



Motor City Ghost Hunters get to bottom of spooky stories

Halloween is the busy season for the Motor City Ghost Hunters, a group of paranormal researchers based in southeast Michigan.

Mixing a little history, a little science and a sense of adventure, chief ghost hunter John McCormick, 48, of Canton and his crew have made a hobby of tracking down real-life ghost stories.

"We stay busy 12 months out of the year, but from late September right on through the second week of November, we're swamped," McCormick said today.

"It's a passion. Many of us in the team have had paranormal experiences when we were younger. And we get quite a few calls from people who are having problems in their homes, and a lot of them where children are being affected."

Their latest trip was on Friday to TV's Grand Event, a Trenton banquet center owned by Tracey and Victor Stroia. While there, the Ghost Hunters saw lights flashing from a flashlight lying on a table, responding to questions, McCormick said. "They figured out it was a young boy who had died on the back end of the property -- he had actually drowned in the Detroit River behind the restaurant," McCormick said.

Meters also registered ghostly voices in the basement, possibly a bartender who locals say hung himself in the ballroom years ago, McCormick said.

The Grand's owner, Victor Stroia, 49, of Grosse Ile says the Ghost Hunters' visit seems to bolster claims by Grand guests and workers that they've heard and seen spirits.

"I wasn't either way on the whole spirit thing -- I wasn't a believer and I'm not a nonbeliever," he said today. "But I'm going to roll with it and see where it leads. There's just been so many things that people talk about -- it's crazy."

McCormick said the Ghost Hunters visits are free. First, a Ghost Hunter volunteer evaluates the property for squeaky floors or a plumbing problem that might seem spooky. They also talk to the property owner to make sure medically induced hallucinations don't play a part. If they still don't find an explanation, they return to the property for an overnight stay, using video and audio equipment to record and explain disturbances.

It's akin to the movie "Ghostbusters," but

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with fewer theatrics, says McCormick, a licensed mechanical contractor who owns Squeaky Clean Air Ducts. "Kind of, sort of, but we don't deal with the plasma rays," he said. "All of our stuff is scientific equipment." The group also does presentations in the community. McCormick is scheduled to present "Best of the Motor City Ghost Hunters" at 7 p.m. Tuesday at the Dearborn Public Library, 16301 Michigan Ave. The presentation includes video and audio from the group's most successful investigations. For more information, call the library at 313-943-2330 or visit the Michigan City Ghost Hunters website at motorcityghosthunters.com.

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