

PARANORMAL INVESTIGATORS

JEANETTE BROWNING FAUBION
CITIZEN STAFF

Something spooky was going on in Edgerton last weekend, but residents shouldn't be alarmed — it was all a very creative fundraiser for a local event. Heartland Paranormal Investigative hosted a paranormal class and investigation Saturday to benefit Edgerton Pioneer Days, set for the second weekend of September.

Organizer and Edgerton native Beverly Slocombe said the class was such a success that Heartland Paranormal intends to host additional classes later this year — potentially at the oft-rumored-haunted Ridgely Cemetery.

Slocombe and fellow Edgerton native and paranormal investigator Tammy Lanier have had their

own unexplained adventures in Ridgely Cemetery — including the breaking of a car window — documented before, in Missouri writer Jason Offutt's *What Lurks Beyond: The Paranormal in Your Backyard*.

It was another local experience that sparked Slocombe's interest in the paranormal, growing up near the Platte City Cemetery and spending the night at a friend's house in Tracy. She recalled hearing unexplained noises that night, then witnessing a cereal bowl levitate above the kitchen counter the following morning.

It awoke her to the possibilities of the paranormal, and her interest has grown until she joined Heartland Paranormal a few years ago after attending a similar class in Westport.

"I came up with the idea

descend on Edgerton



JEANETTE BROWNING FAUBION/Citizen photo

Paranormal investigators conducted a class in Edgerton last week as a fund raiser for the Pioneer Days festival. From left, Bev Slocombe, Wade Walton, Mike Kupsch and Tammy Lanier set up for the hunt.

because we do these classes twice a year as a fundraiser for the Harris Kearney House in Westport," Slocombe said.

She realized Heartland Paranormal Investigative's record of assisting charities — especial-

ly those with a historical bent as many of the team members are also Civil War re-enactors — could assist Edgerton Pioneer Days.

The event kicked off in

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Harmer's Café in Edgerton, where participants were introduced to the basics of paranormal investigation, tools of the trade and the adventures of Heartland Investigative. The group is made up of people from across the Kansas City metro area, including Slocombe, Lanier and other Edgerton-area natives.

Later, the 12-hour course and investigation moved to an Edgerton church and nearby private residence, where the tenants told the team members about the paranormal activity in the home. Heartland Paranormal looks for logical explanations for the unexplained. Slocombe said, and when happenings defy explanation offers support for those affected.

"A lot of times with people who have stuff going on, their family members and members of the community can tend to pshaw them," she said. "But, that family needs support, so that's what we try to do at Heartland Paranormal. We help them in any way we can, and if we find evidence of something that could be paranormal, one of the first things we do is ask them what they want to happen — do they want the spirits to move on, do they want to learn how to live with them?"

Some class participants admitted they were nervous about the possibility of facing the paranormal up close, and some had already had ghostly encounters in their lives and wanted answers.

"It's okay to be nervous," Slocombe said. "When we first took the class, we had no idea what we were getting into, but we knew it was nice to be around people who think the same — who can say 'I have seen things and I have heard things.' All we're trying to do is find out the truth and what's going on."

Seeing and hearing things are pretty standard at the 113-year-old Edgerton home featured in the investigation. The residents have experienced creaking footsteps on the stairs, misty presences, opening and closing doors and electronics that turn themselves off and on. They have heard the sounds of phantom children, and the toys of the children who do live in the home randomly turn themselves on.

Recently, one resident said, she had

been working in the kitchen when behind her the trash can tipped sideways and flew across the room.

Investigator Wade Walton warned that despite claims of activity, most investigations are not as exciting as those shown on television.

"Most places we go into, it's like watching paint dry," he said. "And the investigation is the most exciting part."

After an investigation, the team has hours and hours of footage of dark rooms and audio recordings to review. If something anomalous is noted, team members focus on it and try to find a reasonable explanation. A mysterious floating white ball is most likely dust or an insect, not a spirit orb, and most hidden messages in audio files can be dismissed as ambient noise or something called matrixing — the human brain's tendency to look for recognizable patterns in chaos.

Organized chaos is an apt description for a paranormal investigation overall, as the home was wired up with infra-red cameras, motion detectors, digital voice recorders, laser grids and other equipment, complete with a command center set up outside for investigators to monitor live activity on the monitors.

For nearly four hours, three teams of investigators and class attendees spent time both inside the house investigating and outside watching the live feeds for unexplained activity. It remains to be seen if the activity captured is paranormal, but much of it was certainly unexplained at the time.

While teams were inside, electromagnetic field detectors would go off, some times seemingly in response to questions posed, a television turned itself on and a motion detector went off in an upstairs bedroom — after it seemingly moved itself from its original location.

"There really seems to be something going on in there," said investigator Mike Kupsch. "But, it will be interesting to go through the data and see what we can find."

To contact the investigative team, email casemanager@heartlandparanormalinvestigative.com, to find out about Edgerton Pioneer Days fund raisers, email bslocombe78@yahoo.com.