



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 7 - July 2005

"ROO's" BOOS - NOTES FROM KELLY

Another successful SSP event was held in June! Those of you who attended our *Haunted Tent Event* would readily agree! It was really neat seeing new faces from Harrisburg, Baltimore and Lancaster who most likely will join us for future SSP activities! I was unable to enjoy the water activities which included an inner tube that my back would not be thrilled to see, BUT, John and I did enjoy good conversations, great food and meeting new people. I've heard some interesting EVP's and stories that came from the mill over night as well as voices from the Séance. (One woman actually heard a spectral horse crossing the stream while in her tent Friday night).

I tried to give as many people as possible, messages from beyond. Afterwards I received nice comments about the spirit circle and everyone seemed satisfied with their remarks.

I then joined people for a round of S'mores. You can't have a campfire without these childhood favorites. John and I did not sleep over this year, but we would like to see this as an annual event. Hopefully after a successful back operation this November, I'll be ready to rough it once again in a tent! Thanks, Melissa for putting this event together. *You did a great job!*

HALLOWEEN PARTY SET FOR SAT. OCT. 22, 2005

Mark your calendars for our annual Halloween party in October. The party will be held at Clark and Brenda Rudy's home this year. We'll have more details in our August and Sept. newsletters. Stay tuned!

POSITIVE LIGHT

"Death is not extinguishing the light; it is putting out the lamp because the dawn has come. - **Rabindranath Tagore**

"To not think of dying, is to not think of living." - **Jann Arden**

"To love is to receive a glimpse of heaven." - **Karen Sunde**

SUPERSTITIONS

Based on the book by David Pickering: *Dictionary of Superstitions*
- Cassell Publishing

Most girls pay attention to their fingernails and I'm not any different. This week, for some reason, my fingernails began breaking. Going through my Superstition book, I came upon the word fingernail, and thought, "Why not?" So, here we go on superstitions surrounding fingernails!

Fingernail – In terms of shape, fingernails that bulge in the middle as a sign that the person concerned will die early, while fingernails that are crooked betray an evil, greedy nature. The white crescent that shows at the base of the fingernails, meanwhile, indicates life expectancy: the larger these crescents are the more years left to that person. White spots in the nail are regarded as omens of good luck, while black spots signify ill luck and yellow spots threaten death. In the

case of white spots, more detail is offered by a traditional English rhyme, which may be chanted beginning with the index finger and working round to the little finger:

A friend,

A foe,

Money to come,

A journey to go.

A spot on the thumb apparently means that a gift is shortly to be expected.

The nails should ideally be trimmed on a Monday or Tuesday but **never** on a Friday or Sunday, as this is unlucky. Another English rhyme, known in several slightly different forms, runs:

Cut them on Monday, you cut them for health;

Cur them on Tuesday, you cut them for wealth;

Cut them on Wednesday, you cut them for news;

Cut them on Thursday, a new pair of shoes;

Cut them on Friday, you cut them for sorrow;

Cut them on Saturday, you see true- love tomorrow;

Cut them on Sunday, the devil will be with you all week.

The fingernails of babies should not be cut until the infant is at least a year old or the child will become a thief in later life. (It is OK, however, to bite them short.) **YUCK.** (Kelly)

According to authorities in northern England, a woman who can manage the feat of trimming her right fingernails using her left hand is likely to prove the dominant partner in marriage. Sailors, meanwhile, claim that it is unwise to trim the nails (or cut the hair) while at sea for fear that it will summon up a storm.

Great care should be employed in disposing of the fingernails, for -- like hair clippings -- they are much sought after for use in witches' spells. Superstition holds that all fingernails are unique to their owners, so if a witch gains possession of any trimmings she will be able to use them as ingredients and acquire influence over a person. To be absolutely sure that parings are destroyed for the purpose of witchcraft, they should each be cut into three pieces or else spat upon. If acquired intact by a malevolent agent, nail trimming may be hidden so that anyone who walks over them will fall immediately under the power of that agent. If the person concerned happens to be a pregnant woman, she will lose her child. If they are buried beneath a person's doorstep, that person will be struck down at once by illness, which will continue until the parings are taken away.

