



The Ghosts of Ohio® Newsletter

www.ghostsofohio.org

Volume 9 Issue 4

From the Spooky Desk of James Willis: Expecting The Unexpected



James

Spring is in the air! Well, at least I think it's in the air. To be honest, I'm still waiting for winter to arrive. When I recently mentioned to one of my friends that I wouldn't be surprised if I woke up one day in the coming weeks and found a foot of snow on the ground, she responded with, "Well, this is Ohio. Expect the unexpected." I know she was talking about the weather, but it suddenly hit me that the same could be said of the paranormal field here in Ohio...and beyond.

It struck me that the field seems to have fallen into a bit of a rut. I see it in the articles I read online, the public appearances I give, and even in the research being put forward by people in the field. As a collective group, we seem to have resorted to just sitting back and waiting for the expected to happen. We

hit "record" on the digital voice recorders, set them down, and wait for the voices to show up. Or we turn on the video camera, point it into the "haunted" room, and wait for the ghosts to show up and do their spectral dance for us...on cue, of course.

I know I might be in the minority here, but I don't think our current modus operandi is working. If it were, we would all be getting perfect videos of gaggles of ghosts and EVPs that consisted of full sentences as opposed to barely audible single-syllable words. But we're not. At least not at any frequency that would make skeptics stop and take notice. Therefore, I think we, as a field, need to stop expecting the expected and instead focus on the unexpected. Let's try using different types of microphones, even at the same time. Do we really need to be shooting video in infrared? I think the more we open up our minds to new ways of approaching looking for evidence of ghosts, the better the

chances of something unexpected happening. Namely, getting that evidence we all so desperately seek!

To get you started, have a look at this issue, which has a couple of articles featuring different ways of expecting the unexpected. If you're contemplating using a laser grid, take a peek at how we modified ours to better suit our needs. Or perhaps you've grown weary of all the cookie cutter paranormal shows. If so, we just might have found one that will make you look at things differently. In coming issues, we'll be featuring more of our experiments, equipment, and general ways at which The Ghosts of Ohio is trying to expect the unexpected. Until then, keep your eye on the Ohio weather map for that freak snowstorm I'm convinced is coming!

Cheers,
James A. Willis
Founder/Director

¡El Cucuy! The Latin American Bogeyman



Samantha

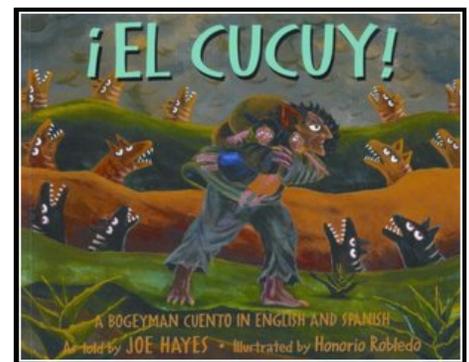
*"Portate bien o te lleva El Cucuy."
("Behave, or the Cucuy will get you.")*

Every culture around the world has its own variation of the bogeyman, a creature designed by parental figures to scare children into obedience. In Latin American, Spanish, and Southwest American cultures, this bogeyman is called El Cucuy (a.k.a. Cuca, Cuco, Coco, Chamuco, etc.).

Not surprisingly, descriptions of this horrible creature vary even more than its names. It's either as big as a giant or small enough to fit in closets and under beds. It can be a mutated animal, like a tortoise with a horned spine or a humanoid alligator. It can be a fairy or

imp, a ghost with a pumpkin head, a fiery-eyed devil, a dragon, and even a shadow on the wall. In the children's book *¡El Cucuy! A Bogeyman Cuento in English and Spanish* by Joe Hayes, the monster is an old man with a crooked back and a big red left ear that hears everything children do. So what the heck does this creature look like? The only thing we know for certain is that El Cucuy is a shape-shifter, changing its form with every storyteller and every child's active imagination.

