



The ghosts of Ohio[®] Newsletter

www.ghostsofohio.org

Volume 12 Issue 2

FROM THE SPOOKY DESK OF JAMES WILLIS:

New Year, New Adventures



James

Happy New Year!

I know it sounds like a cliché, but I have no idea where the year went. Even with my “taking October off” to focus more on family and friends,

I still have no idea where the time went. 2015? Seriously?

So where is the New Year going to take The Ghosts of Ohio? Simply put, lots of new and exciting places. And we want you all to come along with us!

One of the newest things we’ll be embarking on can be found in this very newsletter. Last issue, we decided to try something a bit different and dedicate a

large portion of the newsletter to discussing one specific paranormal case: The Dyatlov Pass Incident. The response was so overwhelmingly positive that we made the decision that from that point on, each issue of The Ghosts of Ohio Newsletter would feature an in-depth analysis of a paranormal case or topic and that we would come at it from all different angles (books, documentaries, movies, etc.) in order to give all of you a thorough background on said topic.

For this issue, we decided to focus on the enigmatic Mothman. We reached that decision based on the fact that December 15th marks the anniversary of the Silver Bridge collapse, an event that has since become entwined with the Mothman myths.

But we’re not content with simply mixing up the format of our newsletter. Far from it. In addition, we are exploring everything

from new pieces of equipment to brand new locations for our Spend The Night program. Oh yes, and then there’s that super top secret thing we’re working on that we’re all confident is going to change the way people look at ghost investigations, in the state of Ohio and beyond. So stay tuned!

In the meantime, I’m off to check the fridge for the last few pieces of Hickory Farms sausage I laid claim to some time around Boxing Day. Nobody better have touched that!

Cheers,

James A. Willis
Founder/Director



THE MOTHMAN PROPHECIES



Wendy

Title: The Mothman Prophecies

Author: John Keel

ISBN: 0765341972 / 978-0765341976

Publisher: Tor Books
(2002 paperback edition)

Copyright Date: 1975

The first time I read The Mothman Prophecies, I was surprised to learn about all the other things that were happening in Point Pleasant and its surrounding cities besides the sighting of the creature known as Mothman. It opened up a whole new world for me in the area of paranormal studies. So this time when I read it, I really took a

look at what John A. Keel was writing about. Basically, not about Mothman. Sure, the original sightings are fleetingly mentioned in the first chapters, but all in all, this is a book about UFOs and the Men in Black.

Mothman (called Birdman by the locals) got his name from a comic that was out at the time, but basically he is described by the original witnesses as a “gray man” between 7 and 9 feet tall, with bat-like wings that folded against his back. Some witnesses saw a face, others did not. But all described bright red eyes that produced a hypnotic effect. Referred to as a “Garuda” by Keel, Mothman chased after several witnesses; flying over or dive-bombing their cars as they sought to escape him, and in some cases appearing later in their yards. He began appearing in the fall of 1966, and the incidences of Mothman and UFO sightings continued until the Silver Bridge collapsed in December of 1967.

(continued on page 2.)

THE MOTHMAN PROPHECIES (cont.)

When Keel, who was a well-known UFO hunter at the time, heard about Mothman and other odd things happening in Point Pleasant, he packed his bags, and with the help of local reporter Mary Hyre, began to look into what was really happening in the little town by the river. He went back to Point Pleasant at least five times over the next year, for weeks each time, both to talk to witnesses and to set up camps to take part in evening skywatches. A lot of witnesses in the book said that oddly moving lights in the sky appeared so often that the locals just began to ignore them. But when the lights and Mothman first began making an appearance and word got out, Point Pleasant was bombarded with UFO hunters and campers hoping to encounter either Mothman or his metallic flying buddies. And there begins the tie-in between Mothman and extraterrestrial events.

Keel explores and witnesses an overwhelming instance of UFO activity in the area...not only discussing in detail events that happened in the Gallipolis, OH, and Point Pleasant, WV, area, but from Portland, OR, and back to Long Island and New Jersey on the east coast. The UFOs seemed to go hand in hand with the arrival of the ubiquitous Men in Black. Keel details all the witness descriptions as basically being very dark-skinned people with slanted Asian type eyes, and an odd, halting or sing-song speech pattern. Witnesses were harassed by them. The MIB tended to drive around town in black 1940s style cars which were in perfect condition. They gleefully stole ink pens, learned how to eat with forks and knives, knocked on doors to ask for water for their pills, and otherwise wreaked havoc all along the river.

