



The ghosts of Ohio[®] Newsletter

www.ghostsofohio.org

Volume 22 Issue 1

JUMPING TO PARANORMAL CONCLUSIONS



James

You see, it would be this mat that you would put on the floor. And it would have different conclusions written on it that you could jump to.

— Tom Smykowski

In the movie *Office Space*, the Jump to Conclusions Mat was Tom Smykowski's million-dollar idea so that he wouldn't have to work a day in his life again. I still remember the day I laughed out loud when I discovered that replicas of the Jump to Conclusions Mat were for sale on Amazon. Recently, I can't help but wonder if there's a Paranormal Jump to Conclusions Mat because an awful lot of people in this field seem to be using it.

By that, I mean that I'm seeing an increasing number of groups and television shows concluding that a single "hit" from a REM Pod or single syllable uttered by the flavor-of-the-month spirit box is evidence that the location is haunted. In and of itself, those single events are evidence of nothing, and we need to stop jumping to that conclusion.

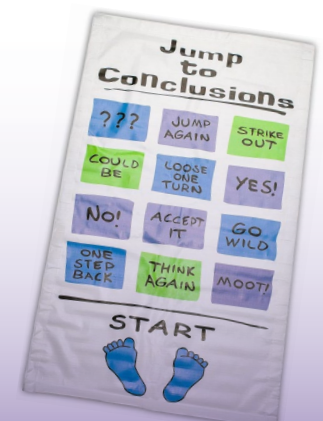
In the case of the REM Pod, if it goes off, all that is saying is that there is energy present...or perhaps that the batteries are dying. To conclude that it's a ghost, there are many, many other things one needs to "jump" to first. For example, is the device near electrical wiring or something with batteries (like a cell phone or flashlight)? Even when you cross all of those off the list of potential culprits, you still can't jump to the conclusion that the unexplained energy is a ghost because...wait for it...what type of energy is a ghost comprised of?

The jumping also has the potential to do more damage when any sort of talking device is being used, as most are nothing more than radio receivers. Is it possible that a ghost comes through and speaks? Sure. But to hear what sounds like "Frank" come through the spirit box and use that as evidence that the building is haunted by a ghost named Frank is not only lazy investigating but also runs the risk of changing the narrative of who or what may be haunting the building.

I understand why the paranormal shows do this: They want quick, simple evidence. No one is going to keep watching a show that depicts investigators sorting through hours and hours of audio and video, only to find absolutely nothing. Still, if we are ever going to move the needle on this field and get us back on the path to finding true evidence of ghosts, we're only going to accomplish that with a lot less jumping.

Cheers,

James A. Willis
Founder/Director



PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

THE MIRROR

Mary B., Van Wert, OH

I've always been into spooky things. When I was a little girl, I used to love spending the night at my grandparents' house, which I was convinced was haunted. It was a typical old farmhouse with creaking floors, old plumbing, drafty windows, and filled with all sorts of odd antique-looking items that my grandparents had collected over the years. In other words, the perfect haunted house. I lost count of how many nights I would just lay in my bed in that house, listening for that one noise that I couldn't dismiss as the house settling or the pipes rattling. Because that meant, to me at least, the ghosts were stirring. Nothing ever happened, though. That is, until the day the mirror showed up.

I guess I must have been around 10 or so when the mirror arrived. When I got to my grandparents' house that Friday evening, I did my usual routine of running upstairs and down the hallway, past the bathroom, to throw my overnight bag on my bed. There, on the wall between the bathroom and my bedroom, was the mirror. It was one of those big mirrors, framed in dark wood with these weird little cravings in it. Looked heavy, too. I can remember seeing it and literally stopping in my tracks to look at it and instantly being afraid of it. I don't know why, but I just got the feeling that if I looked into the mirror, I was going to see a ghost. You would think that would be exciting to me as it was something I had been wanting to have happen. But I was excited. I was scared and quickly got in the habit of running past the mirror every chance I could and never looking at it.

