The ghosts of Ohío® Newsletter

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FROM THE SPOOKY DESK OF JAMES WILLIS: Spring is in the air, and so are the yellow orbs!



James

Adairsville, GA. Actually, I don't believe we even called them "ghost hunts" back then—we were just given permission to roam the grounds after hours looking for ghosts. Anyway, I was totally stoked because I had recently purchased my very first digital camera and was aching to use it. Granted, this thing was about the size and weight of your common fireplace brick, but I was determined to catch me some ghosts on camera.

I still remember

encounter with

a yellow orb. It

was in April of

1998 and I was

taking part in a

ghost hunt at

Barnsley

Gardens in

my first

Today, Barnsley Gardens looks nothing like it did back then. A lot of it was in disrepair and some of it was literally in ruins. So of course, we had to go to those places first. Ghosts prefer dilapidated places, right?

As two people walked ahead of me through the field toward the main building, I decided to take my first digital picture. It was a clear night, so I was able to focus on their backs and snap away. As I sat there anxiously staring at the "processing... processing..." screen, suddenly an image popped up. There were the backs of my two friends as they walked through the field—but all around them were yellow balls of light of various sizes! I had captured some ghost orbs! And yellow ones, at that!

I immediately got my flashlight out and started looking around to see if there were any yellow objects that my flash could have reflected off of. There were none. I was literally over the moon and started shouting for my friends to come and look at my picture.

Now, those of you who know me well know that I tend to overanalyze things, especially when it comes to the paranormal. So once I calmed down, I started counting the yellow orbs in my picture. All in all, there were 10 full ones and maybe 3 or 4 halforbs. That's when the skeptic in me realized this was too good to be true. There had to be a rational explanation. So I started thinking out loud about what else could be flying around in the night sky. Bugs seemed logical, but why were they all yellow? Yellow! That's when it hit me: Pollen!

Those of you with allergies would do well to steer clear of Georgia in the springtime. That's because you haven't heard or seen high pollen counts until you've been to Georgia in the spring. Their pollen count is somewhere north of 8 billion to the point where all the pollen from the pine trees leaves this neon yellow dust all over your car. It's gross, it's nasty, and it makes for some really spooky yellow orbs. I did learn something from this event, though. Something that I still preach to this day. Namely, before you take a new camera (or any device, really) out on a ghost hunt, put it through the wringer to see what its limits are. In the case of a digital camera, take pictures in broad daylight with and without a flash, then do the same in a dark room. Different weather conditions, too. Along the way, you end up creating a visual reference guide as to how your camera responds in different situations. It will come in handy when you try to determine if what you captured in your image is paranormal or, in the case of Barnsley Gardens, just a bunch of airborne pollen.

Of course, I would be remiss if I didn't at least touch on the fact that there are "Official Orb Color Charts" out there that claim you can determine what the Ghost Orb wants or is feeling simply based on its color. According to these charts, a yellow orb represents "Warning." So in that regard, maybe the yellow orbs I captured that night were warning me of my impending allergy problems.

Now, where's the Zyrtec?

Cheers,

James A. Willis Founder/Director

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE #1

—Lee B., Columbus, OH

My father passed away three years ago after a long illness. But for whatever reason, while he was alive, his favorite holiday was April Fools' Day. He just thought it was the best day ever and loved playing tricks on people. When it came to me, When it came to me, ever since I was old enough to drive (so over 30 years ago), his favorite thing to do to me on April 1st was to hide my car keys. He did it every year to me as an April Fools' joke. It got so it was just tradition, I guess. I always knew he was going to do it, but he would end up tricking me to go do something like answer the phone for him and then he would grab my keys and hide them. He'd watch me look for them and keep asking, "What's the matter? Lost your keys? Well, where did you have them last?" He would keep up the game until I would finally say "I give up. Where are my keys?" and then he would tell me.

