



Spirit Society of PA.

A P P A R I T I O N S

A Review and Preview of SSP Activities and Items of Interest • Vol 9, Issue 1 - Jan. 2005

"ROO's" BOOS - NOTES FROM KELLY

I'd like to thank all of the members who unselfishly gave of their time and money to give food and supplies to the Senior Citizen Center of behalf of the Spirit Society of PA. I received this letter from director Lucy Caine the week of December 13, 2004.

"Dear Members of the Spirit Society,

Thank you so much for all of the 'goodies' that your group donated to the Center. We have a large Holiday Party on the 21st. I will use the food for door prizes and for the party. I hope I do not need to use the snow shovel, but 'thanks,' the shovel we have is very old and heavy." Sincerely, Lucy R. Caine Director, WSSC

Thanks again to all of the members who participated. I believe we made their day!

EVP is our topic this month. With the movie *White Noise* coming to the theater in a matter of days, I felt it would be appropriate to discuss this phenomena. John and I plan on seeing the movie the weekend before tonight's meeting, so we will have our opinions ready to share. Has anyone else seen this movie? What are your thoughts?

I've heard quite a lot of good feedback from the new NBC show "*Medium*." John and I watched it last Monday night and we both enjoyed the program. I felt for this woman on many occasions. How could she 'know things' without being involved?

Once I was working with police and the DA contacted me and wanted to know how I knew so much information about the case that had happened in another town hours away? How did I get badge numbers, restaurant names, house descriptions, etc.? I honestly don't know, but it scared the hell out of me. When I was contacted by the DA, I knew that I had hit the jackpot. This case still remains unsolved to this day. In my opinion, the police were involved and there was a lot of corruption beneath the surface. I was receiving strange phone calls, people parked in cars outside of my house for no reason, etc.

I backed out of the case very quickly. This was the very first time I tried my Mediumship skills on someone who had been murdered and what I came up with amazed and frightened me just the same. I taped all of my findings and the police still have this information. Private investigators were involved and followed some of my leads. Again, there was corruption and things that were not on the up and up and I felt like I was on a bad television show. This happened about 5 years ago. I can understand the Medium's frustrations and also her sigh of relief when she was proven correct.

Comment: I personally recall taking strange calls at home and Kelly calling me at work about people parked in front of the house. She was pretty scared and I too was concerned. There are certain issues in this case that she obviously cannot divulge, which clearly suggest to me that not only was she correct in what she told the DA, but this information could implicate a particular policeman in the murder. JDW



Haunted Sickman's Mill – we expect to have more information shortly concerning our SSP camping trip planned for late June 2005. An investigation of the haunted mill will be included. Its a great campsite -- and a fascinating haunted historic mill -- don't miss it!

Radio – Internet Interviews for January and Beyond

John and I have twice been guests on the *Alabama Parapsiritual Research Radio* station recently. (www.apsrradio.com) They are broadcast via satellite, radio and the Internet. They've asked us to be regular guests and more appearances will be announced when known.

On Wednesday, January 12, Kelly will be a guest on the Spirit Seekers of Ohio's chat group via their website @ Spiritseekersofohio.net. Just simply click onto the live chat block and you too, can join the question and answer session pertaining to Life after Death and Angels.

Upcoming National Geographic Documentary on SHC

Researcher Larry Arnold, one of the world's leading authorities on Spontaneous Human Combustion and a long time friend of CGF/SSP will be featured in this program set to air in Summer 2005. Larry went to Belgium & Holland to film with Dr. Mark Benecke, a forensic biologist, who I'm sure Kelly (with her interest in forensics) would dearly love to meet! (He has also been involved with NG documentaries on Vampires and the forensic identification of Hitler's skull.) Benecke's entire site (www.benecke.com) is fascinating (and delightfully bizarre) and worth a peek! Here is a direct link to the page featuring a photo collection from the upcoming NG program: www.benecke.com/shcbelgium.html

When checking the photos, I found the ones on the beach curious (did some overzealous sunbather once burst into flames?), and asked Larry of their significance. Here is his response, which solicits opinions from you folks out there in paranormal land: "*Significance of beach is it's where the possible victim of SHC picked up a seashell and put it in her pocket, from which 30 min. later a blue flame erupted. Neither we nor Dr. Benecke believe this is SHC but rather SC of a currently unknown substance. A substance contaminating the shell? Perhaps. If anyone has any ideas, plz. contact Larry @ psinet@voicenet.com. Thanx.*"

We'll keep you posted as to the exact air date of what should be a real **hot** documentary! - JDW