Beyond the MIB phenomenon, Keel also began to talk to contactees: people who

had met one of the UFO pilots, and were subsequently being given information on future events. Several of these ETs, as I'll call them, became known to Keel, including Mr. Apol, and quite possibly the

when the Silver Bridge collapsed one evening the week before Christmas.

With the MIB and ETs working their ways into the lives of their witnesses, the UFOs began hovering over houses or the river, causing electricity failures: televisions went to static, phones began emitting beeping and clicking sounds, and lights flashed or blew out. UFO and Mothman witnesses suffered from conjunctivitis, which seems to be common in the UFO field. Strange flocks of prehistoric looking birds were seen in the surrounding area (often attributed by skeptics as sand cranes), dogs went missing, strange gray figures were seen running along the fields that banked the woods, and the Point Pleasant TNT area became the creepiest place on earth.

Writing 30 years after the fact, Keel does a good job of documenting all of the strange occurrences and synchronicities happening not only in Point Pleasant, but in the lives of all those connected to the Mothman/UFO sightings, including his own. At the point where Keel thought he was quite possibly delusional and that someone was impersonating him and bugging his phonenumber, the disaster he had been warned about happened—the Silver Bridge collapsed. After that, lives in Point Pleasant almost too quickly went back to normal,

leaving people to wonder what had really happened over the past year, and what did it mean for the future.

This is a great read for anyone interested in the confluence of paranormal forces, and how they can play out in the lives of otherwise ordinary people. Whether you believe in Mothman, the UFOs, Men in Black or just think everyone on the east coast was on a year-long acid-trip, *The Mothman Prophecies* will definitely give you something to think about.



best named ET ever, Indrid Cold. Throughout the book, Keel documents the information these ETs were giving their contactees, including a possible assassination of the Pope, and a disaster on the river in Point Pleasant, which he thought was going to be a plant explosion. He also discusses the premonitions that people involved in the Point Pleasant investigations were having. Mary Hyre in particular had a nightmare about a dark body of water, with Christmas presents floating around in it, which turned out to be exactly what was seen by witnesses

PERSONAL EXPERIENCES:

CHRISTMAS EVE VISITOR

Donna A., Oxford, Ohio

This story took place over 20 years ago and I am still trying to wrap my head around it. It's OK if you think I'm nuts, but I can assure you that what I'm telling you really did happen, even if it was all in my head.

I'm 64 now and live alone. My mother died at a very early age and I was raised by my loving, caring father James. When I think back, my dad clearly went out of his way to make Christmas extra special. I think it was probably because it was just the two of us. We didn't have much family to speak of. But that didn't matter because every December my dad would make our house come alive with Christmas decorations. I'll never forget that it was always really exciting to see how my dad was going to fit the giant Christmas trees he brought home into our house.

After college, I moved out and got my own place across town. My dad and I still had our giant Christmas party at his house on Christmas Day. But it became tradition that he would come over to my place for Christmas Eve. Every year, he would get to my house around 7 and stay until after midnight. I would know when my dad got to my house because he would always knock on my door with the "shave and a haircut" knock. I'd always laugh because he would always add the last two knocks in. I told him he was supposed to wait for me to do that part back to him, but he never listened.

As you can probably imagine, I was pretty well crushed when my father passed away. He passed in November, right before Thanksgiving. That first December, I must have spent the entire month in a haze. I didn't want to have anything to do with Christmas or decorations. I did eventually force myself to put them up, but come Christmas Eve, I was all alone, just laying in the living room. There was fresh snow on the ground and even a couple of snowflakes falling, which would have

made for a beautifully perfect Christmas Eve. But not for me this year. I missed my dad.

I don't remember exactly what time it was because I was dozing off on the couch. But it had to be around 9 at night or so. That was when I heard the unmistakable shave and a haircut knock on my front door, complete with the last two knocks. I don't think it really registered with me because I remember just getting up and answering the door without giving it too much thought. When I opened the door, there was no one there.