In contrast, fingernail clippings feature in many time-honored remedies, often being ritually burned or buried in the belief that by so doing a patient will be relieved of whatever ails them.

Happy Clippings!

IMPORTANT NEWS FROM THE N.P.S.



Benner's Hill at sunset - Photo taken 2/14/04 approx 6:15pm by J D Weaver - Thanks to the news below, one will still be able to enjoy such views on NPS land at Gettysburg!

Excerpt from letter sent to those who wrote the NPS regarding proposed visiting hour changes at Gettysburg National Military Park:

We received many thoughtful comments about this proposal as a result of our public comment period – more than 200 written comments were received before the comment period ended May 31, 2005. As we read each and every letter, compelling comments from three particular groups stood out: local citizens and park neighbors who enjoy the peacefulness and serenity of the park after sunset; school students whose yearly class visits to Gettysburg include an evening of reflection on the battlefield after dark; and families who travel here from great distances and can only afford to stay a short time, who wanted the ability to maximize their time on the battlefield by staying past sunset.

From April 1 through October 31, there will be no change in the visiting hours – the park will remain open from 6 a.m. until 10p.m. daily. From November 1 through March 31, the park will be open from 6 a.m. until 7 p.m. daily. We believe this compromise will strike the right balance between allowing for public enjoyment of the battlefield and ensuring that battlefield resources will not be harmed, preserving them for the enjoyment of future generations.

Park staff will continue to closely monitor potential threats to park resources at Devils Den, Little Round Top, Peace Light Memorial, the Pennsylvania Memorial, and elsewhere as a result of both deliberate abuse and unintentional acts during after-dark use. Visitor safety and adequate law enforcement staffing will continue to be a concern. In the future we may have to reconsider this issue if incidents and threats continue or increase.

The new visiting hours will become effective November 1, 2005. The National Park Service will establish a grace enforcement period from November 1 through December 31, 2005, to acclimate the public to the changes in park operating hours. Beginning January 1, 2006, fines would be enforced as specified.

Dr. John A. Latschar, Superintendent

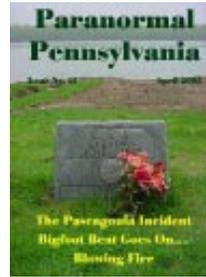
Once again, Ed Dubil and I thank all of those in SSP (and other groups) who followed our suggestion by not using “wanting to hunt ghosts after dark” as their reason to protest the change in visiting hours. I feel what they have come up with is a viable compromise. The bottom line is the 200 written comments had an impact, because they were made from positions the Park Service could relate to, not something their “official” stance denies the existence of. - JDW

EASTERN REGIONAL PARANORMAL CONFERENCE

On July 22-24, join host Vince Wilson (author of the excellent new book *Ghost Tech*) and authors/investigators Troy Taylor, Ed Okonowicz, Mark Nesbitt, Rick Fisher, Rosemary Ellen Guiley, Kelly Weaver, Dale Kaczmarek, Charles Adams and Ursula Bielski for a fascinating weekend in one very haunted city!

This was a great event last year and will only get better - Vince and his BSPR members are a first class, friendly group! Kelly and I hope to see some SSP members there! There's still time to register - go to <http://conference.marylandparanormal.com>

PARANORMAL PENNSYLVANIA Available in printed form



at SSP meetings or save \$ and subscribe to receive .pdf file copies direct from publisher Rick Fisher. Writers include Eric Altman, Tom White, Stan Gordon, Troy Taylor, Katherine Ramsland, Ed Okonowicz, Patty Wilson, Mark Nesbitt, Charlie Adams, Dorothy Fiedel, Scott Ditmer, Bruce Haines, John & Kelly Weaver, Rick Fisher and more. Details at <http://home.supernet.com/~rfisher/magazine.html>

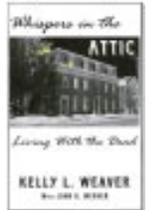
BOOKS AUTHORED BY S.S.P. MEMBERS



Ablaze by Larry Arnold Perhaps the world's leading authority on SHC - Spontaneous Human Combustion - and a dedicated paranormal researcher, Larry is a long-time supporter of local groups such as ours, S.E.A.R.C.H. and the former Harrisburg SKYWATCH. Larry's site is www.parascience.com

