

**m@yo**

volume 9 issue 1



***Among  
the Spirits***

**buxton inn seance  
barney hall phantoms  
beatty's presidential bid**





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## moyo

mind of your own

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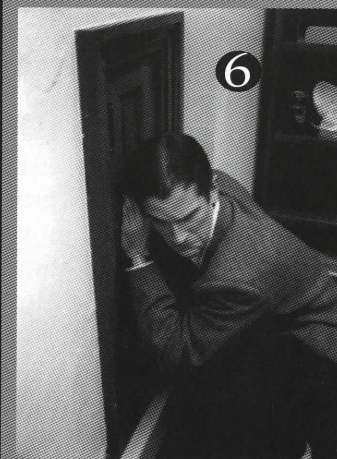
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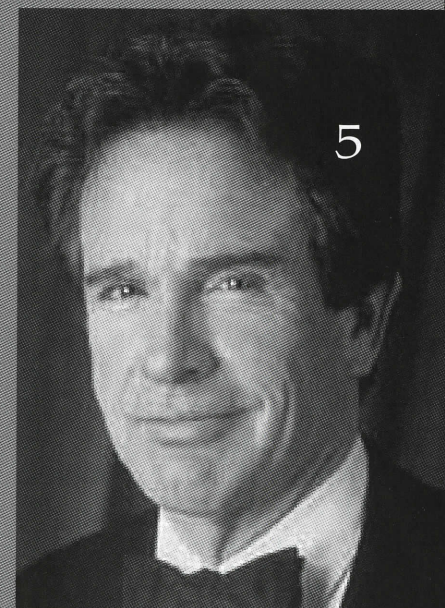
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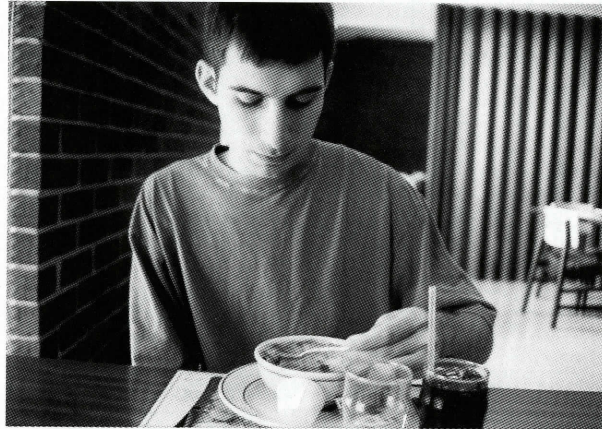
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During my six semesters as editor of *MoYO*, I have attempted to use this space as an introduction to the magazine rather than a paper and ink platform. One objective of my tenure has been the production of a publication with one foot rooted in the local—an interview with Michelle Myers—and the other dangling near Jupiter—Dutch male prostitutes—maintaining a balance unique among Denison media. In order to achieve this balance, I have often been as much steward as editor, sacrificing time on and space for my articles to prune and shape the work of others, placing their thoughts and concerns and those of the magazine above my own. Although the full title is *Mind of Your Own*, I enjoy obscuring my opinions and allowing an issue to speak for itself. My reasons are threefold. One, the publication's timetable is longer than that of other campus media; when an issue reaches a student's hands, the incidents or concerns upon which I may comment—the same ones filling the pages of *The Denisonian* or squeezed into the *Bullsheet* at the moment of composition—have been forgotten, regardless of whether anything has been resolved. Two, I write for a very narrow segment of the populace—most dining hall denizens pick up *MoYO* for the pictures (although *Exile* may have us beat this time) or to cloak the turkey cutlet—and those of you who look forward to an issue's release



alison stine

either share my views or do not deserve additional didacticism. Three, four years is too short a time to correct an institution's ills, especially when these same problems are entrenched in Western culture, perhaps all human culture, and will continue to affect our lives after graduation. Since this is my final issue, however, I will cast aside tradition and offer a trite, if not obvious response to everything ranging from paper waste to racism.

Most of Denison's problems exist within individuals as much as within the institution. Focus on yourself for a change; point a finger if it helps. The University has committed its series of blunders, I admit. After all, Denison is an institution that publicizes the presence of a paper-saving measure—a small, pegboard kiosk—by printing out two thousand flyers to stuff into student mailboxes. OK, the flyers are half a page, costing the world a mere thousand sheets of paper, but they could occupy only a quarter

of a page, conserving even more trees, couldn't they?

A better question: why am I expressing this eco-awareness when the same two thousand flyers were discarded upon the floor of Slayter? Instead of complaining about paper cups in the dining hall and essays being printed on both sides of the page, try not littering in the student union, cleaning your mailbox by casting a pile of Xeroxed, multicolored offal on the floor. Instead of signing petitions and staging rallies, trying talking to students of other races, other creeds, other—dare, I write it—social classes, getting to know people as individuals, not as symbols. We, the student body, including myself, can lessen problems of segregation by making an effort at interacting. And this interaction might also cause us to acknowledge a slew of often overlooked problems—the treatment of and attitudes towards women, both students and faculty; classicism as thick as an Ambercrombie sweater, just as omnipresent; and the persistent, almost socially accepted and rarely punished, prejudice shown towards homosexuals. Take some personal responsibility.

Of course, you who really care are doing what I've suggested and will continue to do so. You don't need the media serving as a moral compass. And the rest? They are content to get their degree and get the hell out, enjoying the pleasures the place provides and having no regrets. They are like a professor I know who read the latest campus bulletin concerning the Wingless Angels in front of his class, mocking the victim's feelings of being "violated," saying this incident would be regarded as joke twenty years ago, when he claimed, as proof of the before mentioned group's frivolity, a minister of the BSU was Wielder of the Naughty Knob. Of course, the liberal, sarcastic pissant in me wants to write something about assaulting area coordinators and harassing first year women being a real barrel of laughs, but—and this is truly disappointing—part of me agrees with him. Perhaps we lose site of our educational goals and let passions get the better of pragmatism. Perhaps we need to relax before exercising personal responsibility. Think before reacting.

Since this magazine is dedicated to free thinking and creative expression, I leave you the above harangue without guilt, bolstered by the feeling I have finally come close to capturing the spirit of *MoYO*, loud and loose. Since this is a last hurrah of sorts, I yield to a further indulgence and mention my muse, my critic, my love Alison Stine. She is a new Eve who seized the apple, ate it whole, and not for a second felt shame. To her I dedicate this issue. As for the nature of its contents, decide for yourself. After all, you have a mind of your own.

**Paul Durica,**  
Editor-in-Chief

## The More You Resist , Babe, the More It Excites Me support for Beatty's bid

by D. Fisher

*"Nixon was so bad that he could get innocent people in to politics, but Clinton is bad in a way that will get all but worst ones out...There will be no year 2000, except for morphs and pimps and political junkies with no pulse..."*  
- Dr. Hunter S. Thompson in 1994

It's August 23, 1999. The first day of classes at our illustrious campus are a mere week away. As we all continue loafing with the remaining time or scramble to endow our final week with monumental experiences and lasting memories, the political scene is in its ceaseless state of flux. At this particular moment, the big news is that Tennessee's Lamar Alexander has abandoned his race for the Republican presidential nomination. Meanwhile, the party's likely nominee, Texas governor George W. Bush, has been paying a heavy price for much-too-carefully skirting direct answers to questions about his possible history of cocaine use. All of this comes hot on the coattails of the Iowa Straw Poll.

Taking their name from the idea that by throwing a piece of straw into the air one will determine which way the wind blows, straw polls attempt to communicate the feelings of the electorate about candidates for office by presenting the results of a small, representative sample of voters. The Iowa Straw Poll, held in Ames, is a baroque gala in honor of the Republican Party and the folks clashing for the contingent's presidential nomination. The candidates are all given chances to speak and rally support in a carnival-like setting, and at the end of the whole extravaganza, the results of the straw polling are presented. Imagine the Granville Fourth of July festival with a few more people, a few more snack

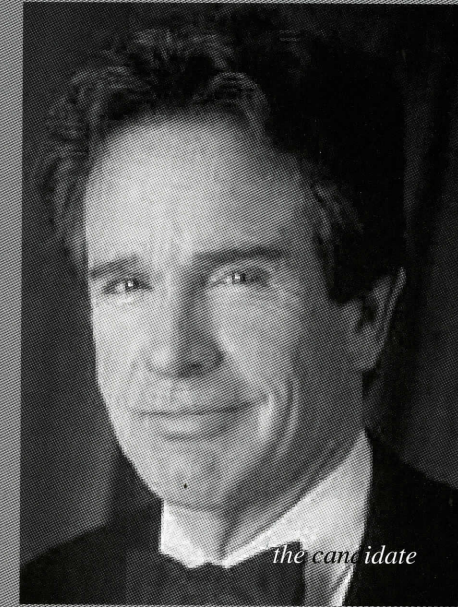
shacks, and organized voting for GOP presidential nominee candidates.

Watching C-SPAN's extensive coverage of the Iowa hoopla, particularly the speeches, I found myself on an emotional roller coaster: I went from simultaneously frightened and confused by Alan Keyes to mildly impressed with Elizabeth Dole back to frightened and confused again by Pat Buchanan. But if the 1999 Iowa Straw Poll showed anything to liberals like myself, this aforementioned roller coaster was precisely it: it demonstrated that The Right certainly has the options once again. For every run-of-the-mill candidate like George W. or Dan Quayle, the GOP has some sexy alternatives in charismatic and intriguing competitors like Mrs. Dole and John McCain. The Democratic Party, on the other hand,

has only Vice President Al Gore and former New Jersey governor Bill Bradley seriously vying for the nomination. While I think a lot of liberals like myself will have to grudgingly settle for Gore or Bradley as the nominee, they wouldn't necessarily be satisfied with them.

As a liberal, I've found it difficult of late to determine any Democrat I would really want to cozy up to. "Is it too much to hope that some forceful, dynamic liberal activist like Warren Beatty will step forward," I found myself thinking after being impressed by his 1998 film *Bulworth* and the electrifying—albeit fictional—platform of the title character. So when *The New York Times* reported on August 12<sup>th</sup> that the man once asked to play the president in *Mars Attacks!* was considering auditioning for the part in reality, I was more than a little charged.