Switzerland's Spreuer Bridge: Haunted? No clear evidence. Bizarre? Positively! Recently, SSP Yahoo Groups member Jan Mueller kindly shared a photo her parents took while vacationing in Switzerland just before the holidays. The photo (below) showed some possible paranormal mist. My initial comments were: *"Without correlating evidence (EM, Thermal, etc) we cannot say this photo can be considered as truly paranormal. However, I suspect it may be — if the mist only showed up in one and was invisible to the naked eye. (I assume no one was smoking and no motor vehicles had passed thru) Perhaps the most 'famous' haunted covered bridge is Sachs Bridge, near Gettysburg, where many anomalous photos, video, EVP, etc have been captured over the years. I've seen several other reports of activity at covered bridges as well. We suspect water is some sort of conduit, and thus such bridges and towns near rivers & streams often have increased activity. If your parents know the name of this bridge, perhaps some research may reveal any history of tragic events that may make it the scene of a haunting."*



Jan's response: *"The covered bridge was built around 1408 in Lucerne, Switzerland. I don't know if any tragedies there. The bridge is called Spreuer-Brucke and the paintings are called 'dance of death'. There is a skeleton in every picture. It is a foot bridge and my parents claim there was no one near them."*

Huh? **Dance of Death? Skeletons?** I immediately had to paraphrase Troy Taylor: **"COOL!"** I had to learn more!

Jan then sent another shot (also shown below), which clearly showed eerie skeletal figures not readily seen the first pic. (Although a closer peek suggests the figure kneeling to the right of the bed and partially obscured by the mist may also be a skeleton)

A browser search turned up perhaps 2 dozen legit hits on the bridge, revealing it was built as a part of the city fortification in 1408. It is called the Spreuer Bridge because it was only here that chaffs of wheat (Spreu) could be dumped into the river. From 1626 and 1635, Artist Kaspar Meglinger added 67 paintings that represent the "Dance of Death" - these are evidently a chronicle of the plague that deci-

mated Europe in the 14th Century. These "Grim Reaper" images (just as common in the middle ages as on a "Deadhead's" Tie-Dyed Shirt today) seem to express the population's perception of the Reaper urging everyone to dance (thus die) with him.



A search on the Artist found few additional details (at least in English; most were German which I read very little of). One details his efforts in painting the ceiling of a church near the same town with images of the Immaculate Conception. (Quite a paradox from his what appears to be his only other claim to fame)

I could find no references to any paranormal activity or legends about the bridge despite the theme of its interior decorations. As for the mist, again, without other evidence we really can't say, although from what we do know it very well could be something from the paranormal realm. Jerry Garcia stopping by to admire the artwork? (If so, don't inhale the mist unless you want a new perspective on the Spreuer Bridge!)



Who would think such bizarre images decorate the interior of this quaint bridge? (Thanks to Jan Mueller for sharing these photos)

MONSTER

MYSTERIES

PA Paranormal Conference
Gettysburg • March 19, 2005

The 2005 PA Paranormal Conference is only 2 months away - March 19 in Gettysburg. Topics covered incl Bigfoot, "Chessie", The Flatwoods Monster, Werewolves, The Carbondale Incident & more. Speakers include Stan Gordon, Rosemary Guiley, Mike Frizzell, Eric Altman, Mark Nesbitt & Rick Fisher. For details or to register go to - <http://home.supernet.com/~rfisher/conf.html> (or call Rick Fisher @ (717) 684-3643)

Musings of a Ghost Adventurer

By Melissa Griffith

Variables That May Affect Paranormal Activity

Paranormal researchers have long studied what variables may increase paranormal activity. What outside factors may affect what might be a good ghost hunting event or a bad one? Here are some common speculations.

Moon Phases:

Full Moon—In the 18th and 19th centuries, farmers believed that crops would grow during a full moon at the same rate as if it were a bright, sunny day. Police departments report more crimes being committed and hospitals claim that more people are injured and more babies are born during a full moon. We've all heard the stories of people acting strangely during a full moon. In fact, the word "lunatic" is derived from the Latin word for moon, "Lunar."

The moon is responsible for the ocean tides and since our bodies are almost 70% water, it makes logical sense that it could affect humans as well. Many believe that this is when the moon's gravitational pull is at its most powerful and that this energy can be used to increase spirit activity. In addition, it's speculated that the moon's energy can alter the electrical currents to our brain which can result in being ultra-susceptible to the supernatural.

Some researchers claim that 3 days before, during and 3 days after a full moon there is more electrostatic charges in the air and more ghostly phenomenon can be witnessed.

