

Legend sparks ghost hunts

Team investigates N.C. phenomena

BY MEGHAN GAMBLING
STAFF WRITER

Tales of ghostly activity haunt North Carolina from inland to coast throughout the year.

Though not every rumor of haunts warrants an actual investigation, Jim Hall and a team of volunteers remain constantly on call.

Hall and the other five members of Seven Paranormal Research, a volunteer organization that investigates ghosts and other phenomena across the state, recently traveled to Wilmington to perform a full search of the battleship U.S.S. North Carolina.

A night watchman's claims of strange occurrences aboard the battleship spawned an investigation of 25 years of unusual behavior, including apparitions and 400-pound hatches slamming shut unprovoked aboard the ship.

But after a nightlong stakeout of the battleship, the team did not encounter much out of the ordinary, though all three of the cameras set up to observe potential activity aboard the ship simultaneously switched off around 9:30 p.m.

"There were a couple of coincidental events," Hall said. "But we didn't collect much in the way of evidence."

Hall said he is waiting for the team's next investigation of the battleship and is not drawing any conclusions about the findings.

"My opinion of phenomena

changes from case to case," Hall said. "Every time I get a workable theory, something happens to blow that to smithereens."

Occasionally, the team at Seven Paranormal Research decides that a claim warrants an investigation.

The team then employs its array of paranormal tracking and detection devices, including digital and audio recorders and motion detectors. Their arsenal soon will include an infrared remote thermometer that measures heat activity.

Seven Paranormal Research has been involved in several other investigations including two locally — one at the Horace Williams House and the other at the Carolina Inn. Both locations involve long-standing legends about former inhabitants.

Legend tells that former Chapel Hill professor Dr. William Jacobs haunts the Carolina Inn room he inhabited for 17 years. After Jacobs' death in 1965, renters of the particular second floor room repeatedly found themselves locked out.

"It wasn't an apparition or a threatening thing," said Margaret Skinner, Carolina Inn marketing director. "It was just hijinks."

Skinner said she had thought that the lock problem would disappear when the Inn was renovated during the early 1990s. "We switched to electronic keys," she said. "Yet the housekeepers still keep reporting problems."

Although the investigative team from Seven Paranormal Research found little to indicate ghostly activity during its visit in 2002, the Carolina Inn still includes the inves-

tigation and the legend of Dr. Jacobs in its press release. "This is the Carolina Inn's ghost story," Skinner said. "A lot of people like to go to a hotel where there are ghosts."

In comparison, Skinner mentioned the Grove Park Inn Resort & Spa in Asheville, where people visit in hopes of getting a look at the "Pink Lady," a young woman who committed suicide and sometimes materializes as an apparition. "Certain hotels are marketed to that clientele," Skinner said. "They offer paranormal experts as a package."

Catherine Frank, executive director of the Preservation Society of Chapel Hill, said she knows of three different groups, including Seven Paranormal Research, that have come to investigate the Horace Williams House.

"Some people said, 'Why would you let ghostbusters come?'" Frank said. "But it reminds people that the Horace Williams House is here. As a director for nonprofit, we are looking for any sort of publicity."

Although one man claimed to have been followed by a male presence, none of the three groups were able to find overwhelming evidence of paranormal activity while investigating the house.

Most cases are inconclusive for Hall and his team, though Seven Paranormal Research receives many calls and pursues some investigations. "If people call and say there is something weird going on, frequently it is just squirrels in the attic."

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IRELAND

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said. "I think," she quickly added. "I never asked him."

She joked that she came to feminist advocacy naturally, though she said that while she was growing up, she thought she would be "a traditional woman."

A former flight attendant accustomed to working in 3-inch heels and a girdle, she said she first became aware of discrimination against women and minorities while she was in law school.

Ireland was the head of NOW from 1991 to 2001 and was most recently the head of former Ill. Sen. Carol Moseley Braun's presidential campaign.

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HARVARD

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many other schools, is able to afford increases in financial aid because it is the richest school in the nation.

Although Duke's cost of attendance is on par with Harvard's, Belvin said Duke will not be offering new financial aid packages because it is meeting 100 percent of student need now through scholarships, grants and loans.

"I don't know that you will see a whole lot of schools be able to match what Harvard has done," Belvin said. "There is a huge difference. (Harvard) has more resources to support a variety of activities of financial aid."

