



The ghosts of Ohio[®] Newsletter

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From the Spooky Desk of James Willis: Glutton For Punishment



James

As one of my recent presentations was drawing to a close, I asked if there were any questions. Instantly, a teenage girl in the front row shot up her hand. When I called on her, she asked if it was true that I have been looking for ghosts for over 25 years. When I said yes, she made a weird face and asked, "Why do you keep doing it?" Without thinking, I said the first thing that popped into my head, "I guess I'm a glutton for punishment."

Looking back, I think I only half-answered the question. I certainly do consider myself a glutton for punishment. I mean, how else can I explain my spending 14-16 hours on an investigation (plus an additional 30+ reviewing evidence), getting absolutely nothing ghostly...and then saying, "Let's do this again next weekend"?

But there's more to it than just being a glutton. It's the knowing that there's still so much to learn that drives me. What happens when we die? Can people decide they're going to become a ghost? Where do ghosts go when they're not

out haunting? Those are the type of questions that not only keep me awake at night, but also push me to not give up in this field until I have the answers. Do I think I'll ever have ALL the answers? Not a chance. But maybe, just maybe, if I hang in there long enough, I'll stumble on an answer or two. And that will make all the sleepless nights, miles of asphalt, and gallons of Monster Energy Drink all worthwhile.

Cheers,
James A. Willis
Founder/Director

Personal Experiences: The Athens Mental Asylum Ghost

Submitted by Brian L., Athens Ohio

OK, so I'm sure everybody who is into ghosts has heard of the Ridges. It is the old Athens Mental Hospital that is up on the hill overlooking Ohio University. I had always heard the ghost stories and really wanted to check the place out. When I graduated high school two years ago, one of the places I applied to was Ohio U. and when I got accepted I was really excited because I would be living right near the asylum!

The first time some of my friends and I went to check out the place, it was during the day. Everybody told us not to go at night because the cops patrol the place and get upset if they catch you walking around up there. So we went during the day and even though it was daytime it was really creepy looking. If you haven't seen the place before, you need to check it out. It's huge and there are metal bars and stuff over the windows. It's like something out of a horror movie.

Well, we went in the building since it is used by the art department, but they wouldn't let us go upstairs. So we hung out for a bit and then checked out the cemetery and just kind of walked about the whole grounds. There's a story about a female patient who died in one of the

rooms and left a stain in the shape of her body on the floor. She's supposed to haunt the place. So, while we were walking around, we kept trying to figure out what room it was. We spent a lot of time looking up at the windows. Didn't see anything though.

A couple of weeks later, we were bored one night and decided to try and go check the place out. We figured we were students so we had a right to be up there.

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One of the remaining buildings of former Athens Mental Hospital overlooking Ohio University.



Cries in the Night: My 25-Year Obsession with Crybaby Bridges



James

When I was but a wee lad growing up in Orange County, New York, a family friend told me this creepy story about an old bridge on Museum Village Road. Seems that one night, a woman was carrying her newborn child over the bridge when she tripped, sending the baby over the edge of the bridge, down onto the railroad tracks below. As the baby cried out in pain, the woman frantically tried climbing down the steep embankment to rescue her child. As luck would have it, a train was coming down the tracks and, well, let's just say things didn't end well for either the mother or her baby. I was told that, according to legend, if you went out to that old bridge at night, you could hear the baby crying.

I was too young to drive when I first heard that story. But any time my parents were driving in the area, I would encourage them to take "the back way" home so that we could cross the bridge. I would then proceed to roll down all the windows in the back and hang my head out in a vain attempt to hear a baby crying. I never did hear anything, but that didn't stop me from trying.

Fast forward to my freshman year of college at SUNY New Paltz. I'm sitting in the common area of a dorm, swapping ghost stories (imagine that) when one of the guys starts telling the Museum Village Road story, except he's getting it all wrong. The way he's telling it, the woman didn't accidentally drop the baby off the bridge—she threw it off because the child was illegitimate. And the baby didn't fall off the bridge onto train tracks. In his version, the baby fell into a river and drowned. Sure, you could still go out to the bridge and hear the baby cry, but only if you went at midnight on Halloween night. I was about to stand up and throttle this guy for completely butchering the tale when I realized something; he wasn't talking about the Museum Village Road bridge. The bridge in his story was over 90 miles north.