Of course, El Cucuy's appearance isn't the only thing terrifying children. It's what he *does* to them that is truly frightening. It seems that El Cucuy has a big appetite for those who are disobedient. The more defiant children are, the hungrier El Cucuy becomes until he finally finds and devours them,



leaving no trace. The children ominously go to a "place of no return."

It's no wonder why parents use the threat of El Cucuy to keep their kids in line!

*"Duérmete niño, duérmete ya
Que viene el Coco y te comerá."
("Sleep, child, sleep now,
Or else the Coco will come and eat you.")*

Personal Experiences: Who (or What) Did I Let In?

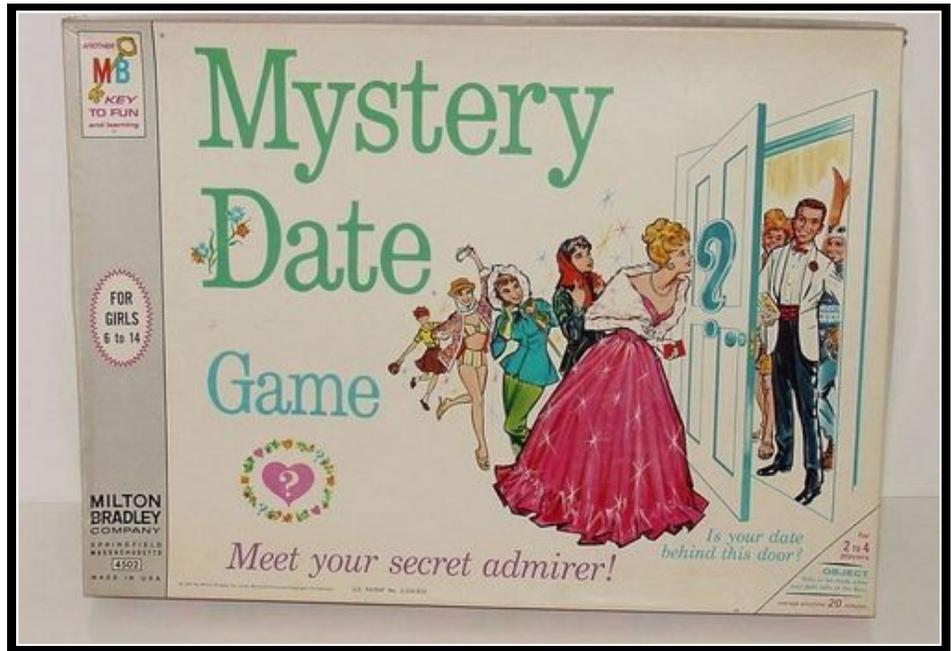
Submitted by Maria E., Marietta, Ohio

I feel a little silly telling this story, as I'm still not sure what exactly happened. But the way I look at it, if there were a place where I could tell my story without having to worry about being made fun of, this would be it.

My story starts back in the 1960s when I was 12 years old and living with my family in Marietta, Ohio. We lived in a really old house and I used to try and scare my friends by telling them that it was haunted. I really did used to hear weird noises at night and sometimes what I thought were footsteps coming down the hallway, but I would always tell myself that I was just scaring myself and that all old houses make noises like that.

So I used to have this really silly game called "Mystery Date" where you would move around the board and pretend you were getting all dressed up for a date. At the end of the game you would open this little plastic door in the middle of the board and reveal who your date was. There were a couple of cards with different potential dates on them, like a guy dressed in a suit, a guy dressed in shorts, and someone dressed really messy. The object was to end up with the nice dressed guy and not the one dressed like a slob. It was a silly game, really.

So one night I was having a sleepover with some of my girlfriends and I decided to scare them all. I made up this story about how my house was haunted by a man named Marvin who had built the house and then was murdered in the basement by his wife, who cut off his head and then hid the head somewhere in the house. She got arrested and they hung her for her crime. But they never found the head. Then I told them that my family would hear Marvin's ghost walking up and down the hallways at night looking for his head. And sometimes, you could see his headless body walking around. I thought my story was pretty stupid but I guess it freaked some of my friends out because all of a sudden they wanted to change the subject and play games. So we started playing "Mystery Date."



