



The ghosts of Ohio® Newsletter

www.ghostsofohio.org

Volume 8 Issue 3

From the Spooky Desk of James Willis: My Library of Scary



James

Having lived in Ohio for well over a decade now, I've come to the conclusion that there's something that is sighted even less than a shadowy spectre—namely, the sun during the winter. Don't get me wrong. I was born

and raised in Upstate New York, so I get that it will be dreary out, especially after the glow of the New Year fades. I'm just not used to not seeing the sun for what seems like weeks on end. It's times like this where I just want to stay in bed and curl up with a good book, which is where my personal ghost library comes in.

You see, I am blessed to be married to a woman who not only accepts my unhealthy obsession with collecting

books on the paranormal, but she has been known to actually feed the monster from time to time. The result is a personal collection that has just passed 850 volumes. Shelf after shelf is crammed with books on ghosts both far and wide. I have collected books of ghost stories from 38 of the 50 states with multiple volumes for each state. I have books on European ghosts, South American ghosts, even ghosts from North Korea. With my library, you can read up on the history of ghost investigation, the methodology of ghost hunting, and how to contact your spirit guides, even if your guide is an animal. But there's one thing that's missing from all these books; concrete evidence of the existence of ghosts.

Sure, these books are filled with photos of what are supposed to be

ghosts. But to date, there is not one photograph, piece of video, or EVP that believers and skeptics alike can point to and say "that's a ghost." All of which leads me to one conclusion: we still have so much to learn.

With that in mind, I will leave you with this request: while you're out there waiting to see the sun again, take some time to ponder the current state of ghost investigations. Then ask yourself, "What can I be doing differently?" Then get out there and find us some evidence so we can shut all these skeptics up once and for all!

Until then, stay warm!

Cheers,
James A. Willis
Founder/Director

Canine Ghost Hunters: The Good, The Bad, & The Ugly



Samantha

That's right, folks. Canine ghost hunters. We're talking dogs here. I do a lot of research for The Ghosts of Ohio, and I'm always trying to identify trends that pop up in the paranormal

field. For instance, I can tell you that 100% of all paranormal groups strive to conduct "scientific" investigations by using tools like audio recorders, video cameras, and infrared thermometers. Some groups go the extra mile by including non-scientific devices such as dowsing rods and pendulums. Even psychic abilities are considered tools of the trade. Now the latest trend seems to be the inclusion of dogs as investigative team members.

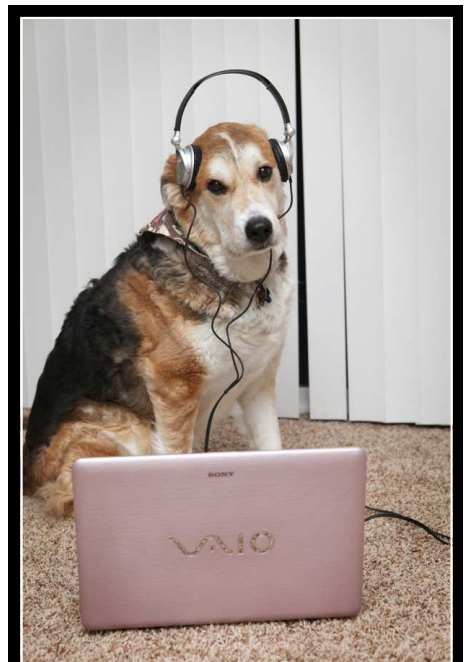
I suppose this shouldn't be surprising. After all, everyone's heard stories about the alleged "sixth senses" of animals.* There have been reports all

over the world of household pets that, among other things, have predicted earthquakes, dogs that have alerted their owners of impending seizures, cats that know when people are about to die, and a variety of animals that can see and hear supposed spirits. Perhaps it's plausible that household pets can become useful tools during investigations. However, the skeptic in me wants to explore this topic more thoroughly.

The Good

For starters, it is generally accepted in the paranormal community that both children and animals are more sensitive to ghostly phenomena. The explanations for this may vary according to personal opinion, but we know for a fact that most animals, especially dogs, have sharper senses than humans.

