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Old Town Haunts

Ghost stories, a freaky hallway and a lot of old buildings add up to Sherwood's haunted history

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Old Town Sherwood is the home of many things: coffee shops, restaurants, specialty stores and more. But, as Cyndi Butler and LeAnn Brown claim, it is also home to many ghosts.

The two friends, who both live in Sherwood and have spent a lot of time in the Old Town area, said it's not unusual for a place with so much history to have ghosts hanging around.

"It's normal, just when you have old buildings," Brown said. "[You hear more stories] every time you start talking to someone in Sherwood."

"A lot of people don't want the stigma of having a haunted house," Butler added. "I think people don't think of [Sherwood] as having a haunted thing — but it's around."

Butler and Brown are known as Sherwood Paranormal Investigative Research & Intuitive Team (SPIRIT), conducting investigations on places that are rumored to be haunted. Last Halloween they even led a group of people on a Ghost Tour around Old Town with the help of local historian Clyde List, and some of the things they experienced were a little too much for people to bear.

"We had adults that were freaked out that came up to us and said, You rigged that, right? Right?" Butler said; even though nothing in the tour was set up, they told some of the younger children that it was staged so they didn't get too terrified.

Stops on the tour included the old Nottingham's building, where a young girl is said to have haunted the kitchen area — Butler and Brown said the former owners found out about her when a ball was bouncing in the kitchen by itself, always at the same height. List said the original part of the building was built in 1912, so the ghost could have appeared at any time since then.

Another stop on the tour was the former midwives' house, where all the Sherwood babies were born years and years ago. Brown worked in the house for a while, and she said weird things were always happening there. She remembered back to the time she was the last one to lock up one night and the first one there in the morning, and even though she had tidied the place up, all the toys were strewn about when she arrived early the next day. She also said the basement just had a weird feeling to it.

"I had lots of basement experiences," she said. "It was just one of those basements where you could feel something."

The most frightening stop on last year's Ghost Tour was the Sherwood Historical Society, which is located in the Morback House. The two women said the scariest moment for most people came when



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As an expert on Sherwood history, Clyde List has heard almost every ghost story in town.

they led them to the part of the house where Joseph Morback died — which is now a bathroom — and just as Butler started talking about his death, the toilet began to flush and run on its own. List also said when the house was a police station, officers frequently heard footsteps on the stairs and in other parts of the building when they were there all alone.

The lower level part of the house always scared Butler, especially the office and what she calls “the haunted bathroom.”

“Nobody likes to use this bathroom,” she said. “There’s just something about that bathroom. If something showed up in the mirror I’d flip out.”

Butler also shared a story of how one time as she and her mother were getting decorations down from the attic the box her mother was carrying flew out of her hands and landed on the ground at the bottom of the stairs. Neither woman knew exactly what happened, but she said they sure got out of there in a hurry that day.

‘The Green Mile’

Don and Deanna Scott live with their two daughters in a three-bedroom rental home just a few blocks off the main part of Old Town Sherwood. They, as well as the people who rented the house just before the Scotts, claim three different ghosts haunt the building: an old woman who likes to tear the covers off people while they sleep in the back bedroom, a preteen boy who walks from room to room, and an old man who slams doors in the garage and moves tools around. The family also said the hallway in the home “has a weird feel to it.”

“I call this the green mile because of all the weird stuff that happens down here,” Don said. “When you walk down there you kind of run a little bit.”

Unlike the apartment the family rented in Scappoose where pictures flew off the walls and their eldest daughter was scratched by something in the middle of the night, nothing violent has ever happened to them in this house. Both Don and Deanna said they are not afraid of the beings that haunt their home, so long as the ghosts never start acting out in aggression.

“It’s not any reason to be scared,” Don said of the ghosts at his new place. “I figure if we don’t bother them they won’t bother us. I think just to leave it alone and know a little bit about it, that’s probably the best policy.”

Although, he added, “sometimes I walk down the hallway and I will be scared.”

Deanna agreed.

“Unless I started being physically harmed by something like that, I don’t really care,” she said. “I don’t really care if they’re here. They don’t bug me so I don’t really care.”

When Butler and Brown came to investigate the Scotts’ home, they agreed the hallway was a little weird and felt different from the rest of the home.

“It’s almost like an optical illusion,” Brown said. “It’s very interesting.”

Butler described the hallway as having a heavy feel to it, possibly because over the course of the history of the house there had maybe been violent arguments in that area.

“The hallway has that heavy, heavy energy to it,” she said. “It’s a very oppressive and heavy energy.”

Not fearless

Like most people, Butler is a little scared about supernatural things sometimes. She said she is more psychic but afraid to know more about things, whereas Brown is very intuitive and is not afraid at all to find out what is out there; in this way they complement one another.

“I feel and see and hear and do all that and I don’t necessarily want to deal with it,” Butler said. “I do sense things but I don’t necessarily want to see them.

“I would say I’m addicted . . . because I get messages and see things and feel things. Doing this validates I’m not nutso.”

Brown said she has ghosts at her house that turn the TV on and off and do other little things, but as long as they

don’t try to hurt her or her family she is not bothered by them.

“I’ve now gotten to the point, as long as I don’t feel it’s anything that means any harm, it’s not a big deal to me,” she said.

The two women were planning on doing another Ghost Tour this year but had to cancel due to poor ticket sales. They said a lot of Sherwood residents are wary of hearing about possible hauntings in their town, though their reluctance to hear about it doesn’t mean the ghosts will go away or that their neighbors will be able to completely block the ghosts out.

“I really think that some people are more sensitive than others. I think we all have the ability to [feel] it; I think it’s more than we admit to,” Butler said.

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