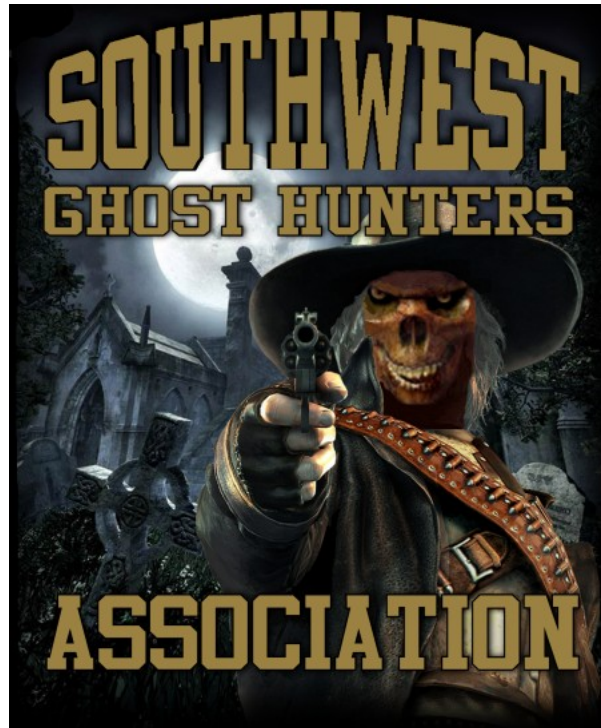


March 2002 Meeting: Cody Polston & Bob Carter on Ghost Hunting

by Dave Thomas : nmsrdaveATswcp.com (Help fight SPAM! Please replace the AT with an @)

New Mexicans for Science & Reason (NMSR) heard Cody Polston and Bob Carter of the Southwest Ghost Hunters Association (www.sgha.net) speaking on "Hunting for Ghosts" on March 13th, 2002.



Bob Carter kicked the evening off by saying that the SWGA group is interested in finding out what causes ghostly visions, even if there is a prosaic explanation. One of the possibilities they are looking at is that visions of specters might be caused by abnormal electromagnetic fields, as has been hypothesized by Michael Persinger. Cody Polston noted that photographs alone cannot prove ghostly visitations, and that even negatives can be faked. Cody mentioned that the group's bylaws prevent them from using psychics in their investigations, as you cannot use one paranormal phenomenon to validate another. This attitude has earned SWGA criticism from other ghost groups, which routinely employ psychics in their investigations. He described a curious incident they investigated in Texas, where cars left parked on a train track are mysteriously "pushed" out of harm's way, with small handprints visible in flour particles dusted onto the rear of the car. However, it's a gravity hill, and the motion of the car is no real surprise. Furthermore, the group found that when the flour is put on the car, it reveals handprints that were already there, made visible because of oils and residue left behind. This did not make them popular with the Texas ghost group.

The group does "investigations" once or twice a month, and employs some low-tech magnetic field sensors to look for odd fields. They typically measure from 5 to 40 Hertz only. Cody and Bob described some of the curious events they have observed, such as glasses blowing up at Maria Theresa's restaurant, flashing lights at La Placita, weird knocking at the Church Street Café in Santa Fe, and

sliding chairs at Los Ranchos de Corrales restaurant. Cody noted that even if the group could prove that photographed "orbs" were real phenomena, it's still a big leap to prove they are ghosts.

All in all, it was a friendly encounter. Cody and Bob do think there may be something to ghost stories, and that's what keeps them going. But, they don't declare that every fuzzy blob in photographs is a "ghost," either. The group could use help with basic electromagnetics and ideas for sensors, if anyone wants to help out. Their investigations are open to those who want to tag along.

NMSR thanks Cody and Bob for an interesting talk.