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## Stumptown Stumper

BY JENNIFER ANDERSON ✉

The Portland Tribune, Nov 2, 2007

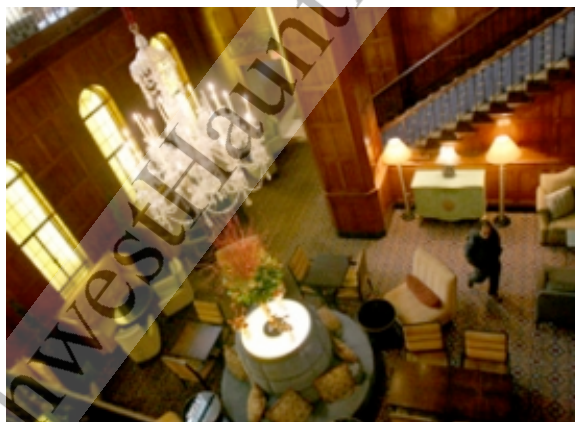
*Every Friday in Stumptown Stumper, the Portland Tribune offers a trivia question and answer that helps you boost your Rose City IQ.*

**Q:** Why are the Heathman Hotel's room numbers that end in 03 reportedly haunted?

**A:** This decades-old legend is just a slice of Portland's underground haunted culture, which gets spotlighted every Halloween.

According to Heathman Hotel general manager Chris Erickson, the ghostly rumors have never hurt business — if anything it's brought a new type of clientele in, especially around Halloween, when thrill seekers and ghost hunters show up.

Some come armed with equipment to record the



SARAH TOOR / TRIBUNE PHOTOS

Alleged paranormal activity has made the Heathman Hotel a destination for ghost hunters and thrill seekers.

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paranormal activity — everything from cameras and flashlights to sound and video equipment and a common tool of the trade called an electromagnetic field detector.

Erickson welcomes these guests the same as he does any visitor. “We help them set it up,” he says. “We don’t make any judgments.”

As legend has it, the haunted tale dates back to the 1930s or ’40s, shortly after the hotel opened in 1927. A person staying in Room 703 at the hotel is said to have jumped to his or her death.

Ever since then, guests and staff have reported mysterious things happening in that room and other rooms that end in 03.

The unexplained events are mischievous, like a glass of water being tipped over by some unseen force, whispering voices, cold spots in hallways, and music playing in a room that hadn’t been accessed by the computerized key card.

“It’s our own friendly ghost,” Erickson says. “We like to have fun with it. Just last week staff reported hearing sounds on the seventh floor. We went up to investigate three times and didn’t find anything.”

While he’s never seen the ghost himself, the tale lives on and earns the Heathman a spot among the ranks of the nation’s most haunted hotels.

It didn’t hurt that celebrity psychic Char Margolis visited the hotel in 1999 and confirmed a ghost sitting at the end of her bed in one of the 03 rooms.

“My theory is that someone once jumped to their death and is haunting the rooms he passed on the way down,” the psychic has been quoted as saying at [www.historichotels.org](http://www.historichotels.org)

“I’ll let the readers judge for themselves,” Erickson says with a smile.

**Next week’s Stumper:** Where in the city can you be walking in the dark and suddenly see a bench, manhole cover or other object momentarily spotlighted for no apparent reason?

*Have a Stumper? E-mail [jenniferanderson@portlandtribune.com](mailto:jenniferanderson@portlandtribune.com).*



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