Let's start with hearing. While humans can hear frequencies up to about



Investigator Fluffy reviews evidence from a recent case, and consequently drools on all of the equipment.

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Personal Encounters: The Woman on the Side of the Road

By Kristina M. - Brookville, Ohio

Love your newsletter! Thought I would share something that happened to me a couple of years ago that still freaks me out.

Back in 2001, I was working as a pharmaceutical sales rep. Even though I lived in Ohio, the majority of my area of coverage was in Indiana, including Richmond and Muncie. If you don't know anything about sales reps, we have to cover an entire area and often pile up hundreds of miles a day. Most of my time was spent driving on the back roads trying to pick up US 40 and US 35. I would often leave my house at 5 in the morning and not get home until 10 or so hours later.

One morning around 5:30 in June 2001, I was driving along one of the side roads that eventually connects with US 35 heading toward Muncie when I noticed something off to the side of the road. The sun wasn't up yet, but it was light enough out that as I drove closer, I could see it was a woman. As I passed the woman, I could see her face clearly and she looked to be in her early 40s and had long, blonde hair. She was wearing a dark dress with a white blouse. She was just standing on the side of the road, looking down the embankment into the woods. I can remember even looking down the embankment myself to see if I could see what the woman was looking at. I didn't see anything, though, and continued on my way. When I mentioned it to my husband later that night, he asked me why I didn't stop. Truthfully, I said I didn't see a reason to. She didn't look like she was in any

danger or anything. To me, it just looked like maybe her dog had run off and she was looking to see if it had run into the woods at the bottom of the embankment.

Even though I passed by that section of road several times after that, I never gave the woman another thought until early January 2002. I was driving along the road once again in the early morning hours when I noticed something (again) on the side of the road. Unlike the woman, this was further off the road and was quite a bit smaller. As I passed by, I saw that it was a small, white cross!! That freaked me out so much that I slammed on the brakes and actually backed up in the road. Good thing it was early and no one else was on the road that morning!

I got out of my car and walked over to the cross. It was clearly homemade and someone had written "Mary Jones"* (this name has been changed) along with "1962 - 2001." When I got back in my car, I was shaking so much that I could barely drive. So about a mile or so down the road, I pulled off into a convenience store. I went inside and bought some snacks, but since there was no one else in the store, I couldn't resist asking the oldtimer behind the counter if he knew anything about the white cross up the road. He seemed shocked and said, "You mean Mary Jones? You didn't hear about her? It was in all the papers."

When I explained to him that I didn't live in Indiana, he proceeded to tell me that back in the spring of 2001, Mary's husband reported her missing. Seems she never made it to work one day.

Police looked everywhere, but there was no trace of Mary or her car. Everybody started to think that Mary ran off until a couple of hunters came across her decaying body inside her car. From what the police could gather, she had fallen asleep at the wheel, drove off the road, down the embankment and was killed when she hit a tree in the woods. The terrain was such that the embankment and the woods hid the car from sight.

It was around this time that I came to the horrible realization that I might have seen Mary's ghost standing by the side of the road that early morning in June. Perhaps she was trying to tell me where her body was. She was, after all, staring down into the woods where her body was later recovered from.

But I didn't believe in ghosts, and I needed more proof. So I called in sick the next day and went to my closest Indiana library and searched their newspaper archives. It took a while, but I finally managed to find an article that included a picture of Mary. Once I saw her picture, there was no denying it was the same woman I saw that morning!

Needless to say, I believe in ghosts now. I also started taking a different route to Muncie from that point on. I can't say if it was because I was still scared or maybe because I felt guilty that I hadn't stopped to help Mary's ghost. To this day, I wonder what would have happened if I had pulled over. Perhaps her ghost would have spoken to me. Unfortunately, I'll never know.

Got a Scary Story to Tell?

Have you had a ghostly encounter in Ohio? Want to see it featured in a future issue of The Ghosts of Ohio Newsletter? Then here's all you have to do:

Just write down your story and send it to info@ghostsofohio.org with the subject line "Newsletter Ghost Story." Be sure to also include your name as you'd like it to appear with the story. We'll take it from there and send you an email letting you know which issue it is going to appear in. That way, you can

get all your friends to sign up for the newsletter so they can see how famous you are!



