. However, she must also be wary of the dark forces that want her for their own...

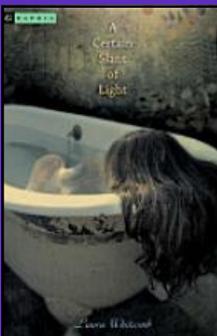
Rating: 🦴🦴🦴🦴



### **The Monstrumologist by Rick Yancey (5-Skull Rating!)**

Set in 1888, this story is about 12-year-old Will Henry and his terrifying adventures as an apprentice to a scientist who hunts and studies monsters—the infamous Dr. Warthrop. In this tale, the monsters in question are Anthropophagi—violent, strong, and bloodthirsty creatures that are ravaging a nearby town. It's up to the Doctor and Will to destroy them. This is my favorite monster-themed supernatural book of all time! It is believable, it's gruesome, and it's intense from start to finish. The sequel, *The Curse of the Wendigo*, is equally as compelling!

Rating: 🦴🦴🦴🦴🦴



### **A Certain Slant of Light by Laura Whitcomb (5-Skull Rating!)**

Helen died 130 years ago, and has since been following and clinging to the living, fearing the terrible force that threatens to drag her out of the world. Unseen and unheard, she is both lonely and alone. That is, until she notices a young man staring at her, and they form a bond that goes beyond the living world. This is by far one of my favorite supernatural novels. It is thoughtful, romantic in a Romeo & Juliet kind of way, and it is heartbreaking.

Rating: 🦴🦴🦴🦴🦴

The next time you visit your local library or bookstore, take a little time to browse the young adult collection. The titles I listed here are just a few of the many intriguing supernatural books out there. And if you can't find exactly what you want, just ask!

## Spend The Night with The Ghosts of Ohio in 2011

The Ghosts of Ohio is continuing to look into renting out some of the most haunted buildings in Ohio (and beyond) for an entire night. Unlike traditional "ghost hunts," where you are often forced to share the location with total strangers, every building we rent out will be 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!

## Where Can You Spend The Night With Us?

We are still working on confirming dates, but we are able to confirm one location at this time—one that I'm sure you will all be interested in participating in!

**Where:** Waverly Sanatorium (Louisville, KY)

**When:** Tuesday, August 23rd

**Winners will be announced in the June 2011 newsletter.**

Got a place that you're dying to spend the night inside? Drop us a line at [info@ghostsofohio.org](mailto:info@ghostsofohio.org) and we'll see what we can do!

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

## Sleep Paralysis Versus the Paranormal Occurrence

*Continued from Page 3*

in an aware-but-sleeping condition, which is what sleep paralysis is? Does that help the entity's ability to manipulate energy fields? You can really get on a roll with all the what-if type of questions.

I would like to see a study correlating people who have ES (environmental sensitivity), suffer from sleep paralysis and have continual paranormal occurrences in their lives, with whether they have a haunting, see Mothman or receive alien communications. It would be interesting to see how often these all

relate to one another, since already in the above examples you can see where a sleep paralysis episode can actually be *within* a paranormal event. I'm sure science would say the mind is a powerful weapon; we have no idea what it can really do. And they are correct. The key may be that the paranormal world is created by our minds. But until we get concrete answers, all we can do is educate ourselves on *all* possibilities, and decide for ourselves what explanations best fit which events.

## The Ghosts of Ohio Newsletter Staff

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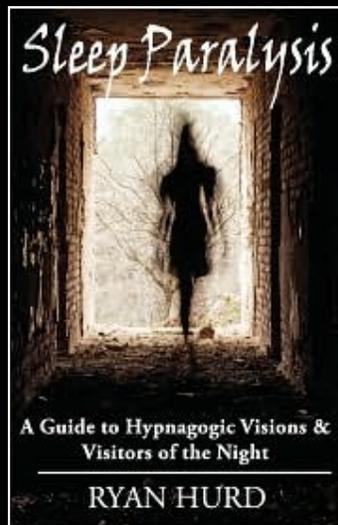
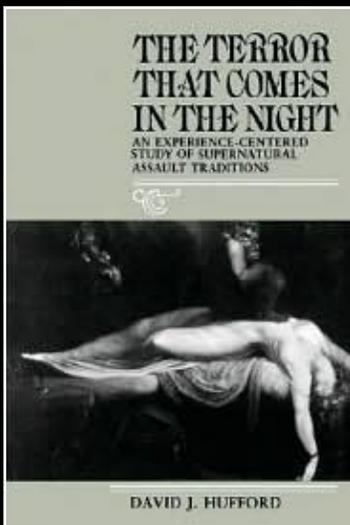
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Sam Nicholson

