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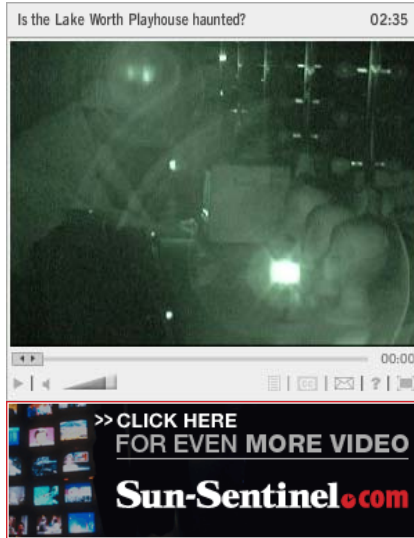
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# Ghost hunters seek spirits at Lake Worth Playhouse, West Boynton pub

Do spirits dwell in Lake Worth's old theater?



By Erika Pesantes | South Florida Sun-Sentinel  
October 31, 2007

Shaun Jones believes the voices whispering "yeah," "you know it" and "wire hanger" come from beyond the grave.

The words themselves are hardly scary. But they came in harsh, breathy and low whispers that belong to a man who allegedly haunts the Lake Worth Playhouse, captured on tape in barely audible background noise Jones calls "Electronic Voice Phenomena" or EVP.

Jones has been chasing ghosts in Florida since 2003, when her penchant for paranormal phenomena prompted her to launch the Florida Ghost Team.

Drawn by the intrigue of the unknown — spirits, energies, ghosts, orbs, demons and poltergeists — the team conducts free investigations at residences and public places like the playhouse.

Carol Kassie, the theater's marketing director, says she's skeptical, but she's slowly embracing the possibility of the paranormal in the playhouse. Kassie, who never wears perfume because she's allergic to it, says she sometimes finds herself

sneezing in her office where the scent of women's perfume inexplicably hovers above her.

"Things are going on that lead me to question my sanity," she said, including bubble-like images of orbs that appear in digital pictures she takes in the theater. The orbs seem to like children, Kassie said, as they pop up mostly in pictures of kids' events at the playhouse.

So, on a recent night when thunder gently rumbled outside, the ghost hunters set up shop in the playhouse. Their tools: mostly amateur gear — infrared video cameras, computer monitors, voice recorders, electromagnetic field detectors and digital

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One is a playful female ghost that loves playing hide-and-seek amid the racks of tightly packed costumes in the costume room, Newman said.

"Nothing violent happened here. It's all very happy," she said.

Before a place is deemed haunted, though, the team exhausts all reasonable normal evidence. They look for air vents and drafts that cause temperature changes and electric wiring behind walls that electromagnetic field detectors may pick up.

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"We don't just jump to conclusions," said Jones, a Pompano Beach resident who by day runs a truck leasing company. The paranormal investigators dress in black and don black baseball caps to prevent reflections on camera that could pass for evidence of the supernatural, they say.

"You have to scrutinize everything, otherwise you look like a jackass," said Jones, whose left forearm bears a tattoo with the initials SFGT for South Florida Ghost Team (the team's former name) and a sketch of a spirit hiding behind a tombstone.

She and Newman, of Stuart, are the team's "sensitives," who claim they can sense areas that harbor paranormal activity in allegedly haunted places.

Among them, Shea's Corner Pub west of Boynton Beach, where three ghosts named Dorothy, Francis and John supposedly have taken up residence. There, lights turn on and off, a painting has been permanently left upside down since ghosts seem to randomly turn it when it's fixed upright, cold spots surface in a hallway between bathrooms and hanging beer mugs clink on their own.

But they don't seem to bother Kathy Shea, the pub's owner, who says "hello" to them as she opens the pub and "good night" on her way out.

"If it's a good spirit, it's welcome," Shea said.

As the weeks creep closer to Halloween, the team sees a rise in inquiries and requests to explore hauntings, Jones said. And that should be no surprise. In a pre-Halloween poll conducted by The Associated Press and Ipsos this month 34 percent of people surveyed said they believed in ghosts.

And many are happy to hear about the hauntings, including Kathy Glynn, a pub patron and Boynton Beach resident. "Everybody wants to believe that when you die you don't just die," she said. "Everybody wants to believe there is something on the other side."

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thermometers.

Fully equipped, they gauged dips in temperature, searched for electronic fields that they said would indicate a supernatural presence and reviewed possible apparitions on monitors. And they checked recordings for supernatural voices, which is where they heard the man's whispers that seem to defy other, more earthly, explanations.

Teammates Jacqui Newman and Trevor Fitch filed into the women's dressing room, where other paranormal investigators have said they felt a presence and chills in their bones. They sat in complete darkness. The temperature: 79.2 degrees.

"Is there anybody in here that would like to speak to us? What's your name?" Newman said, summoning spirits. "Can you move something in the room for us so we know you're here?"

Nothing spoke, nothing moved, nor did a cold spot emerge, but Newman knows of spirits in the playhouse. She's seen them in "her mind's eye," she says.

Listen to sound clips recorded by a local  
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