

The house between worlds

Paranormal Society looks into ghostly happenings

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Bleeding sidewalks, phantom people and sounds and a torture-chamber basement. Can you think of a better place to spend your Halloween? We joined the South Eastern Idaho Paranormal Society on an investigation Saturday designed to uncover the cause behind many paranormal happenings at Stellar Thoughts in Blackfoot.

S.E.I.P.S has members from all over this side of the state, from Island Park to Pocatello. The society finds scientific answers to paranormal happenings.



S.E.I.P.S./Courtesy photo

With all the lights out, and video cameras covering all the hot spots, the scene was set for creepy. And while I don't think I saw anything, the imagination sure runs wild in that setting. I had many double takes when I scanned too quickly a shadowy corner, or a play of light from a passing car reflected off of something that looked suspiciously like a face. Hair was perpetually on end, and I swear spiders never stopped crawling up my legs and spine.

But spooks aside, this was a clash between the psychics and the skeptics, and I doubt this story will declare a winner. In fact, by the end you may find yourself questioning where imagination and impossible cross over into paranormal. Let's go through a question-and-answer session with Eileen Bresnahan, the owner of the house and resident counselor/psychic.

Q. What goes on here?

A. There's always been lots of activity. People claim to hear a baby crying upstairs and two little boys running around the house and sliding down the stairs on their butts. We've been locked out and locked in. We changed all the locks to digital keypads, but it still happened. People under the influence are reprimanded by a spirit, and the sidewalk bleeds.

Q. What do you do when the locks don't work?

A. Sometimes the front door won't lock. Once a friend of mine came by to check on me and the front door wasn't locking. We just sat here and the temperature dropped like 20 degrees, to 42 degrees. And

we thought, "Wow, I think we're just supposed to hang out for a little while. They're not letting us leave." We figured there was something on the road we were supposed to avoid, or something like that. Maybe we were just being optimistic.

Q. What happened with the old locks?

A. Before we changed them, if you didn't say 'Bye, I'll be back tomorrow,' the front door would not lock. You could twist it around and around. But as soon as you said you would be back, 'click.' When you came in you also had to ask permission or it wouldn't open.

Q. Tell me about the lady who slaps clients on the stairs.

A. We're counselors here and sometimes we get people here who are under the influence, and if they are, the public bathroom is upstairs and if they go up there you can hear and see them get slapped upside the head. It's kind of like this little old lady who is like "straighten up." I've even stayed at the bottom of the stairs and watched my friend at the top get slapped.

Q. What do you do here?

A. There are several businesses here. I run a nonprofit called Alice's House that provides prevention education and parenting education. We're also counselors. And then Stellar Thoughts is my business. It's a psychic business where we do palms, taro, crystals and intuitive readings. That's what drew me to the house originally.

Q. Do you ever speak with spirits here?

A. Yes, definitely, that's how I got the house. The reason we call it Alice's house is that one of the original owners was Alice Montgomery. Before I bought the house I was training someone to do crystal layouts, which is when you put crystals around the body and it opens you up to being able to feel more than the conscious mind, and the first thing that came to me was this two-story Victorian home on a corner in Blackfoot that I would have as an office. My first thought was, "That's not possible." I felt that in six months I would get the house. Almost exactly six months later this house came up for sale. I looked at it, but knew I couldn't afford it. Then the sign went up that said 'by owner.' That perked my curiosity and so I came and looked at it and immediately felt a presence in one of the upstairs bedrooms. It was a female that came to me as Alice. I didn't know at the time that she was the original owner, it just came to me as Alice. I asked the owner if I could be alone in the house, and told Alice this is what I wanted to do, to put a wellness center here. I asked her if she would be open to that and would she help me find a way to purchase the house? The very next day I drove by to go to the Eastern Idaho State Fair and the 'for sale' sign had blown away. It was gone. I wondered if that was my sign. I started talking and worked out a price. Everything came right through. I really think Alice helped it go through because she wanted it to be a positive place.

Q. Is your thought that there are spirits in this house?

A. Oh, definitely.

Q. Do you know why they are here?

A. I would say there is just some unrest or confusion, perhaps when they crossed over. Maybe they were too young to have a belief system or understand where they were supposed to go next. We are directly across the street from an old mortuary, and they could have just kind of come over as a common ground kind of thing. My guess is it's just kind of a spiritual place.

Q. What was your hope when you called S.E.I.P.S.?

A. To give some validation to what we are already feeling. It's nice to have so much science these days to back up the paranormal. Before this kind of science, people like me were always kind of mocked. I have my counseling degrees and want my field to be more reputable, and to have instruments available now to back that up is only helpful.

Q. Do you anticipate they will find anything?

A. Oh yeah.

Q. Like what?

A. It would be great if they get to see things. They've already picked up differences in their recordings in different areas of the house. There's just been so much activity here that I'd like to see what they pick up, to see the hardcore science behind what goes on here.

Q. Is any of this creepy?

A. No, never to me. Maybe creepy in the sense that the house doesn't always let you leave when you want to, but I've never felt threatened. I've never felt anything real negative but more that it's protective, to me at least. Other people say it feels kind of threatening. I do feel a little threatened by whatever is in the basement in that room (the walled off portion), that one feels very dark to me and I was a little concerned about opening it to not allow anything out.

Q. What does your business do for people?

A. When I was growing up this was all considered very witchcraft oriented or voodoo, very negative. One of my pet peeves when I was learning and going to different readers was that a lot of them did not have any kind of counseling background. That was one of the big reasons for going into counseling. If you're going to go to a reading to get some major information that you may not understand, it can't just be dropped like a bomb and then you leave. I want to tell people that even though I'm getting this feeling around you, doesn't mean you don't have the power to change. Coming in and getting a reading may have been the warning you needed to change your path.