



# The ghosts of Ohio® Newsletter

www.ghostsofohio.org

Volume 8 Issue 2

## From the Spooky Desk of James Willis: Happy New Year!



James

Where did 2010 go? Sure, it feels great to be able to put another year under our ghostly belt, but I'm the kind of guy who is always wishing for more time—more time to spend researching ghosts and more time to just sit back and take in the current paranormal landscape and figure out just where we all stand. And of course, there's the wish for more time to spend with my family and friends doing non-ghostly things. So I guess if I had one wish for 2011, it would be for us all to be able to take a few deep breaths and spend a bit more time in the land of the

living. I'll be the first to admit that I find the living a lot more frightening and disturbing than the dead. Still, as someone who has been involved with paranormal research for many, many years, I have seen, in recent years, a bit of the muddying of the ghostly waters. For better or worse, we are now a field that spends most of its time and efforts trying to capture fame and fortune. It's hard enough spending almost all of your spare time investigating ghosts. But add PR work into that and it can become all-consuming. All for something that, if it happens at all, is over in a heart beat. And who suffers the most from all this? Our friends and family. Which, when you come right down to it, is the saddest

thing of all as they are usually the ones who are supporting us the most. They are the ones who allow us to chase after our lifelong goal of searching for things that go bump in the night. Without them, there would be no paranormal field.

I know that the holidays are almost over, but it's never too late to put down the EMF detector, turn off the Ghost Adventures marathon, quit Outlook, and take some time to let those close to you know how much they mean to you. Don't worry, the ghosts aren't going anywhere.

Cheers,  
James A. Willis  
Founder/Director

## Ghost Fiction: The Little Stranger—A Good, Scary Read



Janine

Sarah Waters, the Welsh author of *The Little Stranger*, is known for novels containing gay and lesbian characters, notably *Tipping the Velvet* which was made into a film aired on the BBC. *The Little Stranger* completely breaks from this vein, and is a ghost story reminiscent of *Turn of the Screw* in the way that suspense is constantly amped up, and yet at the end, the reader can't be sure what really happened.

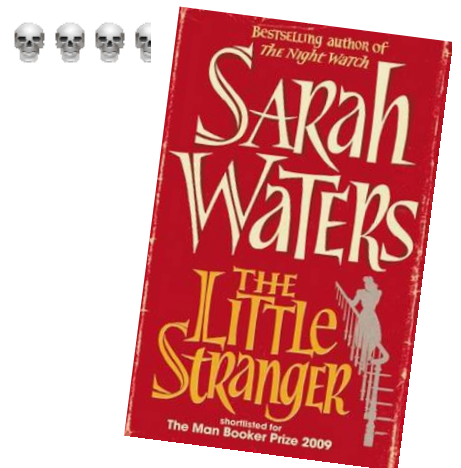
Its main character, Dr. Faraday, practices medicine in rural, post-World War II England. His mother and father needed to scrape and save to send him to medical school, his mother once having served as a lowly nursery maid in Hundreds Hall, one of many servants to the wealthy and upper-class Ayres family.

When Dr. Faraday is called to cross the expansive land around Hundreds and attend a young maid, Betty, he is shocked to see the deterioration of the

mansion, and to learn that Betty is now the only servant in the home. Times have been rough for the aristocratic families in England. The maid tells him that she finds the dark corners of the servant's stairway frightening. The horror grows slowly from this point, in an English novel sort of way. The son of the house has been wounded in the war and has post-traumatic stress disorder. Could he be setting the small fires in his room himself? Could it be Betty, a teenager, either purposefully, or through a poltergeist sort of activity? An unglamorous romance begins between Caroline Ayres and Dr. Faraday. Is she plain enough and desperate enough to marry the son of a former family servant? Is her sister, who died very young, haunting Hundreds? Suddenly the sister's name is found written on walls in a childish script. Things don't end happily, and Dr. Faraday, who has always led with scientific explanations, is not sure that those explanations are really the answer.

