

Ghosts: Disproving evidence is the goal of investigators

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Indeed, she said, in almost every house she lived in she has encountered spirits. They have all been friendly so far, just coming and going within a few seconds.

"At first, I thought it was the houses that we lived in, but I kind of think it's me," she said. "Probably because they say, there is a theory, that spirits know if you're open to seeing them."

This year she's taken that theory and founded a group of seven kindred spirits who tour private homes as paranormal investigators who attempt to make contact with the dead.

Called Northeast Oregon Paranormal, the group started in January and conducted its first investigation in early March.

The crew went to the historic Frazier Farmstead in Milton-Freewater to see if they could find any ghosts in the 1880s home, now a museum.

"Hey, who's here?"

Fujan said she heard the question in a recording she was using in a bedroom, predicting it was one of the Fraziers who had lived on the property. Likely a father, based on the low tone.

"That was so exciting to hear that because it was very clear you didn't have to replay it," Fujan said.

"It's exciting, for me anyway, when I get evidence like that because sometimes you think nothing's happening," she added. "And then you go back and listen to the recorders, and they're answering you, answering your questions or sometimes just talking between themselves."



Chloe LeValley/Walla Walla Union-Bulletin
Sandy Fujan and her husband Roger explain how to use their thermal imaging camera to show temperature variations during paranormal investigations.

Kathy Thorberg, a Walla Walla, Washington, resident and member of the group, said they also got to talk to someone who died in a war.

Although they use several instruments in their investigations, they were using a simple flashlight in a room with military items. Asked yes or no questions, the spirit's responses were based on light flickers, Thorberg said.

The flashlight must be set with the switch almost to the on position, so when a spirit taps the flashlight it flickers on, Fujan said.

The group asked questions, such as "Were you in the war?" and "Did you die in the war?" The flashlight would turn on, meaning yes," Fujan said.

Gearing up

Much of what the group does is try to disprove evidence. That's why they bring in Fujan's husband

Roger, the "tech guy" and "resident skeptic."

He said he has fun disproving evidence based on what else might have caused specific readings from their equipment, such as car driving by or a dog barking in the distance.

As such, the investigators must be aware of their surroundings so they can record when a seeming paranormal activity is actually, for example, someone clearing their throat.

Before an investigation begins, the group does an initial walk-through of a home with their equipment, such as an electromagnetic field reader to note emissions from appliances or electricity in the walls. That will help determine whether something beyond those readings might be paranormal activity, Sandy Fujan said.

A digital video recording system, night vision camera

and a thermal imaging camera are among other investigative tools. The latter indicates temperature variations and shows up on their phones as a heat map, with blue showing a cold spot in a room.

Sandy Fujan said she is still skeptical about a recently purchased device that scans radio frequencies that supposedly ghosts can use to talk through.

But the gear isn't all hi-tech. They will take dowsing rods, traditionally used to detect underground water sources, on their next investigation. The person holding the rods will remain still, and a ghost is supposed to move the rods to answer questions and point to people.

Learning the history of the place they will investigate also is vital, group members said. It allows them to ask more specific questions if they encoun-



Chloe LeValley/Walla Walla Union-Bulletin
An array of paranormal investigation equipment is laid out on the dining room table of the Fujans' home in Milton-Freewater.

ter a possible paranormal activity.

"We're all kind of history buffs, and so we want to know the history of the place, and some of the names so we're familiar of who to talk to and who to ask," she said.

Reconnecting

Like Fujan, Thorberg said she also has had experiences where she reconnected with a departed loved one. She said she's felt her mother stroke her hair, something she always used to do in her earthly life.

The group recently conducted a paranormal investigation in a private home in Milton-Freewater, where a woman's mother had died. The woman told them that when she left her kitchen the cabinet doors would be closed, and when she returned they would be open.

Thorberg said a radiating electro-magnetic pod was used in the investigation. The device lights up and makes a noise when there are activities, such as something touching it or moving within a certain

perimeter of it. The pod was on the bed in the living room where the mother died.

"I think the daughter was asking, 'Mom are you here with us?,' and the REM pod would go off, and I think she asked more personal questions," Thorberg said.

The daughter told them the answers confirmed it was her mother. The group's electromagnetic detector also went off when the REM pod did.

"There was activity in the home," Thorberg said.

No voices were picked up on the recorder, however.

"I think she follows her," Thorberg said of the mother's spirit. "That's what we thought, you know, it would stop when (the daughter) would go outside, and it would start back up when she would come back in."

Fujan said discovery of paranormal activity in a home can help bring closure to people who call on Northeast Oregon Paranormal to investigate.

"Who's to say it's a relative or not," Fujan said, "but sometimes ... you have a good judgment."



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian
Morrow County Sheriff Ken Matlack receives his first dose of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine from registered nurse Erin Anderson at the Bartholomew Building in Heppner on Wednesday, Dec. 30, 2020.

Vaccine: '2020 has been a rough year for all people'

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ru-style vaccination clinic served as a test run for future vaccination events.

Morrow County Health Department Director Nazario Rivera said the county received roughly 70 doses of the Moderna vaccine from Pioneer Memorial Hospital and expected to receive the first dedicated shipment of 100 vaccines later the same day.

"We received about 70 doses from the hospital from what they had left over and we're expecting to receive 100 more," he said.