## Recommended Reading



## 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 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>

facebook



myspace  
a place for friends

## A Tradition in Jeopardy: Poe Toaster Still A No-Show



James

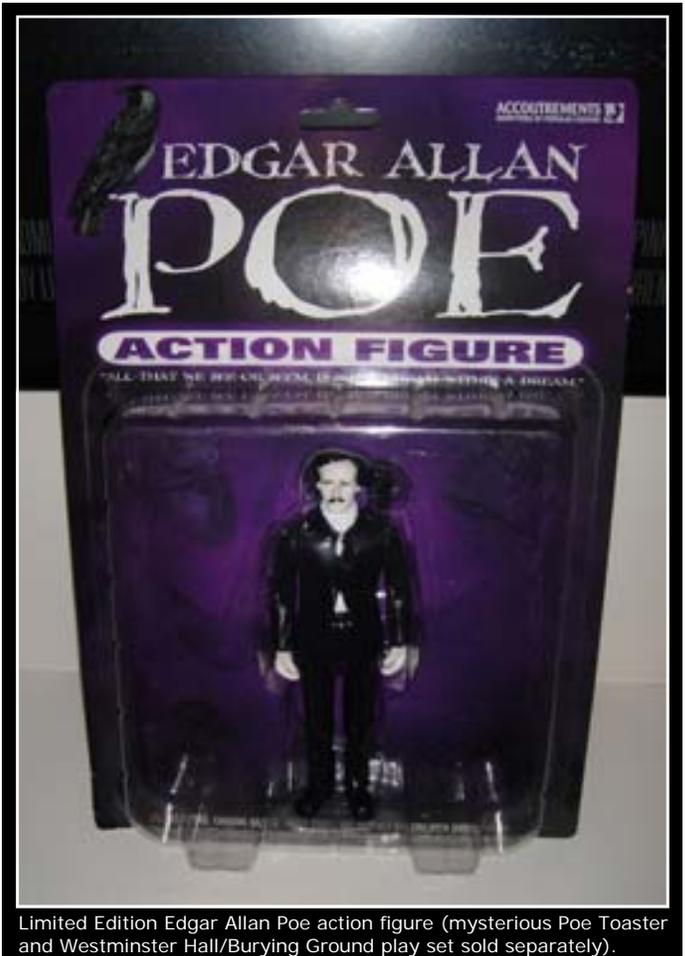
Ask any paranormal enthusiast for a list of writers who inspired them and chances are Edgar Allan Poe will be lurking somewhere near the top. Truth be told, Poe's works have become so engrained in

popular culture that they often make guest appearances in everything from episodes of *The Simpsons* to TV advertisements. One of his most famous works was even used to name an NFL team, the Baltimore Ravens. Poe himself even has his very own action figure (although his weapon of choice is "Morbid Ruminations"). So it is with great sadness that we need to report that one of the longest-running and strangest rituals involving Poe appears to have officially come to an end this past January when the mysterious Poe Toaster failed to appear for a second straight year.

For over 60 years, a mysterious figure in black would appear outside the gates of Westminster Hall and Burying Ground in Baltimore, Maryland, in the early morning hours of January 19th, Poe's birthday. The figure, whose face was always obscured, would walk to Poe's grave, pause for a moment, and then leave behind three red roses and a half-finished bottle of Martell cognac, arranged in a specific configuration. On several occasions, the Toaster also left behind a note, although none of them explained who the Toaster was, why he was doing this ritual, or even the significance of the roses and cognac.

While the identity of the Toaster has never been confirmed, it is believed that it was the same gentleman from 1949 until 1998, when the man passed away. This is based on the fact that a note left by the Toaster in 1999 stated that the original Toaster died last year and that the tradition was being continued by "a son." And while there have been many imposters over the years, those close to the tradition, including Jeff Jerome of the Edgar Allan Poe Society, are confident they know when the real Toaster makes an appearance. For one, the real Toaster is very secretive when entering the cemetery, unlike the imposters who walk right through the crowd that is usually gathered in hopes of catching a glimpse of the dark figure. Plus, Jerome claims that there is a secret "signal" the Toaster gives before arranging the roses in a specific pattern, none of which the imposters did.

2009 now stands as the last confirmed visit by the imposter to Poe's grave. Perhaps not coincidentally, the date marked the 200-year anniversary of



Limited Edition Edgar Allan Poe action figure (mysterious Poe Toaster and Westminster Hall/Burying Ground play set sold separately).

Poe's birth. In 2010, aside from several imposters, the Toaster did not make an appearance. And while dozens upon dozens of people stood outside in the freezing weather on January 19th, 2011, the Toaster never showed up, causing everyone, including Jeff Jerome, to wonder if perhaps the traditional visits of the Poe Toaster have finally ended.

### Administration

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### Coming Up—Next Issue: June 2011

- **The Fate of Fate Magazine**—What has become of the U.S.'s publisher of "true reports of the strange and unknown"?
- **The Hands That Resist Him**—Taking a closer look at the infamous haunted eBay painting
- **A Ghostly Look Back**—interview with founder/director James A. Willis on the past 12 years of The Ghosts of Ohio