Setting is usually the most important thing to me in a book. If a novel

begins—It was a foggy night in London—I'm in. I like to escape into another world, even the rather dreary one of postwar England, and this book does that well. Its "ghosts" are believable, not over the top with blood and gore. I like the uncertain ending, and the way the romance is an upside-down version of the impossible poor servant girl who marries the rich son plot. The book is not for those who like fast action, however. I would give it three and a half skulls.



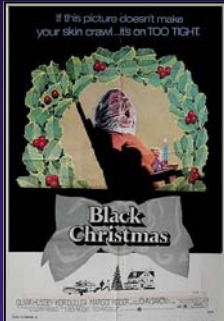
## 'Tis the Season for Merry Scary Movies!




James

There are some pretty creepy holiday movies out there. And by that, I don't mean the ones that are unintentionally creepy. For example, as a child, I can remember getting freaked out by the Three Little Pigs and the fiddle-playing cat in the 1934 classic *March of the Wooden Soldiers* whenever it aired during the holiday season on channel 11 in upstate New York (if you've seen the movie, you know what I'm talking about). The movies I'm talking about here are ones that purposely took all the holly jolly trappings of Christmas and used them to try and scare the hell out of us!

So as this holiday season is drawing to a close, you still have enough time to build yourself a nice, warm fire, get a tall glass of nog, and give one of these cinematic chestnuts a whirl!



**Black Christmas (1974)**—This movie was ground-breaking for several reasons. First, it is considered the very first full-length feature horror film based around Christmas. Many also consider it one of the first “slasher” movies ever produced. It’s also the first movie to use the (now) clichéd horror film setting—a sorority house. But even so, it is still a rather effective film. A horrid 2006 remake probably helped, too, as horror fans unfamiliar with the original began trying to hunt it down.

Original:   
 2006 remake: 



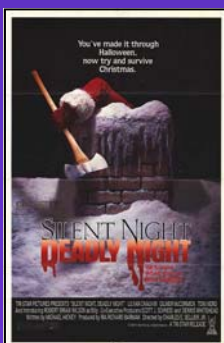
**Silent Night, Bloody Night (1974)**—Perhaps the reason this film is so effective is that while it centers around the Christmas holiday, it still attempts to ground itself in the old school gothic horror films. The setting is an old mansion, which used to be an asylum. Having just inherited the building, the new owners arrive with their friends just in time for the holidays, only to find they are not alone. Extra points given to the fact that the film somehow manages to make the song *Silent Night* into a rather creepy and effective theme song.





**Christmas Evil (1980)**—Originally released as *You Better Watch Out*, *Christmas Evil* starts off with a unique storyline; a boy being scared when he finds out the “truth” about Santa Claus and then spends his life trying to re-capture that excitement by becoming a toymaker. Alas, our young hero finally snaps and mayhem ensues...and the film quickly falls into MST 3000 territory. Without giving too much away, part of the climax involves a mob of people running through the streets carrying torches as if they were hot on the trail of Frankenstein’s monster.





**Silent Night, Deadly Night (1984)**—Even though this film needs to give a huge nod to its success to the thousands of parents who headed up the public outcry over “Santa” killing people (remember, this was 1984, where groups like the PMRC were tracking down all sorts of multimedia things that could corrupt America’s youth), *Silent Night, Deadly Night* still has its moments. Sure, at its core it is simply a slasher film. But it still has more than its fair share of flat-out creepy moments. And unlike some of the other films in this holiday genre, *SNDN* never veers off into being too campy or just plain silly. The same, however, cannot be said for the multitude of straight-to-video remakes and sequels spawned by this film, all of which should be avoided at all costs!



