

# MARKETPLACE

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## Skepticism makes ghosts... vanish!

by Jason Przybycien

Steve Diasparra, founder of Ghost Hunters of Southern Tioga Pa., calls himself a ghost hunter. He was quick to add, in an Oct. 10 interview, that he is not like the ones you see on TV.

He isn't looking for ghosts. He's looking for answers, and he leans on science to weed out the good answers from the bad.

"I'm actually a fairly skeptical person," Diasparra said. "One of the reasons I got into this in the first place was 'cause I was seeing and hearing a lot of things on TV and on the Web that were honestly not true, not scientifically valid at all."

"There were good people who were honestly scared in some circumstances, or maybe thinking that they were going crazy or there was something wrong with them because they were experiencing something. They would go to an over-zealous group that wants to believe that everything is a ghost, and get very bad advice."

### Meet the hunters

Diasparra formed GHOST-PA about a year ago as a hobby. He has training as a criminal investigator and in audio and video editing. So, he conducts investigations like a police officer who can tell which pictures and audio are fake.

Five other people have helped in his investigations, to places such as Mansfield University's North Hall and the Fallbrook Cemetery. The team members, including his 16-year-old son, are mostly new to paranormal investigation.

### No "ghost detectors"

Diasparra uses digital and analog audio and video recording equipment to collect most of his evidence, but he said the most important equipment is a skeptical mind, and maybe a pen and paper. Like

a police investigator, you don't really need more than that.

The team also has an electromagnetic field (EMF) meter, which has been overglamorized on TV.

"They're not ghost detectors," he said. "They're just electromagnetic field detectors."

Actually, finding EMFs, caused by household wiring or geologic formations, helps to explain supposed "ghosts." Diasparra said low frequency EMFs can give people the feeling of a presence or even hallucinations.

"In a lot of cases if you have an area where people continually experience, you know, the feeling that they're not alone or that they're being watched, it very well could be due to a man-made electromagnetic field," Diasparra said. "It doesn't necessarily have to be bad wiring. Any electricity moving anywhere causes an electromagnetic field."

Research by the Association for the Scientific Study of Anomalous Phenomena ([www.assap.org/newsite/articles/Magnetic%20ghosts.html](http://www.assap.org/newsite/articles/Magnetic%20ghosts.html)) is ongoing in this area. ASSAP helped pay for a Magnetic Anomaly Detection System ([www.apaw71.dsl.pipex.com/MADS](http://www.apaw71.dsl.pipex.com/MADS)) in order to further study the phenomena.

### Spooky places

The GHOST-PA team investigated several "haunted" areas this year, with the property owners' permission. Though they investigated several local legends, Diasparra hopes "bored young people and some who aren't so young" will steer



photo by Jason Przybycien

STEVE DIASPARRA

clear of such places. It's not that he thinks the "ghosts" should be left alone. He just wants the natural and man-made objects there left in one piece.

For example, Diasparra refused to name a "haunted" church in Bradford County. He said that kind of reputation could lead to property damage. The damage at Fallbrook Cemetery, for example, is not caused by malevolent spirits.

"No," he said. "They were drunk idiots that knocked the stones over, I'm quite sure."

### The evidence

Diasparra has experienced some strange things on ghost hunts which defy explanation. At a rural Bradford County church in April, he heard a crowd of children playing and singing in the evening. No children were around the church then, but two separate recording devices captured what he heard.

Such recordings are called electronic voice phenomena or EVPs. You can download samples from Diasparra Web site, [www.ghostpa.com](http://www.ghostpa.com), but the quality has been reduced for the Web.

Diasparra outright dismisses another kind of ghost evidence: "orbs" and "streamers." They look like particles floating in front of a camera. According to Diasparra, they are just dust, camera defects, or optical illusions.

Something happened one night this May at the Fallbrook Cemetery, on Armenia Mountain above Troy and Blossburg, that can't be so easily dismissed.

Diasparra wrote about it on [ghostpa.com](http://ghostpa.com) under Findings:

"Several times a mist was seen moving around us and through the area rather quickly. We were only able to get one picture of it at a distance. There was no natural fog at this time," the site said. "Footsteps were clearly heard behind us once, but when we turned to investigate they stopped. We actually thought someone else was in the cemetery, but we were in the middle and could see 50-100' in any direction. We found no one."

At times like these, Diasparra and his team try to focus on their investigation, not the hair standing on the backs of their necks.

"You can't really be scared," he said. "You have to see where it's coming from or what it is."

He acknowledges that human minds, in addition to being a great piece of investigative equipment, can also assume they are hearing things which aren't really there. Usually, that's not a problem.

"Most of the time it's fairly uneventful and a little bit boring at times although its a lot of fun and a lot of work," he said.

### What does it mean?

Diasparra said people are really experiencing something, but he won't call it a ghost.