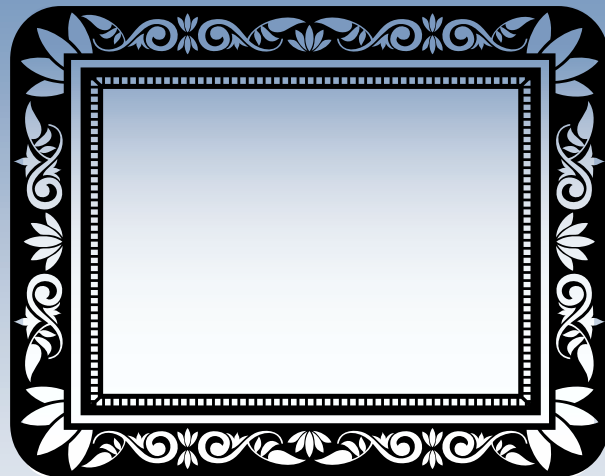
That was easier said than done because the mirror was on the wall between my bedroom and the bathroom. One weekend, I tried hanging a bedsheet over it so I wouldn't have to run the risk of inadvertently looking at it. My grandfather saw me, though, and threatened to not let me read my *Scary Stories to Tell in The Dark* books anymore if I didn't take the sheet down. So, I got

pretty good at avoiding the mirror.

But one night, I was in the bathroom, brushing my teeth before bed, when I suddenly felt a cold breeze. It was November, and I remember thinking it must have just been the wind having found a way inside the house. The bathroom door was open and without thinking, I turned my head and looked out into the hallway, I guess to see if I could determine where the breeze had come from. Unfortunately, my gaze fell upon the mirror, which seemed to have a faint glow about it. That's when I saw the little boy inside the mirror, looking out at me.

If I had to guess, I would say he was about 8 years old. He had dirty clothes on, complete with a dirty hat. He wasn't misty or half-formed. It just looked like a reflection of someone in the mirror. Except there was no boy standing in the hallway. At least not one I could see. As soon as I saw the boy, I ran out of the bathroom, down the hall, and jumped into bed. It must have been a good 10 minutes before I realized the toothbrush was still in my mouth. I was that scared.

I never saw the boy in the mirror again. Whenever I would go into the bathroom to get ready for bed, I would close the bathroom door. When I was done, I'd put my head down, open the door, and walk quickly to my bedroom, all the while keeping my eyes fixed on my feet and the floor. My grandparents eventually got rid of the mirror by donating it for the church rummage sale. Every so often, I think about that mirror and wonder where it is. And of course, I think about the ghost boy. I can't help but wonder if he's still in the mirror, hanging in someone's home, waiting to be seen again.



PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

THE WOMAN IN THE FOG

Mary B., Jefferson County, OH

I've been told I live in the middle of nowhere, and I guess that's true. Suffice to say, I have to travel a lot of back roads at night and more than a few of them are supposed to be haunted. Not sure I believe any of the stories, though. Truth be told, when I'm driving down these haunted roads, I'm more nervous about coming around a sharp turn and running into a couple of deer or some bored teenagers than a ghost. That's what makes what happened to me while driving down a road that wasn't even supposed to be haunted so strange.

It was a Saturday evening in late September, and I was driving home alone from a friend's house a couple of towns over. There was fog rolling in, but that didn't bother me; I had tunes cranked on my XM Radio and my GPS to guide me (I knew the route, but I like to keep the GPS on just so I can see how much longer I'll be driving).

So, I'm driving along the road, and I start to notice that the fog is really starting to get thick and it's covering the entire road. I start to slow down because, as I said, I'm waiting for a deer to run across the road at any second. All of a sudden, my XM loses its signal. Then, my GPS starts freaking out and keeps repeating "proceed to the route" over and over again. I'm thinking it's the fog causing all of this, which is why I got excited when I noticed up ahead in my headlights that it looked like there was a break in the fog. And there was a break in the fog, but there was something in it.

As I rolled up to the clearing in the fog, I could see that it was just a clear patch alongside the road. And there was a woman standing there on the side of the road. She looked like she was dressed all in white, but I honestly couldn't tell if it was clothing, or the fog wrapped around her. I could tell she had long black hair, though. As for the rest of her facial features, I don't recall seeing anything like eyes, a nose, or a mouth. It just looked blank.

