PRISON MUSEUM POST

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THE HAUNTING ON HIGH STREET



The PMA's "haunted" event, held the last three weekends in October, was a rousing success. Dubbed "*The Haunting on High Street*" ("*THHS*"), it got off to a slow start when inclement weather closed the first night (Friday, October 16). The next four nights (October 17, 23, 24 and 30) were sold out. The final night, Halloween, typically a slower night for haunted events, nevertheless drew a steady crowd all evening until closing at 10 p.m.

We want to thank the County Commissioners, Department of Public Safety (Fire Inspections), Department of Resource Conservation and Parks

Department for allowing us to use the museum and grounds for the event. Special thanks to Resource Conservation Department Head Mary Pat Robbie, Museum Curator Marisa Bozarth, Public Information Officer Dave Levinsky and the Fire Marshals Bob Carr, Steve Woods and Dan Kerr.

NEW VISITOR ATTRACTIONS AT THE MUSEUM

The PMA is very lucky compared to most other historic societies in that we do not have to worry about maintaining a historic building. The poor County has that headache. They have done a yeoman's job of late, including the 2024 renovation in which the building received a new roof, new rain gutters, a brick patio and full exterior pointing of the building and the wall's masonry. Free of maintenance worries, the PMA can devote all its time and resources to promoting the museum as a tourist destination and preserving its history through publications and our very extensive and informative website, and in drawing visitors and improving their experience through personal tours and attractions such as escape games, audio tours, spirit boxes and exhibits.

We are currently in the process of completing the first phase of two visitor attractions which will launch later this month. Both promise to be big crowd pleasers. The first one will be called the "Ghost Tour" . The visitor will be given an Ipad and sent to the basement, where the spirit of Warden King will appear on the screen. King, who was murdered in the basement in 1920 by a crazed inmate, will complain that all of the Jail's ghosts are being bothered by one particular spirit, Joel Clough, who was hanged for murder in 1833. The visitor will be directed throughout the building to help King in his quest to find Clough. Along the way, the visitor will come across three other real-life characters and learn some interesting American and County history in the process.

The second attraction is a video kiosk that will be installed in the large cell off the top floor's main hallway. The video features an SI version of Founding Father James Wilson, who will talk about his participation in the Continental Congress (1775-1781), the Constitutional Convention of 1787 and on the first U.S. Supreme Court panel. He will also talk about his time as a debtor prisoner in the Burlington County Jail. Thus, in this one attraction, visitors will have an opportunity to learn about the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution, our three branches of government, the

founding of our country, the history of debt and bankruptcy in the U.S., the innovative ideas that architect Robert Mills had about the incarceration of debtors and much more.

Both projects consist of two phases. The second phase of the Ghost Tour will add an additional five characters. The second phase of the Wilson Exhibit will see Wilson become interactive. In other words, visitors will be able to have a conversation with him. When we started the projects, we could afford the first phases only. That was then. The funds raised by *THHS* will be enough to finish these projects and then some. Stay tuned.

THE BIRTH OF A NEW HAUNT

From 2004 through 2013, the PMA raised money through *The Haunted Prison*, an annual event that was produced by PMA members Clark Bish and Jim Reed. Thereafter, they moved the show, which they then called *Bloodshed Farms*, to Columbus Farmers' Market, where it terrified thousands of people each October over the next 12 years.

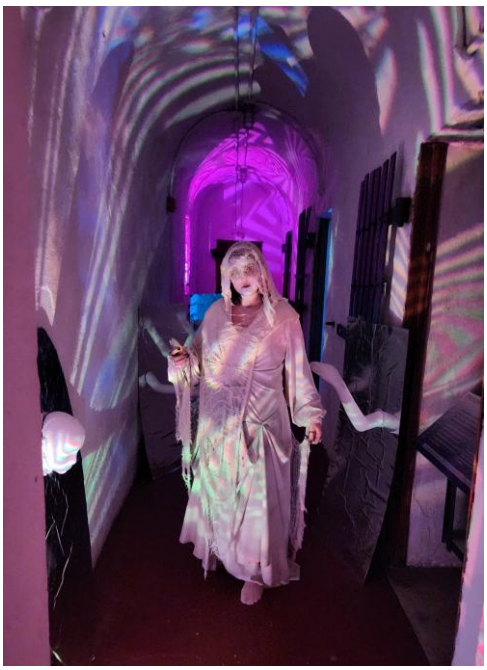
Jim, who owns and operates Howler's Hatchet House Axe Throwing Lodge (www.howlershatchethouse.com) in Columbus, is a very creative gamer, and produced our popular escape game. PMA President Janet Sozio called him a couple of months ago to ask if he would produce another, easier escape game for our younger and senior citizen visitors. He said he would, and then changed the subject, casually asking if the PMA would be interested in having a fall fundraiser. Bloodshed Farms was packing it in, and the actors were looking for a farewell performance.