I think at that point, I still didn't get what was going on. I went into the kitchen and was pouring myself some juice when I heard that same knock on the door again. This time, I remember getting a little scared thinking it might be a burglar or something, so I went and peeked out the peep hole. But there was no one at the door. I don't know why, but I opened up the door and looked around. But I didn't see anyone. Here's the really odd part though. As I was looking around, I noticed that there were no footprints leading up to my door in the snow. There weren't even footprints in the driveway or yard. So how did someone get to my door without leaving footprints in the snow?

It was around that time that it started to register with me that it might be a ghost. But what do you do in situations like that? For me, I decided to just go back and sit on the couch and wait. Sure enough, about 10 minutes later, I heard that special knock again. I ran to the door and threw it open immediately which I know probably wasn't the smartest thing to do. Still, there was no one there and no footprints. I called out, "Daddy, is that you?" But no one answered. I must have stood out there, freezing, for 20 minutes, but I never saw a living soul. I never heard the knocking ever again, either.

Some people I've told the story to over the years think it was just someone messing with me, but I don't see how that's possible. I don't see how someone could keep coming up to my front door and not leaving footprints. And I get that the whole shave and a haircut knock is pretty common, but that was sort of a joke between me and my dad. Nobody else knew he did that, least of all on Christmas Eve.

For me, I would like to think that what I heard was my dad's ghost. I just wish I could have seen him one last time.

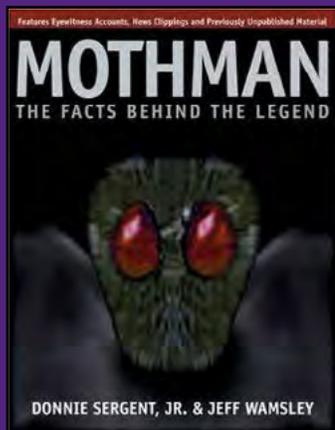
GOT A SCARY STORY TO TELL?

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 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!

MOTHMAN'S DOCUMENTED HISTORY:

A REVIEW OF TWO BOOKS



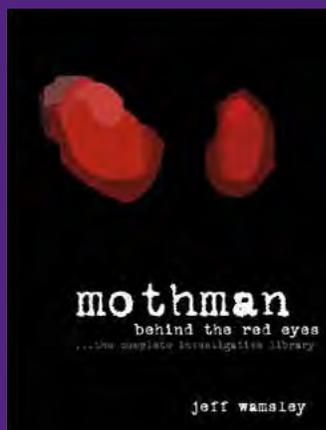
Title: Mothman: The Facts Behind the Legend

Authors: Donnie Sergeant, Jr. and Jeff Wamsley

ISBN: 0966724674 / 978-0966724677

Publisher: Mark S. Phillips Publishing

Copyright Date: 2011



Title: Mothman: Behind The Red Eyes

Author: Jeff Wamsley

ISBN: 0976436809 / 978-0976436805

Publisher: Mothman Press

Copyright Date: 2005



Samantha

Ah, Mothman. When I think of Mothman, the very first thing that comes to mind is the moldy stench of mothballs. Fellow Ghosts of Ohio member Wendy Cywinski and I attended a

Mothman festival in Point Pleasant, West Virginia, in 2011, and some numb nut had smashed mothballs all over the streets of the festival. I found myself overcome by the smell a couple of times, seeking refuge in local shops to grab a few breaths of fresher air. It almost ruined the entire festival for me!

Fortunately, all was not lost. What I enjoyed about the festival was hearing from actual witnesses and learning more about the so-called Mothman. I had originally thought of the creature as nothing more than a silly urban legend, but the sincerity of the speakers and the plethora of documentation made me wonder. What was the Mothman? Where did it come from? Where is it now? We may never know the answers to these questions, but there's no doubt that the small town of Mount Pleasant was forever changed by it. And that's not silly at all.

This review covers two books that go hand-in-hand with each other: *Mothman: The Facts Behind the Legend* by Donnie Sergeant, Jr. and Jeff Wamsley and *Mothman: Behind the Red Eyes* by Jeff Wamsley. Both books are chock full of eyewitness interviews, newspaper clippings, letters, photographs and drawings that document the Mothman saga.