"I fear we're getting closer to a plutocracy than we want to," Beatty told



the candidate

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# The Haunting of Barney Hall

mysteries of the  
fourth floor revealed

The theater was as dark as baby Jessica's well; the only image visible to the audience was the calm, grainy face of Mick Jagger as he pointed his laser pistol at Emilio Estevez. I sat alone in the front row, or so I believed, until I felt a warm breath down the side of my neck. One of those warm breaths that makes your skin feel like sandpaper. I turned my head to examine the breath's source, and there she was. Eyes like a Monet painting—soft, tender colors, beautifully blended. Ears calling out for you to lean towards effervescent, smooth cartilage and whisper, "I like your ears," or, "Are you of legal age?" and hair that made you want to go out and buy tampons.

As I admired my new guest, she presented me with a black box and before I could ask her name, she vanished. Unfastening the box, I discovered a badly neglected pair of dentures. Suddenly, the woman returned and after a quick apology swapped the box for a similar article.

I opened the new container to reveal an elaborate computer screen that fuzzed-over before presenting the all too familiar face of the editor-in-chief of this magazine.

"Ah, Muzzeli, I have another assignment for you," he spat out, his voice a mixture of Edward G. Robinson and the guy from *Fat Albert* who wore the lampshade.

"It's Ward, sir. What's going down?"

"I'm gonna need you to get me the skinny on the fourth floor of Barney."

"The fourth floor of Barney?"

"They say its haunted by some spook?"

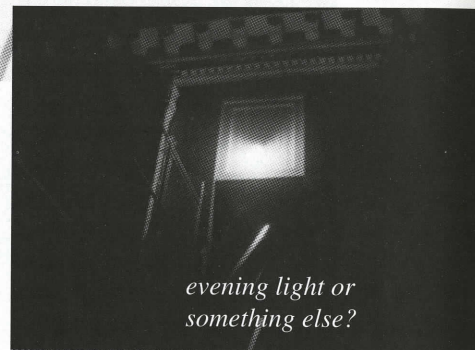
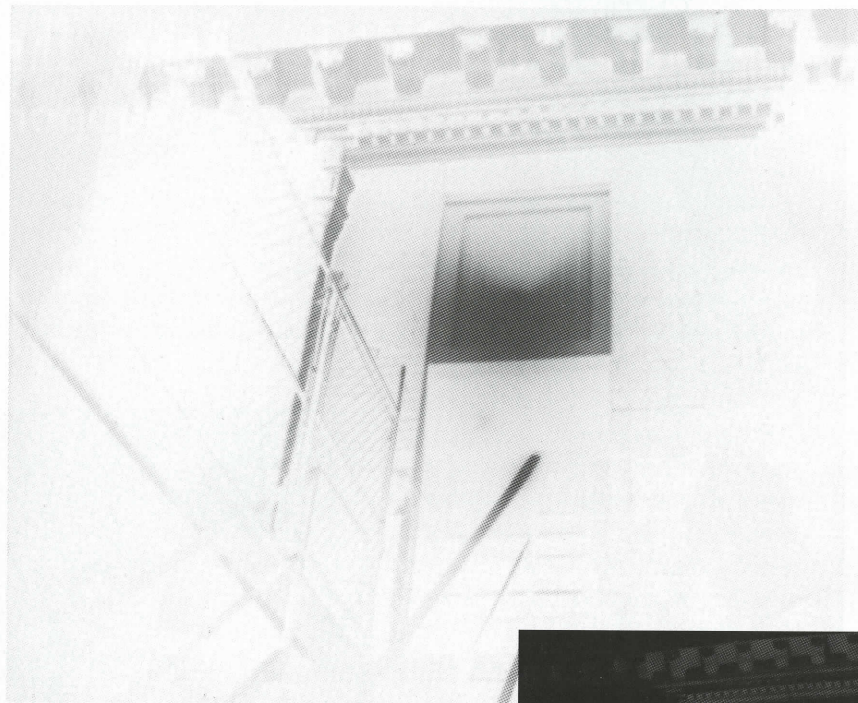
"A government assassin?"

"No, no, Benetti. A spook, specter, spirit, ghost. I want you to spend the night up in the fourth floor of Barney and get the lowdown on this thing. Oh, and take that photographer of yours, Chan."

"Its Boyle, sir."

"Right, right. Well, I want this article on my desk by Sunday. Good luck, Butafuco. This message will self-destruct in fifteen seconds." The screen blipped and went blank. While I was standing up, I stumbled over the box, which exploded, singing both my eyebrows. These are times to try men's souls, but there's no rest for the vigilante.

After a quick investigation, I learned the identity of the apparition who wanders the halls of Barney—one Francis



evening light or something else?

devlin boyle

Donnelly, a student who perished after falling down a flight of stairs, the end result of a scuffle with a peer.

"How unfortunate," remarked my photographer, one Devlin Boyle.

"The name or the death?"

"Neither. I was remarking about your burned-off eyebrows."

After finishing our research we began our assignment with several interviews of various area locals.

"So what do you think of the specter who haunts the fourth floor of Barney hall?"

Before the first local could answer, a car swerved off the road and struck him, smashing his body into a brick wall.

"And what about you, do you believe in the ghost of Barney hall?"

"OH MY GOD! MY HUSBAND!!!"

The third local we interviewed entered into a long tirade concerning the idiocy of people who believe in ghosts and any sort of afterlife. I can't be sure what his conclusions were because my attention span wandered from his words to the scene in *Willow* when Kevin Pollack falls in love with a cat.

We continued our journey to Barney hall to spend the night and meet this apparent apparition. As we reached the fourth floor I noticed the first sign of our ghost—a strange, spongy object attached to my jacket.

"Luc, I think that's the spleen of the first guy we interviewed."

"And the red ectoplasm all over your head is his blood."

"Actually, no. Somebody put strawberry syrup in my hair tonic." Devlin dropped his camera and pointed at the end of the hall. "Look a safe."

My photographer was correct in his observation. Built into the wall of the fourth floor was a safe, looking as old and impenetrable as a Jean Renoir film. After several weak attempts to open it, we realized the task required some sort of explosive. I sent Devlin to retrieve his asthma inhaler and a sharp object, while I looked around for anything helpful at hand. Or anything from a higher plane.

The ghost I was looking for had been one of the first students at this illustrious institution. He had been caught in a whorehouse, had received a restraining order in connection with the girl's college, and had died defending himself from an accusation of theft. Since Francis's demise, reports have been circulating about his ghost appearing on the fourth floor and throwing fruit at an occasional passersby on the walkway outside Barney.

"Why fruit?" I asked myself just before hearing the deafening pop of Devlin puncturing his asthma inhaler with a pen.

I ran over to find the safe intact but sporting a large dent, with Devlin unconscious beside it, minus both his hands. Ignoring his injuries, I grabbed a large sledgehammer conveniently lying in the middle of the hallway and worked the dent into a hole, obtaining access to this mysterious safe. I crawled inside and found myself surrounded by stacks and stacks of money.

"What is going on here?"

"Getting yourself into lots of trouble."

I turned around to see the all too familiar face of my editor painted white. He wore a black spandex jumpsuit with a picture of Marvin the Martian ironed onto the front.

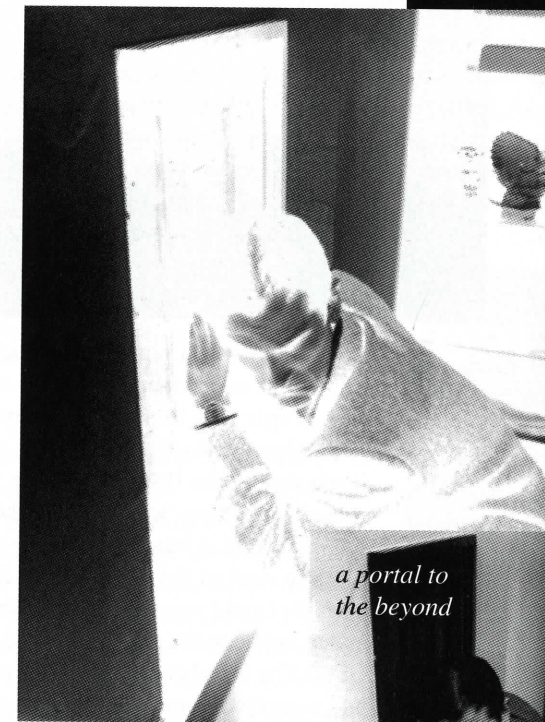
"What are you wearing?"

"I spilled coffee on the white sheet with holes cut out for the eyes, and this was the next best thing. Now stand up." I noticed he was holding a gun.

"So now comes the part when you explain why there is all this money in the safe, and basically what the hell is going on here?"

"Well, actually, I was just going to shoot you, but since you ask, I've been embezzling all of the money from the DCGA by convincing them to grant me much more funding

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a portal to the beyond

devlin boyle

After a quick investigation, I learned the identity of the apparition who wanders the halls of Barney—one Francis Donnelly, a student who perished after falling down a flight of stairs, the end result of a scuffle with a peer.



# Not Your Crocodile Dundee

## interview with Chet

### Snouffer by Chris Million

*Chet Snouffer greeted me in jeans, sneakers, and an Adidas long-sleeved shirt. A well-built fellow standing about 5'10", he looked to be in his mid-thirties though he's actually forty-three. He's been throwing boomerangs in Ohio since boyhood. Chet Snouffer has been the World Champion three times ('85, '89, '94), US National Champion eleven times ('83, '87-'96), and US Open Champion five times ('92-'96). He was the President of the US Boomerang Association (USBA) for four years, and is now a member of the USBA board. He holds a number of World Records in his sport and has been featured on "PM Magazine," ESPN's "Amazing Games," CBS Nightly News, Australia's "Who" Magazine, MTV Sports, Sports Illustrated, Men's Fitness, and Ohio Magazine. He has a resonant voice and a warm handshake. Chet lives in Delaware, Ohio, on the bank of the Olentangy River, with his wife and two children.*

**MoYO:** I wanted to start by talking about the origin and history of boomerangs. How old are they? What can you tell me about their development?