When we took a break from the game to have some refreshments, I snuck upstairs and drew a picture of a man without a head on it. Then I went and stuck it behind the door on the "Mystery Date" game so that the next time we played, whoever opened the door would have a headless man for a date. I thought that would be funny.

When we got back to playing, my friend Jessica ended up being the one who got to open the door for her date. When she opened it up, I screamed as loud as I could, "Oh my god! It's Marvin! He's going to get you!" And then I turned off all the lights. Everybody screamed and laughed and then all of a sudden there was a really loud BANG that sounded like someone banged on the table the game board was on. We all screamed some more and then turned the lights back on. We all looked and saw that all the pieces from the game had been knocked on the floor. The only thing still on the table was the picture I had drawn of Marvin. Then we heard a really loud BANG on the basement door and we all screamed and said it's Marvin! Obviously, I didn't think it was a ghost, but it was a lot of fun. We all slept downstairs that night and every time we heard a noise, one of

us would say it's Marvin! And then we'd scream. I am sure that really made my parents mad.

The following night, I was alone upstairs sleeping in my bedroom when a loud noise woke me up. Sitting there in the dark, I heard what sounded like footsteps in the hallway. But these didn't sound like the ones I had heard earlier. These were definite footsteps and sounded like someone going from room to room like they were looking for something. It was like, "step step step, pause. Step step step, pause." Like someone walking and then stopping at each room. I called out, "Mom, dad?", but there was no answer. Then it sounded like whoever it was stopped right outside my door. The door was open but I couldn't see anything. It was really weird.

The next day, I asked my parents if they were walking around and they said, "No."

Over the next couple of months, from time to time, I would hear someone or something walking down the hall and sounding like they were looking in each room. Sometimes the footsteps would be downstairs but even then it sounded like they were going from room to room.

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Personal Experiences: Who (or What) Did I Let In?—Continued

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One night, I couldn't take it any more, and when I heard the footsteps downstairs, I snuck out to the stairs and peeked down. It's kind of hard to explain, but I swear I saw a shadow of something that looked like a man, except the man had no head! It was just the outline of a man's body, but the head was clearly missing! I don't know how I didn't scream. I only know that I ran as fast as I could back to my room and slept under the covers.

Now, whenever I would hear the noise, I would stay in bed. The scariest was when the footsteps would be on the same floor as my bedroom and I'd hear them coming down the hall towards my room. When that happened, I would pull the covers up over my head and just listen to the steps getting closer. I had started closing my door at night just so I felt safer. One horrible night though I forgot and left it open. I heard the

footsteps stop outside my room and I decided to peek out from under the covers. I didn't see anything at first, but then in what seemed like slow-motion, the shadowy figure of a man peeked around the corner of the door frame at me. The only problem was the man didn't have a head! It was the most surreal thing I've ever seen! After what seemed like forever, I heard the footsteps continue back down the hallway.

I never said anything to my parents because I was afraid they would think I was mental. One night, though, I was watching tv with my parents and my dad suddenly sat up straight in his easy chair like he was going to go rushing off. But then he shook his head and sat back down. My mom asked what was that all about and he said, "That was the strangest thing. For a minute there, I thought I saw a headless man in the

hallway." He just shook his head and went on like nothing had happened.

Well, as weird as this sounds, I lived with that headless ghost for the next six years or so until I moved away to college. My parents sold the house in 1980 and I've never had the nerve to go knock on the door and ask if anyone had seen a headless ghost in the house.

I'm in my 60s now, but those images of the headless ghost are still as clear as they ever were. It sounds totally crazy, but I can't help but think that my drawing that picture and hiding it behind the game board's door somehow enabled a headless ghost to literally come through the door into my house. How else can you explain the fact that the night after I created the story of a headless ghost, that very same ghost is walking around in my house?

