



Living

Real-life 'Ghostbusters' investigate Holly site

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Holly — They're just like anyone else, holding down a 9-to-5 job, raising a family and contributing to society —except for one thing — they spend their weekends hunting ghosts.

The Motor City Ghost Hunters are a diverse group of 23 individuals formed in 2007, who investigate paranormal activity throughout Michigan. The group's past investigations include a July 11 session at Battle Alley Arcade Antiques Mall in Holly.

"Battle Alley is very active," said John McCormick, founder and lead investigator for the group, referring to alleged paranormal activity.

The Battle Alley area in Holly is a noted historic site, and the antique shop is next to the Holly Hotel, which local lore suggests is

haunted. The investigators believe that items in the antique shop may have connections to their previous owners.

Much like the "Ghostbusters" of the movies or TV's "Ghosthunters," the Motor City Ghost Hunters rely on scientific tools to pinpoint possible paranormal activity.

The group previously investigated the store in February, and said they turned up what could be evidence of paranormal activity, including Electronic Voice Phenomena (EVP) recordings that reveal voices other than those of the investigators, and readings from their K2 and K3 EMF meters, which measure electromagnetic fields.

Owner Pat Kenny, who assumed operations in 1998, said she had always heard of strange occurrences inside the store when she worked as a dealer in the shop, such as misplaced items and strange feelings and noises.

"Some nights, I just was not comfortable here," she said. "I just felt like I wasn't by myself."

The investigators set up camp downtown Saturday evening, with 12 team members alternating shifts over an 11-hour period.



Heidi Sapikowski (right) and Jesse Shultz of the Motor City Ghost Hunters read meters in the basement of the Battle Alley Arcade antiques mall in Holly during a July 11 investigation.

During the investigation, the ghost hunters first walked the building with the lights on, noting their surroundings and checking for electromagnetic readings that may be caused by exposed wires and electrical outlets. If a meter shows a response and is not near an electrical outlet, the investigators will try to determine if it is being caused by paranormal activity.

In an early shift of the investigation, team member Jesse Shultz of Redford tried to initiate contact with any uninvited guests in the shop's basement by flashing lights and asking questions.

Alicia Sonderegger of Holly stopped by early in the evening to tell the investigators about her former apartment, adjacent to the store, where she experienced some unusual activity, including loud, crashing noises and furniture being moved while she was in an adjacent room.

"I cracked open my door, but nothing was moved," she said. "But my cat was in the corner, shaking."

The investigators invited Sonderegger inside the store in an attempt to make contact with spirits. Once inside, the K2 meters seemed to respond to her questions by lighting up following certain questions in the store's basement, prompting Sonderegger and the investigators to believe it was her late great-grandfather establishing communication.

Shultz primarily handled the K2 meters while Sonderegger asked questions, and he reported feeling depleted of energy after the experience.

When Shultz joked, "Let's ask some stupid questions now," the meter suddenly lit up to its full capacity, causing him to think he may have angered a resident spirit.

Investigators reported other strange occurrences throughout the evening, too, including one team member who said something pushed him into a room, and several team members experienced strange feelings, chills and weakness.

The team will wrap up its investigation after three weeks of reviewing hours of video and audio recordings, and will present a report to the storeowners.

Heidi Sapikowski of Westland has only been with the team for two months, but already feels at home.

"This group is very serious about it," she said.

"We never charge our clients," McCormick said. His team conducts about 48 investigations per year, and operates like a large family.

"We go out there, and it's almost our home away from home," he said.

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