Interact with The Ghosts

Need a spooky friend? If you have a MySpace account, swing by and add The Ghosts of Ohio to your friends list: www.myspace.com/ghostsofohio.

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

Facebook

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

Twitter

<http://twitter.com/ghostsofohio>

Canine Ghost Hunters: The Good, The Bad, & The Ugly

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23 kHz, dogs can hear up to 45 kHz—nearly twice the range of humans! They can also hear sounds at up to four times the distance. Basically, they can hear higher frequencies and at greater distances. This puts humans at a distinct disadvantage when it comes to being aware of our surroundings! When it comes to olfaction (the sense of smell), dogs again have the upper hand. With over 220 million olfactory receptors (human beings only have about five million), dogs have a sense of smell that is over a thousand times more sensitive than that of us lowly humans. With such acute senses of hearing and smell, it's no wonder why dogs are used consistently in law enforcement and search-and-rescue operations to sniff out bombs, drugs, missing persons and cadavers.

But what about sniffing out ghosts? In the paranormal field, one working theory for why people have a hard time seeing, hearing, and “feeling” the presence of spirits is that ghosts operate on frequencies that are outside the normal human range. Since dogs have a much larger range of hearing and smell than humans, it stands to reason that they may be able to detect the presence

of a supernatural entity. This is a widely accepted theory, even among non-investigators. I conducted an informal survey among my friends and coworkers and found that not only do *all* of them believe that dogs can sense things that humans can't, but they *all* perceive using dogs on investigations as a positive thing. Using dogs on paranormal investigations seems like a logical thing to do.

The Bad

So far, it seems like using dogs to find ghostly entities is a no-brainer. For those of us who don't have psychic abilities, it would be nothing short of awesome to use man's best friend as a ghost detector! Unfortunately, bringing dogs into the equation raises a variety of concerns that no responsible person (investigator and client alike) should overlook.

First of all, it must be understood that a dog is an animal. It is not a human being. Bringing an animal into an unfamiliar environment and expecting it to perform tasks requires a very high level of obedience and discipline. No one wants a strange dog coming into

their home and wreaking havoc, and no investigator wants to be responsible for damages. Does the client have pets in the home, like dogs, cats or birds? This could be a potential problem since animals don't typically like to share their spaces with other unfamiliar animals, and predator/prey instincts can run high. It's supposed to be a paranormal investigation, not a National Geographic program!

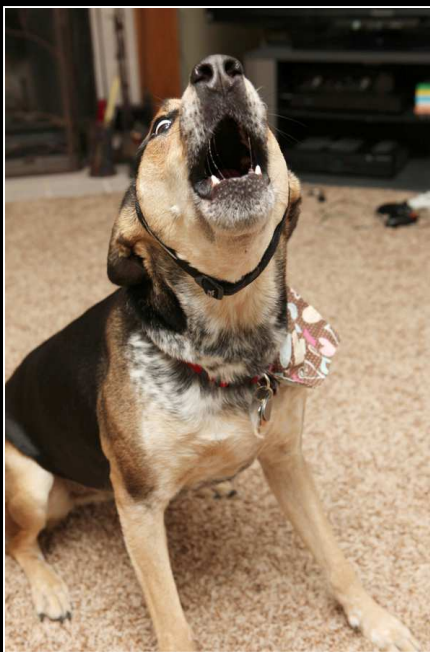
Second, there are health issues that need to be addressed. How clean is the dog? No one wants their home infested with fleas and/or ticks after an investigation. Has the dog had all of its vaccinations? What would happen if the dog bit someone? And what about allergies? Is anyone in the household allergic to fur or dander? Will the mere presence of the dog make life miserable for the residents of the home? These are serious health issues that can have dire consequences for both investigators and clients.