Rivera stressed the importance of organization and cooperation in getting the vaccines out to as many people as possible. Since the vials each contain a set number of doses and must be used within a limited time period after opening, Rivera said it was important to ensure that the appropriate number of people were scheduled so the vaccines weren't wasted.

"It's definitely going to be a challenge moving forward," said Rivera. "There's about 11 doses in each vial so making sure that we don't



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian
Morrow County Health Department registered nurse Erin Anderson administers a dose of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine to Morrow County Sheriff's Office communications deputy Travis Carr during a vaccination clinic in Heppner on Wednesday, Dec. 30, 2020.

waste any of our resources is definitely going to be important."

Nevertheless, Rivera expressed confidence in his staff and their ability to schedule and distribute the vaccine. Rivera said the first doses of vaccines are going to be distributed to first responders, with long-term care facilities to follow.

"We have a good portion of EMS that will be taken care of today, and if

not today, (Jan. 5, 2021) for people up in the north part of the county," he said.

Rivera said he doesn't expect any issues distributing the vaccine and said the county has enough personnel available to cover the entire county.

"2020 has been a rough year for all people, so hopefully people can take advantage of this and hopefully bring some hope for the new year," he said.

Physician: Sisterly togetherness

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not-too-shabby 3 hours, 37 minutes.

She takes her runner's high into the clinic where she works with two other doctors and four physician assistants.

Woodbury seems to have come almost full circle in some ways. She grew up in the Pacific Northwest town of Tumwater, Washington. Her father taught at Evergreen State College in nearby Olympia. She and her younger sister, who are less than a year apart in age, forged a close-knit relationship.

After high school, Woodbury attended Amherst College in Massachusetts, and then medical school at the University of Pennsylvania.

"I decided when I was 8 years old I was going to be a doctor," she said.

After her residency, she spent 20 years as a family physician at a hospital system in Conshohocken,

Pennsylvania. The last four years, she worked as medical director for an occupational medicine clinic.

The last couple of years brought changes to Woodbury's life. Her mother died of cancer, she got divorced and her youngest son headed to college. The lure of family and an urge to get back to family medicine grew strong. She put out feelers for a position in Pendleton.

"Deborah was looking for a change in her life and was interested in relocating to Pendleton. We fit the bill," said Dr. Jon Hitzman at Pendleton Family Medicine. "Her credentials are stellar. She is well trained and well versed. We're really glad to have her."

Woodbury loves being back in family medicine.

"Family practice is pretty awesome," she said. "I get to know each patient as a whole person."

Those who matter most to Woodbury are close by. Her son, John, is living at

home, taking college classes remotely. Tom will soon start his military posting at Fort Lewis in Washington. She's got her beloved 12-year-old dog, Goldilox, and she lives close to her sister's large, nurturing family.

The person happiest about Woodbury's arrival in Pendleton is likely her sister, Sarah. The siblings nurtured their relationship during 30-plus years living on opposite sides of the country, but now are enjoying as much sisterly togetherness as they want. They live a mere six blocks apart and have a standing weekly lunch date.

Because restaurants aren't offering dine-in service, the sisters often drive downtown in Sarah's small RV, find some takeout and enjoy it while sitting inside the camper.

"I couldn't be happier," Sarah said. "All those years on opposite coasts, now we get to have lunch every week."

Shooting:

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in the investigation.

Nelson added that staffing and resources also played a role in the decision to hand the case to OSP. He said the Morrow County Sheriff's Office is still assisting OSP in the investigation, providing available detectives and resources for the agency to keep track of minor details while search warrants are carried out.

Nelson also said he believes more people know about Bowles' whereabouts than have approached investigators, and that they are neglecting to disclose information because they assume law enforcement already know about it.

"I've even heard off-hand from guys who come to me and say, 'Oh, so and so talked to so and so and they know that this is what happened,'" Nelson said. "And I say, 'Well gosh, I know law enforcement has

not heard that.' And sometimes these rumors are true, but people always assume that law enforcement is aware."

He is urging anybody with information about Bowles' location to contact Oregon State Police, as any piece of information can help.

"Any small thing can change a case," he said. "It can find a culprit or expand who we need to interview. And it might seem small to people, but every little bit (helps)."

Court records show that a David Lee Bowles, born in 1977 and a longtime Heppner resident, has a list of criminal charges and convictions spanning more than two decades in multiple counties, including Morrow, Washington, Wasco, Yamhill, Hood River and Umatilla.

In 1995, he was sentenced to 39 months in prison for attempted murder. And in 2007, he was convicted of second-degree burglary and

fourth-degree assault.

Nelson said he could not confirm nor deny Bowles' criminal history at this time, although the man he said law enforcement is seeking has the same full name, year of birth and longtime residency as the Bowles whose history is detailed through the records.

Nelson said Marlen Bowles has two 14-year-old son and two children over the age of 18, but he was unsure if any of them were David Bowles' children. He added that she was well known in the community and worked at the Gateway Café in Heppner.

Bowles was last seen driving a brown Chevrolet Impala with Oregon license plate URG552. He is a 5-foot-6, 180-pound white male with graying hair and blue eyes.

Police are urging residents to not confront him, but to call 911 or OSP Dispatch at 800-442-2068 and reference OSP case No. SP200348879.