Blue Moon—A Blue Moon is when there is a second full moon in one month. Since this phenomenon is rare, it is believed to be extremely powerful.

Nighttime:

During dark hours our vision is impaired so our bodies have a natural defense mechanism that will increase our hearing ability and may also increase our sixth sense/intuition capabilities as well. This may make ghost hunters more aware of paranormal occurrences.

Negative Ions:

Ions are molecules that have gained or lost an electrical charge and are created when air molecules break apart because of sunlight and moving air & water. Negative ions are abundant around moving water—the ocean, waterfalls and after thunderstorms. According to Pierce J. Howard, PhD author of *The Owners Manual for the Brain*, "Generally speaking, negative ions increase the flow of oxygen to the brain resulting in higher alertness, decreased drowsiness and more mental energy." This is the reason we feel so relaxed after a thunderstorm, while gazing at a waterfall or while vacationing at the beach.

Increased mental energy and heightened awareness could make us more sensitive to paranormal experiences. Could negative ions also effect spirits? Just an FYI: If your investigating indoors, it might be advantageous to turn off any air conditioning units as they deplete negative ions.

High Adrenaline:

People who have high energy or who are easily excited or afraid have high adrenaline levels. Spirits might be able to use this energy to manifest (much as they do from batteries, electrical equipment, etc.) However, you do not want a 'scaredy cat' on a ghost investigation with you—but it does give new meaning to the phrase "... feeding off fear."

Solar X-rays/Geomagnetic Storms:

Solar x-rays develop when flares are emitted from the sun and crash back onto it's surface. A geomagnetic storm is created when these radiation particles hit the Earth. The atmosphere becomes ionized, electrically charged and any object capable of hosting an electrical current can posses higher electrical charges.

Caveat: Although this can be useful energy to spirits and ghosts, it can also cause misleading positive readings on an EMF meter.

Dates & Important Information:

If it's possible, it may increase your chances of a supernatural encounter if you happen to know personal information regarding the particular spirit at your investigation location. For instance, the name of the spirit and names of people that were close him/her. Asking questions about these names may reward you with a response.

If known, it may also be beneficial to investigate on a date that is significant to the spirit. Date of death, date of birth, marriage anniversary or any other date that may be important to that specific spirit.

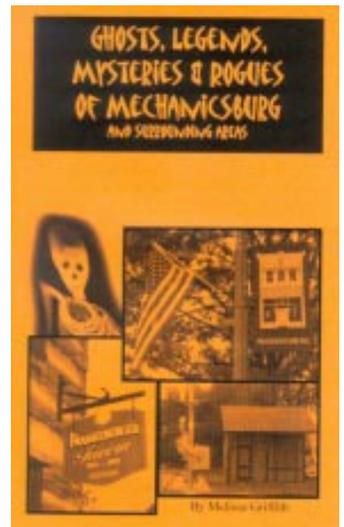
Ley Lines:

I'm sure we've all read some information on ley lines—natural lines of earth energy. In ancient Chinese belief, these lines hold powerful life energy called "Chi". The lines flowing from east to west contain hot, dry, rapidly-acting positive chi—or "yin" and lines flowing north to south are home to slow-acting, cold negative chi—or "yang". When the lines intersect, they can result in double positives, double negatives or one of each. It is believed that ley line energies can also be used for paranormal manifestations.

Caveat: There are also hypotheses regarding "Black Lines" which are localized and do not form a grid network. These are associated in Chinese belief as "sha" or deadly energy lines.

So for optimum results—organize a ghost hunt at a ley line intersection during a full moon after a thunderstorm while there is solar/geomagnetic activity with hyper-active people on a date is significant to the spirit you wish to experience. Good luck with that!

Melissa is the author of *Ghosts, Legends, Mysteries and Rogues of Mechanicsburg and Surrounding areas*. Copies are available at SSP meetings or from Melissa directly. We appreciate her excellent monthly contributions to *Apparitions* and look forward to the *Haunted Tent event* she is planning at Sickman's Mill next summer. Details on that event coming soon.



Spirit Society of PA.

APPARITIONS

Story & Photo Contributions are Solicited - send to:

John & Kelly Weaver, 43 Essex Rd, Camp Hill, PA 17011

E-mail: weaviate@aol.com

S.S.P. Website: www.spiritsocietyofpa.com

Ghosts In The Machine - Jim Gilchrist, *The Scotsman*

We're sitting in a small Dundee flat, waiting to converse with the dead. No Victorian-style seances with table rappings or hovering blobs of ectoplasm; just sporadic (human) conversation and the silent spooling of a microcassette recorder.