"I couldn't even tell you what a ghost is," he said. "That's even debatable. What is a ghost? Nobody's been able to really answer that question."

According to Diasparra, 99.9 percent of the time there is another, natural explanation.

"If there is a 0.1 percent chance that it is not a ghost, it's probably not a ghost," Diasparra said.

But, he admits, not everyone will believe that. There is the age old question, 'What happens when I die?' For some people, ghosts are part of that answer.

## Keith Lindie, a historian who lived history

by Jason Przybycien

As the current United States economy took a major downturn this year, many journalists and intellectuals found parallels with the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Few people have a living memory of those days. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, only 9,300 people, less than the population of Tioga County, are over age 80 in the whole country.

Keith Lindie, a lifelong Blossburg resident, remembers the Depression. He worked hard before he reached adulthood, preparing for a career in the Tioga County coal mines.

"What got us in this problem is because people don't realize the value of a dollar," Lindie said.

But just after high school, he answered Uncle Sam's draft and went to Europe to fight the Germans.

### Child of the Depression

Lindie was born in 1923, when the best way to buy clothing was through a mail order catalog.

"The first thing we done when we come home from school, we took our school clothes off and our shoes and everything and we put them away," Lindie said. "Then you went and got your play clothes out. You didn't play in the clothes you went to school in 'cause they were too hard to come by."

Lindie's parents repaired their own shoes and sold wild berries to make ends meet.

"We picked berries and my mother canned them and sold them," Lindie said. "My grandmother made cookies; she lived right below us. She made cookies and I used to peddle cookies for

her."

Life began to improve after the presidential election of 1932, though.

"The guy that went out was a guy by the name of Herbert Hoover," Lindie said. "He went in with a great slogan. 'A chicken in every pot and a car in every garage,' and we pret' near - the country pret' near starved to death. When he went out he went out with a landslide and Franklin Delano Roosevelt, you know, FDR come in."

Lindie said FDR's New Deal programs like the Civilian Conservation Corps and the Works Progress Administration became a "godsend" by employing many unemployed citizens. The CCC built and improved federal parks such as those adjoining the Pennsylvania Grand Canyon. The WPA built public buildings for housing and entertainment, and distributed food and clothing.

"Those things there were a godsend because people didn't have no income," Lindie said.

### World War II Tank Commander

Lindie graduated from high school in Blossburg in the spring of 1941, so he planned to do what nearly everyone in town was doing at that time: mine coal. But Japanese planes bombed Pearl Harbor, an American Naval base in the Hawaiian Islands, on Dec. 7, 1941. This led the United States into World War II, and caused Lindie to delay his coal mining ambitions.

"I graduated in '41 and I tried to go into [the coal] business with my dad," Lindie said. "But I got stuck right in a war."

"I probably could have got out

of the draft because everything was essential, you know, at that time. But I said no, I'll go same as anybody else."

"In them days the furthest we went were halfway between Williamsport and Elmira. We had a car but we didn't do too much with it. We never saw the Statue of Liberty before. It never really meant a lot to you until you seen it."

Lindie trained as a tank commander. He attended 16 weeks of infantry training, then armor school in Fort Hood, Texas.

"I was a lucky guy. They made a new battalion of 630 men there at that time," Lindie said. "I was with the Third Army from the latter part of '41 until the latter part of 1945 when I came out, and I'm the only on my tank that's alive."

His unit first saw combat at Utah Beach, one of the D-Day landing sites, a couple days after the Allied forces invaded there. His armored unit went south through central Europe. He just missed the Allied defeat Battle of the Bulge.

"The winter was one of the hardest winters that they ever had in their life over there in Europe, and we had moved into a small town called Edelbrook that night probably around 10 o'clock and every was trying to get out of the weather there a little bit. The first sergeant came along and said 'Load up. We're going. We're movin' out.' They never told us the Germans broke through ... at the Battle of the Bulge."

Though that battle was the bloodiest for the United States in the whole war, Germany did not gain enough ground there, in the Ardennes Mountains of Belgium,



photo provided

Keith Lindie in his WWII tank commander uniform

France and Luxembourg. The Allies regrouped and marched into Germany.

Lindie said even in Bavaria, a rich and beautiful region of southern Germany, the Germans were so hungry and tired of war that they would wave any piece of white cloth they could find in order to surrender.

### Miner, bachelor, historian

By the time he returned from the war, Lindie's high school sweetheart had married someone else. He decided to wait a few years before settling down, then never quite got around to it.

He joined his father's coal company and managed the mines for about 20 years.

"We took care of the sales end of it and Ray Kaminski's dad did the production end of it," Lindie said. "Ray's dad, Adam, was a real good man. He was a man of his own convictions. When Adam



photo by Jason Przybycien

Keith Lindie today, with the collection of tapes he made about Blossburg

spoke, Ray listened."