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 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!

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 groups 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!

Equipment Corner: Working With Laser Grids



James

I've always had a soft spot with using lasers on ghost investigations. This stems from an investigation around 2001 when, while using a non-contact thermometer, I was able to track a cold spot that, incredibly, managed to stop the thermometer's red beam in mid-air, despite the fact that there was nothing visible to the naked eye. Yet something was there.

Over the years, I have tried numerous experiments in an attempt to stop that beam; dry ice, smoke, swirling air (via a huge fan). No matter how hard I tried, I could not stop that beam. I even wrote to the manufacturer and asked if the thermometer could be broken and was

told "even if it were, it cannot malfunction in that manner." All this left me scratching my head. As the years went by, researchers began abandoning the non-contact thermometers in favor of ambient devices. I held onto my non-contact, though, and kept trying, unsuccessfully, to recreate what had come to be known as the Hanging Beam Incident.

So I was overjoyed when, in recent times, people began experimenting with laser grids as a way of detecting ghosts. For me, this created the possibility of not only being able to detect a ghost, but also to measure its shape and size (based on how it broke the grid) and even its mass (basing that on how much mass is needed to break the beam).

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Cedar Point Amusement Park
(Sandusky/Erie county)

Green Eyes Cemetery
(Shelby/Richland county)

House of Mary
(near Rockbridge/Hocking county)

Sedamsville Woods Abandoned "Murder" House
(Kenyon College/Knox county)

Seneca Lake
(Senecaville/Guernsey county)

Dark Matters: Twisted but True Review



James

I might be showing my age here, but while I was growing up, I fed off a steady diet of the TV show *In Search Of*. Not only was the show hosted by Spock himself, Leonard Nimoy, but it also managed to beam

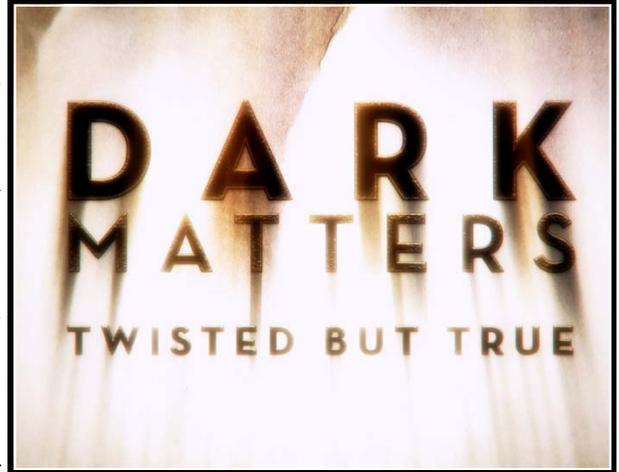
into my house all sorts of creepy, twisted things like poltergeists, Bigfoot, Nostradamus, and even the Amityville Horror.

My favorite part of the show would be when they would freeze-frame the screen and Nimoy would offer up the question, “Is this an image of the Loch Ness Monster?”

After *In Search Of* went off the air, I tried to get my fix from a multitude of TV shows: That’s Incredible, Scariest Places On Earth, and more recently, MTV’s Fear, and Scariest Places on Earth. But it just seemed, especially when these shows started trending towards being more reality-based, that there was more post-production scares and less substance—less story.

So you can’t imagine how happy I was when I stumbled across a new television show, *Dark Matters: Twisted But True*. Hosted by *Fringe* actor John Noble, this series, while not focusing solely on the paranormal, delves into

some really bizarre and, well, twisted, subject matter. I mean, who can resist taking a peek at a show that features episodes with titles like *Tripping With Uncle Sam*, *Honey, I Nuked The Planet*, *I have Einstein’s Brain*, and *Unidentified Flying Nazis*? What’s more, each hour-long episode of *Dark Matters* gives you not one, but three topics that are discussed in roughly 20-minute segments. But unlike *In Search Of* and all of the shows that came after, everything presented during the course of the show is 100% true, raising the Creep Factor to an even higher level! So while some of the ghost reality shows currently airing might leave you sitting there wondering “ok, is that real or are they faking something?”, *Dark Matters* provides you with historical documentation that the harrowing tale you just witnessed did indeed occur. That’s right; there really were secret experiments designed to create an army of Ape-Men. Yes, Thomas Edison really was involved in some sketchy (and deadly) experiments while trying to prove the superiority of DC power over AC. And as for the research into re-animating a human



corpse, that particular episode will keep me awake for weeks!