My first reaction upon seeing her was to slow down and see if she needed help. But we live in troubled times and my instincts were telling me to get out of there as quickly as I could. So, I sped up and left her behind. I guess I got about half a mile down the road when my XM and GPS both popped back on, and I started to feel bad about leaving the woman behind. So, I made a U-turn and headed back, telling myself I would at least see if she needed help and then I would offer to call the police for her. Except when I got back to the spot where she was, she was gone. The fog had dissipated from where she had been standing, too. In fact, there was nothing there that would lead me to believe she had been there at all—no disabled vehicle, bicycle, backpack, nothing.

I still wonder who or what I saw that night alongside the road. I know I saw something, though.



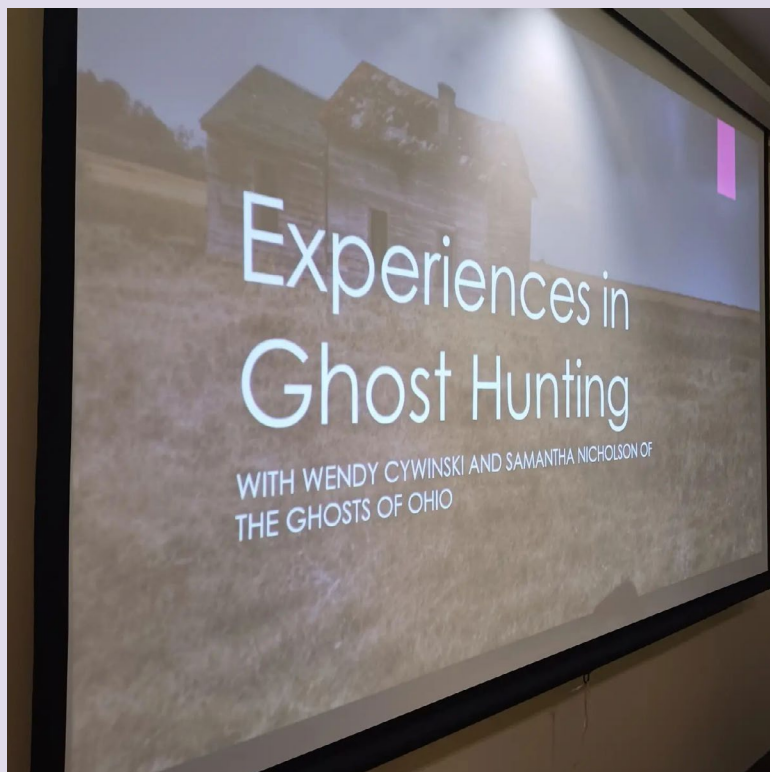
EXPERIENCES IN GHOST HUNTING



Samantha

What happens when it's October, Jim's fully booked with appearances, and a library in northeast Ohio asks for a presentation? In this case, Wendy and I stepped up to share our "Experiences in Ghost Hunting" at the Willoughby Hills Public Library.

Since we've each been Ghosts of Ohio members for 20 years (wow!), there was so much that we could have included in the presentation. Ultimately, we decided to talk about the group's philosophy, investigative style & procedures, followed by a highlight of several of our most noteworthy investigations. We shared the hard-soled footsteps we captured at Waverly Hills Sanitorium when Wendy and I had stepped away from our recorders. We shared the slow creaking footsteps from the attic at Gaines Tavern that happened four times, each louder than the last until I asked what that sound was. We shared the doppelgänger laugh (that imitated Wendy) at Eaton Public Library that only appeared on one microphone, even though another recorder was just steps away. And we shared the children's voices asking for



"mama" at Twin City Opera House, which still surprises me every time I listen to the recording.