**Chet:** Well, the oldest boomerangs are about 12,000 to 15,000 years old. The earliest found have been in Europe, Australia, and northern Africa. The boomerang movement has come in waves. The first surge was around 1900. There was a four blade for backyard play that Victorian ladies caught with nets. Then, in the 1950s there was another boost when Popular Science and some other magazines took a look at boomerangs. The last big wave started in the 1970s when the Smithsonian began holding annual boomerang crafting workshops. A week after the workshop, there would be a competition. So boomerang enthusiasts started coming just for that competition, and they blew the workshopers away. This kind of became the National Championships. This continued until about 1982, when the Smithsonian said they didn't want it to be that kind of event and it wasn't really their intention. That's when the US Boomerang Association was formed. It's been hosting tournaments ever since. International play really began in 1981, when a team of US throwers challenged the Australians.

**MoYO:** Were the Australians and Americans the leaders in the sport at that time?

**Chet:** Yeah, those were the two main countries. America had a big band of enthusiasts because it was unique, like Frisbee. It was something different. Australians, especially European Australians, had a great competitive spirit. The aborigines play too, but they're more laid back about it. People of European descent are so competitive anyway, and some of the



*i've got it: Snouffer*

other cultures don't have that same, "let's make a game and try to beat each other at it" kind of spirit. The boomerang was designed to hunt birds. They weren't trying to make something that would come back, but something that would climb and hit the flock. But when you throw it overhand, it comes back. They would throw them sidearm and it would swoop up and it was like a shotgun blast in a flock of birds. It really stacked the odds in their favor.

**MoYO:** Could you tell me more about the first international match between the Americans and Australians?

**Chet:** The US challenged the Australians to a match. It was just a group of American throwers, but the Australian Boomerang Association had been running since the late 1960s. The Americans had developed some events that the Australians didn't do then. So there was a lot of negotiating about which we would do and which we wouldn't. So the Americans dominated all the events we brought over with us, and ended up winning the whole thing. But there's always been talk that the Aussies would've beat us if we hadn't done some of our own events.

**MoYO:** What about today? Are there international rules or guidelines?

**Chet:** Yeah, there's an international set of rules and they're pretty standard now. They kept changing year to year until about 1991. The format since '91 has been pretty universal. The Europeans were ready to go along with whatever the

Australians did, but the Americans were always making up their own rules. Americans are always free-thinking, trying to make something new and more exciting. We finally agreed to use their rules when it started costing us in the world championships. We were doing events there that we didn't ever do anywhere else and it was hurting us.

**MoYO:** Are those American innovations still used?

**Chet:** Yeah, the US, the Germans and the French are the top countries as far as throwing and definitely the most innovative in their design work. The Americans are pretty innovative in their work, but the Germans—sometimes we get a hold of a German design and we try to modify them and make it different, but we're using their design to start off with. When they use our design, they're sort of coming full-circle with it. They won the last two world championships, so there's a tendency to think that they've got the better technology—we've got to get what they've got. In some ways, you're limited, because then you're only as good as they are—you've got to keep evolving the technology, to keep the edge.

**MoYO:** Is that where most of the difference is made in the sport?

**Chet:** I think so. Now, America has always trained harder, whereas the other countries are slower. I mean, we've dominated for the past ten years, we've won all the international championships, and I think it's because we had more athletes and more athletic approach to training, as well as the advanced boomerangs. Now, it seems like the Germans are pretty athletic and the French, and you see more athletic throwers, and the technology has evened out. There is no edge now—you've got to get it either in technology or in training. We did some things this year that we've never done before.

**MoYO:** Anything in particular?

**Chet:** Well we did the team training camp in PA, and 24-30 throwers went there to select three teams, the third being a developmental team. People went knowing that of the thirty that went, only 18 would be selected for the teams. So we trained together there and we divided up the teams randomly at first, which was nice. And then we worked on a unified concept, because in the past, our two teams have been really competitive with each other—we were trying to beat the Germans and the French, but we kept getting distracted—we were trying to beat each other, but because of that, we lost the tournament. And then we also had a boomerang day, a big workshop. We had all the materials and it was just a big boomerang making day—outfitting everybody so that we were all armed and dangerous. And then we had team selection, three teams that are strong and that will, hopefully, do well.

**MoYO:** You said that the third team was a developmental team?

**Chet:** Yeah, we tried to pick younger throwers who weren't quite ready to be on teams one or two, but who showed potential, and that's hard because the tendency is to put other better throwers on there who really deserve to go, and it was hard to say, "you've been on three teams before, but we're

going to send another thrower who isn't as good as you." But it's building for the future—I'm sure some feelings were hurt, but..

**MoYO:** It must be tougher in such a small, localized sport...

**Chet:** Yeah, so everyone felt they had a right to go. We designated three coaches and said, "you're the final call—your decision goes." And they divided it up and figured it out.

**MoYO:** Who's involved? Who are the coaches?

**Chet:** Larry Ruth and Barnaby Ruhe and Eric Darnell. And they are, to me, the very best. They were on the boomerang team with me in '81 and I was the youngest member of that team, and I'm the oldest of the team I'm on now, but I'm on team one. I've got a nice group—I've got a nineteen year old, Adam Ruth, the world-record holder, and I've got Betsy Mallar-Giggs, the only woman on any of the teams, one of the top throwers in the world, and she's very competitive, and Stevie Cavanaugh, really laid back, and 30 or so now, but we think of him as a college kid, got the long Rasta hair [laughs] and real force, that's his best trait. And my brother Greg—we've only lost once that we've been on the same team. We were always on different teams, but we're a really strong unit—we bring out the best in each other, so that'll help. That should get them worried already, just that we're together. And then we've got.. um... Aaron McGuire, a Kent state grad, a track athlete, built like a horse—we didn't expect him to end up on the team, but they thought, "he's got

*Continued on page 17*

## fear of flying back

The science of boomerangs is complicated, but there are a few basic forces acting that can be described without too much scientific jargon. First, the aerodynamic shape of the boomerang's "wings" allows it to pass through the air with minimal air resistance. Second, the slight incline at the base of the leading edge (the part of the wing that leads the rest through the air) provides upthrust similar to that of sticking your hand out a car window on the freeway. Third, lift is generated as air passes over the curved top and flat bottom of the wings. It works the same way an airplane's wings do. Air passing over the top must pass over more space to get around the curve and meet up with air passing across the flat bottom. This causes the air on top to have greater speed, which causes it to have lower pressure. This lower pressure lifts the boomerang in whatever direction the curved side is facing. Since a boomerang is thrown with the curved side to the left, its flight curves to the left. The high speed and strong spinning motion of a thrown boomerang provides great lift, but there is also a difference in speed over the top and bottom wings because the top wing moves in the same direction as the throw and the bottom in the opposite. All these factors contribute to the graceful curving flight of the boomerang.



# Night in Nine

## seance in Buxton stirs more than spirits

by Paul Durica

Photos by Devlin Boyle

Your room, sir? The girl behind the desk asks the question twice before I take notice of her, a friendly smile, a striped smock and colonial-style dress. She is meant to be a flesh and blood image of the past, but like all such images she fails; a dyed hair or a piercing where one would not expect it, and the illusion wanes. I can't help but wonder if she wears leather after work. "Your room?" I'm standing at the front desk of the Buxton Inn, staring at a photograph of a past proprietor, a genial old man resembling Rockefeller. His name was Major Buxton; Major was his Christian name and not a military designation. He died in 1901. From time to time he appears by the dining room fireplace, warming his hands; sometimes only the hands appear. I glance at the fireplace and see three porcelain cats.

"Nine," I tell the girl.

"Room nine?" She gives me a look, the look needed in this type of story. After all, this is a ghost story, and must follow the form, beginning with calm and peace and becoming tenser with each subtle turn. She gives me a knowing look, rich in sinister import, but I know what she will say and respond for her. "Yes, the haunted room."

Although the Buxton prides itself on being "Ohio's oldest continuously operated Inn in its original building," as even the souvenir matchbook claims, its long-term inhabitants intrigue me more than any bit of architectural history. As the Inn's multiple copies of *Haunted Ohio II*, only eleven dollars apiece, attest, the Buxton's reputation rests on more than the strength of its timbers. One can say the Inn is also Ohio's oldest continuously haunted inn in its original building. No less than three former owners stalk the narrow halls, as well as a slew of nameless spirits and an undead cat. The spirit whose activities are best documented is Ethel "Bonnie" Bounell, who ran the Inn from 1934 until her death in 1960. She is



the Buxton Inn

known as the woman in blue, and room number nine, her former room, her place of death, is where I plan to rest my head this evening.

The girl hands me my key and wishes me a pleasant sleep.

My plan is simple: rent the haunted room, invite over some associates to conduct a séance, and see what happens. If the spirits lie low, I can still write about my associates' reactions, their attitudes towards death and the beyond. My biggest obstacle—how to get them all into the room without arousing suspicion; we are rowdy college students—is quickly solved; room nine has an outside entrance, a rickety set of stairs leading to the second floor and my door. As I turn the key in the lock and push open the door, I sniff the air for the scent of gardenias, the traditional marker of Bonnie's presence. A certain floral sweetness fills the two rooms, but I attribute it to the can of air freshener I find in the bathroom. I also notice a curious stain circling the toilet and damp to the touch, but it seems more the product of poor plumbing than poltergeists.

Despite the television and refrigerator, the coffee maker and complimentary mints, the two chambers possess a Victorian flavor. Ottoman chairs, stiff sofas, and thick wood dressers surround me, devouring most of the space.

A rose leaf border appears hand-painted; the beds are high off the floor and, when I recline upon one, I am amused by my feet poking over the end. I have never had greater empathy for Abe Lincoln.

The Gideons were kind enough to leave a Bible on the vanity, and I mark Psalm twenty-three with a pencil. On the bedside table, I arrange the articles necessary for conducting a proper séance: two white candles, for the front and back of the room, a glass of water, paper and pen in a box for direct writing, and additional paper for automatic writing. I also remove my microcassette recorder and place it on the table; it will serve as my séance journal. To my disappointment, none of the tables are round, but I intend to solve this problem after dinner. I check myself over in the closet mirror; my clothes are black, naturally, and my friends will later remark upon a passing resemblance to David Copperfield. With a swift flick of the wrist, I lock the door behind me and disappear down the back steps.

I decide to dine in the basement tavern and order the beef stew and a beer. I have read a full stomach is necessary in order to conduct a proper séance; the physical energy provided by food is translated into psychic energy upon which the spirits feast. Abstention from alcohol beverages is also suggested, but I am willing to take my

chances on this point.