I remember thinking, "How could this be? Two similar tragic events



If you listen carefully, you just may hear the faint sounds of distress emanating from the afterlife at the Lick Road Crybaby Bridge.

involving NY bridges that resulted in hauntings...coincidence, right?" Or was one version the "true" story and the other just a transposed, made-up story?

So began my obsession with Crybaby Bridges.

I didn't know it at the time, but not only was my Museum Village Road story not unique, but it was part of a whole slew of stories collectively known as Crybaby Bridge tales. While the specifics vary from story to story, there are several key ingredients needed:

A bridge

A mother and her newborn

An event that causes the baby to fall from the bridge

Once you have those ingredients, you just need to have a reason for the mother and child to be up on the bridge (walking home, contemplating suicide and/or murder, or even, in one case, lost in a snowstorm) and then have something happen that causes the baby to fall (or be thrown) from the bridge. The postscript to the story always involves telling the audience to go out to the bridge, sometimes on a specific date, in order to hear the ghostly cries from the baby. Sometimes, a ritual of sorts needs to be performed in order to hear the baby's cries—honking your horn and/or flashing your headlights are quite popular. Other times, one simply has to

sit quietly and wait.

My research shows that while they were not originally referred to as "Crybaby Bridge" stories, versions of them started popping up as early as the 1950s. The first reference I've found that uses the term "Crybaby Bridge" is from 1983.

Today, virtually every state has a Crybaby Bridge story, with the highest concentration being in the Eastern and Midwest states.

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The Gore Orphanage Crybaby Bridge.



Spend The Night with The Ghosts of Ohio in 2012

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>.



So Who's Spending the Night at Mansfield Reformatory with The Ghosts of Ohio?

Marie Jensen, Suzanne Richart, and **Julie Kavanaugh**, that's who! And a very special congrats goes out to **John Finger** who, as our Grand Prize winner, gets to spend the entire night with us for FREE.

If you weren't one of our lucky winners, don't despair. As long as you are a newsletter subscriber, you are automatically entered into every contest. So your day will come, eventually!

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. And who knows? You just might get the chance to investigate the location along with The Ghosts of Ohio!

Come Out and See The Ghosts!

It's already summer and The Ghosts of Ohio's calendar is already starting to fill up! And while we're working on some extra-special events for this October, here's a couple of places you can come out and see us in the meantime! Please note that unless there's a dollar

sign (\$) associated with the entry, it is free and open to the public. Still, some of these locations have strict guidelines with regard to how many people can attend before the room is at capacity. So it's always a good idea to call the venue ahead of time just to be on the safe side.

JULY

Thursday, July 26th, 2012

"Just How Weird is Ohio?" Presentation
Delaware County District Library: Orange Branch
7171 Gooding Boulevard
Delaware, OH 43015
(740) 549-2665
<http://www.delaware.lib.oh.us/>

OCTOBER

Thursday, October 11th, 2012

"Meet The Ghosts of Ohio" Presentation
Hurt/Battelle Memorial Library
270 Lilly Chapel Road
West Jefferson, OH 43162

Wednesday, October 10, 2012 @ 6:00 pm

"Meet The Ghosts of Ohio" TEEN Presentation
Fairborn Community Library
1 East Main Street
Fairborn, OH 45324
<http://www.greenelibrary.info/Branches/Fairborn-Community-Library.html>

Wednesday, October 17, 2012 @ 6:00 pm

"Meet The Ghosts of Ohio" TEEN Presentation
Lane Library: Fairfield Branch
1485 Corydale Drive
Fairfield, OH 45014

Friday, October 19th–Saturday, October 20th, 2012

Lima Lantern Tours \$
Allen County Memorial Hall
120 W. Elm Street
Lima, OH 45801
<http://limalanterntour.com/>

Tuesday, October 23, 2012

"Meet The Ghosts of Ohio" Presentation
Hurt/Battelle Memorial Library
270 Lilly Chapel Road
West Jefferson, OH 43162
<http://www.hbmlibrary.org/>