***Whispers in the Attic - Living With The Dead* by Kelly Weaver**

Upcoming book signings with Kelly include July 2 & Sept. 3 at Mark Nesbitt's Ghosts of Gettysburg store on Baltimore St. 7-10pm each night. (Mark Nesbitt will also be signing on those dates, and will be at *Civil War and More in Mechanicsburg* on Jubilee Day, June 16)



***Ghosts, Legends, Mysteries and Rogues of Mechanicsburg* by Melissa Griffith** Melissa is planning our June “Haunted Tent Event” at Sickmans Mill in Lancaster Co. and the delightful “GORE TOUR” in spring 2006 to the Lizzy Borden House and Salem, both in MA. Her book can be purchased locally at *Civil War and More in Mechanicsburg*

***Ghosts at Carlisle Barracks* by Allen Campbell**

is also available locally at *Civil War and More*. (Had no image of Allen's book, thus I chose the famed MP LeTort photo rather than a really scary one - Allen himself! - JDW)



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

THE HAUNTED TENT EVENT IS A SUCCESS!

A big thank you goes out to everyone who participated in and helped out at The Haunted Tent Event! The weather cooperated and the



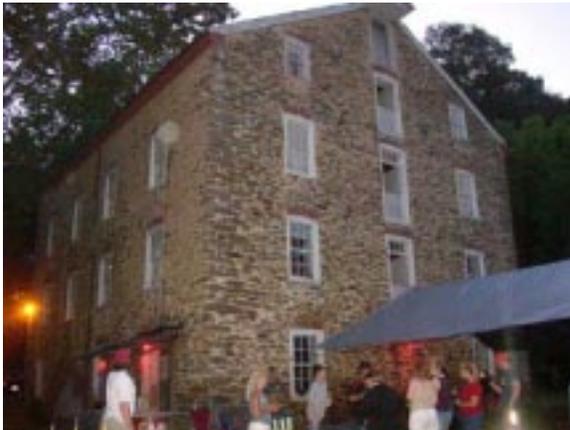
campgrounds were beautiful and relaxing. Who knew that tubing (left) could be so much fun! It was blast!

The gristmill

was built in the 1790s and is home to many spirits. We learned of the ghost of a little girl named Anna on the second floor who was died when she became entangled in some machinery. And the spirits on the fourth floor of a boy named Thomas who enjoys blowing his train whistle and the unsettled spirit of a young man who committed suicide by hanging himself.

Another child ghost is named Rebecca; she entertains guests with her organ playing. And the residual energy of a woman who jumped from the upper floors to her death and the one-armed man who attempted to stop her.

On the grounds of Sickman's Mill, there are many Native American and soldier spirits. A few nights before our stay, some campers reported hearing



the sound of horses crossing the creek. We also heard tales of a young boy who drowned in the creek and whose spirit seems stuck as people have reported seeing his hand emerging from the creek in a futile attempt for assistance.

Our group dinner was fabulous—thank you to everyone who brought such delicious dishes! And another big thank you goes out to Rick

Fisher who did yet another excellent job entertaining us with his knowledge of area haunts!

We received a lot of positive feedback and some requests to make this an annual event! - Melissa



S.E.A.R.C.H. PRESENTS: ALTERNATE UNIVERSES

Are we truly alone? The answer to this question may not just be light years away from us, but right next to us.

New evidence in quantum mechanics supports the notion that not only are we not the only universe in existence, but that there are trillions upon trillions of alternate universes which not only may harbor life, but may also have come in contact with our own universe often in the past. Can we ever visit these universes, and if not, can we at least communicate with the fascinating denizens of these alternate realities? The answer will surprise you.

The next S.E.A.R.C.H. meeting will be held on WEDNESDAY July 20th at the East Shore Library starting at 7:00 PM in ROOM "A". Open to the public and admission is free.