"Basically, I just ask for anybody on their side of the fence, on the spirit side, to draw near and leave anything on the tape," says Linda Williamson, as we both switch on our recorders. She raises her voice slightly: "Anything for Mr Gilchrist here and his family members? Anyone like to say a name that we might recognise?"

Williamson, a 47-year-old former cleaner, is a dedicated collector of "electronic voice phenomena", commonly known as EVP - the mysterious voices or voice-like sounds, often distorted amid other extraneous noise, which can crop up on tape recordings, broadcasts, even telephone answering machines. Some believe these are communications from the afterlife, others that they are simply random noise from electromagnetic or other earthly sources, in which believers simply hear whatever they want to hear.

However you may interpret it, and even if you haven't heard of it up until now, EVP will have a much higher - and scarier - profile from 7 January when the film *White Noise* is released, starring Michael Keaton as an architect who becomes obsessed with EVP following the disappearance of his wife.

So far as Williamson is concerned, however, there is nothing scary about EVP, although her introduction to the phenomena was unsettling enough. In 1998, she and her friend, Irene MacIntyre, were working as early-morning contract cleaners in a factory on Dundee's dockside, when a rash of odd occurrences - such as things being moved about and doors being slammed in their faces - prompted Williamson to bring in a cassette recorder, which she left running while she was working. She plays me an extract from that first tape, now stored along with hundreds of other EVP on her computer: there is a noise of what sounds like furniture being banged about, and of women laughing.

It wasn't her and MacIntyre laughing in that otherwise empty factory at five o'clock in the morning, she insists. "We weren't near the recorder at that point." On first listening to the tape, she was initially "petrified," then fascinated. She didn't know anything about EVP at the time, but after watching a TV documentary, contacted the American Association of Electronic Voice Phenomena (AA-EVP). "They told me not to worry, that people round the world were getting things like this."

Williamson has recorded many snatches of disembodied speech, which she believes come from the afterlife - including deceased members of her family. She plays me some extracts - many of which I find unintelligible, including a brief snippet of a woman's voice she says is her mother and, at one point, a snatch of singing from a man she believes to be a friend's father who died some years ago. She thinks he's singing "Remember your dad," but it doesn't sound like anything to me.

Elsewhere, a breathy snatch of a woman's voice appears to utter "Help!"; another appears to say "I'm impressed," but that's my interpretation. One she made in the ruins of the Priory of St Andrews Cathedral certainly sounds, as she suggests, like distant monkish chanting. Too often, however, the EVPs sound like random gobbledygook, fleeting murmurs or harsh interjections couched amid industrial-sounding clangs and rumbles. Sometimes she has to reverse the tapes to make any sense of them.

You get the impression her relationship with the paranormal is at least

partly tongue-in-cheek, going by the imitation skulls which leer from among the Christmas cards, her haunted-house screensaver and the cuddly little ghost clutching the word Boo!, stuck to the mirror. A recurring black-and-white cow motif marks her as a fan of the cartoonist, Gary Larson, creator of *The Far Side*.

On this occasion, though, the far side is declining to get in touch. Williamson, playing back the tape we make, thinks she may have heard some extraneous whispering over our conversation, but says she'd have to listen to the tape for a long time to get anything out of it. She is sincere, but I'm left with the feeling that, apart from what certainly sounds like distant chanting on the St Andrews tape, it's all too easy to read anything into these distorted "soundbytes".

EVPs are sometimes referred to as "Rorschach audio," after the psychological test where subjects read their own interpretation of inkblot images.

Professor Chris French, who heads the anomalistic psychology research unit at Goldsmith's College, London, agrees on the ambiguity of the phenomena: "According to modern experimental psychology, and not just with the paranormal, you've got two different sources [of stimulus] coming in. You've got the raw sensory input, referred to as 'bottom-up' processing, but because that comes in at a hell of a rate and a lot of it is very ambiguous and hard to make sense of, you are also influenced by what are known as 'top-down' processes - your general knowledge and beliefs and expectations.

"The 'top-down' processing tends to have much greater influence if you've got degraded or ambiguous stimuli. In those situations, your own beliefs and expectations will tend to determine how you perceive them."

He often uses examples of so-called EVP to illustrate this, and stresses that it's important to listen to it first without knowing what it is supposed to say: "You'll find it's open to all sorts of interpretations, but once you've read or been told the message, when you listen to it again, you can hear it quite clearly."

Dr Caroline Watt of Edinburgh University's Koestler parapsychology institute, also comments on the ambiguous nature of the few EVPs she has heard. "It was essentially random hisses and pops and other noises but sometimes these might resemble a word. We're programmed, almost, to impute language and meaning into something that's quite random, and I think that's what's going on.