Thursday, October 25, 2012

"Meet The Ghosts of Ohio" Presentation
Southern State Community College: South Campus
12681 US Rte 62
Sardenia, OH 45171
(740) 362-3861
<http://www.sccc.edu/about-us/campus/south.html>

Saturday, October 27, 2012

Somerset Ghost Tour
Details To Come

- Euler Road/Crybaby Lane**
(Bowling Green/Wood county)
- Green Eyes Cemetery**
(Shelby/Richland county)
- House of Mary**
(near Rockbridge/Hocking county)
- Potter House**
(near Bowling Green/Wood county)
- Sedamsville Woods Abandoned
"Murder" House**
(Kenyon College/Knox county)
- Weidler's Pass**
(near Arcadia/Hancock county)



Cries in the Night: My 25-Year Obsession with Crybaby Bridges—Continued

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Case in point, when I first started tracking Crybaby Bridge stories/locations in Ohio back in 1999, there was a grand total of 15. That number has grown to the point that my database now boasts 87 different locations in Ohio, all said to be home to the “real” crybaby bridge. On top of that, I have 11 listings for Crybaby Tunnels, four Crybaby Woods, and even a Crybaby Hollow.

So I know what you’re thinking, with so many variations out there, is there a “real” Crybaby Bridge? You know, the one that was the inspiration for all these other stories? As of this writing, I’m sad to say I’ve yet to find The One. I have

indeed found instances across the U.S. where babies/small children have died on or near bridges, but none of those bridges (so far) have come to be known as being haunted or of anyone hearing a baby crying. Looking specifically at the Ohio Crybaby bridge locations, I have not found a single instance of an actual death happening at any of them that could have caused the haunting or at least the genesis of the legend. True, a few of the bridges have been sites of deaths (most recently, the 2010 discovery of a woman’s badly burned body at the site of the Egypt Road Crybaby Bridge in Salem, Ohio), but all

of the deaths occurred AFTER the Crybaby Legend had already been in circulation.

When all is said and done, it would appear that the Crybaby Bridge legend is nothing more than a creepy campfire tale that just spread like wildfire. After all, everyone loves a good ghost story, right? Still, should you find yourself crossing over a particularly spooky bridge in the middle of the night, go ahead and roll down your windows and give a listen. You never know what you might hear!

Personal Experiences: The Athens Mental Asylum Ghost—Continued

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Man, if you think the place is spooky during the daytime, it is really creepy at night!

We were walking around, and the three of us are doing what we did last time, looking up at the windows and trying to figure out which room the lady died in. All of a sudden, one of my friends was like, “What the #&*! is that?” We all looked. There was a woman standing up in one of the windows looking down at us. I just knew she was a ghost, but the thing is, she didn’t look like what people say ghosts look like. She wasn’t glowing or all cloudy looking. She just looked like a real person. She had dark hair and what looked like a white apron on. She didn’t do anything except stare at us. It was really freaky! My one friend waved to

her but she didn’t wave back. So we just stood there looking at her staring at us and then she just sort of faded away. It wasn’t like she moved away from the window. She just kept standing there and not moving and then faded away. It was the freakiest thing I have ever seen.

When we got back to the dorm, we talked about what we had witnessed. The only thing we could come up with was that it was a ghost. But the really weird thing that we didn’t think about until later was that while we were looking at her there wasn’t any sound. It was like someone had hit the mute button because we don’t remember hearing any noise at all. Once she faded

away, the noises, like cars and crickets, came back again. Weird.

I have gone up there a bunch of times since, but I haven’t seen the ghost again yet. I hope I get the chance to see her again though.



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@ghostsofahio.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/ghostsofahio.

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/ghostsofahio>



Podcast Review: The Paranormal World of Jim Harold



Podcasts. A quick click on your favorite search engine turns up thousands of them covering a mind-boggling range of topics. But what is a podcast and how do you get one?

A podcast is a prerecorded radio show that is distributed over the Internet. They can be accessed a variety of ways, but most are available either through iTunes or smart phone applications. Some are free, some are based on subscription models, and most have some form of advertising.