The basement of the Buxton, its rafters festooned with cobwebs and green and red lights, once served as the bedroom and dining room of passing coachmen. Some of them still visit, placing an invisible hand on a diner's shoulder or helping themselves to what is on tap. The only ghosts I observe derive from my past. The plastic tablecloth decorated with a cartoon carriages, the dark wood furniture, garish lighting, and endless renditions of "Gloria" and "Nine to Five" conjure up images of the



1980s and my own harrowing youth. When the check arrives—a salad not ordered among the listed items—the specter of Reagenomics descends, and I am grateful for the light and warmth of the first floor. Time does seem to stand still at the Buxton, but in terms of decades, not centuries.

I take my desert in a dining room with a glass ceiling and walls, offering a view of one of the garden's many fountains. I eat a gingerbread cake smothered in warm applesauce and drink a cup of coffee while reading

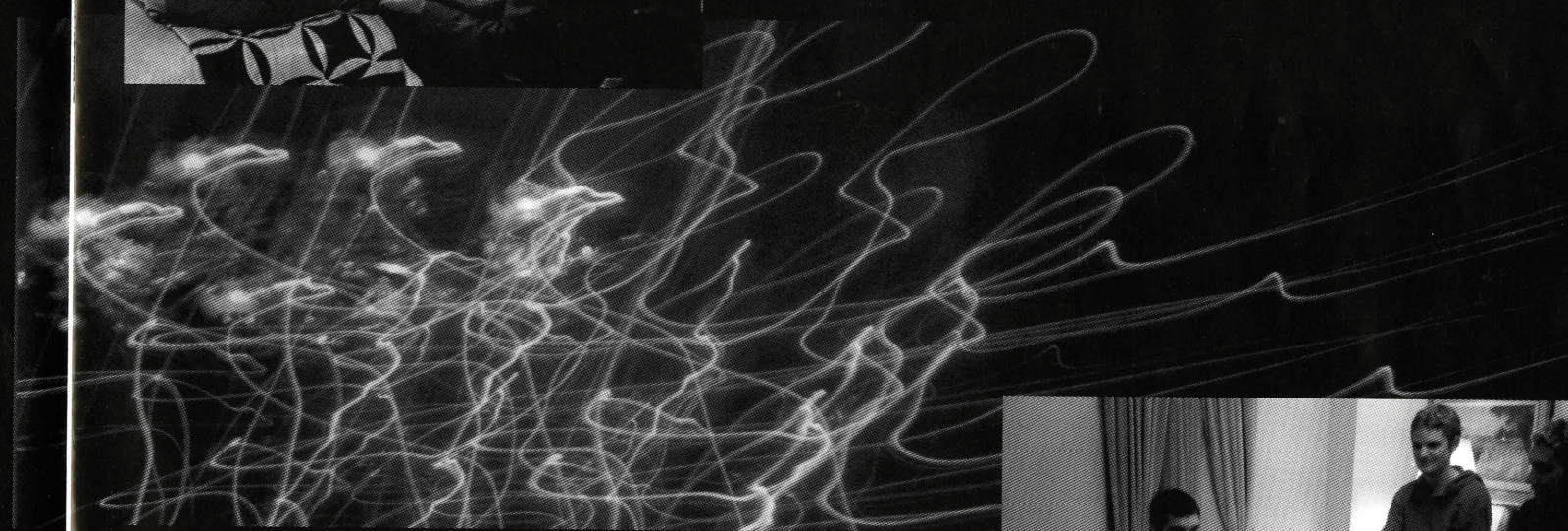
materials related to séances and the haunted history of the Inn. We are to begin by joining hands—left palm up, right down—and taking three breaths to steady the nerves. A recitation of the Lord's Prayer seals the psychic circle and serves as protection against malevolent spirits. As I'm taking this in, a cat runs past the glass window, and the part of it I see, the second of swift motion, gives me a start. I believe it was not black but the color of cinders. I look back at my papers and am startled once again by three boys on bicycles riding past the glass and yelling as only children can. I glance at my watch and ask for the check.

The last time I dined at the Buxton, I was seated with a party of four in the atrium; September night air cooled our meals and made the candle on the table flicker. My party seemed more concerned with the state of the wine bottle than with the

out from number nine, the genuine haunted room, my room. A strange form of serendipity, I wonder.

My guests arrive in one car, six in total, counting my photographer. The séance must have a gender balance, and so I have invited two more men—whom I will call the Playboy and the Artist—and three women—the Texan, the Activist, and the Poet. A few of them dressed as instructed—drab colors, muted grays, blacks, and browns—but the Artist wears neon orange pants, visible from my place on the terrace and sure to attract attention from more than disembodied spirits. I wave them over to the stairs and bid them silent with a finger raised to my lips. Once inside room nine—with the door locked and the blinds on all the windows drawn—the fun begins.

As I write this article, I listen to the recording I made of the séance, the



condition of our food, and by my fourth glass, I was telling them stories about the Buxton spirits. "And that room," I said, pointing up at a random window, "Is the famous haunted room, where a cook once found a ghost in his bed." The window I indicated with a tipsy gesture was intended to ground the story, nothing more. As I realize now, standing on the terrace outside my room and looking down into the atrium, the window I indicated looks

various invocations and a pen scratching paper, automatic writing by the Poet. On the tape, she insists the source is a pressure on her elbow; my right hand rests on her left, but I do not move it. And if she tells the truth, then who



moves her hand? Long before we reach this stage, I outline the basic procedure, and my associates assist in preparing the room. First, we decide on which of the two chambers to use. The Playboy asks for the death room, but I tell him I'm not sure in which room Bonnie breathed her last. The stories do not provide such details. We select the larger room and move the only table that will work—of the rectangular bed-side variety—into the room.

The Photographer takes a few pictures of the room before we begin; he seems intrigued by

Texan on the Ottoman to my right. I pull up a wooden desk chair, tossing its striped pillow on the floor. The Bible, glass of water, and paper and pen fill the table. We try joining hands, and satisfied this arrangement will work, I tell them what to expect.

Before beginning, we must agree upon whom we will contact and who will be our spirit guide. The spirit guide is an entity friendly to the participants—a deceased relative, for example—and intercedes on their behalf, bridging the world of the living and the dead. The participants must remain focused on the name of the spirit guide throughout the séance in order to maintain the connection. Since I am serving as the conductor, I choose my great-grandfather as the spirit guide, hoping to God he won't be offended, cantankerous Scotsman that

activity occurring in the second hour. After ten minutes of silence, I become impatient and wonder if I should say something. The words seem trapped in my mouth; I'm not really experienced with this type of thing, and what can I say that won't sound like something from an episode of *Dark Shadow*? After much hesitation and a few raspy breaths, I utter something generic like, "Spirits, come and communicate with us." I tell the group to remain focused on our spirit guide. The Activist asks me for the middle name of my great grandfather, and I tell her I don't remember it. The Poet asks me if his middle initial was A; something tells her it was A. I tell her I don't know and ask her to make an attempted invocation. She asks, "Is there anyone out there who wishes to communicate with us?"



**Forty minutes pass before we hear a low, guttural noise, coming from the floor and moving towards us. At this point, I laugh. The sound: the Photographer's snore.**



the chandelier hanging over the bed and the wall-length mirror squeezed between two windows in the room where we convene. From what he has read, the Playboy says the presence of mirrors is important; his remark reminds me of the childhood Bloody Mary game, but out of ignorance I agree with him. I put the box with paper and pen beneath the table. The Poet lights the candles, placing one on the television and the second on the vanity, which is behind me during the séance. The Texan gets the glass of water and remarks upon the stain around the toilet; the Artist eats the shortbread cookies next to the coffee machine, and we are ready to begin.

I close the door to the first room and bid them to sit down and form a circle as best as possible. The Poet and Playboy sit on the sofa, the Artist and Activist on the foot of the bed, and the

he is. Our desire is to reach the spirit of Bonnie Bounell—although the Playboy seems quite keen on channeling the dead cat—and my great grandfather, we hope, will bring her to us.

At 10:00 PM the Photographer turns off the lights, and I tell my friends to join hands, shut their eyes, and take three deep breaths. I recite the Lord's Prayer and, after a pause, the Point of Light Prayer (another protective gesture) and the Twenty-third Psalm. Between the latter two, I instruct the participants to visualize a white light rotating counterclockwise around our circle; after seeing the light circle several times, they are to imagine it swirling into the center and funneling up into the ceiling. After the prayers, I tell them to focus on the name of our spirit guide and wait.

A séance is intended to last two hours, with most of the interesting ac-

Nothing happens. We sit silently in the dark for fifteen more minutes. A tense feeling strikes my body, and I ask the group if they feel it.

We agree the tension derives from holding hands for twenty-five minutes and sitting with our backs straight. I suggest changing spirit guides—great grandfather is just not responding—and the Poet offers her grandmother. She says her name, and we wait. I ask for the spirits to "come and communicate with us" a few more times. We wait.

Forty minutes pass before we hear a low, guttural noise, coming from the floor and moving towards us. At this point, I laugh. The sound: the Photographer's snore. He is asleep, wrapped in a rug. We break the circle

and slump back in our chairs, sofas, on the bed. The Poet gets up to turn on the lights, and the Activist switches off the recorder. The Photographer and Artist go out onto the terrace to smoke.

After a short break, in which the Photographer makes himself a cup of coffee, we reconvene to discuss the shortcomings of our initial effort. The Playboy believes we selected the wrong room; like some of the others, he feels more of a presence in the first room. He now believes this is where Bonnie died; I tell him about the air freshener in the bathroom. We agree to leave the door leading to the first room open; if Bonnie wishes to join us, she will have free passage. The Playboy remains fixated on the placement of the mirrors, and I assure him I will sit with one directly behind my head.

The Activist believes part of our problem derives from a lack of focus. The Texan confesses to thinking about

her own deceased relatives and not my great-grandfather; the Poet did the same thing. We agree to forgo any spirit guides and to attempt to contact Bonnie directly. After all, the Activist reasons, this is *her* room, we are the guests.

The Playboy says that's just it. We are not guests, but visitors who will not spend the night. All of the ghostly stories concern guests; Bonnie only appears to guests whose satisfaction with the Inn concerns her. His argument meets with near unanimous approval, but I insist upon trying again, focusing on Bonnie and having everyone speak. The Texan tells me to say the Lord's Prayer correctly this time; according to her, I omitted three verses.