The first documented sighting of the creature took place around 11:30 p.m. on November 15th, 1966, in what the locals call the "TNT Area." The area was used to make and store TNT during World War II. A couple of decades later, the abandoned site served as the local hangout spot, complete with drag racing; and now it's designated as the McClintic Wildlife Management Area.

That night, two married couples—the Mallettes and the Scarberrys—were in a car on the road near the abandoned power plant. When they crested a hill, they saw a light gray creature on the side of the road with a body like a muscular man but with large, angel-type wings spanning about 10 feet. It was about 6 to 7 feet tall, and it had 2-inch diameter eyes that looked red when light shone on them, spaced about 6 to 8 inches apart. When the couples spotted the creature, it fled into the power plant. Soon after, however, it began following their vehicle in a cat and mouse manner. It flew

incredibly fast over their car, sometimes thumping the roof. Frightened, the driver sped toward town at over 100mph, the creature keeping pace the whole way. It even seemed to get ahead of them and wait for them in different places on the way home. It wasn't until they got back to town that the creature gave up the chase.

After this encounter, it didn't take long for chaos to ensue. The police and media were inundated with "sightings," and locals and tourists alike flooded the TNT Area, throwing parties and holding vigils with the hope of catching a glimpse of the creature. Those that claimed to have encountered Mothman described it in slightly varying ways: it was gray, or brown, or black. It sounded like a "record played at high speed," the "squeak of a mouse," or an inhuman screech. It had the body of a muscular man, or it was more bird-like with "legs that looked like gray feathers." It had giant angel-like wings, or its "arms were like wings." Despite all of the small differences in the creature's descriptions, there were a few that remained consistent. Everyone agreed that Mothman stood between 6 and 7 feet tall. It had large eyes that glowed red when light was shone into them. It was an awkward runner, but flew incredibly fast. Most importantly, the creature never attempted to harm anyone, even in situations where it easily could have. Over

(continued on page 5.)

MOTHMAN'S DOCUMENTED HISTORY:

A REVIEW OF TWO BOOKS (CONT.)

the course of one year, there were over 100 reported Mothman sightings and personal encounters. So what was that thing?

Of course, experts from all over the country weighed in on the issue. Most believed it to be a type of large bird, including a wild goose, a large owl, a Great Blue Heron, or a rare Sandhill Crane, which stands about 5 to 6 feet tall, has an 80-inch wingspan, and has red patches around its eyes. Another theory was that it was a weather balloon released by the local high school's science club in an effort to "study prevailing wind currents." Of course, neither of these theories quite fit the descriptions from the witnesses, so scientists added a bit about mass hysteria and how imagination can be a powerful hallucinogen.

These explanations only angered witnesses because many of them knew exactly what birds looked like, and weather balloons don't usually chase cars. They weren't drunk, either! So the townsfolk came up with their own theories. If the creature wasn't some kind of prank, then maybe it was a product of the toxic waste that had been dumped in the TNT Area during manufacturing. (The EPA later cleaned up the waste.) Perhaps it was the curse of a Shawnee chieftain named Cornstalk from long ago in the town's history. Maybe the creature was some sort of prophet of doom. Or maybe, just maybe, the Mothman wasn't from this planet at all!

Interestingly, when sightings of the Mothman began, so did sightings of UFOs in the area. In fact, there were far more reports of UFOs than of Mothman; so many that the local Herald Dispatch had to create a "UFO desk" to cover them all! There were as many as eight reports per night in a year. And, of course, the descriptions varied wildly. The objects came in all shapes—discs, cigars, butterflies, and even one that was described as a "kerosene lamp turned on its side." They were seen at all hours of the day and night, sometimes high in the sky, and sometimes silently hovering over homes, following cars, and parked in the middle of roads and fields. They all had brightly colored lights and tended to disrupt radio and television signals. One witness even had his TV blow up in his living room

from the severity of the interference! Were the UFOs related to Mothman somehow? Were they looking for the creature? No one knows. And there's something else...