Granted, the unique-looking CGI they use for the reenactments gets a bit tiresome after a while. But if you’re looking for something a wee bit different that just might have you buying into my personal belief that the living is a whole lot more frightening and disturbing than the land of the dead, give *Dark Matters* a whirl. You won’t be disappointed!

Currently between seasons, *Dark Matters* can be seen on the Science Channel. For more information, or to watch episode online, visit <http://science.discovery.com/tv/dark-matters/>

Rating:

Equipment Corner: Working With Laser Grids—Continued

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To begin with, I shopped around and tested out several different kinds of laser grids; different wattages, shapes, and even the different designs that the laser could project on the wall. For starters, I settled on the 30w laser as opposed to the 5w. Simply put, I wanted a stronger laser. Once I had the wattage down, I thought about the conditions I wanted to use the grid in. Since The Ghosts of Ohio traditionally have their investigations last upwards of 10 hours, it soon become apparent that we were going to have to modify the standard laser. If you think about it, these “grids” are really nothing more than laser pointers, which are designed to be used in short spurts to highlight portions of presentations.

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The 30w laser grid as purchased, in the original configuration of the device.

Equipment Corner: Working With Laser Grids—Continued

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Hence the small “on” button you need to press down on. This was solved with a simple rubber washer over the button. But to prevent us from having to continually change batteries during the course of a night’s investigation, we would need to convert it from DC to AC.

Thankfully, Mark, our resident “evil scientist,” was able to whisk the laser away to his secret lab and the operation was a success. After the operation, we noticed that the small ring that controls the grid pattern was a bit loose and quiet easy to turn, thereby altering the pattern on the wall. Mark then hit upon an interesting idea: use the grid itself as a Trigger Item and invite the ghosts to come up and touch it. The idea being that if the laser is sitting locked into a small tripod, the grid pattern should not change until someone (or something) touched it.

So far, we have used the laser grid on one investigation and it passed with flying colors. Once plugged into a wall outlet, it ran constantly for over 8 hours. We were also able to aim the pattern so that it almost completely covered an entire room, leaving room for an infrared video camera and DVD burner. But we ended up not even needed any sort of IR extender as it almost entirely “blew out” the laser patterns. Running the video camera without any sort of light source, other than the laser, allowed us to get a nice, clear picture of the entire grid. And any time someone walked through the grid, his or her body not only blocked the light, but also cast a shadow behind it, both of which were very visible on the camera. Unfortunately, we did not capture anything paranormal during the course of the evening. Still, the night was an overwhelming success and gave us some ideas as to perhaps incorporate multiple grids into a single area in order to possibly create a 3-D image of a ghost... providing we find a willing spirit who will walk into the middle of our pretty laser light show. So stay tuned!



The 30w laser mounted on a tripod after the AC conversion (above) illuminated the entire bedroom without concern for battery longevity (below).

Spend The Night with The Ghosts of Ohio in 2012

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!