"We're immersed in various forms of electronic noise, electromagnetic activity from the Earth, from power cables and television and radio. I suspect these apparatus are just picking up fluctuations."

Certainly, the phenomenon is only as old as the technology which seems to receive it. An early proponent was the artist and opera singer, Friedrich Jurgenson, who was recording birdsong near Stockholm in 1959 when he picked up what he believed was a greeting from his dead mother.

In 1971 Jurgenson's protégé, the Latvian psychologist Konstantin Raudive, published his researches into EVPs in a widely-read book, *The Inaudible Made Audible*, although he made no particular claims for the phenomenon. Much earlier, Thomas Edison, inventor of the phonograph, wrote: "If we can evolve an instrument so delicate as to be affected by our personality as it survives in the next life, such an instrument, when made available, ought to record something."

Tom and Lisa Butler, co-directors of the AA-EVP, have no doubt these "messages" are more than stray electromagnetic radiation or random noise. "We have a high degree of confidence that the voices and other forms of these phenomena are not able to be explained using currently understood physical principles," says Tom, an electronic engineer based in Reno, Nevada (his wife, Lisa, is a psychologist).

“The one hypothesis that answers all of the evidence coming from EVP is the Survival Hypothesis - that is, that the personality of a person survives the death of the physical body.”

Whatever the nature of the phenomenon, it continues to take people by surprise. A recent BBC Radio 4 programme, *Speak Spirit, Speak*, recalled how, last February, listeners reported hearing a “ghostly voice” 23 minutes into a live broadcast of the travel show *Excess Baggage* from Leap Castle - reputedly the most haunted castle in Ireland. Presenter Sandi Toksvig and company were unaware of the interloper until they played recordings later. “Lie down,” the unsettling, sinister-sounding whisperer seemed to say - at least according to some listeners, “You liar,” suggested others, while to this writer it sounded more like “hide out” or perhaps “wipe out”.

Ian Ashbury, senior investigation engineer with BBC radio, opined on *Speak Spirit, Speak* that, so far as EVP on radio was concerned, he would always look for a rational explanation, and that microphones can pick up radio transmissions. Others, not necessarily believers, are intrigued nonetheless. Gordon McPherson, composer and head of composition at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, is currently working on a Creative Scotland Award project to create a multi-media piece incorporating recordings of EVP. White Noise, he jokes, has stolen his thunder: “I think at the moment there’s a huge interest in this kind of thing and it was just a matter of time before a film came out.

“My whole approach to writing this has been one of abstraction rather than involvement. I think what interests me most are the belief systems of the people involved. I have a very sceptical approach to it.”

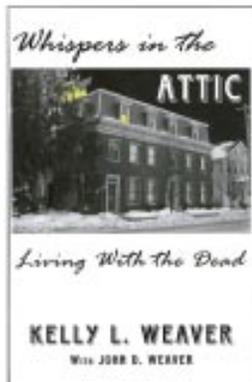
For his part, Niall Johnson, scriptwriter of *White Noise*, sees in EVP what he calls “a complex two-way relationship between the spiritual and the technological. I’m specifically interested in the effect which these messages have on an average person, who one day loses a loved one and suddenly wants to believe. *White Noise* is all about Michael Keaton’s character wanting to believe.”

Many of us might also want to believe, but we are haunted by ambiguity rather than by restless spirits. Listening to what Williamson believes are voices from the afterlife, it is very hard not to conclude that if the dead are indeed talking to us, they don’t have a lot to say.

For more on the EVP-based movie “White Noise” which opened January 7, visit: www.whitenoisemovie.com

Visit the website for the American Association for EVPat : <http://aaevp.com> (An excellent site with lots of information on both recording and editing EVP)

Whispers in the Attic - Living With The Dead Kelly’s long-awaited first book is selling well! Copies are available at SSP meetings, Ghosts of Gettysburg Headquarters, Troy Taylor’s History & Hauntings Book Company, The Inner Connection in New Cumberland, Borders in Camp Hill and Cupboard Maker books in Enola. Also available at Amazon.com “...This is a must-read book for anyone who has an interest in psychic phenomena, ghost hunting or with a desire to better understand the mysterious world that we live in.” - Troy Taylor, Author/Founder, American Ghost Society



SSP Meeting Dates For 2005

2nd Mon. of Ea. Month

At the NC Senior Center - 7pm

Jan 10

Feb 14

Mar 14

April 11

May 9

June 13

July 11

Aug 8

Sept 12

Oct 10

Nov 14

Dec 12