



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

www.ghostsofohio.org

Volume 8 Issue 6

## From the Spooky Desk of James Willis: The “Ultimate” Bragging Rights?



James

While Sheri is going to give us all her review of Zak Bagan’s newest endeavor, Paranormal Challenge, later in this newsletter, I’ll go ahead and admit something right off the bat; I made sure to tune in for the first episode. There were two reasons for that. First, Ghost Adventures’ new season had yet to start, so I was curious as to what part of Mr. Bagan’s had grown more during the hiatus: his biceps or his head (the answer ended up being both). But more than that, I was curious as to what exactly the “ultimate bragging rights” were that the winners were going to have bestowed on them. Even though I’ve spent the last 26 years investigating ghosts, I’ve never felt that I had bragging rights to anything. So I was dying to know exactly what one had to be in order to acquire “ultimate” bragging rights.

Truth be told, even though I’ve waded through several episodes of Paranormal Challenge, I’m still scratching my head over what those bragging rights are. But more than that,

I’m appalled at what this show is proclaiming makes for a good investigation. Aside from the fact that the “investigation” is really only two 2-hour sessions or that one of the criteria the teams are graded on is called “history” when really all they are asked to do is use their short-term memory to remember what (unverified) history the tour guide tells them, the vast majority of investigators I have seen on the show behave badly. They yell at fellow team members, misuse equipment, and try to outdo each other by continually challenging the ghosts to “do something.” Perhaps these teams are simply parroting the antics of Mr. Bagan’s in an attempt to gain favor. But I’m getting more than a little sick and tired of having myself and The Ghosts of Ohio lumped into the same category as these groups.

Back when I first got involved in this field, how good a team you were was determined by one thing and one thing only—how you treated your clients and those who reached out to you for help. These people weren’t looking for you to get into a wrestling match with a ghost or dare whatever was inhabiting their

home to step forward and push you. No, these people just wanted answers and to talk to someone who wasn’t going to treat them like they were crazy. There were no bragging rights involved. At the end of the day, if you could climb into bed with the knowledge that you helped a family sleep a little easier, you were content.

Things are different now. It’s no longer about how professional you are, but how much “evidence” you collect, no matter how suspect it is. And there will be those who will tell you that if you don’t have your own TV show yet, you better get a pilot episode up and running if you ever want to be taken seriously. All in all, it’s clear to me that somewhere along the way, many got lost. I can only hope that one day, we can all find our way back. Until then, I won’t hold my breath awaiting approval on my Ghost Adventures Crew membership application.

Cheers,  
James A. Willis  
Founder/Director

## Travis Walton: One Decision Can Change a Life



Samantha

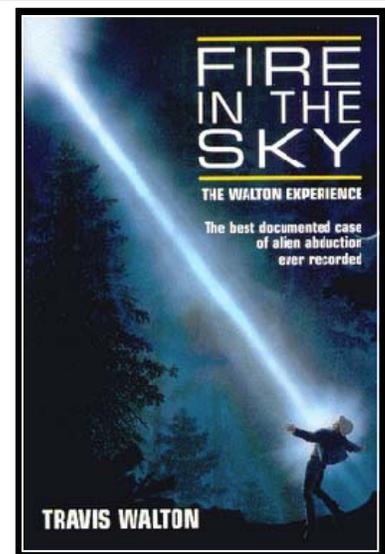
*“If I had to do it over again, I wouldn’t get out of the truck.”*

– Travis Walton

When Travis Walton took the podium on July 16th at this year’s MUFON of Ohio Summer Conference, the audience’s anticipation was palpable. It isn’t often that the subject of the world’s most thoroughly documented alien abduction case makes a public appearance; and based on what I had learned about him before the conference, I must admit that I was excited, too.