He was really sick the last few years of his life, but that didn't stop him. He would ask me to go get him something in the other room and then I would hear him telling my sister, "Go in her purse and get her keys and hide them for me."

I really didn't give it much thought the first April 1st after my dad passed away. But as I left for work that morning, my keys weren't on the kitchen island where I usually leave them. I searched all over, but couldn't find them. I guess it was out of habit because I don't remember thinking about saying it but I just sort of yelled out, "I give up! Where are my keys?" As soon as I said it, I caught myself and had a little laugh. I stopped laughing, though, when I heard this jingling noise come from my bedroom. I went in there and my keys were sitting on top of my bed, right in the middle and out on the open.

Now I should tell you that I live alone. And I make my bed every morning before I leave for work. So I know those keys were not there earlier. That's when I sort of got a cold chill. I've always believed in ghosts, but I've never seen one.

Next April, the keys disappeared again. After my dad died, I never really paid much attention to the calendar, so I didn't even realize it was April 1st until I realized my keys were missing. When it dawned on me, I actually pretended to look for my keys and then said, "I give up! Where are my keys?" This time, though, I didn't hear any jingling noise and my keys didn't show up. I ended up having to use a



spare. But wouldn't you know it, when I got home that night, my keys were lying on the kitchen island, right where I put them. But I know they weren't there when I left.

This year, as weird as it sounds, I took the day off to try a little experiment. I wanted to see if I could see where my keys went. I actually slept with my keys on my belt loop that night. In the morning, I put them on the island in the kitchen and then just sat there with them in plain view. I did work on my laptop, but the keys never left my sight.

Three hours later, they still hadn't moved. The door bell rang and since I had been expecting an Amazon delivery, I went to answer it. But when I opened the door, there was no one there. No package, either. Shrugging, I went back to the kitchen and you guessed it—my keys were gone! My dad's ghost had tricked me!

Guess there's always next April Fools' Day.



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!

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE #2

-Geoff G., Alliance, OH

I am 67 years old and I believe in ghosts and all sorts of things in this world that we can't explain. I wasn't always that way. You could probably say that I grew up making fun of people who believed in ghosts and such. Seemed like a whole bunch of foolishness. But something happened to me back in my youth that I still can't explain. For that reason, I was forced to believe that there are things in this world beyond our comprehension.

Back in my late teens, the tiny hamlet I grew up in had absolutely nothing going for it, which meant there was nothing to do on the weekends for us young folk. We could still get into a little mischief here and there, most of which involved beer. You could hang out in town, but the local sheriff didn't have much to do either, so more often than not, he'd run us off. So my friends and I would take to exploring the woods, if for no other reason than we could hang out and drink in peace.

One night, we managed to stumble upon this old, falling-down farmhouse out in the middle of nowhere. It was perfect for us and quickly became our unofficial clubhouse. We'd hang out there most weekends, drinking and shooting the breeze.

I don't remember where or when the idea first came up, but I'm sure it was fueled by the alcohol. Either way, we got the idea in our heads that no good abandoned farmhouse was worth its salt if it wasn't haunted. So we decided to create our very own ghost, complete with a back story.

Our ghost was that of a farmer, Sam, who used to own this very house. He had a secret, though. He would often need to travel to neighboring towns, telling his wife and family he needed to pick up seed or something like that. Even though he'd be gone for weeks on end, his wife and family never questioned anything, not even when he'd always pack a leather apron and several razor sharp knives. He told his family he was packing them in case he had the chance to swing by the local slaughterhouse and get a good deal on some fresh meat.

Long story short, the police show up at the farmhouse one day, looking for Sam. Wife says he left about a week ago, heading to town. Turns out the husband is wanted in connection to a series of brutal murders where the victims were all basically skinned alive. Police started calling the unknown assailant Leather Apron based on the description of his attire (we borrowed that name from Jack the Ripper lore, by the way).