We begin again at 11:30. The Poet now sits on my right; she does not wish to be near the open door. I say the prayers and tell them to visualize the light. "Bonnie, come and communicate

with us." I suggest each participant provide an invocation.

"Bonnie, our hearts and minds are open," says the Poet.

"Give us a sign," pleads the Playboy.

"Bonnie, let us get to know you," is the Texan's attempt.

"Bonnie, we want you to be comfortable," says the Artist, "And to understand what you have to say."

"Bonnie, we are listening." With the Activist's invocation, we have circled the group. I decide to call Bonnie forth a second time, and the others follow my lead. Three times around the circle we summon her, and with each successive attempt, I feel more comfortable with the group, as if we are joined by more than our hands, as if a force travels from person to person. This force begins weak, but by the time it has passed around the circle and back to me, it is a palpable entity. We all open our

## Phobia or Philia? student questions prejudices against specters

by Kim Curry

I've never been afraid of ghosts, although I know quite a few people who are. I even know people who are but who admit they've never encountered a supernatural being. The difference is I have; the first time was right after my birth. Try as I might, I can't come up with any other explanation for my experiences. And I don't want to because I'm not scared. In fact, I'm fascinated by ghost stories, especially my own, and according to my mother I always have been.

We lived at #1 Bademer Strasse in Bitburg, Germany. Our home was the second story of a large house owned by Herr and Frau Alff. It had been converted into a small apartment. After I

was born, my father and my mother would take turns getting up in the middle of the night to feed me. My mother, being the lucky person she is, got weeknights, and my father got the weekends. Almost from the very beginning, my mother noticed someone behind her when she awoke to fix my nighttime bottles. She assumed the presence was my father, but whenever she turned around no one was there. Things continued this for over two weeks before she said anything to my father. He also felt watched and was aware of the same presence. Years later, when I asked them why they didn't say anything sooner, they said they both felt silly. But things were far from silly; once they talked about what they were experiencing, what they experienced changed.

At first my parents only noticed small noises in addition to being watched, so they assumed they were being silly again. They were both a little shaken, so they started talking to me at night while they were up and would sometimes take me to their bedroom while they fed me. Or they both got up with me. Safety in numbers, they believed.

After a while, they noticed more

than noises. Occasionally, a small waft of perfume, the type an older "grandmotherly" type would wear, hung heavy in the air. My mother didn't wear that kind of perfume (though she surely will someday), and it certainly wasn't my father's. Then they started noticing more obvious and, admittedly, more frightening things. When my parents would leave the apartment and return several hours later, the window blinds would be in a different position and the stereo would be set on a speed of 78. My parents were going to forget the window blind incidents because maybe they didn't remember where they left them, but the stereo could not be explained by a memory slip or negligence. They didn't even own records that played at a speed of 78, let alone play any.

By this time my parents were pretty unnerved, but that, too, would change. My parents talked about what could be going on, but they couldn't figure it out. Then one night I started to cry and when my mom got up to check on me, my favorite music box started playing. She froze, and after a few seconds I stopped crying. She came in to check on me, and I had fallen back



eyes and look around for a sign of another presence. The Playboy notices the candle flame behind my head, how the flame flares and flickers without a breeze in the air. It elongates and sways from side to side, and we take this as a sign of Bonnie's presence. The Playboy asks Bonnie to make the other candle flare, and after a moment, the candle flares. Both sway madly, and I decide to develop a system. I tell Bonnie to make one candle flare if the answer is "yes" and both candles flare if the answer is "no," and instruct each participant to ask a question. I ask the first.

"Bonnie, are you happy with how the Buxton is managed?"

One flicker.

The Poet follows me. "Bonnie, are we alone?"

One flicker.

The Playboy leans forward on the couch. "Bonnie, why is it you appear to guests?"

Nothing.

"Bonnie, are you happy?" asks the Texan, and receives one flicker.

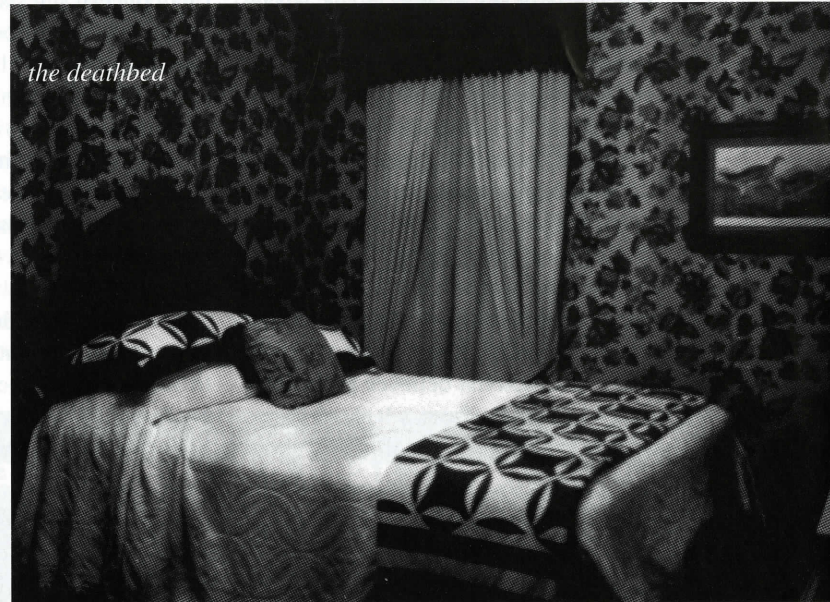
The Artist follows, "Is there such a thing as peace?"

As this point, my recording of events becomes garbled. The Activist's

question sounds something like, "Bonnie, are you Aunt Jemima?" I really doubt that's what she said, but some of the additional questions remain within my memory. I ask about the gardenia perfume. The Playboy inquires whether or not a spirit named Nate Turner inhabits his house. The Poet is interested in loneliness and pain; the Texan wants to know if Bonnie has friends. All of this is lost on the tape, and perhaps my memory is faulty, but one thing is still heard clearly—a pen scratching paper. I'm not sure how it begins. I believe I try first. The force, which now seems to bind our group together, feels concentrated in my wrist and elbow. I feel the urge to write. I take the pen and pull the paper near, but

nothing happens. I hand the pen to the Poet, and she writes.

At first, the pen crawls along, and then the strokes broaden and length. Nothing but lines appear, but the Poet insists they are trying to take form. Someone or something is trying to write "Yes" or perhaps a name. She feels the



the deathbed

words in the pen. The Playboy asks Bonnie if she is right- or left-handed and watches the flame. He is convinced something is going on in the other room and asks the Photographer to take his place. I tell the Photographer to investigate and for the Playboy to stay put.

The Poet continues to write; the strokes become fiercer and begin to spill off the page. I place my hand under her wrist, but she tells me to put it back on top. She asks if I am moving her hand. I am not. She says she feels a pressure at the back of her elbow. She believes Bonnie is unhappy with the Inn.

I tell Bonnie the recorder is there for her to use if she desires to speak with us, but the Poet continues to write. The recorded sound of the pen on paper is harsh, like sawing through bone. It lasts the side of a tape, burying our voices in its rhythm. As abruptly as the writing starts, it stops. I ask for Bonnie's patience; we are all new at this type of

thing, but whatever presence may have joined us feels gone.

We talk about our bodies; the left side seems cold and the right warm. We are exhausted. Almost two hours have passed, taking us beyond the witching hour. I decide to end the séance by reciting the Point of Light Prayer and telling them to visualize the white light descending from the ceiling and moving in a clockwise position around us. I pause to allow the image to form in my own mind, before reciting the Twenty-third Psalm and shutting the Bible. I declare the séance at a close, and the Photographer switches on the light.

Cleaning up, we investigate the candle on the vanity behind my seat in the séance. Tall and thin, the candle was set inside a coffee mug and kept aloft by a base of melted wax. We wonder if the candle came loose during the séance and if this accounted for the odd movement of the flame. We find the candle rooted in place.

The Photographer has another idea. As the candle melted and descended into the mug, he believes, the flame received less oxygen, and this deprivation produced the flares and flickers. "It was suffocating slowly," he says.

The other candle has simply melted, covering the television, a table, and my suitcase in a thick layer of vanilla-scented wax.

Before they leave, I ask my associates what they thought of the séance. At times, the Texan says, she felt like she knew Bonnie; for her, the spirit was sending a positive message. "After you die, only the stuff that made you happy in life matters," she says.

The Photographer believes he spoke with Bonnie in his head, and she appeared in his mind's eye as a little girl. The Poet supports his remark by recalling stories about the spirit appearing in a variety of ages.

"I wanted to know her better but then she left," says the Playboy as he shuts the door.

I am alone again in the haunted room. I get ready for bed, observing the curious stain around the toilet to see if its size has altered. As I return pieces of furniture to their original positions, I notice something scratched into the surface of the table we used. At first, I think the pen may have slipped off the paper while the poet was writing and damaged the wood. Then I realize we never removed the glass shield from the table—an obvious protection against clumsy guests; the shield on one table is now covered in wax—and the scratches assume a pattern. I see three letters, the first and last corresponding to my great grandfather's first and last initials; the middle letter, longer and more pronounced than the rest, is A.

## The Haunting of Seven and Nine

Phantom cats aside, rooms seven and nine remain the abode of former proprietor Ethel "Bonnie" Bounell in death as they did in life, and she is not afraid to assert her presence to assist a troubled guest. She has been seen to appear in a blue dress and at various ages in her life; the attar of gardenias announces her presence. In 1978, the well-remembered blizzard waylaid most of the Buxton staff, forcing them to spend the night in rooms reserved for guests. One of the cooks was given room seven for the night, and when he crawled under the covers, he discovered an unusual bedfellow—the ghost of Bonnie Bounell. Bonnie appeared again in 1991 to a nurse who was staying in room nine. In the middle of the night, the nurse awoke to see a woman sitting at the foot of the bed. The woman asked if the nurse were sleeping well; when she replied in the negative, the spirit vanished. The next day, after seeing a photograph, the nurse identified her nocturnal visitor as Bonnie Bounell.

source: Christ Woodyard, Beth Scott, and Michael Norman; the internet



the haunted room

To unwind, I watch a documentary on scientology, which qualifies as one of the more frightening moments of the evening. When I attempt to sleep, I leave on the lights. The next morning, the Inn enshrouded by fog. I enjoy a small continental breakfast by the sealed-off dining room fireplace. Portraits of George and Martha Washington watch me eat; I search for a feeling of ghostly eyes cast upon me, but Buxton and company keep their distance. I return the key to room nine, escaping with two pilfered shampoo bottles, and drive back to Denison for class.