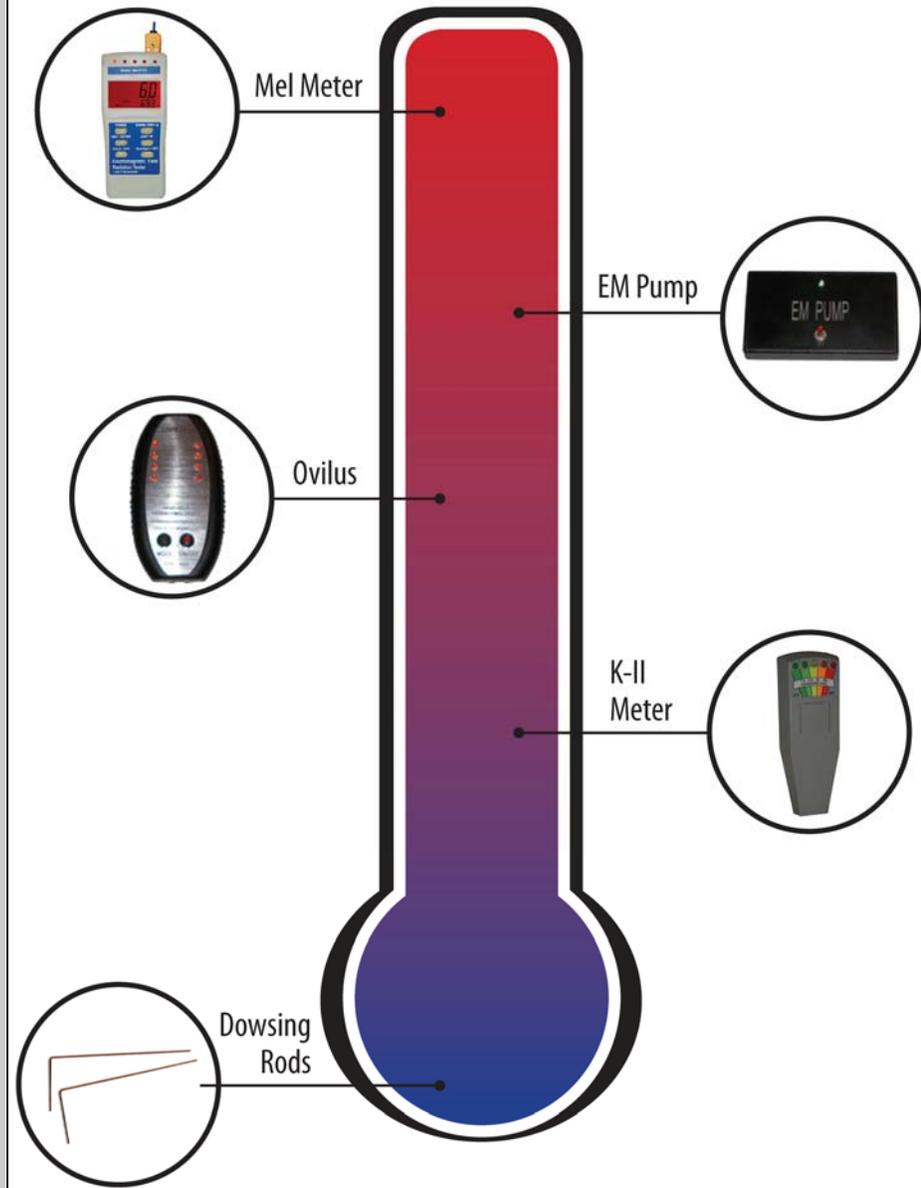
I first learned of Travis Walton years ago when I saw *Fire in the Sky*, the 1993 film loosely based on his book about his abduction experience. The movie terrified me at the time. However, my inquisitive mind always wants to know more, so I recently acquired a copy of his book titled *Fire in the Sky: The Walton Experience*. It was incredibly eye opening. It not only proved to me that he did, indeed, have a close encounter, but it also revealed that there are some things more frightening than anything Hollywood can produce. And I’m not necessarily talking about aliens.

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

**HOT or NOT:  
HANDHELDS**



**HOT**

*Mel Meter*

It's an EMF! No, it's a temperature gauge! Actually, it's both...and a whole lot more. And since it does the work of several handhelds, it's like getting a whole extra hand free.

