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Paranormal convention coming to Falls

By Stacy Horany

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Wichita Falls first paranormal convention, FallsParaCon, will be anything but conventional when paranormal researchers gather for a day filled with topics from beyond the grave Oct. 25 at the Howard Johnson Hotel in downtown Wichita Falls.

Traci Roberts, a Texoma Researchers Investigating Paranormal Phenomena team member and FallsParaCon conference coordinator, said FallsParaCon will be the first event of its kind for this area.

"I think we're the first — it's funny because if you Google 'paranormal conferences' they're all over the United States — we're not going for the shock factor, we're just trying to inform people that there is something there and to not be scared of it," Roberts said.

Roberts and other members of the TRIPP team have been performing paranormal investigations on homes and businesses in the North Texas area for the past several years. If a homeowner suspects she might have uninvited guests from the next world, she can call TRIPP to have her suspicions confirmed with the use of digital cameras and recording equipment.

"A lot of people have seen something on TV like the TAPS program, and a lot of that is sensationalized because it is on television. We're normal, down-to-Earth people, we all have jobs and lives — this is just something we do in our spare time," Roberts said.

She said the members of the group have been talking about hosting a conference for quite some time.

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"We just want to educate the public in general that we're out here. We don't come and do exorcisms or anything like that — we want to introduce the whole concept of paranormal investigation to the area," Roberts said.

The conference will begin with registration from 9 to 9:30 a.m. Tickets are \$20 and include a chance to win a "beginners" paranormal investigation kit that has a digital camera, a digital voice recorder and other items essential to investigating unexplained phenomena.

Roberts said in support of the Texas Military Family Foundation, attendees who bring four non-perishable food items will receive an additional ticket for the beginners' kit raffle.

She said there will also be other raffle drawings, including a one-night stay at the Lonesome Dove Inn Bed and Breakfast in Archer City, known for its share of ghostly guests.

She said speakers will include Larry Flaxman, senior researcher and president of the Arkansas Paranormal and Anomalous Studies Team, who will talk about equipment used in paranormal research.

"He's bringing in a lot of equipment and a lot of new stuff on the market—he's kind of technical guru," Roberts said.

Another speaker will be Christy Selfridge, founder and director of Oklahoma Paranormal Research and Investigations, who will talk about her experiences with "shadow people phenomenon" and other types of spirit phenomenon. Roberts said Selfridge will also talk about the history of ghost hunting.

1 of 3 1/28/2009 3:57 PM

April Slaughter, executive director of The Paranormal Source, Inc., a non-profit research and education corporation in Dallas, will talk about her work at the Skinwalker Ranch in Utah, which Roberts said is known for its paranormal activity.

And Roberts said a team of paranormal researchers, the Military Paranormal Investigations team, will also speak about their work researching paranormal activity on military installations, how to form an investigative group and also will talk about their research dealing with Electronic Voice Phenomena or EVPs, the sounds, voices and noises on digital voice recordings that are unexplained, Roberts said.

She said after the speakers have given their presentations for the day, they will take questions from attendees.

Along with speakers, Roberts said vendors and paranormal research teams will be on site to talk with attendees about paranormal investigations.

Roberts said people interested in attending the event should visit the TRIPP Web site at www.tripp-online.com and click on the FallsParaCon banner at the top of the page to register early online and for more information. Seating is limited at the conference. She said the hotel is offering special room rates for conference attendees.

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3 of 3