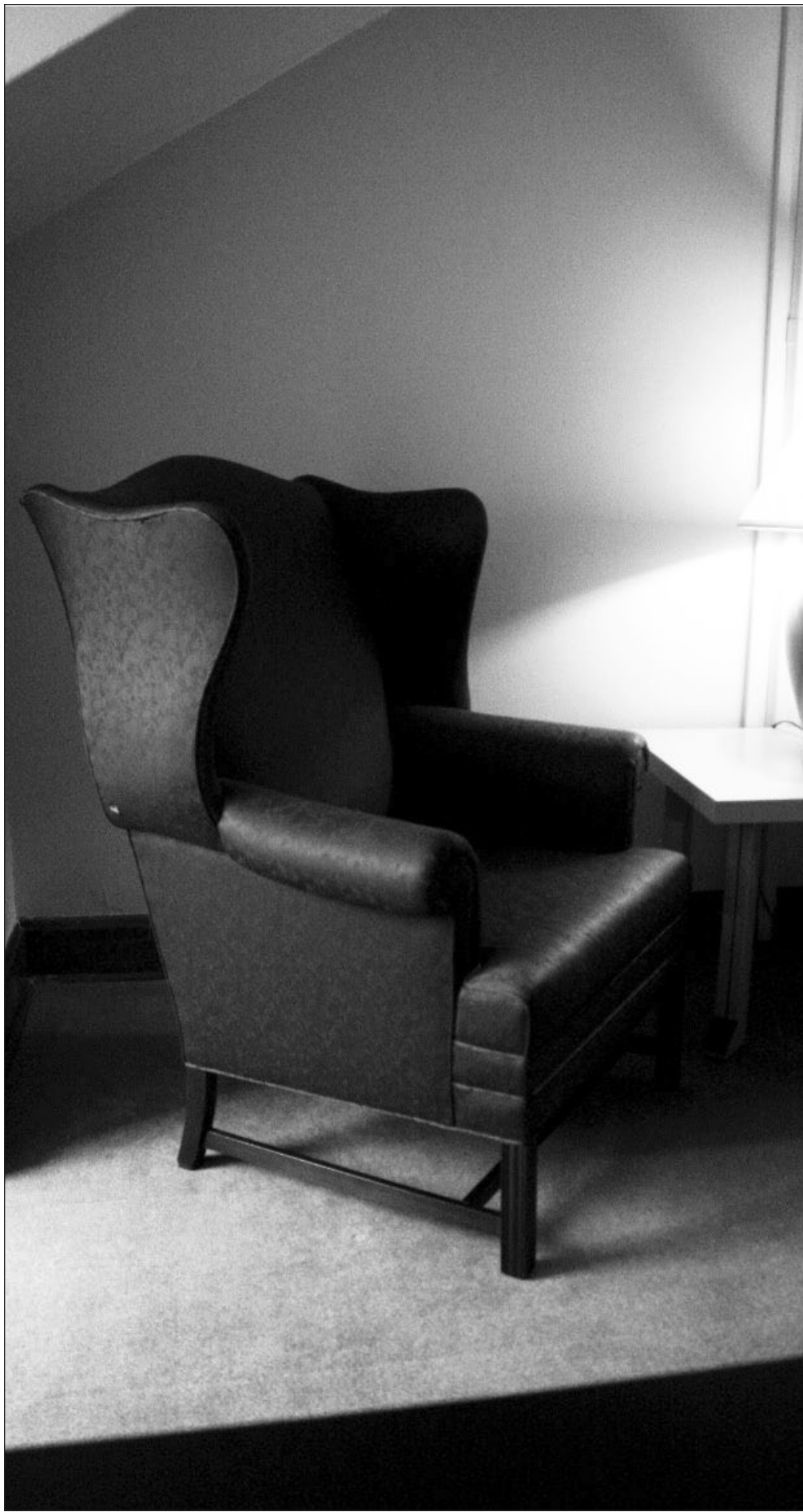


"There's no good explanation for it. I don't know. There's definitely something that can't be explained by normal means. There's definitely something out there, I don't know if it's a ghost or what, but it's there. -- Katherine Tynan



Amy Vicars/Index

Charlotte Burkhalter is allegedly a resident ghost at Grim Hall who has a favorite black overstuffed chair she has been known to occupy in the fourth floor lounge.

All Eyes On: Charlotte Burkhalter

Grim ghost makes a habit of turning on televisions and spooking students

BY ANNA MEIER
Staff Reporter

Remnants of the past still lurk in the corridors and rooms of Grim Hall, and people long since dead have returned to reclaim their domain.

Residents of Grim have complained for years of things that go bump in the night. Charlotte Burkhalter has haunted the place since her death in the 1930s, giving today's residents a bit of a spook every now and then.

Charlotte was a nurse when Grim was not associated with the University, but rather with Grim-Smith Hospital, said senior Susan Pope. The nurses used Grim as a headquarters and residence hall. Charlotte lived there with other nurses, but apparently was left alone during a winter break and died.

Two versions of the story of her death exist today, Pope said. The first story claims she was diabetic and was snowed in, making it impossible for her to obtain insulin, so she went into a diabetic coma and died. The second story says that Grim had poor heating, and she died from hypothermia.

Whatever happened to her, she seems to have never left the building.

