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Paranormal tales on way to library

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WALLINGFORD — The approach of Halloween brings candy and costumes — and stories of the paranormal.

The Northeast Paranormal Investigation Society will bring tales and evidence to the Wallingford Public Library a few days before Halloween, at 6 p.m. Oct. 27.

The New Haven-based society investigates historical locations reputed to be haunted throughout the Northeast. After doing extensive research, including general information and names of people who may have died there, the team takes photos, audio, and video in an attempt to capture any possible paranormal activity.

"History and the paranormal kind of go hand and hand," said Adam Shefts, a Wallingford resident who founded the society.

"Spirits are history demanding to be remembered," he said.

Shefts, who started the group about a year and a half

ago, said he has been involved with capturing paranormal activity for the past seven years. He decided to branch out and create his own group, which now has six members. The group specifically investigates historical locations, and works with historical societies. Any money the group gains through its appearances goes to local historical societies.

"These historical properties are always starving for money just to keep their doors open," said Barnaby Mortensen, a member of the group.

Mortensen who had also been interested capturing evidence of the paranormal, met Shefts about a year before the society was established. Dissatisfied with the way others groups were conducting paranormal encounters, Mortensen joined Shefts' team when Shefts came up with the idea of investigating activity specifically at historical properties.

"We don't chase everything that goes bump in the night, we like history," Mortensen said.

Every member of the group

plays their part when it comes to setting up equipment, but when it comes to electronic voice phenomenon equipment, Mortensen has come up with new ideas to make its use more efficient. According to Mortensen, EVP audio clips cannot be heard by the human ear at the time they are recorded, only when played back on a computer.

Mortensen said that he has experimented with EVP recorder loop-outs and headphones, and on one occasion was able to capture what he said were paranormal sounds and voices while recording on site.

While investigating paranormal activity is popular entertainment, its value as science has been met with considerable skepticism.

"What they do wrong is they don't test out their ideas. They are looking for anything weird and proclaiming it a ghost without any effort to try and find more explanations," said Steven Novella, a neurologist

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□ Tales of paranormal

at the Yale University School of Medicine who is president and co-founder of the New England Skeptic Society. The claims of scientific investigation are misinforming the public, Novella said.

Mortensen and Shefts don't consider their experiences frightening, but at some sites

their senses heighten and they say they know they are not alone.

The group does not visit cemeteries or use mediums to contact the dead.

Mortensen said his participation in the group is 99 percent curiosity and 1 percent just for the thrill of it, which is

why around Halloween the group travels to towns to share the paranormal activity they have captured.

"Around Halloween we try to do more presentations at libraries, because paranormal information tends to be heightened at this time," said Shefts.