If interested or you have questions, please contact Steve Groff at SGROFF@paonline.com or call 566-2835

NEWS FROM ED OKONOWICZ

Ed received word that he was named **Best Local Author in the 2005 Delaware Today Readers' Poll.**

The Ft. Delaware Ghost Tours are filling up rapidly. In June the fort held it's first evening Ghost Dinner. The food was excellent, the setting in the dining hall was spooky, and the meal added greatly to the usual walking tour. If interested, the only other dinner program is on Fri. Aug. 12. Call the fort office about this or other tours, at 302 834-7941. (Ft Delaware & Ed O - a highly recommended combo! - JDW)

For more details on Ed's activities, visit: www.mystandlace.com



Those of you who attended our May "Spirit Day" heard several excellent EVPs captured by Rick Fisher at an 18th century Lancaster Co. farmhouse. Rick is hardly prone to sensationalism, and after telling me several times it was "the most active haunted house" he has ever investigated, I was anticipating something special when Kelly and I finally got to visit the place. We were not disappointed - it IS incredible!

We spent about 3 hours there - fortunately with only Rick, not a crowd - and came away with an incredible amount of material from 2 camcorders and 2 audio recorders. (Over 30 solid EVPs plus one strange anomaly filmed by Kelly) Understandably, Rick does not want to broadcast the location, and I won't go into a lot of details. There is one sequence, though, that is a unique 4-way correlation of paranormal activity: When discussing things in the kitchen, Kelly noted that she felt something touch her foot. At the same time, my Tri Field Meter (sitting on the table) registered a sharp spike and Rick mentioned feeling a rush of cold pass by him. I was taping at the time, and when reviewing it, as Kelly says something touched her foot, another voice says "Foot"! Since it was not feasible for me to accompany Kelly to the seance she did for Troy Taylor at Decatur's Lincoln Theater last Oct, I was anxious to see what would transpire at Sickman's Mill. I must say it was quite an experience -- even I could feel heightened energy in the circle. (I respected her wishes to not even use a "silenced" meter) I've just completed reviewing both audio tapes (haven't even got to the video) and I've noticed several voices on each that are evidently EVP. (Some yet require a bit of cleaning to decipher) I must see people at this event did a much better job of remaining quiet than at Troy's (which I also reviewed). I'll be sharing some of these at tonight's meeting.

Musings of a Ghost Adventurer

By Melissa Griffith

THE “REAL” COUNT DRACULA

Yes, there really was a “Count Dracula” but not the shape-shifting, blood-sucking creature we know from traditional folklore. A real person, Vlad Tepes (pronounced “Tepesh”) AKA: Vlad Dracul, Vlad Dracula, Vald the Impaler, ruler of Romania in the mid 1400s, was Bram Stoker’s inspiration for the literary character of the Count.

Vlad was knighted as a member of the “Order of Dragons” and, therefore, always wore a dragon medallion around his neck. The commoners began to call him “Dracul” which means “Dragon” (or also “Devil”). Adding the ‘a’ (Dracul-a), means “the son of” as Vlad’s father had also been a member of the Dragons. Although this was certainly meant to translate respectfully to “The Son of the Dragon”, it could commonly be misinterpreted to be “The Son of the Devil.”

What gave this infamous ruler such a reputation? Take into consideration:

- He was famous for ‘impaling’ his subjects who dare break the law—no matter how minor the infraction. (Impaling meant having a long pole shoved through your body. The pole was then ‘planted’ in the ground, as the weight of your body slid further and further down the pole you were left to die a slow and painful death.)
- Vlad would often dine in these “impalement” fields, watching his subjects in their death throes. He would take his bread, sop up the blood of some poor unfortunate and eat it. (Hence, the ‘blood sucking’ aspect).
- Impaled bodies were ‘planted’ along all the roads leading into the country—as a warning to all visitors of the consequences for breaking the law.
- When dignitaries were visiting from another country, they refused (for religious beliefs) to remove their head coverings upon meeting Vlad. Feeling disrespected, he had the coverings nailed to their heads!
- When the homeless of Romania became a social problem, Vlad invited them to a huge feast in a magnificent barn. As the poor people began to dine, Vlad had the doors locked and burned the barn to the ground. No more homeless problem!
- When Vlad happened upon a man on the street who had a hole in his trousers, Vlad had the man’s wife run through (from vagina to head) with a red hot poker for being “too lazy to tend to her husband.” The man was then appointed a new wife who consequently worked herself to death literally for fear of the same fate.