*EM Pump*

So if ghosts can affect the electromagnetic field, what would happen if you introduce even more electromagnetic charge into an area? Will ghosts use it to materialize or simply drain the energy? That's what this device aims to prove, one way or another.

**LUKEWARM**

*Ovilus*

No one seems to care that there's no real explanation as to how this device supposedly allows ghosts to speak through it or that the manufacturer willingly admits that the Ovilus is designed for "entertainment purposes only." All that matters is that the darn thing speaks!

*K-II Meter*

Is it your dead grandmother who's making all those lights on the K-II flash? Or is it merely a call from your living grandmother on your cell phone that's responsible? The fact that this meter is susceptible to all sorts of interference is causing more and more investigators to think twice about using it.

**NOT**

*Dowsing Rods*

In today's "flashing lights and beeping noises" world of the paranormal researcher, dowsing rods look, well, kind of lame. Add to that the fact that the slightest breeze or involuntary twitch will send these things spinning and you'll see while most dowsing rods are being re-bent and returned to their original shape as a clothes hanger.

**Investigations and Consultations: Continued Scheduling for 2011**

The Ghosts of Ohio is continuing to schedule investigations for 2011 and into 2012. 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>.

## Travis Walton: One Decision Can Change a Life—Continued

*Continued from Page 1*

Travis Walton's extraordinary story began on November 5, 1975, in the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest in Arizona. At the time he was a logger on a crew with six other men, clearing pine trees in a remote area of forest. After a long day of grueling work, the men loaded into their truck and began the drive home to the small town of Snowflake, Arizona. However, their trip was interrupted by the sight of a bright yellow light emanating from within the forest about 30 yards from the road. The sun had already set, so they began speculating about what it could be. Hunters? Fire? Plane crash? As they got closer, the source of the light finally came into view, to everyone's utter disbelief. What they saw was a "strange, golden disc" hovering only 90 feet above the ground. The men were completely awestruck, and for someone as curious as Travis, it was exciting. So exciting, in fact, that as soon as the truck stopped, Travis recklessly threw open the passenger door and ran toward the object wanting a better look. Of course, the other men panicked, yelling at him to come back. Unfortunately, Travis came to his senses too late. When he finally decided to turn back, he was hit with a powerful discharge from the craft that knocked him unconscious, sending his body flying backward about twenty feet. The crew's panic went into overdrive, thinking that the UFO had killed Travis. The men fled the scene as fast as they could, but didn't get far before going back in case he was still alive. When they got to the scene, there was no sign of Travis or the UFO.

The following four days were chaos in Snowflake. Law enforcement, volunteers, and search and rescue dogs and helicopters combed the forest for any sign of Travis, to no avail. Although there were many who suspected foul play and that Travis may have been murdered, the idea of a possible alien abduction attracted news reporters and UFO investigators and enthusiasts from all over the world. Travis' family and friends found themselves being harassed at all hours by the media and by people

with false sightings of Travis in various locations. They received calls from conspiracy theorists and prank callers; so many, in fact, that his brother-in-law Grant didn't believe it when Travis himself called on the fifth day after his disappearance, shouting something like, "They brought me back!" and begging to be picked up in the nearby town of Heber. Luckily, Travis' family decided to go to Heber and look for him, just in case the call was real.

When Grant and his brother Duane found him in a phone booth, Travis was shaky, hungry, and thirsty. He made attempts to describe what had happened to him, but was too horrified to get the words out. He was an emotional wreck. Knowing the circus that would await Travis if they took him back to Snowflake, Duane decided to take him to his home in Phoenix. There, Travis could be seen anonymously by a doctor, and he could be given the time and space he needed to recover from his ordeal.

