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## Paranormal investigators reach out to spirits in Lisbon



Paranormal investigator Kyle Berthiaume uses a meter measuring electromagnetism around a bed frame in Burnham Tavern where former owner George Hoydila died in 2010. Contributed photo

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LISBON – A group of paranormal researchers investigating the 18th century Burnham Tavern in Lisbon said there was a strange energy inside the room where former owner George Hoydila was found dead on Christmas Day four years ago.

Northeast Paranormal Investigations Society director Adam Shefts said Hoydila's bedroom elicited "very strange feelings" among investigators during their Aug. 2 visit to the tavern-turned-farm.

"They weren't heavy feelings; they were just

very energetic, and everyone who walked into the room felt it," he said.

Hoydila died peacefully in his sleep on Dec. 24, 2010, according to his obituary.

The four investigators also heard "chattering" — the sounds of whispered conversation — in the adjacent corn field, Shefts said.

At the John Bishop House Museum in town, an investigation on Sept. 6 yielded a temporary odor.

"Upstairs, in the hallway, we were all sitting on the floor trying to communicate with whatever spirits might be there," Sheft said. "All of the sudden, this strong smell of urine became very potent. It lasted for about 10 to 15 seconds, then it was gone. In theory, that's one of the ways spirits can try to communicate: by scent. We don't know who the spirit was or what it was trying to communicate by urine."

No solid evidence was collected in either investigation, Sheft said.

The information was shared with the community at a presentation of the group's findings sponsored by the Lisbon Historical Society last week. Proceeds from event benefited restoration efforts to the tavern.

Paula Adams, historical society president, said the paranormal investigation team reached out to her as part of its mission to promote history and to support restoration and programming efforts surrounding historic properties.

At the time, members of the historical society had not heard any rumors that the Burnham Tavern was haunted, Adams said, but "it had such a long history, we had a feeling it might be. A lot of people lived there, were born there, died there. A lot of people visited there. We figured, it's possible."

Adams said she helped out during both investigations by monitoring multiple video feeds set up throughout the homes.

"The tavern has been unoccupied for a couple years. It's really dusty," she said of the night-vision scenes visible on the screen during the first investigation. The investigators "would walk across the room, and there would be a storm of dust blobs that followed them."

The state has recognized the circa-1755 Burnham Tavern, which sits on 129 acres, as a historical landmark. It was acquired by the town in 2012 after voters approved the \$900,000 purchase. It was then turned over to the Lisbon Historical Society through a 99-year lease.

The tavern served as a drinking and meeting establishment in the 1700s in what was then part of Norwich. It was a rendezvous point for local militia before the start of the Revolutionary War, a stopover for Revolutionary forces and an improvised recruitment site for the Navy, according to historical records.

The Bishop House was built in 1810 and inhabited by only three families, Adams said, before it was acquired by the town and opened as a museum in 1987.

Sheft said he founded the paranormal investigation group in 2009 as an extension of his interests in both history and the paranormal. He said his group would like to return to the Burnham Tavern after state-funded renovations to the building, which began Tuesday to address foundation issues.

“Construction can stir up activity,” he said.

Adams said the historical society would welcome the investigators back.