Despite these and other horrifying tales of the man, the people of Romania—even today—consider him a “hero” of their country. There’s no doubt that his harsh rule was (if nothing else) effective. His castle still exists albeit in a remote area of the Carpathian Mountains (as was “Dracula’s Castle” in the novel). There is a plaque on a house in the small village of Sighisoara (Schassburg) proudly touting it as the house in which Vlad was born in 1431. If you’re interested, there’s a restaurant on the second floor of this 3 story house.

Vlad was killed and decapitated during battle with the Turks in 1476. This incident was used by Stoker as a way to kill a vampire—by cutting off their head and, similarly, the ‘stake through the heart’ to



simulate the impalements Vlad ordered so frequently. But there were stories of his death actually being an assassination by his own men. As proof of his death, his head was sent to Constantinople as evidence of a Turkish victory.

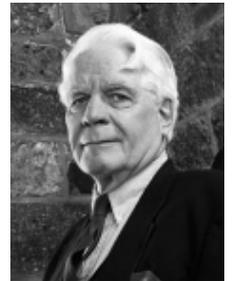
Vlad’s gravesite seems to be up for discussion, as no one seems quite sure exactly where the ruler was interred. Officially, it is at the Snagov Monastery near Bucharest, however when an excavation was performed in 1931, it was reported the grave was empty; yet others told of exhuming a richly dressed headless body.

A monument honoring the ruler claims that he died at the young age of 45. Some folks claim he lived to be well over 200-years-old and yet others tell tales that the blood-thirsty ruler has never died and may still roam the countryside to this day. Another myth Stoker took advantage of for his novel—that the vampire never ages and cannot die (by conventional means).

Consider this: the novel “Dracula” has never been out of print since it was first published circa 1897. In that vein (so to speak), Vlad Tepes IS still alive, isn’t he?

MY QUEST FOR THE IMPALER by J.D. Weaver

Ever since reading *In Search of Dracula* by Raymond T McNally and Radu Florescu in the early 70s, I’ve been particularly fascinated with ol’ Vlad! McNally (Rt), who is now deceased, was a professor of Russian Studies at Boston College and became a sort of “promoter” for the “real” Dracula followin his co-authoring of this work with Florescu, also a BC history prof. (A former hockey teammate who played at BC told me of attending one of McNally’s halloween season talks on Dracula with several hundred drunken & stoned students!)

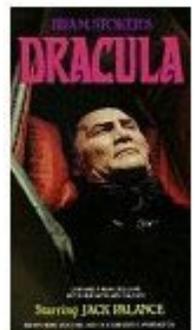


I enjoy vampire movies, but am hardly obsessed with them. However, the fascination with Vlad Tepes and his country is something I can’t explain. Strangely, its the geography of the region that really draws me -- places like the Carpathian Mountains and the Borgo Pass paint a vivid picture of mystery that has long been in the back of my mind.

Rosemary Guiley has shared many interesting stories and photos with Kelly and me about her trip to Romania to do research for her *Encyclopedia of Vampires and Werewolves*. She actually got to visit the ruins of Vlad’s castle, which is quite a popular tourist destination! There are several “Dracula Tours” available... and the \$ has good value in Romania. (*Hey Melissa - how about an Eastern Euro “Gore Tour” for ‘07?*)

WHO WAS YOUR FAV ACTOR TO PORTRAY THE FICTIONAL (VAMPIRE) DRACULA?

To some degree, I’ve long felt that Max Schreck, who played “Count Orlock” in *Nosferatu* was one of the most sinister, creepiest horror figures ever! (*Nosferatu*, or *The Undead*, was so named as the producers of this silent film were unable to purchase the rights to Bram Stoker’s novel from his widow, thus they changed the villain’s name along with the title, while keeping the basic plot) I’ve also enjoyed the Hammer films with Christopher Lee playing the count, but for some reason, perhaps my favorite Dracula portrayal was by Jack Palance in a 70s TV Movie. While not the best vampire movie, there was a correlation drawn between the real Vlad Tepes and the fictional Dracula, and Palance really looked the part of Vlad himself, to me. Who’s your pick?



BIOGRAPHIES of the STRANGE and PARANORMAL by Gail Dull

Vampirism, Myth or Disease?

For hundreds of years nearly every culture has had some form of vampire, a feared undead creature that sucks the life from some poor unsuspecting victim. People have long believed that they are real, but are they? Is there really such a creature?