And what an ordeal it was! After being knocked unconscious by the UFO, Travis awoke sometime later on a table in a small odd-shaped room. His head and chest hurt, and at first he assumed that he had been taken to the hospital. As his vision cleared, however, he found himself face-to-face with three humanoid alien beings with translucent pale skin, oversized craniums, and large eyes whose intense stare would haunt him to this day. As anyone might do in such a situation, Travis panicked and lashed out at the creatures, knocking one into the other. He then used what strength he had to jump off of the table and grab a nearby object with which to defend himself. Amazingly, just as he was about to attack them, the beings "turned and scurried from the room." He then sought a way out, so he went through the only door in the room—the one through which the creatures had exited. There was a narrow corridor, and he proceeded in the opposite direction from where the beings went. He soon discovered a room that appeared to be some sort of control room, and it was while he was experimenting with

buttons and levers that another being arrived. This one, however, appeared to be human, and Travis was at first relieved. He asked question after question, but the "human" never spoke to him. The being simply guided him to an airlock, and then off of the craft into a large hangar, and then to a room where two men and a woman were waiting for him. Again, he asked question after question, but these human-like beings didn't speak to him, either. Strangely, all of them looked similar, as though they could all be related. And again, Travis noted their eyes. "Something was definitely odd about those eyes." The beings led him to a long table, lifted him onto it (despite his resistance), and gently pushed him down. They then placed an oxygen mask-like object over his mouth and nose, and, almost instantly, he blacked out.

When Travis awoke, he was face down on a road just outside of Heber, Arizona. He looked up in time to see the UFO rise into the night sky and disappear.

The ordeal left Travis shaken. He was tense and nervous every minute, like a "caged wildcat," and he suffered with horrific nightmares. As if that wasn't enough, everyone who had heard about his disappearance wanted a piece of him: law enforcement, UFO "experts," the media, and more. His life had turned completely upside down. Fortunately, he somehow summoned the strength to deal with all of it, and over time learned some very valuable lessons about human nature and about scientific investigations.

The first lesson he learned was that no matter how much conclusive evidence there is, "people see what they want to see." Travis and his coworkers all shared the same story and passed multiple lie detector tests. The crew's hard hats registered abnormally on a Geiger counter. A core sample of a tree near where the UFO hovered showed obvious signs of accelerated growth after the incident. Such hard evidence is difficult to refute, yet there are those who believe that Travis faked the whole

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## Paranormal Challenge: "Suit Up" for Adventure, Acronyms, and EVPs



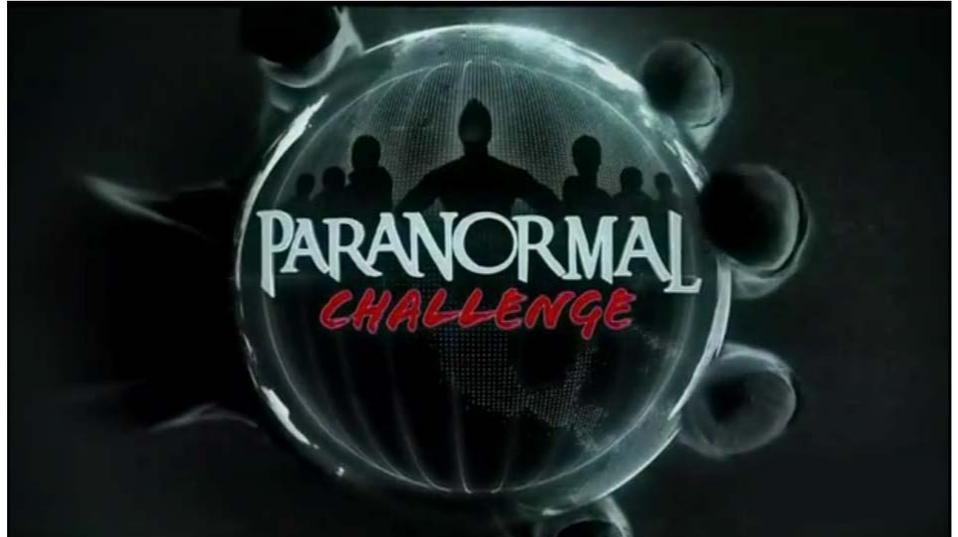
Sheri

"This isn't a stuffed animal factory full of puppy dogs and ice cream," explains host Zak Bagans. That is definitely true. But it is an abandoned, dilapidated building full of fraidy cats, angst-filled investigators, aspiring celebrities, and giant biceps.