Well, they never found Sam, which is what led us to the ghost story. We said that some people believed his ghost haunted the old farmhouse, carrying a razor sharp knife and dressed in his leather apron, searching for his next victim. We decided that he needed a nickname, so we took to calling our ghost Slaughterhouse Sam, or Sam, for short.

I guess it must have been a full year's worth of weekends that my five friends and I sat out there in the old farmhouse, expanding on the legend of Slaughterhouse Sam. We'd always add little tidbits, like how many kids he had or how many people he had skinned alive. But the basics always stayed the same: He was stalking the old farmhouse, clad in a leather apron and carrying a sharp knife. It got so the end of every evening we were out there, we'd all say, "Have a good night, Sam. Don't skin anyone until we get back." We'd also make sure to greet Sam whenever we'd first arrive.

Now comes the part that I can't explain. It was a typical, lazy summer evening, a Saturday, and the six of us decided to grab some brew and head out to the old farmhouse. We'd grabbed the beer and were walking through the woods when one of those summer rain storms came up out of nowhere. By the time we got to the house, the skies hadn't opened up yet, but there was some heat lightning in the air. I was kind of walking and looking down, to keep the light rain out of my eyes, when my friend, Steve, who was rambling on about something, suddenly stopped and let out a, "What is that?!?" I looked at Steve and he was looking at the house. I looked, but didn't see anything. None of us did. When we asked him, he said, "There was a man standing in the house, looking out the window at us." We thought he was seeing things as it was pretty dark, but he was adamant and said he saw it plain as day when the lightning had flashed. Guess he had us all convinced because we all just stood there, looking at the house and waiting for the next lightning flash. When it came, we were all staring at the house and sure enough, we all saw it.

What I saw was a man about six foot tall with dark hair, standing in front of the window at the far end of the house in what I guess would have been the living room.

We all knew what we had seen, and I remember us having a brief discussion on who it was inside the house. All in all, we were pretty convinced somebody had just found our clubhouse and was waiting to tell us to stay away or he'd call the cops. I don't remember any of us feeling scared until the next lightning flash. When that happened, the figure had moved from the living room window and was now standing in front of the window next to the gaping hole where the front door should have been (it had been broken down a long time ago). Then the next bolt of lightning came and I realized it was time to go.

It the full glow of the lightning bolt, we all saw the figure of a man, dressed in a black apron, standing on the front porch, a mere 20 feet away from us. The object he was holding in his right hand glinted as it reflected the lightning. It was a knife. A big one.

With that, we all took off and ran until we were out of the woods. We went our separate ways that night without talking about what we had seen. It would take

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE #2

DID WE MAKE IT REAL?, CONT.

several days before we felt OK talking about it. It makes no sense but we all saw the same thing and that thing looked exactly like the image we had conjured up for Slaughterhouse Sam. But how could that have been since we made everything about Sam up? And the only people who knew the fake story of Sam were standing alongside me that night. My only explanation is that we somehow managed to conjure up something through our repeated telling of the ghost story. And that somehow, whatever we brought to life, so to speak, was able to take on the form of Sam. Makes no sense, I know, but it's the only explanation I can come up with.

I never went back to the house again. A couple of my friends did, but they never did find anything to suggest that anybody other than us had ever been out there. Some other locals must have found the house years later because back in the 80s, I heard what was left of the farmhouse burned down. One final strange thing. I guess about 10 years ago, I heard tell that people said there was a ghost out in the woods where the farmhouse used to be. It was a group of teenagers sitting at a table next to me at the Waffle House. Part of me wanted to lean over and ask for more information about the ghost. But if they ended up telling me the ghost was wearing a leather apron and carrying a knife, I don't know what I would have done.

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HISPERING SKU Jonathan stroud

TEEN BOOK REVIEW: THE LOCKWOOD AND COMPANY SERIES

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lockwood

THE CREEPING SHADOW JONATHAN STROUD



Samantha

rising and causing havoc all over England, it was discovered that children, unlike most adults, possess a natural ability to see, hear, and experience the Problem. Agencies were created to train these children in battling spirits and eliminating Sources—the objects that keep spirits earth bound.

