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Ghosts uncovered and myths debunked, but can they

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Are you terrified of your basement? Do shadows prowl your house at night or voices jolt you awake? You may have a haunted house, or you may have faulty wiring and an overactive imagination. But with the help of the South Eastern Idaho Paranormal Society, you might figure out once and for all which one it is. The society, S.E.I.P.S., investigates local paranormal activity, from Island Park to Pocatello, at no charge. According to a press release, the mission of this group of researchers is to help those who feel they are experiencing a haunting in their home or office. They believe that most hauntings can be explained away with the right equipment, a skeptical, inquisitive mind and a bold step towards what frightens you.



Courtesy Photo--The South Eastern Idaho Paranormal Society from left, Jim Garcia (Investigator), Crystal Murphy (Founder), Daniel Hidalgo (Interviewer), Emily Murphy (Vice Pres, Case Mgr), Kara Hill (Pres) and Warrior Appenay (Tech Team).

So what, you may ask, does a bold step into a freaky basement uncover? Kara Hill, the president of the society, gives a couple scenarios. "We find that like in an instance of basements, everyone is just freaked out to go down there," She said. "We're finding that a lot of theories are actually concluding that places like those basements with all of the cement around them emit electricity that is a little more powerful than it should be, caused by the likes of faulty wiring or your fuse box is put together wrong or it's just an old house. It creates this field of electro-magnetic energy and some of us are sensitive to it and it can make you hallucinate or start itching or your skin starts crawling, and you think someone's watching you and you're paranoid."

She said that more often than not, wherever people are particularly creeped out, that is where the society's meters start going wacky. A little digging and they find a faulty fuse box. "Even living under big power lines can cause you to be drowsy and see things," she said. With some effort, Hill conceded that many theories say the ghosts or spirits really are there, and the electro-magnetic fields just make you more sensitive to seeing them, "but I think people are just hallucinating," she said. "We're mostly skeptics, but we have one in our group who thinks everything is a ghost, which makes it fun. If someone keeps seeing a shadow, or when they're sleeping and things go by the hallway, we set up video cameras in the hallway and often we find the shadow is caused from cars passing streetlights and reflecting."

But not everything is explained away. Even in Hill's own house she finds phantom cigarette smoke at the top of the stairs, and the complex is strictly smoke free. Odd things like that make her say, "Well, I don't know."

But even in the realm of unexplained haunts, S.E.I.P.S. is investigating a theory that may explain away the many reports they get of people, for example, at the Gettysburg field who can actually hear the battles or see them, or reports of people seeing phantom images on tours wearing period clothing, even young children seeing these images who would have no idea what period clothing looked like. To these reports Hill brought up a theory of the residual haunt. "This theory means it's not really a haunting, but maybe just something that is captured in the environment. Are they psychic people, or are they actually seeing something that was actually recorded in the environment somehow? In a rock? Is it possible to

theorize that limestone can gather energy? It's hard to believe, but that's what makes it intriguing for us."

But In their experience, both personal and researched, 85 to 90 percent of investigations turn out to be non paranormal, and "How nice is that," Hill says, "When someone is able to go 'oh, that's why.' "

For more information E-mail Kara Hill at info@s-e-i-p-s.com.