As if Zak Bagans hadn't penetrated deep enough into ghost territory on the *Travel Channel*, the "highly respected" lead investigator of "Ghost Adventures" has a new reality show called Paranormal Challenge. Instead of spending time cuddling puppies and eating ice cream, the show purports to measure contestants' knowledge of history, technology, and teamwork while conducting a paranormal investigation and competing against another team. The prize? The highly coveted "ultimate in bragging rights" (whatever that consists of) to bring back to your acronymically named, black t-shirt wearing ghost posse.

Now, don't get me wrong. It's not that I'm bothered by the contestants' matching t-shirts, acronymed name, or natural ability to utilize a \$5,000+ piece of technical equipment without any training. I'm bothered by the continuous barrage of clichéd ghost hunter characters that appear in different shapes and forms on every paranormal reality show on television. It's all the same. There's always the naive, inexperienced investigator, the overly cocky, hot-tempered investigator, the seductive, trying-too-hard-to-be-sexy female investigator, and the clumsy, inept investigator. Take this recipe of personalities and have them examined under a microscope of self-proclaimed ghost experts and you have the formula for Paranormal Challenge.

I'm also bothered that having a radio show, writing a teen novel, and speaking at conventions is enough credence to allow you to be called an evidence "expert" in a field where there is no certainty about anything. Yet, to have the pluck to speak with utmost



conviction on the subject every time? That's ballsy. It's almost as if watching a ghost-hunting challenge show, being in a ghost group with an acronymed name, and writing for a ghost newsletter gives you credibility to become a television show critic! Go figure!

I'm bothered that the Paranormal Challenge show concludes each episode with the review of two visual and two audio pieces of evidence from each group. The majority of the time, the groups are splitting hairs to make a dust particle seem like a ghost orb or a camera pixilation seem like a shadow figure. Occasionally, a group presents a piece of evidence that makes you say, "Hmm..." But, where is our system of check and balances? Can we believe these "experts for a day" that it is legit?

I'm not bothered by Zak Bagans, however. I've come to enjoy his character. I enjoy his overdramatic, utterly convincing naïveté. And, his biceps...well, those have only grown since last season of Ghost Adventures. And, the audience, and some investigators, are okay with that.

While Zak's antics and persona (over-gelled hair, enthusiasm for a giant crank siren, and ability to only appear in overdramatic lighting) entertain, the show is to be taken with a grain of salt. Yes, you get to see many cool buildings (each one more "haunted" than the last), and yes, sometimes the show brings you to laugh out loud (but maybe not

purposely). But, as far as relying on the host, judges, or crews to show expertise in the field, I believe the show should come with the disclaimer: "This show is for entertainment purposes only. Activities on this show should not be attempted at home."

Bottom line: If you can survive the cheesy lines (i.e., "I love the smell of EVPs in the morning" or "Suit up"), and questionable evidence, it's worth watching when nothing else is on TV.

### Support The Ghosts of Ohio... And Look Good Doing It!

Have you visited The Ghosts of Ohio web store yet? If not, what are you waiting for? Our store has all your back-to-school needs, from baseball caps and t-shirts to water bottles and mousepads. What's more, everything we make from the sale of our merchandise goes directly to support The Ghosts of Ohio organization. In other words, you get to show off all your sweet Ghosts of Ohio attire while knowing that you helped us keep fresh batteries in our flashlights!

So have a look around the store. You never know what you might find on our shelves!