"We were having a girls' night for a Senate program, and we were actually downstairs in the basement," Pope said. "We were watching a movie, and we were counting how many people were there. One of the girls said, 'OK, well there's 12 people here,' and the TV immediately turned off. Nobody had the remote in their hand — there's no reason it should have turned off, and then the same girl said, 'Oh, I guess we forgot Charlotte. Sorry, Charlotte, there's 13 of us.' And the TV turned back on."

Another Grim resident, senior Sarah Pollock, said Grim Hall Senate had given Charlotte an invitation to that party. The students named the fifth floor lounge "Charlotte's Lounge," because she visits it frequently.

"Last year we were making our quilt, and we were up on the fourth floor in Charlotte's lounge, sewing the backing on the quilt," Pope said. "And my sewing machine would just not work, and we couldn't figure it out.

My current roommate was up there with us, and she explained to Charlotte 'We're just making a quilt — you're even included. You have your own square, just let us do our thing. We decided to try the machine one more time, and if it didn't work that was it. And it started working right after that.

"Then at the end, we were sewing, and she and I heard this little giggle sound. The machine was off, and we thought it was my roommate, and I later said to her 'What were you laughing about?' ... [She said,] 'I didn't giggle!'"

Junior Katherine Tynan said that although they have had electronics turned off, the clocks in the hall are also touched by the supernatural hand. The clocks are not meant to reset themselves — they're not automatic in any way — but about once a year around Daylight Savings Time, they reset themselves. Tynan was a witness.

"Last year or a couple years ago over midterm or spring break, some time when there was like 10 people in the building tops, there were one or two of us sitting in the lounge, and the clocks just start spinning," Tynan said. "It was just freaky."

Pollock said Charlotte's typical antics include making the lights flicker or making a noise that sounds like a bowling ball being rolled across the floor or dropped down a set of stairs.

"Charlotte apparently has a chair upstairs that we call hers," Pollock said. "And a lot of the time as people walk by, they'll see someone out of the corner of their eye, or they'll like turn halfway and see someone sitting in that chair, and then, when they turn all the way around she's gone. So she likes that corner a lot, and apparently sits there a lot."

Other students also have reported seeing a little boy in the building under strange circumstances, and the general thought is that he also haunts the building. Whenever people see him, he suddenly disappears. As a general rule, Pollock said, no one thinks he and Charlotte are connected in any way, but she might have a companion spirit in this disappearing boy. Although no one's certain of the existence of either of these two ghosts, people do acknowledge that something strange is going on in Grim.

"There's no other good explanation for it," Tynan said. "I don't know. There's definitely something that can't be explained by normal means. There's definitely something out there, I don't know if it's a ghost or what, but it's there."

Ghosts haunt residence halls and Kirksville

BY HÉLÈNE BIELAK
Staff Reporter

Ghost stories have been circulating campus for decades, and Truman's staff and students are no strangers to these tales.

Junior Danielle Sparks said she has heard many strange stories during the two years she has worked as a student adviser in Centennial Hall.

"I had a friend who was a student adviser here in Centennial Hall a couple of years ago," Sparks said. "Once, after the residents left the building for Thanksgiving Break, she and a friend were doing rounds to make sure that everything was OK to lock down the residence. They were on the third floor, and they saw a little boy drinking at the water fountain at the north corner. As the building was locked down, they thought it was bizarre. Then they shouted at him, saying 'Hey, who are you?' When the little boy saw them, he ran around the corner. They followed him, but he was gone."

The story of the little boy is not the only entity haunting Truman's campus. Grim Hall also has its own famous

ghost hanging around — Charlotte Burkhalter. (See story above) Erin Neuman said Charlotte was a resident nurse who used to live there in the 1930s. After she died one winter, her spirit stayed in Grim Hall to haunt the residents.

"Most people say that she is a really nice ghost," Neuman said. "I do not really believe in ghosts, but I like the idea of having a ghost in my hall."

Sounds of moving furniture and rolling bowling balls or flickering lights are some of the things many residents have reported, especially on the third floor, even though there is nothing above them, Neuman said.

On the opposite side of campus, Baldwin Auditorium also is well known for its ghosts. In the basement, Neuman said, an old dentist chair inspired a creepy story. In the women's bathroom on the lower floor, several students reported seeing an old man watching them in the mirror as they were washing their hands. When they looked behind them, the man was gone.

Neuman said the ghosts bring character to the university.

While Sparks and Neuman know a lot of strange sto-

ries on Truman's campus, sophomore Dylan Neel said he knows about many ghost stories from around Kirksville. On his October board next to his room, residents can read strange stories, rumors and legends from around the campus. The Internet, second-hand stories and what he has heard from students have been the main sources of his research, he said.

"Personally, I have never encountered anything, unfortunately, but I would love to someday," Neel said. "I don't necessarily believe in ghosts, I just like having stories to tell."

As he was seeking strange stories about Truman's campus, he discovered some that concerned other areas around Kirksville.

"There is a particular headstone in one of the cemeteries in town here which is called the devil's chair," Neel said. "The legend says that if you sit on it once you have bad luck, twice you are cursed, three times you die, and if you sit on it at midnight on Halloween evening, the devil will come visit you and take you to hell. It is a local legend and kind of a fun thing for high schoolers."

"I feel like no matter what kind of university campus you go to, there will be stories like that," Neel said.

"But the fact that the University is here gives the town more stories. I think that the devil's chair is definitely something interesting for a little town like Kirksville, where you will not expect to see it."

Personally, I have never encountered anything, unfortunately, but I would love to someday."

Dylan Neel
Sophomore

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