Lucy's psychic abilities are stronger than most. While she possesses Sight, her Listening skills (hearing and communicating with the dead) and sense of Touch (being able to touch an object to see moments of its past) are second to none. Most agencies don't know what to do with someone like Lucy; so it's fortunate that she landed employment at Lockwood & Company, the maverick of all agencies.

Lucy Carlyle is a teenage professional ghost hunter, much like many people her age since the Problem began decades ago. When spirits of the dead began

> Together with swashbuckling Anthony Lockwood and braniac George Cubbins, Lucy and the boys put Lockwood and Company on the map as one of the top agencies in the country for eliminating spirits.

There are four adventures (so far) in this series: The Screaming Staircase, The Whispering Skull, The Hollow Boy, and The Creeping Shadow. All of them are a blast to read! They're spooky and full of page-turning adventure, but also thoughtful and full of heart. It's the characters that drive this saga.

I highly recommend this series, especially for older teens and adults looking for a smart paranormal adventure. I'm anxiously awaiting the next book!

HOLLOW BOY

JONATHAN STROUD

MEET THE GHOSTS OF OHIO: Sam

Length of time in The Ghosts of Ohio?

I've been a member for almost 12 years.



What got you interested in ghosts? I've been fascinated with ghosts and the paranormal since

childhood. I grew up watching just about every spooky TV show and movie out there, and I spent an abnormal amount of time pretending to be a Ghostbuster, even doing research and creating my own "paranormal dictionary" that was full of new terms I learned.

Favorite piece of ghost-hunting equipment?

My digital voice recorders. There's nothing spookier and more amazing than capturing a voice that wasn't heard in real time.

Favorite place you've investigated?

So far, I'd have to say the Haunted Hydro because it's the one place where I feel like I made genuine contact with a spirit. As a non-psychic, that means a lot to me.

Three places you'd love to investigate?

First, I always love investigating Gettysburg because it's truly a paranormal grab bag. You never know what you're gonna get! Second, the Winchester Mystery



House would be an interesting place to investigate, both supernaturally and architecturally. I'd probably get lost in that crazy place. And third, I'd love to investigate the Tunstall Store in Lincoln, New Mexico, because of its connection to Billy the Kid's history (I'm obsessed), and the fact that a park ranger told me that the place is haunted, most likely by Mr. Tunstall himself. Oh the questions I'd ask!



Several issues ago, we announced our new "Back In Time" feature where we asked you to share your spooky stories from childhood and we would do some research to find out where those stories stand today. Sort of like a supernatural scavenger hunt where we try to unearth all those tales from your youth. I guess we struck a nerve with you guys because the response has been overwhelming! We've gotten over 95 requests so far, which include everything from ghosts and haunted houses to mysterious monsters and even a few UFO sightings! Amazing!

For those of you unfamiliar with what we're doing, it all goes back to the idea that everyone, even those who might not believe in the supernatural, has one thing in common when it comes to ghosts: A scary story of a haunted place from your childhood. You know, the old house you weren't supposed to go near or the creepy old grave sitting all by itself on top of a hill. Maybe the monster that lived in the woods behind your house. Well, whatever it was, we're sure that you've often thought to yourself, "I wonder whatever happened to that place?" Well,

now's your chance to find out!

The Ghosts of Ohio wants you to send us your childhood ghost stories. We'll take it from there and dig into the history to find out if there really was any truth to the tales that chilled your bones as a youth. Just send an email to info@ghostsofohio.org with as much information as you can remember and we will jump right on it. We'll even supply you with a free report with everything we were able to uncover. So what are you waiting for? Send The Ghosts back in time!



BACK IN TIME T Toledo's Satanic Cult



This isn't really about ghosts, but you seem to be into all sorts of weird stuff so I thought if anyone could answer this question, it would be you.