<http://www.cafepress.com/ghostsofohio>



## Travis Walton: One Decision Can Change a Life—Continued

*Continued from Page 3*

thing. The media, of course, is notorious for putting spins on stories. Unfortunately, it is the so-called “investigators” that are the biggest disappointment, publishing negative articles based only on hearsay and opinion, with no interviews or fact checking. Travis calls these people “armchair investigators,” and in my opinion, they have no right to call themselves investigators at all. Getting at the truth means getting off your butt!

The second lesson Travis learned was the difference between professionals and frauds. Shortly after his return, his brother Duane contacted an “investigator” named William Spaulding from a group called Ground Saucer Watch (GSW). Spaulding had contacted Duane while Travis was missing and offered advice in the event Travis was returned. At first he was helpful, instructing Duane to save Travis’ clothes and urine for scientific analysis. However, when he arranged for Travis to see a “colleague” of his for a medical examination, it turned out that the “colleague” worked in a seedy part of town, wasn’t informed about Travis, wasn’t licensed to practice medicine in Arizona, and also seemed to have forgotten that he was even associated with GSW! It didn’t take long before

Travis and Duane kicked them to the curb. In Travis’ words, “...it was in dealing with GSW that I first had contact with pseudoscientific nonsense and flaky people with bogus credentials.” On the flip side, a group called the Aerial Phenomena Research Organization (APRO) turned out to be comprised of true professionals. It arranged for Travis to have a complete, confidential medical exam, including blood and urine testing, EKG, EEG, X-rays, and more. Also, the group’s director, Jim Lorenzen, and certified hypnotist Dr. James Harder helped Travis calm down and relax enough to tell his story. APRO was supportive and knowledgeable, which was exactly what Travis needed at the time.

The final and most important lesson Travis learned was how to be his own investigator. He’s spent years conducting his own research and testing, compiling as much information about the incident as he can. Interviews, documentation, and test results can be found in his book; and, he analyzes his story from multiple points of view, including those of his detractors. He even attempts to answer people’s questions about the bigger implications of his abduction experience. I honestly never expected to read such a thorough

account of an alien abduction. I was also impressed when, at the conference, he revealed that he’s currently having soil samples tested, and he’s going to be checking the current radiation levels of the area. He’s planning on publishing a third (and final) edition of his book sometime in the near future. He has become a true investigator, which is why his case is known as the “best documented case of alien abduction ever recorded.”

I find it amazing how one decision can change a life forever. For Travis Walton, that decision was getting out of the truck. Not only was his experience with the alien beings terrifying and difficult for him to cope with, but the chaos after his return reminds me of sharks ripping apart a piece of meat, with Travis as the meat. He never wanted to be in the spotlight, and he still doesn’t. His awkwardness as he spoke to a room full of people at the conference proved that. One of the reasons he wrote his book was to “avoid being eternally interviewed.” Unfortunately, he’ll always be the subject of discussion and people will always have questions, even if his book has already provided the answers.

## Ghostly Fiction: *The Winter Ghosts* Book Review



Janine

*The Winter Ghosts* by bestselling author Kate Mosse is not a book for those who demand an action-packed beginning, but it is a worthwhile read.

It is a story in a frame, beginning with a confident man, Freddie, searching out a bookseller in 1933 Toulouse, France. After he finds the bookseller, he relates his tale. Five years earlier, Freddie had been nearly suicidal over the loss of his older brother in World War 1. He took a drive through the Pyrenees, got caught in a storm, and crashed his Austin. This catastrophe is described in exquisite detail, “I saw the snow and glass and blood mixed together in my lap,

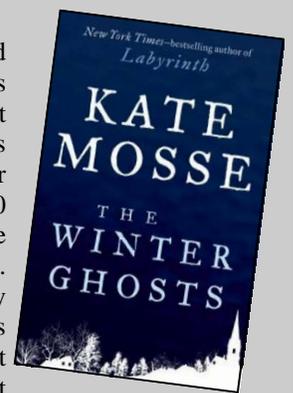
glittering and yet dull at the same time.”