A third concern is that while dogs have incredible senses that may theoretically allow them to detect ghostly entities, they can also detect a whole host of other things—*natural* things—that humans can't perceive. For example, if a dog suddenly focuses on a corner of a room and begins barking, what the animal perceives may not necessarily be a spirit. It could be the sound of insects or rodents in the wall. It could also be the sound of a vehicle from down the street, a leaky pipe, a slightly higher electromagnetic field from wiring, or an unfamiliar odor. When a dog is brought into a foreign environment, there's no telling what it will react to, and there's no way it can tell you what it's thinking. And let's face it, unlike the field of law enforcement, there's no way to train a dog to sniff out spirits. If that were possible, then we wouldn't need dogs in the first place, would we?

The Ugly (aka “The Nitty Gritty”)

It's important for both clients and investigators to address all of the above issues before including dogs on

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Investigator Fido tries to provoke the spirits (and human investigators, clients, neighbors, etc.) in a recent EVP session.



Investigator Fluffy captures some ghostly voices on his trusty voice recorder...or maybe they're ghostly barks.

Canine Ghost Hunters

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investigations. Health and safety should always be priorities. During my informal survey, I was greatly disturbed by the fact that while *all* of my interviewees were willing to allow dogs into their homes, almost *none* of them had considered the logistics of it. Why is that? Are people so blinded by the perception of dogs as man's best friend that they're simply forgetting about the health and safety concerns associated with them? Are some people so excited to look for ghosts that they'll open their homes to anyone and anything to find one?

Here's my plea to everyone reading this article: If you're presented with the opportunity to have a dog included on an investigation, be smart about it. Consider it carefully, do your homework, and create some legal documents so that, if something bad happens, the responsibility falls on the correct shoulders.



Investigator Fido travels into dark corners of haunted locations with his trusty headlamp, and stash of dog biscuits.

*If you'd like to read more about the sixth senses of animals, look for an incredibly fascinating book by Rupert Sheldrake called *Dogs That Know When Their Owners Are Coming Home (and Other Unexplained Powers of Animals)*.

A Must Read for Students, Seekers, and Sometimes-Warriors: Paranormal State: My Journey into the Unknown



Sheri

Fans of A&E's *Paranormal State* should not miss this "behind-the-scenes" tome about hauntings, demons, personal struggles, and a rise to fame in the paranormal community.

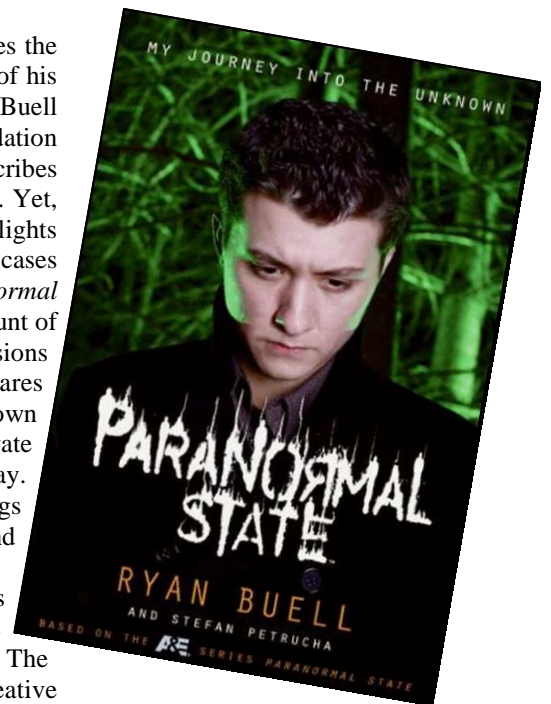
The novel outlines the Paranormal Research Society's (PRS) beginnings, to their rise to relevancy as they land their own reality television series, to the personal struggles with the "demons" in the members' lives.

PRS founder Ryan Buell narrates the story and provides an honest view of his personal beliefs and character. Buell takes the reader through the foundation of the PRS organization and describes the rigor he sends his team through. Yet, the majority of the book highlights behind-the-scenes details about the cases taped for Season One of *Paranormal State*. Buell provides a candid account of his personal feelings and impressions throughout the taping, and shares personal anecdotes about his own discovery of his faith and the private battles he has fought along the way. He frankly depicts his feelings towards psychics, demons, faith, and the unknown.