A few days after the séance, I have coffee with the Activist. We talk about our mutual experiences. Like the others, she had her moments of belief but was more intrigued by how we responded as a group, the feeling of unity the séance fostered. I told her the same group of individuals has to meet eight times or more before anything interesting happens. She asks about the article, how I plan to approach the

asleep. This same thing happened several times. In an attempt at rationalization, my parents thought it started playing as a result of vibration. They tested it but couldn't get it to play. At this point, my parents decided they had a helper in taking care of me. Based on the "grandmotherly" perfume and the older speed of records, they figured it was someone looking out for me until my first-time parents figured out what they were doing. Both my mother and my father found the presence somewhat calming. They started talking to her and even gave her a name: Oma, the German word for granny.

So what's the point of the story? My mother suffered from phasmophobia her entire life, but she had never even encountered a ghost. Once she did, she wasn't afraid of it. I was an infant when this happened, and ghosts have never

bothered me. As a child, all my favorite cartoons and movies involved ghosts of some kind.

This could be just some strange coincidence, but I don't think so. My roommate is another prime example. She used to think she was haunted, but we talk about this all the time, and she tells me that she has never actually encountered a ghost. In fact, she's not entirely sure she even believes in ghosts. "But," she says, "when I was younger, they scared me to death. I don't think I believe in them anymore, but if they did exist, I know I would still be terrified of them."

Why do people who have never had a genuine supernatural experience harbor such a tremendous fear? Is their anxiety a fear of the unknown? Perhaps, but I say ghosts are known and are nothing of which to be afraid.



candles and the writing. I'll write the truth, I tell her. Nothing happened.

She disagrees. She tells me to write as if something did, to embellish when necessary. "Why not?" she says. "Turn it into a real ghost story."

I finish my coffee and fail to tell her about the letters scratched into the table.

## Beatty Bid

*Continued from page 5*

the *Times*, "and I believe that deep down the people want to do something about that." Historically vocal on behalf of the Democratic Party and on issues such as campaign finance reform, progressive politics, and civil rights, Beatty has established himself as Tinseltown's most savvy and motivated political player. Long ago, he lent his clout to the campaigns of Democratic presidential hopefuls Robert Kennedy, George McGovern, and Gary Hart, but has now found himself unhappy with 2000 Democratic alternatives Gore and Bradley, inspiring an urge to run. "There certainly should be someone better," he humbly told the *Times*, "(but) that's not to say that I don't have strong feeling on a lot of things that aren't being spoken."

Aside from his past spokespersonship for Democratic presidential competitors, Beatty has often tried to bridge the gap between his profession and outside interests, participating in films rife with political commentary. This is seen, for instance, in *Bonnie and Clyde*, with the devastating results of Michael J. Pollard's liberation-by-

recruiting.  
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tattooing, which touched a nerve with hippie audiences of the time; in Alan J. Pakula's *The Parallax View*, where he plays a reporter who delves into the dark side of government, investigating the murder of a senator; in his arguable masterpiece, *Reds*, a dramatization of American journalist John Reed's experiences with the Communist Party during the Russian Revolution which led to his writing of *Ten Days that Shook the World*; and even in *Dick Tracy*, which has some shrewd observations about police corruption to offer amidst its colorful pyrotechnics and grotesque make-up effects. But it is with *Bulworth*, perhaps the greatest and most audacious work of art about the world of politics since Robert Penn Warren's blistering novel *All the King's Men*, that Beatty most vividly communicates his own opinions about the current state of American democracy.

*Bulworth* tells the tale of neo-conservative, Democratic senator Jay Billington Bulworth and his confrontation with his own dishonesty, namely the loathsomeness of his campaign's financing and his participation in the Democratic Party's duplicity in regards to the African-American community. Ironically, these feelings are aroused after he takes a contract out on his own life, but Bulworth is soon liberated by the realization that speaking the truth, at any cost, is the way to go and begins telling things like they are by any means necessary, including rap. Bulworth becomes the ideal political official—Gandhian even. He fasts, goes without rest, and takes constant steps towards connecting as completely as he can with his constituency, altering his dress, his speech, and his lifestyle. But even though *Bulworth* became the best reviewed film of 1998 and racked up an Academy Award nomination for Best Original Screenplay, the film did poorly at the box office, due in no small part to the strange and scanty ad campaign employed by the film's conservatively-minded distributor, Twentieth Century Fox (to be fair, though, Beatty himself told *The Nation* in their April 5th/12th issue of this year that he did not feel it was appropriate to say that Fox had buried the film because he did not have

marketing control of the film and did not know all of the specifics regarding the film's promotion). Still, the film and the character are a revelation: an enthusiastic vision of the way things should be from one of our finest political artists. *Bulworth* also stands as the perfect retort to those skeptical and cynical about the candidacy of Warren Beatty: if Warren Beatty the Man could bring with him to the office of the presidency even a little bit of the truth that Jay Bulworth the Character does, and why should we assume otherwise, then his interest in the office should be met with gravity and advocacy.

But just how serious is the Oscar winner about actually entering the race for the presidency? Well, serious enough that he's met with people such as Ellen Miller (of the Public Campaign), Steven Cobble (formerly of the Rainbow Coalition), and Robert Borosage (a major progressive politico). Serious enough that *Time Magazine*, CNN, *Newsweek*, and others have all taken a sincere investigative interest in the possibility—Lloyd Grove of *The Washington Post* in his column "The Reliable Source" has even been keeping a regular tab on the filmmaker called the "Warren Watch," updating readers about the star's bid for the presidency. And serious enough that he's been playing elusive when asked directly about his potential run. And why shouldn't he be taken seriously, especially when one considers the slew of entertainers who have achieved political office (lest we forget Ronald Reagan, Sonny Bono, Fred Dalton Thompson, Jesse "The Body" Ventura, Bill Bradley, and so on).

Of course, the next few months will see major changes in each and every contender's campaigns, so who knows what will have changed by the time this memoir finds itself printed in the pages of *MoYO*. That's the fickle nature of politics for you. Lamar Alexander: here today, gone tomorrow. Warren Beatty: maybe here today, but most likely gone tomorrow. Regardless, if and whenever he chooses to run, Beatty would make a positively thrilling "liberal alternative." The energy and veracity with which he has expressed his feelings about this country on film

are the kind of energy and veracity we need and must have in office. You got to be a spirit, Warren, not a ghost.

## Barney Ghost

*Continued from page 7*

than necessary for my various front activities, like *MoYO*, *Exile*, and the David Hasselhoff Impersonation Club. I have been storing the money in this safe and scaring away would-be-snoopers with this ghost routine."

"Why then did you assign me this story?"

"I did? I thought I assigned it to my accomplice, Muzzeli. Oh, well, now you die!"

"NO!" cried Devlin as he leapt up to grab the gun and save the day. Because he didn't have any hands, he missed completely and collided with the wall behind Edward G. Taking advantage of the distraction, I threw the sledgehammer at our assailant and, as he caught it, tackled him and took control of the firearm.

"Well, Genatti, what are you going to do now? Turn me in? You know, there is a lot of money in there, and I've got a real good scheme going. Why don't you join me?"

Struggling to lift his aching head from the ground Devlin scoffed at the so-called Barney ghost. "Do you think we'd ever consider joining a lowdown scum-sucker like..." I interrupted Devlin by shooting him in the face.

"Now the only thing we have to worry about is the article."

"The article?" the editor laughed and put his arm around my shoulder. "Don't worry about that. I mean, who's gonna believe it anyway?"

## Boomerang Boy

*Continued from page 9*

potential—if we put him on team three, he won't feel any pressure, so we'll put him on team one and see how he handles the pressure" and he kicked butt, so within the first day, we kept him over some of the older vets who got on team two instead who we could win with, but he's got youth—you need a mix. If you go all youth, you'll get beat, but if you go all vets, sometimes you still come up short; not enough leg or arm power.

**MoYO:** Concerning specific events, which do you do best, which do you like?

**Chet:** Old days, it was funny, I won eleven nationals. I wasn't real strong at 'maximum time aloft'; I didn't like the event, persay. I was always going out of bounds, so I didn't try it much, and wasn't real strong. But I won in spite of that since my other events were so strong that I was able to compen-

sate for that, but as time went on I had to work really hard at that, to train in that, too. And so I've become one of the best throwers in that, too, not making any mistakes. And there are throwers who get more power and more height than I do, but they take the risk of going out of bounds, and I'm more consistent with my throws. My best events are fast catch and endurance. And again, I've held the US record, but while I have world record speed in endurance right now, I don't have world record speed in fast catch, but I don't make any mistakes, so I win nine times out of ten, because I'm not going to make any mistakes, and I have good speed. And then... trick catch and doubling, I'm one of the best at that... but that is a really hot and cold event. You never know.

**MoYO:** For those less familiar with the sport, can you describe the trick catches?

**Chet:** Yeah, trick catches—there's a series of catches now. You do left handed and right handed, and it can't touch the body, and then a two hand behind the back and a two hand under the leg, and one hand behind the back and one hand under the leg, and then you do a hackey catch, where you have to actually hackey it with your foot and then catch it, and that's like my nemesis this year—I'm usually really good at it, but this year, they just keep bouncing places, you can kick it, but you still have to catch it, and sometimes they go in weird angles. Then there's the foot catch where you catch it with both feet, that's where you get on the ground. Then, there's an eagle catch where it's one handed over the top, like snagging a fish out of water, and that's a hard catch. If you catch it, it's easy, but if you miss it, you smack it into the ground, you don't get a second effort at it. So those are the different catches. Then you do the same thing with two 'rangs at the same time, and it's fifty points in the trick catching portion, and fifty points in the doubling portion. They combine for an event that's worth a hundred points. Then, fast catch, as I mentioned earlier, is how fast you can make five throws and catches. The world record is fourteen seconds now. They all have to go twenty meters, so you couldn't just throw a little indoor boomerang, and then endurance... if fast catch is like a hundred yard dash, then endurance is like a mile run. You have to kind of pace yourself—it's five minutes of throwing—how many can you throw and catch in five minutes. And the wind will change—it changes direction, and ebbs and flows during the whole thing, so even if you're really in a groove, the wind changes at some point and you have to make an adjustment—that's really where people get stuck. Sometimes you have the wrong boomerang, or you don't realize when the wind has switched.

