

# Group tries to explain the unexplained

BY RANDY GRIFFITH  
RGRIFITH@TRIBDEM.COM

PORTAGE - Unexplained ringing of bells, apparitional shadow people, mysterious puddles of water and a ghostly slap or two in the head have Sandy Nyeste convinced her Portage home is haunted.

"We think it is my dad," Nyeste said Sunday, following the "Searching for the Paranormal" program at Portage Station Museum.

Nyeste was among more than 60 people who packed the former railroad station waiting room to hear Jason Thornton and other investigators with Southwestern Pennsylvania League of Apparition Technologists explain theories and equipment used in their work.

It's not about seances and mediums, Thornton said. His group uses the latest electronic monitoring and digital recording equipment.

"We try to take a serious scientific approach to what we do," Thornton said. "We try to keep everything sci-

"We try to take a serious scientific approach to what we do."

**JASON THORNTON,  
PARANORMAL INVESTIGATOR**

entifically and theologically sound."

While not discounting their possible existence, SPLAT does not investigate UFOs or Bigfoot. They concentrate on apparitions, which, Thornton said, can be ghosts of dead people or something demonic or angelic.

The multimedia presentation Sunday included photos taken in a cemetery that show a white outline of a female figure in a dress. There were several digital audio recordings of unexplained sounds collected in reportedly haunted homes.

Thornton does not believe the female figure photographed is the

ghost of someone buried in the cemetery.

"In my opinion, this means that land was desecrated," Thornton said. "Desecration to land draws something bad. This is something evil trying to represent itself as something pure. This cemetery needs reconsecrated."

Apparitions should be thoroughly investigated in context to what the ghost or spirit is trying to communicate, Thornton suggests, admitting paranormal investigation is not completely proven.

"If it was, it would be a science taught in high school," Thornton said. "Nobody has the answers."

For their part, Thornton and his colleagues prefer to take a skeptical approach by not working with those who see ghosts in every wisp of fog.

"We put as many controls as possible on what we are doing," investigator Walter Hutsky said. "I've never seen a ghost in my life."



RANDY GRIFFITH/THE TRIBUNE-DEMOCRAT

Paranormal investigator Jason Thornton explains equipment and techniques used by Southwestern Pennsylvania League of Apparition Technologists during Sunday's program at Portage Station Museum.