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DONATIONS

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human resources, information and financial concerns.

"I help nonprofit organizations think in a business-like fashion," said Jim Johnson, director of the Urban Investment Strategies Center at the Kenan-Flagler Business School.

The school also received \$10,000 to fund the Leadership Education and Development Program, a three-week summer program for minority high school seniors interested in careers in business.

DUPLEX

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space or six bedrooms per building.

Nelson said that although chamber members originally recommended that the regulations include more floor space, they are happy overall.

The Town Council unanimously approved the ban in October 2002. Initially, it was set to expire June 30, 2003, but the council voted again before that deadline to extend the ban until Sunday.

Many said the ban was put in place and extended for so long only to allow the council time to create a conservation district in Northside.

Northside advocates were the most vocal supporters of the ban, saying it would maintain the historic appeal of the neighborhood and curb the number of single-family homes being converted to duplexes.

Critics of the ban pointed out the limitations it put on students

Learners' and Educators' Assistance and Resource Network of North Carolina received \$30,000 to pay for an online math and science training program for middle school students and teachers.

Progress Energy donates a total of \$9 million annually, especially to encourage their main interests: education, environment, economics and employee involvement in the community.

"It's not something new to us," Hans said. "It's something we'll continue to fund."

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"We believe duplexes are an important component of... diverse housing."

AARON NELSON, CHAMBER

and families by taking away another affordable housing option.

"I think (the ban) kind of slowed things for affordable housing," Knapp said.

Some have pointed out that despite the council's efforts, the new regulations do not benefit single families looking for affordable housing as much as was hoped.

"(The regulations have) done nothing to help families," Patmore said.

"They think if you try to do something to discourage students, you're encouraging families."

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HEALTH

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Intervention service providers.

Foxworth said her organization plans to settle its final restructuring decisions once the new draft of the service definitions is released.

"We won't have the same funding streams," she said. "We'll have to figure out if we still can have the same structure. In my personal opinion, it will look very different than it does now."

A community focus

The goal of revising the definitions was to fund only community-based and comprehensive care provided through proven practices.

"If people are not being paid to do things, they're not going to happen," said Tom Maynard, director of the Orange-Person-Chatham Area Program. "What service definitions say is important. Some people don't want to do it that way, and the state will make them."

The state failed at a prior attempt to encourage the use of community-based services because the service guideline it provided was applicable to a variety of areas.

"It was too broad," Maynard said. "They were afraid providers might just go visit patients at home, then bill Medicaid for it."

The single community service definition has since been replaced by multiple, more specific definitions.

In the past, service definitions focused more on in-office services.

Mental health reform seeks to integrate services into users' lives.

Maynard said that often, community-based services are beneficial to clients, but added that he does not see the need to cut in-office services completely.

"The state believes outpatient psychotherapy is not what people with major mental illnesses need," Maynard said. "I think they're right in some cases but not in others. For people with depression, for example, in-office counseling can be very helpful."

Many of the new definitions help service providers.

Included are funding rates for crisis intervention, which prior to reforms was billed as psychiatric care.

Employees were paid for their work when crises occurred but not for the time they spent on call.

The definitions under study are being examined by separate teams and are at separate points in the process. Those definitions will be replaced, revised or eliminated.

Twenty services are under study and set to be completed by October.

Eleven groups of definitions might still be under revision after January 2005.

The spirit of reform

The Developmental Day service definition, which provides state funding for day-care services focused on aiding children with developmental disabilities, was not

included in the Jan. 15 draft of the service definitions.

Without the Developmental Day definition, Early Intervention might have to find alternative funding for its child-care services, despite the fact that 50 percent of children using its services are classified as typically developing.

Reforms in definitions affecting Early Intervention were enacted to prevent the isolation of children with developmental disabilities into segregated day-care services.

Early Intervention receives more funding for developmentally disabled children than it does for those who are considered to be at the same developmental level as most children.

"We think we already met the spirit of the practice," Maynard said. "Now people have been worried they won't be able to continue what they've been doing."

Those children could be moved to other day-care centers and supported through other funding streams, but providers worry that long waiting lists and high costs might impede parents' efforts.

But despite the strains reform has placed on her and her colleagues, Foxworth sees the value of change. "It's an opportunity to change how we look at services," she said.

"Our goals are to keep the programs going, to keep the staff positive and to keep doing the work we're doing."

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