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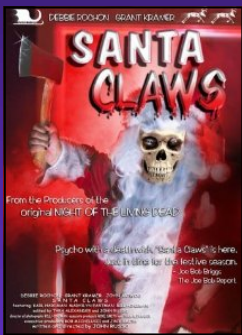
## 'Tis the Season for Merry Scary Movies—Continued

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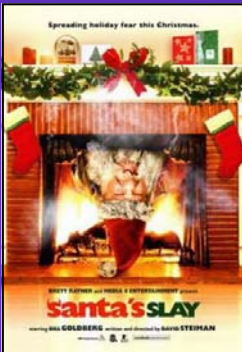


**Don't Open Till Christmas (1984)**—The plot of this slasher film centers around a serial killer who targets anyone dressed in a Santa outfit. Perhaps that's the reason this film slipped under parents' radar while

Silent Night, Deadly Night, released later the same year and featuring Santa himself killing people, came under fire. Of course, the fact that Don't Open Till Christmas is a horrible movie by any stretch of the imagination certainly helped with its fall into obscurity, too.



**Santa Claws (1996)**—After nearly a decade, writer/director John Russo decided there was a need to revisit the whole Christmas horror movie genre and somehow managed to cobble together this mess of a film. Crazy guy dresses up in a Santa costume and kills people with a rake-like claw. That's really all you need to know, except that you shouldn't waste a moment of your holiday on this one.



**Santa's Slay (2005)**—Gotta give this little gem credit for creating a truly unique back story: Santa is actually a demon who loses a bet with an angel. As a result, he is forced to “do good” and give presents to everyone in the world for a period of 1,000 years. But wouldn't you know it, the thousand years have ended, allowing Santa to return to his evil ways just in time for Christmas Eve. At that point, though, the film takes a nosedive and reverts back to a lot of silly killings and bloodshed.



## My Personal Experience: Animals, Raccoons, and Ghosts—Oh, My!



Mark

Certainly the most popular of pets, dogs and cats quite often provide a warm place in our hearts, whether on our laps, curled up beside us in bed, or simply hanging around and watching us as though trying to make sense of our curious ways. Typically, a natural bond easily forms between beloved pets and their human caretakers. We love our animal pets and often take great comfort in their faithful companionship. Our pets do not fear the future, they do not dwell on the regrets

of the past, and they live out their limited lifetime without ever comprehending their own mortality or our long years of human life. We may often wish for this natural inner peace and tranquility. And we sadly mourn our most beloved pets when they die and break that bond, and our hearts, for a time. If that were truly the end of the story, how much more sad it would be, for all of us.

Consider, then, the many similar paranormal encounters shared over the years by ordinary people who have experienced firsthand the extraordinary presence of a ghostly animal!

Sometimes, the haunting visitor manifests only in sound—the jiggling tinkles of tags on a collar long since put away, or a so-characteristic bark or meow. Other times, the experience is more physical, such as feeling the curling up of an invisible animal next to you in bed, or a phantom cat brushing by your legs or attempting to knead a softer bed on your chest. And rarer still, the animal's ghostly apparition may manifest in physical form and become visible for a short time.

Continued on Page 4



## My Personal Experience: Animals, Raccoons, and Ghosts—Oh, My!

*Continued from Page 3*

My first encounter with seeing an animal ghost, however, was not with a deceased pet but with a quite recently deceased raccoon. On a cool autumn evening in October 2010 near Dayton, Ohio, I was enjoying a favorite fall activity in the Midwest: a hayride with the wagon pulled, in this case, by a tractor. The wagon was loaded down with at least 25 people packed together among the sweet smelling bales of straw. Evening sunlight illuminated the vibrant red and gold leaves of the trees as the tractor pulled out onto the country road, and we began our journey. As I simply admired the view and listened absentmindedly to the many fragments of conversation underway, I noticed in the distance a dark and round shadow near the side of the road. My interest peaked; I continued to watch this spot of the road ahead of the tractor, a distance of no more than 75 feet away. Soon, the dark shadow resolved into a raccoon, seemingly perfectly alert with eyes reflecting a faintly greenish glow in the evening light that filtered through the trees. The raccoon seemed to curiously ponder the tractor-pulled wagon rolling toward it before deciding to cross the road. As we continued to draw closer I anxiously watched it move, worrying that it would be hit by an approaching car if it were to dally too long in its adventure. I watched it quickly scurry across the road on four legs without difficulty, only to arrive at the other side and stop there to stare back at me or the wagon, or both. The distance now was only about 30 feet and I could make out