There are some theories as to whether or not vampires exist, other than in myths, legends, literature and movies.

Many people believe that the majority of the vampire myth actually can be traced to a legitimate medical condition called porphyria. This metabolic disease which is extremely rare, consists of a group of similar genetic diseases (and some argue that one variation can be the result of environmental conditions) are related to red blood cells and the production of

certain enzymes. Many people affected by the disease are plagued by severe stomach pain, constipation and **reddish-purple urine**. (*Is that why "Count Orlock", seen in the pic, looked so miserable? - JDW*)

Some of the common symptoms have fed into the vampire myth. Porphyria affects the production of heme in the red blood cells of the body. Porphyria causes those with the disease to be sensitive to sunlight. The skin of the patients will actually develop painful sores over all skin exposed to sunlight. The porphyrins collect in the blood and absorb energy from the sunlight further damaging the heme of the red blood cells. People with the disease are likely to become pale from lack of sunlight. With some forms of the disease some people are even sensitive to fluorescent light and prefer to live in near darkness.

The gum-line of those with the disease often recedes, creating the appearance of larger teeth or fangs. Teeth also are affected in some forms of the disease by the accumulation of the porphyrin in the enamel of the teeth, which stains them red. Combine this with the appearance of longer teeth and you find the cause for the belief of vampires having "bloody fangs".

Garlic when ingested by someone with porphyria can become toxic as it stimulates the creation of the heme enzyme, therefore aggravating the stomach pain and photosensitivity.

Additionally, depending on what part of the body the porphyria attacks causing the blood cells to break down, will dictate many of the effects of the disease. If the red blood cells in the brain break down, the person may exhibit behavior similar to schizophrenia.

The final tidbit related to porphyria is that some believed that the symptoms of this blood disorder could be alleviated by drinking blood, further entrenching the myth of the bloodsuckers.



Another possible disease that would result in vampiric behavior was rabies. During the same period that the vampire myth was rampant in Europe, they were experiencing an epidemic of rabies. People with rabies who are exposed to sunlight may experience violent outbursts and they will often attack and bite people. Additionally, people with rabies are known to vomit blood.

Catalepsy is another possibility. Catalepsy is a circumstance where a

person is unable to react to outside stimuli and their muscles become rigid, breathing slows and to people with no medical training, the victim appears dead. Since historically people were not embalmed, it is reasonable to expect that many "corpses" would awaken from the "dead", much as vampires of myth would have done.

The final possible theory to the myth of the vampire is that if someone was suspected of being a vampire, their body would be exhumed to check for signs of vampirism. After death, hair and fingernails often appear to grow as the skin surrounding them recedes.

This apparent growth also fed into the belief that the corpse was continuing to live. As the body decomposes gasses within the corpse expand which expands the abdomen of the corpse giving it the appearance that the corpse (had it been a vampire) had gorged itself the night before. In cases such as this, the grave diggers may have driven a stake through the heart of the corpse "just to make sure it was dead". If you puncture a decomposing corpse it would likely spew a variety and quantity of fluids which may fuel the uneducated that the corpse had been feeding only the night before.

Has anyone famous/historical been afflicted with any of the above mentioned diseases? The answer is, may be. It is widely believed and acknowledged by the royal family that King George III may have suffered from porphyria. If you have seen the movie, *The Madness of King George* (I highly recommend it) you will remember the royal assistants being amazed with the king "making blue water". He spent the last years of his life kept away from the public, suffering immensely from the disease. As it is a genetic disease, other members of royalty also are thought to have suffered from it including Mary, Queen of Scots, King James I, and the children of King George III, King George IV and Princess Charlotte who died at birth.

Another famous person rumored to have suffered from disease was the famous painter, Vincent Van Gogh. Who some attribute his bouts of "insanity" to the effects of the porphyria.

A few years ago at Rick Fisher's PP Conference, author Katherine Ramsland was speaking on her research on vampire cults and a few of her "fans" showed up... including one attractive female who stopped by Kelly's table. Seeing Teddy, she did what most people do: Smile. That's when we clearly saw her FANGS! (Aside from the "dental work", she was a friendly, animal loving person!) - JDW