In all, 31 attendees listened with seemingly great interest in what we had to say. While I think a lot of them already had a general understanding of the paranormal, I got the impression that they appreciated our perspective, and especially candidness, with regard to what investigators know and don't know. The questions they asked were thoughtful. One that stood out is a question we all have: "What determines if someone dies but then sticks around?" Of course, the answer is that we don't know. No one does. Despite saying so, however, Wendy and I were able to talk about energy, and the concept of residual vs. intelligent hauntings due to that energy. The audience seemed receptive to this kind of discussion, and it makes me wonder how often people have opportunities to share their thoughts with a room full of like-minded folks. My guess is not very often.



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EXPERIENCES IN GHOST HUNTING continued

Afterward, a few people came up to show us pictures or tell us their stories. I was most touched by a woman who lost her sister only a month ago. She said she had a pair of her sister's sandals; and despite carefully putting them away in the closet, they appeared in the middle of the bedroom floor two days in a row. She showed me the pictures she took of where the shoes were, and they were definitely nowhere near the closet. Her conclusion was that her sister was announcing her presence. I can't argue with that! I, too, had similar occurrences after the deaths of my grandma and my aunt. I believe

that both, in their own ways, were able to make their presence known, if only for a moment. Just long enough to say hi.

I feel very fortunate to be a part of the Ghosts of Ohio, where curiosity and exploration are embraced, and weird is the norm. This group is my second family, and I look forward to many more years investigating the paranormal with them. And to those who are reading this: Share your thoughts, your stories, and your two-bottle conversations with us - and especially each other! The world needs more of that.

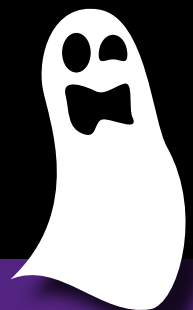
EQUIPMENT REVIEWS

Got a piece of paranormal equipment you've always wondered how it works? Does it really do what it's supposed to be doing? Or maybe you've created some paranormal equipment you'd like field tested? Either way, let us know because The Ghosts Of Ohio would love to help! Drop us a line at info@ghostsofohio.org with the subject line "Equipment" and we'll take it from there!



WE WANT TO HEAR ABOUT YOUR GHOSTLY EXPERIENCES!

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 e-mail 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!



BOOK REVIEW

A Life with Ghosts: True, Terrifying, and Insightful Tales from my Favorite Haunts

Steve Gonsalves with Michael Aloisi
Gallery Books (2024)

Available at [Amazon](#) and [Barnes and Noble](#)



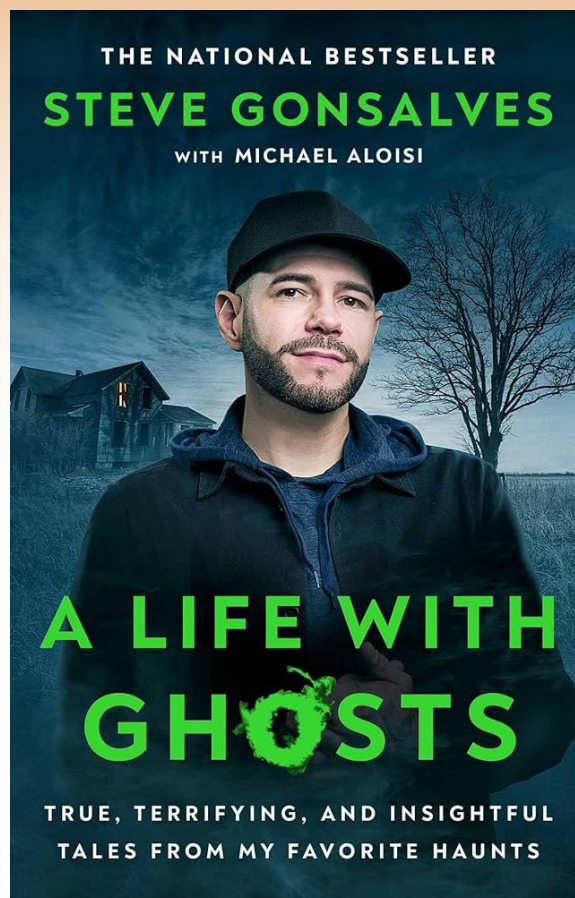
Frank

I first learned of this book while listening to the Astonishing Legends podcast. Steve was being interviewed about his new book and I thought it might make an interesting read.

