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Who ya gonna call? Group reviewing materials from courthouse stay

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POSTED: March 31, 2009

A different type of jury is now reviewing evidence gathered in the Seneca County Courthouse.

"We haven't even begun to go through all the evidence yet," Penny Reynolds said Monday. "We have some stuff coming in, but it may be two weeks before we get everything in."

Reynolds is a case manager and lead investigator for Buckeye State Paranormal and Haunting Investigators. BSPHI has members from around the state with its headquarters in Bellefontaine.

BSPHI owns equipment worth about \$20,000, Reynold said. Members also bring personal equipment to the investigations. Part of the process of reviewing information is gathering all the data together after an investigation, Reynold said.

BSPHI usually schedules one investigation each month. During February, the group conducted an investigation in the Wood County Museum in Bowling Green. During April, the group is to conduct an investigation at the Greater Columbus Antique Mall where the group has been once before.

Beginning Saturday evening and extending into Sunday morning, the group conducted an investigation of the 1884 Seneca County Courthouse.

Reynolds said the investigation of the courthouse went very well. The group used seven infrared cameras, meters to measure magnetic fields, audio recording equipment and other equipment.

"We had the thermal imaging DVR," Reynolds said. "It was just a hand-held one. We walk around with it. Several of us have infrared cameras that shoot video and still. All kinds of cameras; any kind of cameras you can imagine."

Reynolds said about 22 people were in the courthouse during the investigation, including at least two reporters. She said the group divided into small groups with each smaller group taking a different floor in the courthouse. Each hour, the groups would switch floors. Even the clock tower was investigated.

"We had an (infrared) camera set up there running all night," Reynold said of the clock tower. "They (county employees) had opened everything up to us. There was no place we were not allowed to go."

Reynolds said the group is to have a pretty good idea within two weeks about what paranormal activities may or may not have been recorded on the various recording and video equipment. She said members of the group would examine audio recordings and still photos before moving on to view video. Reynolds said reviewing the video takes several days.

Whether any paranormal activity is occurring in the courthouse, the facility made a positive impression on BSPHI members.

"We were all very impressed with the courthouse itself as far as the structure," Reynolds said. "It is very structurally sound. We were led to believe it was going to be a very filthy, dirty, falling down, deteriorating building. That's not at all what we found. Not at all. It's a shame they are trying to tear this building down. It's awful."

In an e-mail last week, Reynolds said the investigation was partly to draw attention to potential demolition of the courthouse.

"We, along with other citizens, would hate to see this building razed, as it is a significant piece of history," Reynold wrote in her e-mail. "In 2008 (the courthouse) was high on the list of endangered historical sites. There will be paranormal group representatives from around the state coming with us to show their support also. Since the paranormal community is so large, we have a great impact on the general awareness of endangered buildings such as this."

BSPHI has been in existence about two years, Reynolds said. Many of the members were part of other paranormal investigation groups prior to joining BSPHI. Many still are members of other groups as well, Reynolds said.

Reynold said a couple BSPHI members experienced interesting things in the Seneca County Courthouse.

"We had a couple personal experiences there, but we'll wait until we get everything in before we disclose that," Reynold said. "Nothing we want to share at this point. We try to debunk everything. We don't just go on a whim. We don't operate that way. If we can't actually prove it, we don't go with it."

Reynolds said BSPHI is to post information about the investigation on its Web site after the information has been reviewed.

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