**MoYO:** Have there been any tournaments indoors, without any wind?

**Chet:** Yeah, we had some indoor tournaments, and that's a whole other ballgame, because your fifty-meter boomerangs that throw great outside with a 3 miles per hour wind, when you get them in dead calm, they don't want to come all the way back. To have a boomerang that comes back in no wind at all, you're actually designing a boomerang that will be worthless outside—so light that if there's any breeze at all, you're not going to want to throw it. What happened is that



we'd just start throwing them harder, but now I've designed some indoor boomerangs, so I have ones that fly inside. I was over in Japan doing exhibitions indoors in a huge dome, and I was throwing floaters and maximum time aloft and they weren't even hitting the ceiling, it was so high. And I was throwing fifty meter boomerangs, they'd go out and back, and I still had fifty meters to go, it was a huge indoor stadium.

**MoYO:** Sounds great. Do you travel a lot?

**Chet:** Yeah, I went to all those championships that we mentioned, and I was in Japan doing exhibitions, and I'm supposed to be in Columbia now, but one of my teammates was going to go for ten days, and there was a lot of war and unrest down there, so I decided not to go. It sounded a little dangerous—the state department issued warnings. We go to Australia in February, and then I travel around the country with my speaking, so you get to travel a lot.

**MoYO:** That's awesome. But it wasn't always like that?

**Chet:** No, but since '81 it's taken me all over the world—I always called it my passport to the world because if I wasn't throwing boomerangs, I wouldn't have gone all those places I've gone—Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and so on. Before that, before the 80s, when I was a kid, I just threw in my field. No tournaments, I didn't know anyone else who threw boomerang. I liked it because it was unique.

**MoYO:** Yeah, I wondered how you and your brother came across it.

**Chet:** I read an article in a book, a Reader's Digest book. I just thought this was really cool. There was a pattern at the end of how to make your own boomerang. My grandpa helped me make the boomerang and the thing actually flew. We did the kinda side-arm pitch and they went upppppppp and came swooping back to us. I said, "This is unbelievable!" So I set out on a quest to learn more about it, and I went to the library to find books on it. I found another pattern in the encyclopedia. It was for this big hunting boomerang. It was about half an inch thick, and a killer. I mean, I would throw these things and they'd come back and hit me in the chest. I'd have bruises. I was in sixth grade, so I'd go to school and tell the girls, "Yeah, I got hit by a boomerang." [chuckles and makes a "suave guy" face] They were like, "Get away." [laughs] I kept trying to find information on them though, and that's what led me to the boomerang business. Additionally it was a newsletter I put together for a bunch of friends I threw boomerangs with in college (Wheaton). I wanted people to be able to learn more about it, to get a whole network going. People would see me throwing them on campus, and everybody wanted one. So I'd use the vices and files in the art department and make boomerangs and sell 'em to all of my friends. That became my business. I paid for a lot of my social life that way. So I kept a newsletter growing to these people who went different directions after college, and they helped spread it all over the nation, and it quickly became an international publication.

**MoYO:** How do you manage to balance the sport and the other parts of your life? How do you find the time?

**Chet:** One of the things we did was to try to incorporate my

family into the activity. When I went to Australia in '87, when I went to Europe later, I took my wife. When I went back to Australia in '91, we took Cody (his son). [pauses] In Germany, I went by myself. Lydia had just been born. That was sort of a sore point because I really probably should have stayed home, stayed here and been a dad. I got my roles mixed up a little. Oh, and we lost in Germany and I lost the world championship, and so there was no reward to say, "Well look, at least I won!" I learned my lesson there. The sport has really turned into my job. You know? I coached gymnastics a long time and threw boomerangs, and these were the things I did growing up. This was my avocation.

**MoYO:** What is it like to be the leading player in a sport that doesn't receive a lot of attention? When you became the US champion, when you became the World Champion, was there a certain amount of fame?

**Chet:** It's funny, because there are always opportunities. The biggest perk of winning was the opportunity to go somewhere else. When I travel to schools, the kids ask me, "Are you rich?" I always saying, "No, I'm rich in experience." I've been places I never would have been. It's a hard lesson to teach that fame and fortune do not go hand in hand. But you're right, sometimes we think, "Where's Oakley or Nike for sponsorship?" And the only way to get air time, usually, is sponsors. So, sometimes you have to be willing to sell your soul for that, and I haven't been willing to do that. I've had offers for beer commercials and Marlboro and I've turned those down due to my own convictions. I've found other sponsorship because of that. We joke that our kids, like Cody, will probably have a Wheaties contract or Nike. He'll be the Tiger Woods of the boomerang world, and we'll still be poor. [laughs] "Man, we missed it by that much!" We feel like we're kind of paving the way, and even if boomerangs doesn't take off... well, boomerangs are so unique, I have a hard time seeing it becoming as popular as soccer or something. I mean, all you need for soccer is open space and some friends, but all you need for boomerangs is the open space... and the soccer fields are already there! It always will have a quirky appeal, and it attracts a lot of free-thinkers, off the beaten path.

**MoYO:** What do you think of some of these other extreme sports, outside of the mainstream?

**Chet:** If I'm watching mountain biking or skateboarding or BMX biking on ESPN 2, I feel like it's a very parallel universe. It's still a really small little group, and they all know each other. They get to travel, and do things, and they have somehow hooked in to the sponsors. We've been trying to figure out how to do that. It's something that we've kind of missed. There's a difference though. We've all ridden a bike, so when you see BMX guys ramping, you say, "Whoa, that's unbelievable! I know I can't do that." Golf is like that. I mean, nobody will tell you golf is an exciting game, but one of the reasons golf is so hugely popular is that most people have done it. So when you see Jack Nicklaus, everybody can appreciate the great skill in what he's doing. Since boomerangs are still outside of that, people watch it and say, "That's really interesting." I've never heard anybody say they're not interesting. But they can't relate it back to anything. It's a

little disappointing when you see other sports go, and even get in the Olympics. We pitched really hard to get boomerangs in the Olympics in Australia. When you're the host country, you can add a sport. It didn't go, though. Still, we draw satisfaction from what we're doing. We're traveling around the world, which is what we'd be doing if it were an Olympic sport. We're not letting it stop us.

**MoYO:** What is the atmosphere like at the US Nationals?

**Chet:** It's really cool. I mean, I'm pretty focused, pretty centered, but most of the guys, even top competitors, are socializing. It's not cutthroat, you're talking to your buddies, congratulating them for good throws. You coach other people a little, they coach you. We don't hire referees. Each of us makes the call for ourselves. It's tough that way, because sometimes people abuse that, but they have to live with it, you know? I mean, they'll probably lose anyway, but if they win, they win knowing they cheated to get there. It puts a lot of responsibility on the part of the competitors. That's the spirit of the sport: it's your call.

**MoYO:** How is it different than the World Championships?

**Chet:** Well, at the worlds, there's a lot of team spirit. There's still some mingling. I go to dinner with the Swiss guys, because I can eat with my teammates anytime I want. On the field of competition, there's really a sense of team pride. That's neat, because boomerang throwing is always individual, and when you form a team and compete, you realize you have to do what's best for the whole team, not just yourself. Sometimes you have to hold back, because it can be too great a risk. In individual competition, if you blow it, well, you're out. But it's just you, not your whole team. I really do my best in team play. I feel a responsibility for my team.

**MoYO:** Now the Germans have been pretty good at the last couple of World Championships...

**Chet:** Yeah, in '96 they beat us, but we were without some of our best players. We lost by a really small margin with a really weakened team. But they were able to keep the same exact team for the worlds in '98. These guys were still young, a little older, a little wiser. They are really where the US was ten years ago when we began our domination. It's kinda scary. A lot of our top players are in their thirties or forties like myself, and we're still competitive, but we're not going to be there for ten more years. Our younger guys just don't have the experience yet. We've got a great team this year though. It'll be tough, because they don't have any weaknesses.

**MoYO:** What other tournaments are there?

**Chet:** Well, we've been running ours in Delaware for the last twenty years. It's the oldest and the largest tournament in the country. We always do it the first weekend of August. We've held the nationals here a bunch of times, and we held an international match against the Australians in '84. There are a lot of good boomerang throwers in Ohio. My brother and I here, Gary and Mike are in Canton, John Glisky in Cleveland. There are more US team players here than anywhere else.

**MoYO:** Are there tournaments in the Southern Hemisphere we can throw at during the winter?

**Chet:** Our season usually lasts until October in the States, then pick up again in March or April. They're the first, down in Georgia. It's mostly a warm weather sport. The World Championships this year are in Australia in February. That's a challenge for us and the Europeans, because the Aussies will have a lot of warm weather to throw in, a lot of tournaments, and we'll be rusty. That's the challenge: to try to throw throughout the winter, to be really sharp, at our peak.

**MoYO:** How have you managed to deal with your great successes?

**Chet:** Well, I've won a lot of these, and I've been on six world championship teams, which is more than anyone else. It's interesting, because I've been doing so well. This will be twenty years for me and for international competition too. Maybe if we win, I'll get out. I'll be done. In 1994, I won the World Championship, the Nationals, the US Open, and the World Team Championship, and I retired. I said, "That's it!" You can't do that every year. And after retiring, I hurt my knee in gymnastics, and the guys started kidding me about it. "It's a good thing you quit when you did. You couldn't keep up with these young guys nursing an injury. You could never compete now." So the competitor in me couldn't take it. Plus, I had never been injured before, so I thought, "I can still throw." So I came out of retirement late the next season and won the US Nationals and the US Open. I've never since won any World Championships since, and never had that magic string. So sometimes I look back and I think I should have stopped on top, like Michael Jordan. But of course, he came back. It would have been a nice way to finish, but it helped me reevaluate the whole thing. Was winning the only thing for me? I mean, I was telling the guys on my team that you had to play for the love of the game. I had to tell myself that it was most important to be playing.