Prior to reading the book, I was honestly quite skeptical of the "realness" of this reality show. The dramatic storytelling and creative cinematography seemed to imply a work of fiction (similar to the "reality" of

films like *The Blair Witch Project* or *Paranormal Activity*). However, after reading the book it is difficult to question the integrity of Buell, who lets the skeletons out of his closet and shares his vulnerabilities, mistakes, and regrets with readers. I would recommend this book to any fan, or seeker, who wants to get a closer look at "the real stories of Penn State's Paranormal Research Society," all while in search of the truth.

Rating: 🐻🐻🐻🐻



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 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>.

Ghost Fiction: *All Saints' Eve*—A Good, Scary Read



Janine

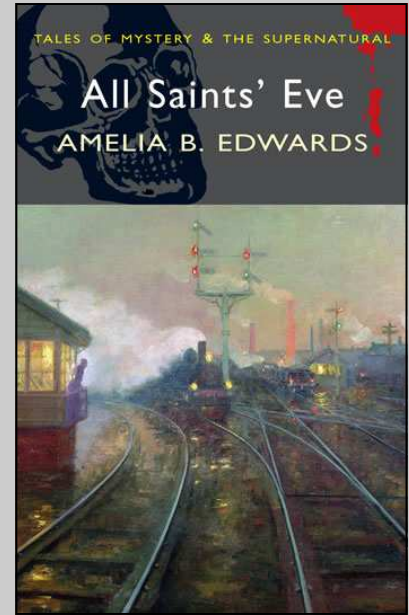
“The Four-Fifteen Express” is a short story that I read from a collection, *All Saints Eve: The Murder Mysteries of Amelia B. Edwards*.

Amelia Blanford Edwards was born in 1831 and was a friend of Charles Dickens. This puts her as a forerunner of the Queen of murder mysteries, Dame Agatha Christie. Christie’s second husband was an archaeologist and she was somewhat involved in his work, but Amelia Edwards herself was known as the “Queen of Egyptologists” in her time. She wrote famed travel books and worked to save Egyptian antiquities.

All the stories in this collection are tales of murder, or near murder, and most have at least a supernatural touch to them. “The Four-Fifteen Express” stands out among them as a fine ghost

story. It starts as ghost stories should, on a foggy afternoon in London, when the hero, Langford, boards a train, hoping for a private compartment. Unfortunately, he is soon joined by an all too talkative fellow traveler, and is made to listen to a detailed, boring account of business. Upon reaching his destination, Langford discovers that he has been traveling with a man wanted for a theft. The story gets eerier and eerier from here. One of the characters is a ghost who shows the solution to his own murder.

“Number Three” in this collection is also a particularly good story. In the introduction to this volume, Richard Daly says that “The Phantom Coach” is Edwards’s best-known ghost story. Unfortunately, it does not appear in this collection. Considering the age of these works, they are surprisingly readable, evoking a lovely, misty atmosphere.



“The Four-Fifteen Express” and “Number Three” Rating: 🦋🦋🦋🦋
Overall Collection Rating: 🦋🦋🦋

Spend The Night with The Ghosts of Ohio in 2011

The Ghosts of Ohio is continuing to look into renting out some of the most haunted buildings in Ohio (and beyond) for an entire night. Unlike traditional “ghost hunts,” where you are often forced to share the location with total strangers, every building we rent out will be totally ours.

How do you get in on all this spooky fun? It's simple, really. All you need to do is sign up for The Ghosts of Ohio newsletter—which is free...and which most of you have already done!!

For each investigation, we'll be picking several names from our list of newsletter subscribers and giving them the first shot at spending the night with us. All they need to do is pay the same

registration fee that the members of The Ghosts of Ohio have to pay in order to rent out the building (dollar amount subject to change based on individual venue).

In addition, we'll be drawing at least one lucky Grand Prize winner who will get to come along for FREE!

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

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

Where Can You Spend The Night With Us?

We are still working on confirming dates, but just to whet your appetite, we are currently in negotiations to book private overnight investigations at the following locations:

- Waverly Sanatorium—Louisville, KY
- West Virginia Penitentiary—Moundsville, WV
- Mansfield Reformatory—Mansfield, OH

Got a place that you're dying to spend the night inside? Drop us a line at info@ghostsofohio.org and we'll see what we can do!

Administration

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