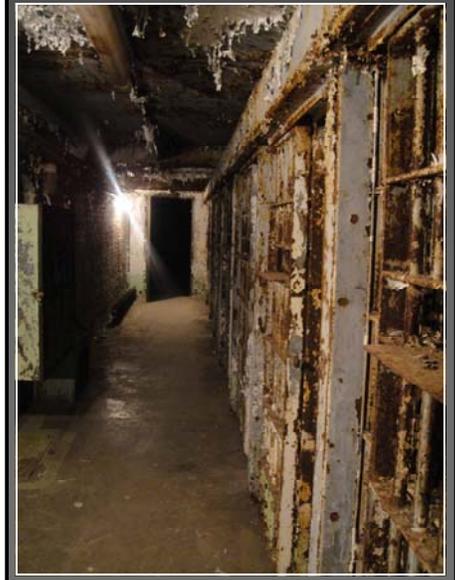
That's all there is to it! Of course, we might want to take a few pictures of you on the investigation and post them on our site so you'll be the envy of all your friends. But hey, that's a small price to pay for the chance to spend the night with The Ghosts!

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

BREAKING NEWS:

The Ghosts Return to Mansfield Reformatory

Well, it's official: The Ghosts of Ohio will be returning to Mansfield Reformatory as part of their Spend The Night program. This will be The Ghosts of Ohio's 3rd visit to the Reformatory and we have yet to be disappointed. Plus, and we have to be honest here, there's nothing like having a huge prison all to yourselves for the entire evening! The Ghosts will be spending the evening of July 17th, 2012, from approximately 7:00 pm until approximately 7:00 am on July 18th, 2012.



Come Out and See The Ghosts!

It's barely spring and The Ghosts of Ohio's calendar is already starting to fill up! And while we're working on some extra-special events for this October, here's a couple of places you can come out and see us in the meantime! Please note that unless there's a dollar

sign (\$) associated with the entry, it is free and open to the public. Still, some of these locations have strict guidelines with regard to how many people can attend before the room is at capacity. So it's always a good idea to call the venue ahead of time just to be on the safe side.

JUNE

Tuesday, June 19th, 2012
 "Meet The Ghosts of Ohio" Presentation
 Delaware County District Library
 84 East Winter Street
 Delaware, OH 43015
 (740) 362-3861
<http://www.delaware.lib.oh.us/>

JULY

Thursday, July 26th, 2012
 "Just How Weird is Ohio?" Presentation
 Delaware County District Library: Orange Branch
 7171 Gooding Boulevard
 Delaware, OH 43015
 (740) 549-2665
<http://www.delaware.lib.oh.us/>

OCTOBER

Thursday, October 11th, 2012
 "Meet The Ghosts of Ohio" Presentation
 Hurt/Battelle Memorial Library
 270 Lilly Chapel Road
 West Jefferson, OH 43162

Friday, October 19th–Saturday, October 20th, 2012
 Lima Lantern Tours \$
 Allen County Memorial Hall
 120 W. Elm Street
 Lima, OH 45801
<http://limalantour.com/>



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.

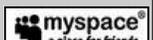
And for those of you who use Facebook and/or Twitter, you can find The Ghosts of Ohio on those sites, too:

Facebook

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

Twitter

<http://twitter.com/ghostsofohio>



The Great Appalachian Spook Show Paranormal Conference



www.greatappalachianspookshow.com

May 4th, 5th, & 6th, 2012

Twin City Opera House in McConnelsville, Ohio

Tim Maile, Brian Harnois, James Willis, John Sabol

Eric Glosser, Rene Kruse, Pat & Stephane Bussard, Brendan Shay

Rick Cassidy, Aron Houdini, Joey Ward Tickets On Sale Now

The Ghosts of Ohio will be appearing at The Great Appalachian Spook Show in McConnelsville, Ohio, this May. The convention runs from May 4th through 6th and will include ghost hunts, vendors, and presentations by a number of people in the field of paranormal research, including The Ghosts of Ohio's founder/director, James A. Willis.

For more information about the convention, or to order tickets, please visit:
<http://www.greatappalachianspookshow.com/>



Coming Up—Next Issue: June

- Paranormal Podcasts: A Review
- A 20-year Obsession with Crybaby Bridges
- Spend the Night with The Ghosts of Ohio Contest Winners!

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Investigations and Consultations: Continued Scheduling for 2012

The Ghosts of Ohio is continuing to schedule investigations for 2012. 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 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>.

Administration

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