I was well aware of who Steve was when I first got

into paranormal investigating. I went on several public ghost hunts all over the country. You know the ones; crowds of eager spook hunters gathered, intending to find something exciting, only to find themselves tripping over one another. During those early days, participants had ample time to visit with the celebrity investigators. On more than one occasion, I attended an event that featured the gang from *TAPS/Ghost Hunters*. I was able to spend time chatting with all of them. I found they were cordial, funny, helpful as could be under the circumstances, and sincerely friendly, especially Steve. So, I was eager to read his book.

As I started reading, I realized Steve really was just a regular guy. He grew up in Wooster, Massachusetts, where his childhood interest in the paranormal was seeded by a movie he saw, *The Entity*. For Steve, that film raised all kinds of questions in his mind: Was his own house haunted?



What happens when people die? Are there real monsters out there? A year later, his interest in the paranormal became more intense after watching another movie, *Poltergeist*.

As Steve grew older, he started doing his own research, which included studying about Ed and Lorraine Warren. Loyd Auerbach's book, *ESP, Hauntings and Poltergeists: A Parapsychologist's Handbook* would become his go-to book of study as it taught Steve about serious investigations, evidence gathering and ways to work as a professional.

Steve's family moved several times in his youth before finally resettling back in Wooster. Steve was 15 when he started doing his own investigations, although he admits it was small scale stuff until he got his driver's license. He said he started by investigating cemeteries, where he would take a lawn chair, Pop-Tarts, and a flashlight,

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BOOK REVIEW CONTINUED

and hope to have a paranormal experience. Most of the time, nothing happened. But one night, Steve was sitting in his lawn chair when an overwhelming sense of fear swept over him. Steve describes it as if a spirit was trying to make contact. Not interested in wanting to find out what was going to happen next, Steve grabbed his gear and ran. While he never saw anything, the experience convinced Steve that the paranormal was real.

As Steve matured, he became an EMT and then a police officer. I found it interesting that Steve's father encouraged him to get involved in the jewelry business and while a police officer, Steve attended the Gemological institute of America, eventually becoming a diamond grader, certified appraiser and jewelry designer. Over time, Steve felt the jewelry business was not for him and decided to just stay with the police force.

Steve's paranormal research eventually led him to Jason Hawes and Grant Wilson from TAPS. They immediately hit things off and began to develop both a friendship and a working relationship.

A Life with Ghosts goes into great detail about how, in the early 2000s, Jason and Grant were approached by Pilgrim Media with the idea of creating a ghost reality show. That show would become known as Ghost Hunters, which Steve has been featured prominently on for many years. In the book, Steve describes how investigations at locations are developed and filming, including mentioning that it entails sound men, production assistants, and more people than he ever could have imagined.

Steve describes in detail some sixteen

individual investigations he has participated in, including Alcatraz, Waverly Hills, Myrtles Plantation, St. Augustine Lighthouse, and Sloss Furnace among others. All the investigations are very interesting and as someone who has investigated many of these places myself, it was interesting to learn that when *TAPS/Ghost Hunters* show goes onsite for an investigation, they are there for several nights, not just the few hours most of us get to investigate at these locations.

All in all, I found *A Life with Ghosts* to be a very interesting read and a great peek behind the curtain of what goes into making a ghost reality show. I think anyone interested in the paranormal would find it to be a good read. One comment of Steve's that stuck with me long after reading *A Life with Ghosts* is this one:

"I'll also admit that despite the insane experiences my colleagues and I have shared together, we haven't been able to prove beyond a doubt the existence of ghosts".





2024: THE YEAR OF THE CRYBABY BRIDGE?



James

As most of you know, every Fall, The Ghosts of Ohio embarks on a whirlwind tour of Ohio, giving presentations and making appearances throughout the Buckeye State. The best part of those appearances is getting to chat with all of you. And I've

always found it interesting that every year, questions about a specific topic tend to be asked more than any other. One year, it was Ouija boards, another time, poltergeists. This year, the topic was Crybaby Bridges.