After a grueling walk, he ended up in Nulle, a little village with a “kind of cloud” of sadness hanging over it. The landlady of his lodging invited him to “la Fete de Saint-Etonne” to be held that night. He attended the jolly costume party and drank a heady red liquor. He met a girl, Fabrissa.

Fabrissa was different than everyone else he had met in the years since the war. She listened to him. This was healing. Before she could tell her own story, soldiers broke into the festival and Freddie and Fabrissa had to escape.

By the time we have heard what Fabrissa had to say, both the reader and Freddie have had a history lesson, and know that Freddie has met a room full of ghosts. The folks at the party had not

been dressed in costumes after all, but in what was right for their time, 600 years before Freddie’s life. The history lesson comes off a bit heavily, but the good that Freddie and Fabrissa do for each other lifts this story and makes it luminous. Meeting the ghostly Fabrissa has made Freddie the more confident man who speaks to the present-day bookseller.



Rating: 🧟🧟🧟🧟

## Spend The Night: Waverly Sanatorium Sneak Peak

On Tuesday, August 23, 2011, The Ghosts of Ohio spent the night locked inside Waverly Sanatorium in Louisville, KY, with a few lucky newsletter readers. We'll have a full review of what happened in our October newsletter. Until then, here's a few pictures to whet your appetite.



## Spend The Night with The Ghosts of Ohio in 2012

Did you read that right? 2012? Yes, believe it or not, we are creeping toward the end of 2011. But don't despair, because that means that The Ghosts of Ohio is already looking into renting out some of the most haunted buildings in Ohio (and beyond) for an entire night in 2012. 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!

## 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](mailto:info@ghostsofohio.org). And who knows? You just might get the chance to investigate the location along with The Ghosts of Ohio!

## 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!



**Devil's Backbone**  
(Camden/Preble county)

**Fudge Road**  
(Gratis/Preble county)

**Airplane Hollow**  
(Nelsonville/Athens county)

**Hellmouth**  
(Kenyon College/Knox county)

## Ghostly Tour of Ohio University Campus

On Monday, August 1st, The Ghosts of Ohio founder and director, James A. Willis visited the campus of Ohio University in Athens, Ohio, to speak at the 2011 Ohio Library Support Staff Institute. That evening, Willis led over 50 attendees on a two-hour walking tour across campus, chronicling the university's ghost stories and urban legends. From Laura, the Bob Marley-loving ghost at Crawford Hall to the demonic face in the door of Wilson Hall, no ghostly tale went untold and a great time was had by all! For more information on the OLSSI, please visit [www.olssi.org](http://www.olssi.org).



## Have Spirits, Will Travel: Come Out and See The Ghosts!

While there still a month or so to go, before you know it, Halloween season will be upon us! And that will mean that The Ghosts of Ohio might just be showing up in your town. While we're still scheduling some appearances at

local libraries and partnering with local ghost tours to give more of you the opportunity to come out and see us, here's a peek at some of the places we can confirm so far. More details and additional dates are going to be added

soon. For the most up-to-date news regarding where The Ghosts of Ohio will be showing up, friend us on [Facebook](#) or follow us on [Twitter](#) to get breaking news as it happens!



Check out The Ghosts of Ohio at an upcoming presentation near you!

### OCTOBER

**Saturday, October 8th**

Bowling Green Ghost Tours

**Saturday, October 15th**

Delaware (Ohio) Ghost Walk

**Tuesday, October 18th**

Marion Public Library Presentation

**Friday, October 21st**

Lima Lantern Tours

**Saturday, October 22nd**

Lima Lantern Tours

**Saturday, October 29th**

Brugeman Lodge (Hancock Park District)

### NOVEMBER

**Thursday, November 3rd**

Southern State Community College

# WAVERLY HILLS SANATORIUM



Photo by Sheri Harrington

## Interact with The Ghosts of Ohio

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>



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## Coming Up—Next Issue: October

- Spending the night inside Waverly Sanatorium
- The Ghosts of Ohio reveals their scariest Halloween memories
- Borley Rectory: World's Most Haunted Building?