all of its features. I remember thinking something like “Good! Now keep moving.” But the raccoon didn’t move away from the road. The raccoon trotted back to the middle of the road and lay down, on the yellow double stripe, in the middle of the road. Now I was quite perplexed and anxious again for its safety. I recall even saying aloud to no one in particular “What are you doing?? You’re going to get run over!” Never once had I taken my eyes off the raccoon since first sighting it. Inexorably, the tractor-laden wagon approached the very point in the road I had been watching the raccoon. There, exactly where I had observed the animal trot back and lay down was a distinctly dead raccoon; one that had been run-over in the not too distant past and was clearly incapable of any further movement in this life. Blood pooled around its body, and its sad eyes stared up at the waning evening clouds that it would never again enjoy seeing. Others in the wagon saw the poor dead raccoon as we passed by, which elicited a few reactions and comments, such as “poor thing” and “ah, that’s too bad” as we rolled on down the road, but that was all. No one else had observed what I saw. I visually searched the road as we passed by looking for trails of blood, but there was nothing there. No blood anywhere except where the raccoon had been run over by a car tire. Further, the body of the raccoon was so seriously damaged by the run-over that there is simply no possible way it could have trotted anywhere as naturally as I had watched it do.

There is no simple explanation for what I saw that brisk autumn evening while sitting snug in the hayride wagon. When I first saw the raccoon, I could not see the dead body on the road. It was too flat for one thing. There was no sign of blood anywhere across the road except where the raccoon had been hit. A dying animal with that run-over damage could, perhaps, haltingly crawl while spilling blood in its path, but not trot about effortlessly as I had watched it do. And I can assure you that I was in a perfectly normal state of mind, well rested, and without any mental impediments to my thinking. I am not prone to spontaneous hallucinations either, or an overly active imagination that runs the visual machinery by itself (which is actually a fun topic for another day—lucid dreaming). So, for strange reasons I cannot fathom, I do believe that I encountered the ghost of a raccoon, recently deceased, on that otherwise beautiful fall day. Perhaps the catalyst of a sudden tragic death, as in the case of people, spawned a ghostly encounter with an animal spirit no longer tightly bound to this world. Native Americans, who once walked the seemingly endless forests of Ohio centuries ago, held strong beliefs in the sacred spirits of all living beings. I’m sure the lowly raccoon was counted among them!

### 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!



### 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

## Paranormal Snack Time: Experimenting with Ghost Bait



Mark

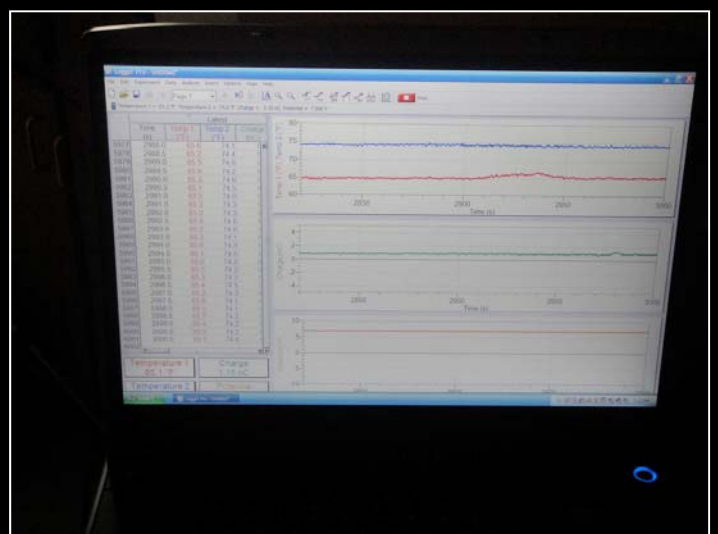
Paranormal investigators will often jokingly acknowledge that, if ghosts had a snack food, it would be batteries. The concept is straight forward on the surface: ghosts withdraw energy from the environment in order to manifest their presence or perform an action. Quite often, energy seems to be drawn from the air itself, resulting in unexpected drops in temperature for no apparent reason; i.e., cold spots. Very strong paranormal occurrences have been known to temporarily lower the temperature in an area by more than 10° F. In the case of batteries, the theory is that the ghostly phenomenon can sometimes channel the stored electrical energy out of the battery