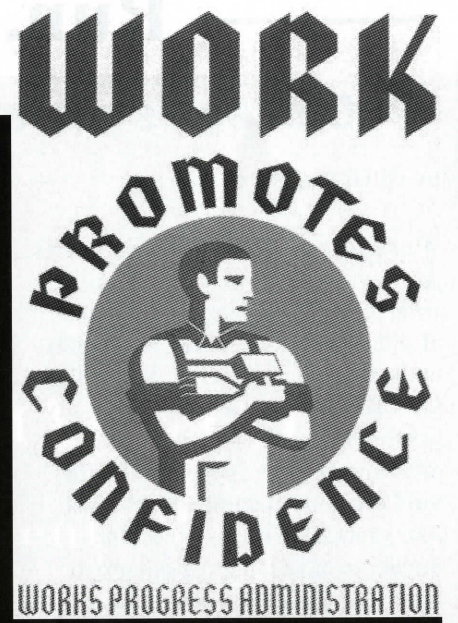
**MoYO:** After that kind of success, it must have been hard to really enjoy just playing.

**Chet:** Exactly. I had to get beat. In '98, I lost the Nationals for the first time. I almost won, but I lost. And again in '99, I came in second. So it's not like I died and went away, but I came in second. I had to get beat to realize that you wake up the next day and it's okay, life goes on. I had been motivated by fear of losing, definitely. I couldn't imagine it, like something bad would happen to me, I'd fall off the end of the earth or something. But I looked around at my teammates, and I was beating them every year, but they kept coming out. They didn't quit because they got beat. They came back every year and got beat again and they seemed happy. I didn't understand at first. They seemed happy, content with themselves, they don't have any self-esteem issues or ego problems, you know? My self-esteem was all wrapped up in winning. And I always thought, if next year, Pepsi decides to do a commercial, they'll want the National Champion, and if I'm not that guy, I'll miss the boat. Once I lost some, I realized life goes on and it's okay.

**MoYO:** What kind of advice do you have for beginners in the sport, or even people who have never thrown a boomerang before?

**Chet:** What I find is that most people try to hard to do tricky





spring 2000



MoYO's Cineaste Spectacular:

Robert Levine enrolls in the New York film school of hard knocks

Laura Barrett serves cappuccino and foreign classics at the Cleveland Cinematheque

Andy Hiller assists in editing Miramax's "The Yards."

Plus: Jason Shuba slams the Luddites And much, much more

fixtures. I don't blame him; the whole light-flickering thing seems overrated. I mean, if I was going to come back from the dead, I'd want more than just the strange ability to turn the lights on and off. I'd at least ask for a smooth ride, maybe a pale horse or something. But anyway, this guy definitely didn't know his stuff.

"Just what kind of a ghost are you?" I asked. "A ghost that's going to kick your ass if you don't start making sense," he said. He never followed through on it. Ghosts are all talk. In fact, he still lives with me. Claims he's my "roommate." Sometimes ghosts are just stupid, I guess. I mean, can't they get it through their insubstantial skulls: they're dead?

So I fail to see why everybody makes such a big deal. Ghosts are all over the place, and when you get right down to it, they're all talk. We should spend our journalistic time on more important issues, like cats. Those animals are the really scary thing, if you ask me. Ghosts I can handle, but I'd hate to be haunted by stupid cats.

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# Supernatural is Super-boring

## Denison student non-plussed by multiple ghostly experiences

by Tom Hankinson

I was surprised when my editor said that lots of stories for the magazine this semester were going to be on ghosts. I have had numerous experiences with ghosts, and I can tell you, they are not that big a deal. For instance, the first time I saw a ghost was in third grade, when my mom was hanging up the laundry to dry. She had just got finished clipping all my underwear to the line with clothespins, and she was starting to hang up the sheets. My friend was there too; he was making fun of the red, white, and blue stars on my briefs. Then, suddenly, he became very quiet. My mother had hung one of the sheets on the line, and it started to move, seemingly of its own volition, roiling with some unseen force. My friend and I had just finished swimming, and we both felt a distinct chill, as if from the presence of some unearthly cold. Wow, I thought, is that all you've got, ghost? I mean, come on, if supernatural beings are going to visit the corporeal world, you'd think they would at least do something cool.

Then, of course, there was the time in junior high when Bobby McOwen ran into the girls' locker room after gym class one day. He was gibbering and yowling like a banshee, and swooping around with his arms out. It made all the girls scream. Bobby almost got in trouble for it, but he told the principal he was actually possessed by some strange, disembodied spirit who craved a young, healthy body for its own devices. After that, we had to burn a bunch of fantasy books in the library for containing "occult references." That was pretty neat, but not big enough to deserve all the attention ghosts seem to get these days. Bobby was fine the next day, and the ghost never came back.

Finally, there is the biggest exposure I ever personally had to a ghost. I came back from summer vacation this year and was moving my stuff into the dorm room. When I came back from one trip to the car, there was a mysterious "person" sitting on my armchair. I asked him how he got in, and he said, "Through the walls, how do you think?" He didn't seem like a very exciting ghost; he just sat there on my chair and looked at me. Then he asked me if I had anything to eat, and I told him that ghosts weren't supposed to eat, because the food would fall through their "bodies" and stain things. He asked me to turn the lights on so he could read. Obviously, he didn't know ghosts have special powers over light

things to try to make it circle. I tell them it's just like throwing a ball, or imagine a tomahawk. It's an overhand throw, like you're trying to throw a tomahawk into a tree. At first, the less you think about it, the better. I mean, keep the curved side facing you and throw it and see what happens. That's the easiest thing, instead of reading the directions, "90° to the right of the wind at 5° elevation" or whatever, because you're so paralyzed with data. If you know somebody who can throw, you'll be throwing in five minutes. I've taught all sorts of people, athletes and non-athletes, and given them feedback. But the boomerang gives you its own feedback, which is neat. It tells you what you did right away by the way it flies... but the thing is, just to do it. I mean, the main reason people don't succeed at things is because they're just afraid to try. We're afraid to fail so we just don't try. You have to get out there, believe in it, and make it happen.

I have further boomerang literature, including a boomerang catalogue. To learn more or order boomerangs, e-mail [LeadingEdgeChet@compuserve.com](mailto:LeadingEdgeChet@compuserve.com).

## retro moyo



Seth Gilmore makes a case for coed roommates in our 1994 issue



# Run, Rita, Run

## Denison's marathon professor

by Chris Anderson

Imaging running more than 25 miles in sub-freezing weather with a wind chill of two degrees. Imagine also that you have trained for months in the rain, heat, and cold. Sound like fun? This is what Denison University psychology professor Rita Snyder does to *relax*. Dr. Snyder has run in the Columbus marathon for the last four years. One might expect Dr. Snyder to have ran cross-country or track during her high school or college days but she did not. Snyder took up running only six years ago. She decided to start running one day when she was out for a walk. She slowly changed her stride from a walk to a run. Though she only ran a block, she describes the experience as one of the freer moments of her life. It was exhilarating. Running was a tremendous release. Soon after, she started running regularly.

Running a marathon is not something one can do without preparation. Those who do not prepare properly pay a price. Those who are unprepared have either injuries, are unable to finish, or both. When Dr. Snyder decided to run a marathon she went to the Granville Public Library and looked at many different books about marathon training. There are almost as many different training programs as there are books. The training program she uses stresses rest. She begins training for a marathon about five months before the run. Throughout her training, she runs about four miles 4-5 times during the week. On the weekend, she will go for a longer run. The length of the long run builds up gradually. Starting at 5 miles the first weekend, she adds 1 mile every weekend. At 10 miles, she adds 2 miles every other weekend alternating with half distance runs (i.e. weekend run length: 12 miles, 6 miles, 14 miles, 7 miles). The longest training distance Dr. Snyder ever runs is 22 miles, 4.2 miles less than the marathon itself, 26.2 miles. Three weeks before the run her training program recommends a taper period. She

only runs 1 to 2 mile distances during those three weeks. In addition to running, she also trains by weightlifting for 20 minutes twice a week.

While she sometimes runs with sociology/anthropology professor Susan Diduk, she often trains alone. Snyder maintains life is not lonely on the bike path. Along the bike path, there are birds, bullfrogs, and turtles on logs. She sometimes stops by a farm that has llamas (they do not spit!). Of course, there are also the other people that she passes on the bike path. She especially enjoys watching the seasons change. Though she may run alone, Dr. Snyder receives much support from her husband and other colleagues. She ran her first marathon with Susan Diduk. She ran her second marathon with communication professor Laurel Kennedy. She ran her third marathon with English professor Marlene Tromp. The latest marathon she ran by herself.

The marathon itself is a wonderful experience. Snyder finds it easier than training because of all of the people around. The social atmosphere at a marathon is supportive; however, the elemental atmosphere is not always so agreeable. Snyder says, "The marathon always seems to fall on the coldest day." Even so, Snyder still stresses how fun the marathon is. She finds all sorts of

interesting people with whom to talk during the marathon. She usually talks with people about kids, careers, or training for the marathon. Though the Columbus marathon is a relatively small marathon (only 4,000 - 5,000 people) there are fans along the entire route. Last year she finished with a time of 4:32:40, her best time yet. This time placed her in the middle of her age group. The best part is the participants get a medal for just finishing.

The most difficult aspect of the race for Dr. Snyder is seeing other people drop out because of injuries. Most people have the hardest time between 16 and 18 miles. She says if they are not crying they are near tears. These moments are very emotional because so much time has been invested in preparing for the run. Luckily, Dr. Snyder has only had one injury, and it did not prevent her from finishing the race. During last year's marathon, she hurt her hamstring.

What most impressed me when I talked to Dr. Snyder was the attitude she took towards running. She keeps a slow and steady pace (about an 11-minute mile while training). She does not care if people pass her nor does she gloat over passing others. She never treats the marathon like a race. Snyder says, "Running a marathon is more like a social event than a race". The true race is the hectic world outside of running. She does not keep a log and makes a point never to think about the psychology of running. Running is something she does to get in touch with a different aspect of herself. She runs for the sheer joy of it.

**Running a marathon is more like a social event than a race**  
**Denison professor of psychology and marathon runner Dr. Rita Snyder**

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