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Heceta Halloween

Raging winds and white caps set the stage
for haunted house's legendary lady in grey

Story by Caroline Petrich
Photos by Bob Baker

"Gosh," murmured the usually cynical photographer, "it is kinda spooky, isn't it?"

I nodded in agreement. This house — reputed to be haunted — rested on a cliff above the violent Pacific Ocean, evoking an eerie sentience.

Perhaps the weather had something to do with it. The wind raged, spitting rain everywhere and whipping up giant white caps in the infinitely grey sea. The waves relentlessly smashed into Conical Rock and Parrot Rock, mammoth guards to the tumultuous cove called the Devil's Elbow.

Yes, the Heceta House could be haunted by a legendary woman in grey.

Harry and Ann Tamman, caretakers of the Queen Anne style structure, believe that a spirit exists

"I have to because I saw something one night," Ann says.

Ann encountered the specter in a hallway between the kitchen and dining room. She thought the grey-haired old woman might be one of her two dinner guests. Ann immediately looked in the dining room. Both guests, grey-haired women in their sixties, still sat

Ann remembers her guests' quizzical looks after she ran out of the room. She came back, wearing an odd expression.

"I think I just saw our lady," she said.

Ann describes the meeting as "mostly a shock."

"She never announces she's there."

One night, Harry saw her at the top of the stairs and charged up. Not quite at the top, he saw the hem of a grey skirt and empty space below. The figure who had no feet

went into a room and vanished.

The Heceta House, named after the cliff it sits on, adjoins the Heceta Head Lighthouse. When the house, a duplex, was built in 1893, the lieutenant lighthouse keepers' families lived there. The head keeper occupied a house that once stood next to the shore's beacon.

Electricity's advent eliminated the keepers' duties and the two houses were abandoned. Workers tore down the head lightkeeper's house in 1940, leaving only the ghost and her Heceta House.

After the woman's initial appearance, the Tammans employed an ouija board to decipher her mystery. The board spelled out the old-fashioned name "Rue." They've called her that ever since.

"She just appears when she feels like," Ann says.

Rue startled a repairman in the

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