For the uninitiated, I while back I decided to turn my lifelong obsession with Crybaby Bridges into a little web page, which quickly became the Ohio Crybaby Bridge Project. It's been plugging away for years, with my occasionally updating it whenever I heard about a new potential Crybaby Bridge, or someone had a personal experience to share with me.

Now, I'm not sure what caused Crybaby Bridges to be on everyone's mind this year. Still, I thought I would take a moment and just answer some of the questions people were asking me most about Crybaby Bridges in Ohio.

For more information on The Ohio Crybaby Bridge Project, visit :

strangeandspookyworld.com/crybaby-bridge-project/

How many Crybaby Bridges have you found in Ohio?

In terms of ones I've been made aware of, I think I'm pushing close to **50 bridges** total. But some of the information I have is nothing more than a single story or someone telling me they visited a Crybaby Bridge "years ago, somewhere in Southern Ohio. I won't put them up on the web site until I've gotten a bit more information on them. Currently, there's 33 Crybaby Bridges up on the site.

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2024: THE YEAR OF THE CRYBABY BRIDGE? continued



Pitchin, OH Crybaby Bridge

Doesn't every single state have a Crybaby Bridge?

It's possible, but I haven't found that to be true...yet. I do collect stories and reports of Crybaby Bridges from other states, I don't have one for all 50 states. Of course, there are also states that have Crybaby Bridge-type stories, except they are known by other names—Witch's Bridge, Death Overpass, etc.

Is it true that every county in Ohio has a Crybaby Bridge in it?

Again, while I've heard that a lot, my research doesn't support that. But I'm always hearing about a new bridge every few weeks. In some cases, the bridge ends up being called a Crybaby Bridge for no other reason than someone just decided that was how to refer to it—so no legend associated with it. In other cases, the original Crybaby Bridge gets demolished and the story hops over to another bridge. So, while every county might have something they refer to as a Crybaby Bridge, it's in name only. Regardless, I'm still about 35 counties short.

Where is the original Crybaby Bridge in Ohio located?

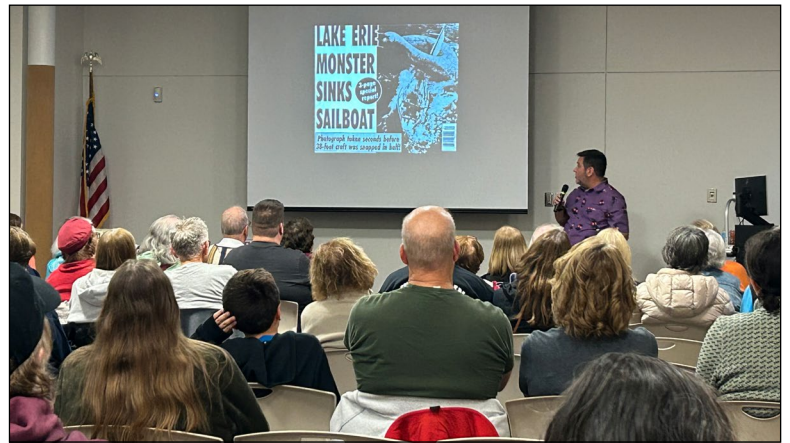
While I have found several Ohio bridges that people have been killed on/near, I have yet to find one that involves the death of a baby. If "original" is meant to mean "oldest", that's still open to debate. But I will say that the one at Rogues Hollow seems to be one of the oldest as I have personal experiences and stories from people visiting that bridge, and referring to it as a Crybaby Bridge, back to the early 1970s.



2024 FALL TOUR RECAP

What an amazing Fall Tour we had! New topics, new presenters, and tons of new faces—all coming out to hang with The Ghosts for a while and share their personal experiences with us!

Thank you to everyone who took time out of their day/night to come and spend some time with us. You made the 2024 Fall Tour something we will not soon forget!



THE GHOSTS OF OHIO CALENDAR

2024 is quickly drawing to a close, but The Ghosts Of Ohio are already scheduling events for 2025!