Men in Black. Although it doesn't appear that there were any news clippings about them, many witnesses claimed to have encountered these beings during the year that Mothman and UFO sightings were at their peak. As their title describes, they dressed in black suits or dark turtleneck sweaters, black hats, black shoes and black sunglasses, regardless of the weather. They even drove black Cadillacs (with no license plates). Their intent seemed to be to silence those people who were speaking about their UFO encounters. They used several tactics, like impersonating military or "Civil Defense" officials sent to prevent mass panic. They followed and harassed anyone talking about UFOs, and they even sat in cars outside of witnesses' homes and businesses to intimidate them. As if this wasn't creepy enough, did you notice that I called them "beings?" All of the witnesses were frightened of them because they acted like aliens trying to pass themselves off as people. The most unsettling characteristics were that they never blinked, they smiled unnaturally, they became fascinated with ordinary objects like staplers and pens, and they were awkward with gestures like shaking hands. Where did these guys really come from? Were they in cahoots with the UFOs to find Mothman? Fortunately, their presence—as well as the presence of Mothman and the UFOs—only lasted for about a year. Then came the Silver Bridge Disaster.

December 15th, 1967. It was rush hour during the heart of the Christmas shopping season, when one eyebar on the heavily trafficked suspension bridge spanning the Ohio River gave way, setting off a chain reaction that caused all 1,460 feet of the structure to plummet into the frigid waters below, killing 46 people. It was deemed one of the worst road bridge disasters in U.S. history, and it could have been prevented had the powers-that-be spent the extra money to have it built according to its original design—with cables instead of eyebars. Unfortunately, in 1927, eyebars were the hot new idea, and designers didn't know about the amount of heavy traffic the bridge would have to endure just 40 years



The Mothman statue at the annual Mothman Festival

later. It's a mistake that has never been forgotten, and it's already saved lives by improving bridges across the country. It's a shame, though, that so many lives had to be lost to learn the lesson.

The Silver Bridge Disaster not only served as a dark time in Point Pleasant's history, but it also marked the end of the whole Mothman/UFO/Men in Black circus. No one knows why the sightings diminished after the tragedy. Was the Mothman an omen trying to warn people about the bridge, but then disappeared after it fell? Or could it be that the gravity of the disaster overshadowed everything else? Sure, people have occasionally reported Mothman and UFO sightings since then, but it's never been anything like what the town saw in 1966-7. It's probably a good thing. Point Pleasant could focus on recovering from the tragedy, picking up the pieces and finally regaining some semblance of normal.

Of course, there's still an annual Mothman Festival...

So...what can I say about Mothman: The Facts Behind the Legend and Mothman: Behind the Red Eyes? Honestly, I'm impressed by the amount of information I learned just by reading the articles, interviews and letters. There are still a lot of unanswered questions, but that's to be expected with such a wild story! Personally, I enjoyed reading the actual newspaper articles, and I liked being able to compare what was written to what witnesses stated in later interviews. There were a few inconsistencies in their stories, which begs the question, "What really happened?" I'm not sure we'll ever know. It's a mystery that will endure for a long, long time.

MOVIE REVIEW:

THE MOTHMAN PROPHECIES



Rick

GENRE: Thriller/Horror**STARRING:** Richard Gere (Pretty Woman, Chicago), Will Patton (The Fourth Kind, Falling Skies), Laura Linney (The Exorcism of Emily Rose, Mystic River), and Debra Messing (Will & Grace).**DIRECTOR:** Mark Pellington (Arlington Road)**RATED:** PG-13**RUNNING TIME:** 1 hour and 40 minutes**RELEASE DATE:** 2002**AVAILABILITY:** Streaming on Netflix or Rental**RATING:** 4 out of 5 skulls 🦴🦴🦴🦴🦴

The Mothman Prophecies is a film loosely based on actual eyewitness accounts of events that occurred between November 1966 and December 1967 in Point Pleasant, West Virginia. The story is set in present day and is told through the eyes of newspaper columnist John Klein, played by Richard Gere. John and his wife Mary (played by Debra Messing) are involved in a bizarre vehicular accident which ultimately results in his wife's passing. Soon after, John discovers an assortment of mysterious drawings, which she created before her death, depicting a strange black winged creature she saw on the night of the accident.