for its own charging-up purposes. The result: battery operated equipment sometimes unexpectedly fails on an investigation even though fresh batteries were inserted prior to the start.

The Ghosts of Ohio paranormal investigation teams routinely deploy our own KAPOS measurement system to probe and record changes in the environment at a specific area of interest, usually the “hot spot” focal point of paranormal activity. During an investigation, a member of the team often monitors KAPOS readings in real time so that we can quickly respond to unusual disturbances in probe readings. On one of our recent private investigations, we reconfigured one of the KAPOS probes to monitor and record the voltage potential of an ordinary 9-volt alkaline battery

alongside the readings of two fast-responding thermal couple probes and the static electricity probe. For an alkaline battery, the voltage potential remains fairly consistent over a battery’s lifetime, but it drops rapidly upon depletion of the chemical energy source inside. It is this abrupt drop in voltage potential across the battery that we are attempting to capture in the KAPOS data stream.

While we did not observe an abnormal drop in battery voltage on our first try of what we refer to as the “ghost bait experiment,” we now have another measurement technique with which to probe the darkly mysterious forces at play in hauntings and other paranormal activities. And this is one piece of tasty energy bait that we hope lures future ghosts into sampling a bite!



In this experiment, a 9-volt alkaline battery (left) serves as the ghostly “bait,” while the status of the battery’s voltage is monitored using the KAPOS system (right).

### Investigations and Consultations: Now Scheduling for 2011

The Ghosts of Ohio is now scheduling 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>.

### The Ghosts of Ohio Newsletter Staff

**Editor-In-Chief:** James A. Willis

**Copy Chief:** Kathy Boiarski

**Designer:** Adam Harrington

**Photo Editor:** Sheri Harrington

**Contributing Authors**

Janine Bourdo Mark DeLong

Sheri Harrington

**Contributing Designer**

Stephanie Willis



### A Merry Scary Christmas and a Happy Boo Year!



Sheri

The Ghosts of Ohio celebrated another exciting year in style with our annual Merry Scary Christmas party. The Ghosts of Ohio members and families celebrated the holiday with food, fun, laughs, and the "spirit" of giving. This year was the 7th annual holiday party, and as with tradition, the Ghosts members generously brought gifts and toys for needy children. The presents filled the room with warmth under the Merry Scary Christmas tree. This year we graciously donated 27 toys to the 33rd annual Firefighters 4 Kids Toy Drive—a partnership of the Columbus Division of Fire and NBC 4 Columbus. Participation in this event continues to be a point of pride for all members.

In addition to the giving, there was food and beverages for all ages and tastes, from wings, to meat and cheese, to homemade cookies and Krispie treats, to roasted weenies, to chips and dips. The evening carried on with great conversations, rare holiday movies, and games with the Ghosts members. All who attended left with a great appreciation for all we have accomplished over the last year and gratitude for the strong friendships that we all share. Happy Holidays!



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

The Ghosts of Ohio are currently making plans to rent out some of the most haunted buildings in Ohio (and beyond) for an entire night in 2011. 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>.



### Administration

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