The following are only the confirmed dates—much more are in the works. Also, while the following dates, times, and topics were current when this newsletter went to press, it is all subject to change, so please check with the individual location to be on the safe side. Additionally, we post any changes to all our social media accounts, so give us a Follow/Like to stay in the loop.

As always, unless an event is marked with a "\$", it is free and open to the public. But in all cases, seating may be limited, so it's always a good idea to check with the venue regarding the need to pre-register.

Friday, December 6th–Sunday, December 8th

GalaxyCon Columbus (\$)

Greater Columbus Convention Center

400 North High Street

Columbus, OH 43215

[Tickets on sale now](#)

Wednesday, December 11th

Merry Scary Holidays presentation

Pickerington Main Library

201 Opportunity Way

Pickerington, OH 43147

Saturday, March 1st -Sunday, March 2nd, 2025

Frogman Festival III (\$)

Oasis Conference Center

902 Loveland-Miamiville Road

Loveland, OH 45140

[Tickets on sale now](#)

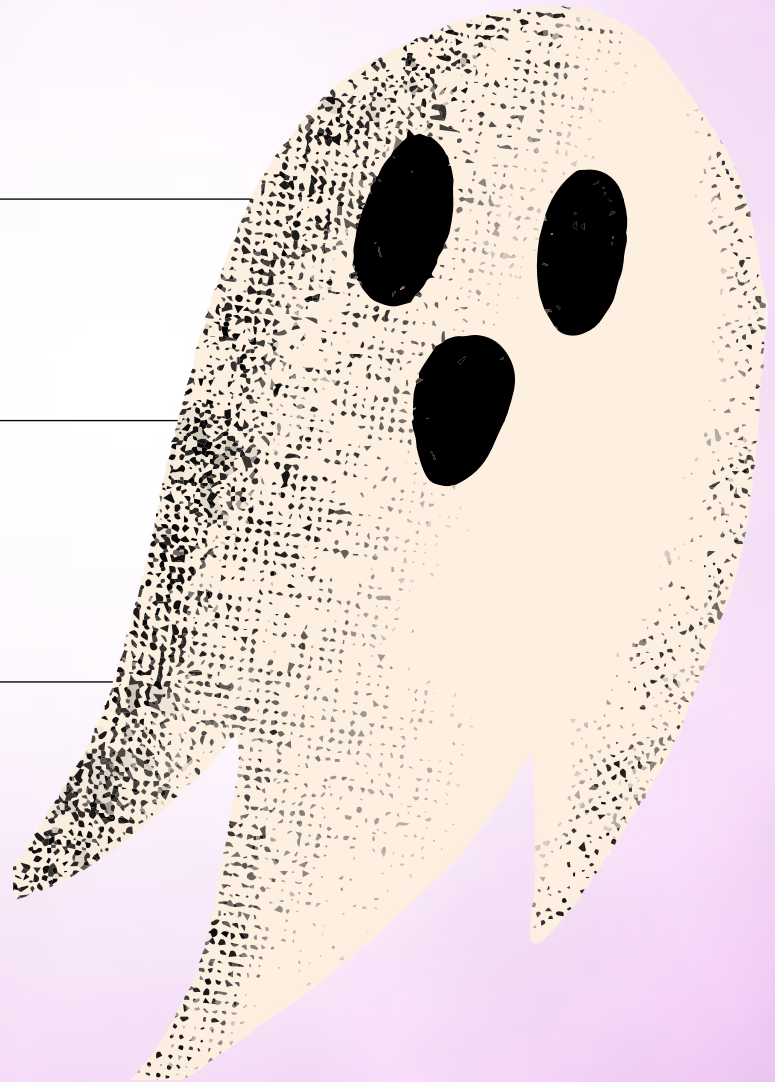
Thursday, June 26th-Sunday, June 29th, 2025

Haunted America Conference (\$)

Lewis & Clark College

Alton, IL

[Tickets soon](#)



www.strangeandspookyworld.com/appearances

Investigations & Consultations

The Ghosts Of Ohio have begun scheduling investigations and consultations for 2024, as well as some for 2025. So, 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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In addition to our website, here are a couple of places where you can find The Ghosts Of Ohio lurking online:

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