I grew up near Toledo, Ohio, in the 70s and 80s. When I was a teenager, we started hearing all sorts of stories about there being a satanic cult that lived in the woods somewhere in Toledo. I guess it

would have been around 84 or 85 because I was in high school at the time, but I wasn't a senior yet. I mention this because the seniors would try to scare us by saying the police had gone out and dug up the places where the cult had sacrificed people. They said the police found over 100 bodies that the cult had killed. I swear I remember one of the seniors showing me a newspaper article that talked about the police digging up bodies. But age has taken its toll and I can't remember any of the specifics about the article.

So can you shed any light on this? Thanks in advance and I love all the work you guys do with the newsletter. It's nice to know there are people like you all out there who take the paranormal seriously but also have a sense of humor.

-Gerard E., Newark, New Jersey

First off, thank you for the kind words. And yes, since I am (proudly) "into weird stuff," I am able to answer your question with very little digging. Truth be told, I've been personally obsessed with this "case" for many years as I find it to be a wonderful example of how rumors can lead to panic, which in turn, years later, can turn into a nice, spooky urban legend!

Concerning the story of the cult lurking in the Toledo area woods, here's what we've got:

LEGEND

Since 1969, there has been an active satanic cult lurking outside Toledo in Springfield Township, Ohio. This cult, according to one witness, conducted blood rituals and even human sacrifice. In fact they would sacrifice an average of 5-6 individuals a year. In June of 1985, acting on tips from locals, police excavated a mass grave containing the bodies of almost 100 victims of the cult.

TRUTH

Believe it or not, there is a lot of truth hidden within this particular urban legend. Truth does not always equal evidence, though, as we'll soon find out.

This strange tale begins on June 20, 1985, near Spencer Township, Ohio. Around 7:00 a.m. that morning, police, armed with a search warrant, entered a house in the 900 block of South Crissey. Among other things, authorities were looking for Leroy Freeman, 59, who was wanted for questioning regarding the disappearance of his granddaughter, Charity. Both had gone missing almost 3 years ago. Charity was 7 at the time of her disappearance.

At a press conference held that very morning, Sheriff James Telb stated they were also looking for drugs, weapons, and what they deemed to be "cult paraphernalia." And that's when things quickly started to spin out of control.

Apparently, there were rumors throughout the area (although none were ever substantiated) that Leroy Freeman was the head of the cult and had sacrificed his granddaughter. As to why authorities chose to search the house on South Crissey, that was never made clear. But there were reports that Freeman either owned the house or had stayed there. Unsubstantiated claims also spoke of Freeman being spotted lurking around the house itself. This despite the current owner, Pat Litton, claiming to not know or have ever seen Freeman.

So no one was really surprised when police emerged from the house sans Leroy Freeman. No guns or drugs, either. As for the "cult paraphernalia," some of the items recovered included 2 Ozzy Osbourne albums, and a poster "depicting scenes from the film *Raiders Of The Lost Ark.*" There was also an item described as "a bone." although the current owner, Pat Litton, claimed there was no significance to the bone and that her sons had simply dug it up in the back yard.

Police apologized to the Litton family and most people thought that was the end of it. But then the digging started.

Sheriff Telb announced that they were preparing to start digging in the nearby Spencer Township woods. And they were looking for bodies. Telb said this was part of a multimonth investigation into cult activity in the area. What's more, a witness had come forward and explained that there

(continued on page 7.)

BACK IN TIME Toledo's Satanic Cult, Cont.

was a mass grave in the woods, which was used by the cult to dispose of their victims. As to how many bodies they expected to recover, Telb put that number between 50 and 60 and included men, women, and children.

The Region

Satanic Cult Dig Resumes

TOLEDO, Ohio-Lucas County sheriff's deputies resumed digging on Tuesday for alleged victims of a satanic cult, which officials here have been told killed up to 75 people over the last 15 years.

