

PRESCOTT PARANORMAL RESEARCHERS

A belief in something beyond and the passion to pursue it!

By Phillip Melchers

We've all heard them, those strange nightly sounds. It could be the crashes at night that either momentarily rouse us awake, or has us rocketing out of bed entirely. Perhaps it's the house breathing, or a creaking floorboard that has us nervously looking over our shoulder. Then sometimes, during those rare times, these disturbances aren't so easily explained. Sometimes it is not just heard, but seen, and sometimes even felt: a cold touch across the hairs of the arm, a shiver down the spine. Sometimes we can just shrug and go back to sleep. But then there are the other times when the heart can't be settled. In facing such experiences, there are still a few in this world who choose to challenge accepted logic for the sake of believing in something beyond it. People like the Prescott Paranormal Researchers who work to investigate the questions modern reason sometimes can't explain.

Prescott Paranormal Researchers (PPR) was originally formed by Brenda Steinburg and Lee Gove four years ago. Since then they have been conducting investigations all over Eastern Ontario in places like the Spencerville Mill, Smith Fall's Railway Museum, and Prescott's Battle of the Windmill. Today, PPR consists of six members with their youngest and perhaps final member, Tim McCann joining earlier this year.

In conducting their investigations, PPR believes in using a variety of equipment mixed with their own personal sense. Amongst this arsenal is included the "Spirit Box," a white-noise generator that captures EVP or electronic voice phenomenon. There is also the REM Pod, an Electro Magnetic Field (EMF) detector that signifies whenever a ghost is near. With



these and other equipment such as digital audio recorders, and night-vision cameras, PPR believes that they have found considerable evidence of paranormal activity.

However, as rational as these technologies may be they are not without their problems. Many regular household occurrences can often impact the equipment: old wiring letting off electrical signals, noise pollution, lighting and reflections, even dust can impact equipment readings. For example, sometimes small spheres of light, referred to as "orbs," can be seen as signifying the presence of a phantom when recorded, but sometimes not. Often orbs are the product of cameras capturing moisture in the air, bugs or more commonly dust particles. The topic of "orbs" among the PPR team is still "debateable," making judgment also an important quality in

Left to right: Lee Gove, Maggie Graves, Melissa Mills, Lynn Lambert, Brenda Steinburg
Back: Tim McCann

distinguishing the presence of paranormal beings. After all, it's all about choosing what you want to believe.

This is certainly true for the team who are a mixed bag of believers, seekers, and skeptics, all coming from varying backgrounds. One member, Maggie Graves, calls herself a skeptic. While member Melissa Mills of First Nations descent chooses to believe in her spirituality through her own cultural ancestry. For instance, Melissa will begin each investigation with a cleansing ritual and meditation using herbs and various prayers that she believes is protective for both herself and her teammates. And then there is Lynn Lambert who considers



(L-R) Prescott's Battle of the Windmill.
Lee Gove sets up for an investigation, Seen: REM Pod



herself spiritually sensitive and able to feel and sometimes even communicate with the afterlife.

This means that opinions tend to vary: to some members, the presence of an afterlife is only a possibility, a cause for investigation, while others in the group might be sure. In terms of their religious influence, Maggie, although raised Catholic, does not believe in the biblical definitions of God, while Lynn also a Christian, does not relate her gift to her faith. Yet to be skeptical, but then to also take part in a First Nation's cleansing ritual, might at first seem contradictory until realizing that these are a group of people who have chosen to accept each other rather than to believe in any one single idea. The rituals of one have become the rituals of all. Within their group, opinion is never met without debate, leaving all answers healthily subjective. It seems that within all their interactions together, they have in the end only one joining belief: the belief in something more. In fact, whatever their faith may be, faith does not seem to coerce their investigation as much as it benefits it. It gives them a perspective, keeps them open; a door but not a destination. Their differences do not deter their experience. But instead by combining these various perspectives, the team gains multiple approaches and explanations in terms of what they find.

This strong sense of passion is benefited by the team's overall sense of professionalism. According to Tim, when joining the team was impressed by how well the team mixed scientific reason with personal intuition. Sometimes it isn't even about finding ghosts but rather about de-bunking a client's paranormal experience, or if a paranormal experience is found, trying to re-enact it for the sake of certainty. When investigating, as Tim believes, one cannot go into a scene with expectation but rather should let discovery happen on its own. It's evident that results do not always happen for the team, and they aren't always correct, but when the unexplainable does happen at the very least they are there to record it.

Maggie who has had prior paranormal investigation experience before joining PPR recognizes the importance of an open-mind when it comes to her beliefs. Originally getting into the occupation after visiting many historic locations as a child, she said it was the energy of these spaces that drove her towards paranormal investigation. These energies she refers to suggest the feeling of significance that builds around places that humanity feels most enthusiastic towards. She's reluctant to call these energies a presence of God, and yet during these moments says it's hard not to feel something divine there.

All the investigations that PPR conducts are completely free and all equipment and time spent investigating are paid for from out of PPR's own pocket. When asked what the reasons for these investigations were, they answered primarily "validation." They believed that when one person experiences something paranormal, it is often an after effect for the person to feel crazy, or foolish. PPR believes that it's important to have someone there to at least acknowledge these claims and investigate them seriously. To them, they are simply helping to comfort those who have dealt with the paranormal and feel it unexplainable.

If we truly live in an age of information then it can be seen why paranormal investigation can become problematic to the general public. Yet, these experiences seem to happen whether we address them or not. Meet around a campfire and most likely at least one person will share their ghost story. Ghost hunting may be an occupation associated to intuitive feeling, but in the absence of knowledge what else does one have? With the alternative being only ignorance, then what exactly is suffered by the presence of an open mind? Prescott Paranormal Researchers may not have all the answers, they may not even have the right ones, but at least they have belief in something beyond, and the passion to pursue it. **LH**