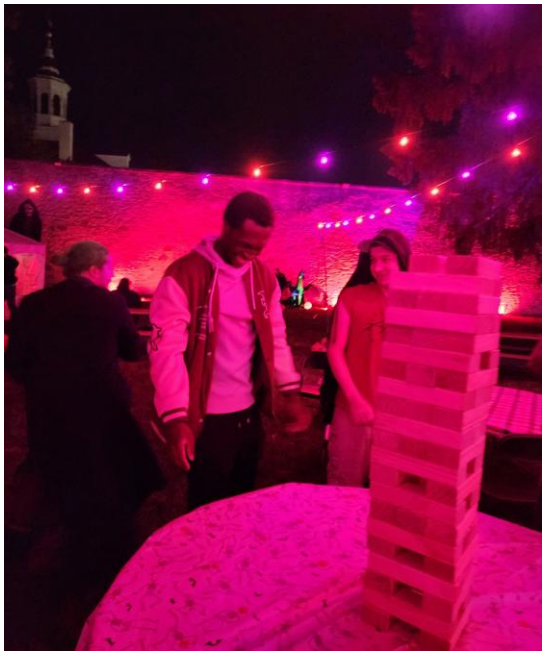
Janet was astounded. This was incredibly serendipitous in light of the PMA's need for funds to finish the SI projects. But how would there be time in the next few weeks to produce a six-night show?

"Well", Jim replied, "Do you remember Mae?" He was speaking of dynamo Mae Delafeld, pictured above right with Jimmy and a Reaper who saw action at the original *Prison Haunt*, *Bloodshed* and *THHS*. Born in Mt. Holly to a township police officer, Mae was a but a teen 20 years ago when her dad

told her about the haunted event that was being produced at the Prison Museum. He knew that his daughter, already a haunt afficionado, would be interested in participating. He dropped her off in his police car at the Jail for the first cast meeting for the 2006 show. Over the next 20 years, Mae, an emergency medical technician and mortician-in-training, would serve as actor and crew on every *Prison Haunt* and *Bloodshed* production. She wasn't the only "veteran" who worked *THHS*. Several of the cast and crew were veterans of the original *Haunted Prison* and *Bloodshed*. They have been together for years and are like a family. Several of them became couples. Some of them even married and had children, who now act as well. Thus, the end of *Bloodshed* was not a happy moment. So when Mae exclaimed "Let's put on a show!", about 35 of her compatriots replied with a loud "We're in!". (On left is Beth.)



Mae's plan was ingenious. The actors would modify their respective *Bloodshed* "acts" for a show inside the Museum. Guests would start the evening off with a terrifying tour of the interior of the Museum followed by a party in the Exercise Yard. DJ Frank Staff kept the party going with great music and dancing all night. What a fantastic job he did. Several tried their hand at Scary-oke; the prize has to go to the group of 14-year-old Burlco lads, whose rendition of "Don't Stop Believin' was a tour de force. Never in world history have so many keys been missed with such gusto.



There were tarot card readings, palm readings and midway games where beanbags, hatchets and dismembered heads flew across the Yard. Make-up artists had a tent where they made up the actors pre-show, and remained available during the evening to make up guests. Tables were set up for Jenga and other games. On the right is a Mt. Laurel H.S. athlete whose Jenga game has been interrupted by a scare from a roving actor who moved among the crowd.

Guests dined on very excellent food truck fare. Gourmet tater tots – who knew? PMA members Janet Sozio, Carole Melman, Rhondi Schwartz and Cindy Earl moved among the crowd in the Exercise Yard and the line out front, telling people about the Museum and giving out free passes for regular hours.



Mae's planning was absolutely flawless. Because the tickets were timed, we never had long lines out front, which was one of the most stressful aspects of the old *Haunted Prison.* The props and special effects were all lightweight and movable, and were put away after each show. She and her remarkable group of actors and crew worked together like a well-oiled machine.

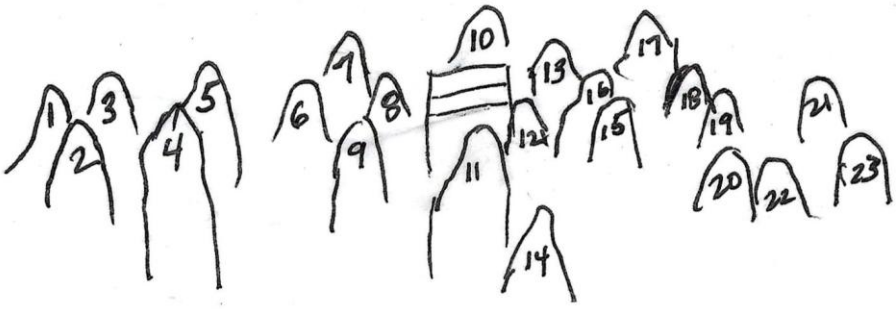
THANKS TO PMA MEMBERS

Thanks to all the PMA members who renewed their memberships and to the many who sent additional donations. If you renewed your membership and did not receive an acknowledgement, or if you sent a donation and did not receive a letter of thanks, or if your name does not appear on our attached new membership list, please email us immediately.