Lindie spends most of his time now chronicling the history of Blossburg and the region. As a member of the Blossburg Veterans of Foreign Wars post, Lindie worked with others to restore the post's World War I cannon.

Jim Warren Sr., a former science teacher and coach at the Blossburg school, had taught Lindie how to run a camera. So, since before his 1941 graduation, Lindie has been taking photos and videos of everything in and around Blossburg. He has dozens and dozens of tapes which contain his interviews with CCC workers, veterans, miners and others.

Many of the people he has interviewed have since passed

away, but Lindie still had the energy to give hayrides to kids, and adults, for about five hours during this weekend's Fall Festival.

"I'll be 86 in the first of January," Lindie said. "Gettin' up there, gettin' old. I don't pay no attention now. I think it's wonderful, as long as you feel good, you know."

"Don't bother me. I'm proud of my age. I don't care. A lot of people want to hide it. Don't bother me a bit, long as I can get around and do things, you know."

"That's all there is to it. To see where people is and do things to help everybody and enjoy where we live, you know, 'cause we live in a great place ... we have a good cross-section of American life here, and of people too."

## Sadie Green Sales releases DVD, to perform at Washboard Fest



photo provided

The irrepressible, inimitable team of Timothy Walker (left) and David Driskell (right) make up Sadie Green Sales.

by Natalie Kennedy

They've been around for many years and have performed at numerous events. "They" are Sadie Green Sales Jugband, a Tioga County-based duo specializing in jug band music.

After 35 years, it's now possible to see band members Timothy Walker and Da-

vid Driskell perform their show "live" on DVD. The pair recently released "Sadie Green Sales Jugband Live in Cocert." The DVD is a recording of their first set performed during the Wellsboro Community Concert Association's Feb. 28 concert.

The pair have recorded albums in the past, but this is their first "film" venture. Scott Turner filmed and edited the DVD.

"We were getting things ready for the Community Concert," said Driskell. "It was kind of a big deal to be in, and I thought, 'Wow, as long as we're going to all the trouble to sharpen up everything, we might as well go ahead and film it.'"

While the actual filming was put together quickly, the motivation behind it was more thought out, he added. The group had wanted to record their show because of their uniqueness - where else will you see someone play two clarinets at one time, the decline and loss of jug band performers and to have a product to offer to fans and bookings.

Turner filmed the initial performance then, after the audience went home,

turned the camera and sound track back on. As Driskell and Walker replayed their songs, he took close up shots, different angles and zoom shots to intercut into the original film.

The end result pleases both men. "Scott did a good job combining sound and video," said Walker.

The two have been together since meeting in Aspen, Colo. in 1969. Originally, Sadie Green Sales was a three-piece combo including a pianist. When she left to get married, the group reformed to include a bass player, singer and another pianist. That group broke up after a short time together and, since 1980, Sadie Green Sales has mainly been a duo.

So, what keeps a pair together for 35 years?

"I don't know why people get along. Part of it is having similar values," Walker added. "There's been a lot of parallel growth and things."

"I guess we're both too lazy to do anything else," said Driskell, displaying the whimsical, Sadiesque humor for which the group is known. On a more

serious note, he added, "I think Tim and I both had a certain dedication - Tim toward the theater side and me toward the music side. This is what we wanted to do with our lives."

They certainly do it well. Part of their work includes residencies at local schools. For a week, the pair come into a school and work with selected groups of students to create instruments from common objects. At the end of the week, Sadie Green Sales performs a concert assembly with the students for the entire school. Some of those assemblies have been posted on YouTube.

"We inspire kids to realize that you can make music out of ordinary things. That's the fun of it: making it work," Driskell added. "Even if they don't make a living from it, it's a recreational thing they can do for the rest of their lives."

One of the instruments routinely created by students is the washboard... which leads to the next part of this story.

Sadie Green Sales purchases "blank washboards" from the Columbia Washboard Company. The washboards are

taken to school and students build an instrument with appropriate sound effect-making objects.

And Driskell plays a mean, decked out washboard as seen on the Live DVD. The pair sent the DVD to the Columbia Washboard Company to show how their product is used.

"They were so impressed that they invited us to play at the 20th annual Washboard Musical Festival in Logan, Ohio," said Walker. The Festival will be held June 18-21, 2009. They're going, of course; it's a paying gig.

"I'll be real interested in meeting other washboard players," Driskell added. "Hopefully, we'll gather in one spot and have a scrub down."

The DVD is available at Garrison's Men's Shop, Wellsboro, for the low, low price of \$10. In addition, Sadie Green Sales is planning another tour of England in the spring, interspersed with school residencies at Galeton, Westfield and Oneonta, N.Y.

For a full schedule of performances or more information, visit their website at [sadiesgreensales.com](http://sadiesgreensales.com).