—from the July 3rd, 1985, edition of The Cincinnati Enquirer

Obviously, once word of a mass grave of satanic cult victims hit the news wire, the national media descended on Spencer Township and the whole area immediately took on a circus-like atmosphere with reporters running everywhere, asking locals questions about the cult. "Cult experts" were even called in to survey the situation and offer up their opinions as to what was and was not cultrelated. Because of all this, Sheriff Telb came under fire for holding his press conference and uttering the words "cult" and "mass grave" before they had even begun to dig. When pressed as to why the Sheriff went ahead and OKed the dig when the only "evidence" he had was a tip from an anonymous source, Telb would only reiterate that this was part of a three-month investigation and that the dig itself wasn't costing much.

Several days later, the dig, which had expanded to cover three locations in the woods, was "temporarily suspended," after Telb began to believe that his informant might be perpetrating a hoax. But digging resumed in early July based on Telb receiving "new evidence." All digging shut down a few days later, never to be started up again. During the entire course of both digs, not a single body was ever unearthed. Among the debris authorities recovered from the dig that were dubbed "cult-like in nature" were several rusty knives, a headless doll, and an upside-down wooden cross (although most said it was more than likely an old clothesline post). Other suspect items included a

hypodermic needle, "various containers – "" of body paint," and "assorted rags."

At one of his final press conferences concerning the case, Sheriff Telb admitted that they had not found any evidence suggesting that any crime had taken place in the woods. However, he added, "We're still going to continue our investigation with the evidence we found. There may still be bodies out there."



-The June 20th, 1985, edition of *The Toledo Blade* contained a detailed map showing the location of the dig sites as well as their relative distance from the house the police served the search warrant at.

Despite that, 32 years later, no bodies have ever been recovered from those woods.

As a final postscript, in October of 1988, Leroy Freeman was arrested at a Huntington Beach, California, apartment. Thirteen-year-old Charity Freeman was living in the apartment with him. Even though Freeman pled guilty to kidnapping Charity, he did not force her to leave and she stayed with him willingly. The kidnapping was believed to have been brought about due to Freeman disagreeing with the way Charity's mother chose to raise her daughter. Regardless, no link between Leroy Freeman and any cult activity was ever discovered.

Got a spooky story from your childhood you'd like for us to look into? Then send the Ghosts back in time by sending your story to **info@ghostsofohio.org** and we'll get right on it!

SPEND THE NIGHT WITH THE GHOSTS OF OHIO THE BELL NURSING HOME

Well, we've confirmed another location for our Spend The Night program: The Bell Nursing Home in Kimbolton, Ohio.

Based on a recommendation from our new friends, the paranormal power duo known as SaRosh, The Ghosts of Ohio have reserved a private investigation of "The Bell" on August 12th.

It was a private residence and then a funeral home before becoming a nursing home. The building closed down around 2006 and the remaining residents were relocated. Or were they? For there are reports of all sorts of paranormal activity taking place in the building, leading many to believe that there still may be a former patient or two wandering the hallways of The Bell.

All of us at The Ghosts Of Ohio are really excited for this overnight as this will be our first visit to The Bell Nursing Home. The facility is actually smaller than our usual Spend The Night locations, which makes for a more intimate investigation. We can't wait to (hopefully) hear and see what secrets The Bell might hold!



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WANT TO SPEND THE MIGHT WITH THE GHOSTS OF OHIO IN 2017?

For those of you not familiar with our Spend The Night program, simply put, it's an opportunity for some of our fans to get locked inside of a haunted location with us on a private, overnight ghost hunt.

All you need to be is an active subscriber to this very newsletter. As long as you are, there's a chance your email address will be randomly pulled from the list. When that happens, you and a guest are headed to a haunted location with us for the night!



Investigations & Consultations

The Ghosts of Ohio are continuing to schedule investigations for 2017. 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:



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Administration

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