With such a wide range of topics available on podcasts it was inevitable that ghost and paranormal podcasts would pop up. This review focuses on the podcasting endeavors of Jim Harold, a Cleveland area resident and paranormal podcaster since 2005. Harold offers a number of podcasts, but this review focuses on the following three programs: The Paranormal Podcast, Jim Harold's Campfire, and Weird News Radio. These three shows have low barriers to entry (mainly because they are available for a minimal cost) and give a good overview of what the Jim Harold world of podcasting has to offer.

First up is the Paranormal Podcast. This program is a catchall that covers everything from hauntings, UFOs, crypto zoology, and psychic phenomena. Episodes tend to run between 35-60 minutes and focus on one topic. Typically each show has one guest, usually an author/expert on the topic at hand. The guest shares stories from his/her research, witness interviews, and paranormal investigations. Harold is a true believer regardless of topic, so questions are usually a softball-style that

allows the guest to expound on their personal theories, opinions, and beliefs regarding the paranormal issue being discussed. Most shows cover topics that will be familiar to the paranormal aficionado, but they tend to drill down into each topic with more research, eyewitness reports, and theories than the average reader has experienced. The paranormal podcast is recommended for those whose interest in the paranormal is wide ranging. Listeners whose paranormal interest is laser focused ("I am only interested in ghosts" or "Bigfoot is real but UFOs are bunk") will find the topic range too broad.

Rating for Enthusiasts: 

Rating for Focused Researchers: 

Next up is Jim Harold's Campfire. Campfire is a show where listeners call in to share their personal paranormal experiences with Jim. While any paranormal experience is fair game for Campfire, the vast majority of stories focus on ghosts and poltergeists. Jim's editorial comments are usually confined to "Oh my!" and "Then what happened," so this show is not recommended for skeptics. Most stories are quite involved with a great deal of build up and description. Campfire is primarily recommended for those that have an interest in hauntings as ghost stories are the predominate type of paranormal incident recounted.

Rating: 

Last but not least is Weird News Radio (WNR). WNR is exactly what it sounds like: Weird news articles from around the world. It is co-hosted by Kate Botello and together she and Harold scour the Internet for odd news articles.

Nothing here is specific to the paranormal and as such appeals to a wider audience. All stories are plucked from real articles around the world and the team of Harold and Botello throw in their own two cents on each one. They make a good team and this podcast is recommended for those that like real-life weirdness and funny and/or shocking news items.

Rating: 

Advertising on each of these three podcasts alternates between sponsors and Harold's adverts for his book (Campfire: True Ghost Stories), along with advertisements for his subscription-based Jim Harold's Plus Club. The Plus Club offers access to a variety of podcasts that are only available through the subscription service.

Interested readers can find Campfire, The Paranormal Podcast, and Weird News radio on iTunes, the iPhone App store, the Amazon App store for Android, or through www.jimharold.com.



Investigations and Consultations: Continued Scheduling for 2012

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



Special Event Announcement: Merry-Go Round Museum Investigation

On Saturday, November 17, 2012, The Ghosts of Ohio will be taking part in a very special fundraiser with the Merry-Go-Round Museum in Sandusky, Ohio.

One lucky raffle winner and a guest will have the unique opportunity to investigate the Merry-Go-Round Museum with The Ghosts of Ohio.

The evening will feature an all-you-can-eat pizza dinner and then you and your guest will take part in a hands-on

ghost hunting experience. All ghost hunting equipment will be provided by The Ghosts of Ohio for you to use as you please and we will be there to give you a crash course in ghost hunting.

Raffle tickets are available for purchase at the Museum (301 Jackson Street Sandusky, OH 44824) and can also be ordered over the phone (419-626-6111). All proceeds benefit the Merry-Go-Round Museum.

For more information, visit <http://www.merrygoroundmuseum.org/> or <http://www.facebook.com/merrygoroundmuseum>.



Coming Up—Next Issue: August

- Bad Mexican Food & the Ghost of Rush Limbaugh: Misadventures in EVP Land
- Locked Inside Mansfield Reformatory with The Ghosts of Ohio
- A Look Back at The Ghosts of Ohio's 2012 Jamboree

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