We need to send a special thank you this year to our members because without you, we would not have been able to have *THHS*. Mae's master plan was exquisitely economical. Jim Reed donated the use of most of the props and Mae and her cohort of 35 were all volunteers. But there were some expenses that had to be paid up front – insurance, fire and safety permits, porta-potties, advertising, make-up , lights, etc. Because of our loyal and generous members, we had the money to cover these costs.

The next PMA Quarterly meeting will be held at 7 pm on Wednesday November 18 at the PMA Office attached to the Museum. All PMA Members are invited.

THHS CAST AND CREW – from the photo on Page 1



1. Branden Marshall
2. Margie Marshall
3. Beck Sykes
4. Jacob
5. Travis Clair
6. Star Estevez
7. Nick Acevedo
8. Rob Jannini
9. Brianna Harvison
10. Mae Delafeld
11. Frank Staff
12. Dylan Kirk
13. Brian Kozup
14. Kaden Braun
15. Skeeter Braun
16. Jim Webb (clown)
17. Matt Terry
18. Emily Trossbach
19. Ashley Rogers
20. Beth Wolf
19. Ashley Rogers
20. Beth Wolf
21. Cecelia Sharick
22. Jennifer Feliciano
23. Robert Kevin Peterson

Not pictured: Jim Reed, Brittney Rivera, James Graves, Adam Rivera, Sharon Staff, Anthony Terry, Edward Wood, Jennifer Bloomberg Alex Feliciano, Robert Bakelaar, Nick Edelchein, Christina Grover, Hailie Grover, Lauren Dewitt, Jenn Reed, Kevin Mulligan



Words can't express how grateful we are to Mae and her gang. What an extraordinary group of people. The handsome young fellow in the front, #14 **Kaden Braun**, scared the wits out of guests at all five shows as the ghost of a boy . This kid is a total ham! Seriously, though, he is actually a very good actor. And dedicated. He celebrated his 10th birthday one of the nights of the haunt. His father, #15 **Skeeter Braun**, stands beside him. There he is on the right. Also an exceptionally good-looking guy, you'd never know it under that terrifying costume. DJ **Frank Staff** #11 kept the party jumping and his wife, **Sharon Staff** (not pictured) did makeup. Frank and Sharon were young teenagers when they provided line entertainment at the Haunted Prison 20 years ago. Now they are married and have a two-

year-old son who is a Mini-Me of Frank. Another handsome man can be found under the black sheet worn by #7- **Nick Acevedo** . Here he is at right -in the basement in full costume as Satan. He's a good six feet tall; we can still hear the screams!



Matt Terry #17 and **Edward Wood** (not pictured) along with Rob Jannini, provided security. No problems arose; everyone was there to have a swell time.

Brian Kozup #13 was there every night controlling the queue .



At right is **Jim Webb** (#16) who is the longest-serving veteran, having been there at the first haunt 23 years ago. #1 **Branden Marshall**, was the main tech. He was in charge of getting all the props to the Museum. His wife **Margie Marshall** #2 is in red. She acted and worked with Branden. #3, **Beck Sykes**, managed all the actors and oversaw interior set up. She never stopped. Next to her is her partner #5 **Travis Clair**, who debuted at *THHS*. He gave guests their final scare on the way out. #8 is **Rob Jannini**, Megan's partner in life and THHS.



The Graveyard looked spookier at Night.

Our favorite tombstone read "DEAD FRED".

The rest of the cast and crew:

Brittney Rivera – Social media manager, pre-season planning, costume and prop creation.

Cecelia Sharick #21 – Actor - The Witch. After the last show on Halloween (the 100th anniversary of Houdini's death), Cecelia and some of the other actors engaged in a real paranormal investigation and communed with the ghosts in the building. They were all quite friendly, so we are sure they enjoyed the show. One wonders what Robert Mills might have thought about it!

Estelle Estevez #6 – Make-up
James Graves - Actor and crew
Robert Kevin Peterson #23 – Game attendant
Elizabeth Wolf #20 - Actor
Adam Rivera - Actor
Ashley Rogers- Actor
Dylan Kirk- Actor
Jennifer Feliciano - Actor
Brianna Harvison # 9- Actor
Anthony Terry – Roving actor, game attendant
Emily Trossbach #18 – The Welcomer
Jennifer Bloomberg – Costume manager
Alex Feliciano -Actor
Robert Bakelaar - Actor
Nick Edelschein - Actor
Christina Grover - Actor
Lauren DeWitt - Crew
Jenn Reed - Actor
Kevin Mulligan - Actor





We'll feature anyone we missed in the next issue!

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by joining the PMA.
Annual dues are $15 (individual)/$25 (family).
Membership benefits include a quarterly newsletter,
event updates and free admission to the museum.
See website for application.