Fastforward two years later and John is driving to Richmond, Virginia, for his job at the Washington Post. Somehow, John manages to get lost and ends up in the small town of Point Pleasant, West Virginia, hundreds of miles off his route. After his car mysteriously breaks down, John makes his way to a nearby house on foot to get help. The owner of the house, Gordon Smallwood (played by Will Patton), reacts violently to John's appearance, appearing to know John, and holds him at gun point. The local sheriff (played by Laura Linney) arrives and defuses the situation, but this is just the beginning of a series of unexplained events.

Events such as people sighting a large winged creature resembling a giant moth with red eyes and premonitions of future disasters that

turn out to be true. Soon a strange entity by the name of Indrid Cold begins communicating with our main characters. In a critical scene, Indrid Cold speaks with John Klein over the telephone and convinces him that he is a supernatural being.

Indrid Cold soon tells him that there will be a great tragedy on the Ohio River. The entity described as the Mothman becomes a personal obsession for John who soon discovers the entity has been around since the dawn of time and only appears right before a horrific tragedy. The tragedy that was prophesied to John was in fact the bridge that lead into Point Pleasant. The bridge collapses and 36 people were killed. The epilogue displays a series of graphics stating that the cause of the bridge collapse was never fully determined. It also states that although the Mothman has been sighted in other parts of the world, it was never seen again in Point Pleasant.

When this movie was first released, it received mixed reviews. Most of the bad reviews were based on the fact that the film doesn't really stick to either the Mothman Prophecies book or to the known facts of the case. Truth be told, the movie deviates quite a bit from the book, adding a number of fictitious events and characters, although there is a nice nod, in the form of an anagram, to Mothman Prophecies author John Keel with the

appearances of a mysterious, all-knowing character known as Alexander Leek.

All that aside, my personal assessment of the movie as a stand-alone is quite positive. The script is solid and you can't do much better than the four main actors in this film. Gere and Patton are riveting and their storyline throughout the film was the highlight of the movie for me. I particularly enjoyed how the story was told in modern times using the fictional character of John Klein as the means of recalling the events that took place in Point Pleasant over 45 years ago.

I recently watched this movie again for the purposes of writing this review and I was fortunate enough to watch with my girlfriend, who was seeing the film for the first time. She was afraid it was going to be some silly monster movie in which a large man in a furry costume ran around scaring people. She was pleasantly surprised that the film had an actual plot and captivating story line. This film is definitely a thriller but with some romantic undertone.

SPOILER ALERT: You will not see anyone running around in a furry monster costume with red eyes, screaming at people.

...AND A MERRY SCARY TIME WAS HAD BY ALL

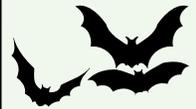


Well, the weather outside started getting frightful, so that meant only one thing: it was time for The Ghosts of Ohio's annual Merry Scary Holiday Party!

For the uninitiated, since The Ghosts of Ohio members are usually out doing something ghostly (and work-related) in October, we never seemed to have time to have a proper Halloween party. Some time ago (10 years ago, to be exact), Ghosts of Ohio founder/director James A. Willis came up with the idea of combining Halloween and Christmas into one big party. And the Merry Scary Holiday Party was born.

Most years, you could find the house decorated with all sorts of Halloween/Christmas weirdness: stockings hanging by the fire with severed feet in them, witches roaming the front yard wearing Santa caps, etc. This year, The Ghosts of Ohio decided to take things to the next level by making this party the first-ever costume party!

All in all, it was a wonderful evening full of good food and good times. Plus, all of our families were invited, too. What a perfect way to close out 2014 and look ahead to an even merrier and scarier 2015!



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 group 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!

Coppermill Manor (Zanesville / Muskingum county)

Dalton Cemetery (Dalton / Wayne county)

Hell House (Lockbourne / Franklin county)

Hogback Road (Delaware / Delaware county)

"Old Hospital" (Wellington / Lorain county)

Zombie Land (Ohio-PA border / Mahoning county [OH])

COMING IN THE FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER

Investigating The Sallie House Case

Love From Beyond The Grave

Lupercalia: The Dark Roots Of Valentine's Day

Investigations & Consultations

The Ghosts of Ohio have begun scheduling investigations for 2015. 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>.

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