

# GHOSTS of an old hotel

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SPECIAL TO THE SENTINEL

**F**or Halloween I decided to go searching for a local haunted place to write about. I found one: the Bayview Hotel in Aptos.

When I pulled up to the hotel, I did not see a menacing haunted house — but a lovely, large white Victorian with blue trim and a gigantic magnolia tree in front.

When I approached the door, it did not swing open on its own, under a ghostly presence. Sandy Held, the new owner, was there to invite me in.

She is a warm, friendly, elegant woman. As we walked through the hotel, she began to tell me about the ghostly occurrences that take place there.

Sandy and her husband Roland bought the Bayview six months ago after moving here from Salt Lake City.

Since then, they have remodeled the hotel with antiques from the 1870s, when the Bayview was built.

## COMMUNITY VOICES

The furnishings are exquisite. Each room is elegant, yet offers a feeling of being at home.

Roland Held was a bit skeptical of the odd happenings in the hotel until one evening in the kitchen. He came up to their room on the third floor and told his wife that the ghost had just waved at him.

He was standing at the end of a kitchen counter which faces a door, eating a snack. A cupboard partially blocked his view of the door. He saw a dish towel rise up into the air, as if it was waving at him.

The towel moved up and down while it remained on the towel rack. Roland walked over to see if someone was hiding around the corner. No one was there. He checked the door. It was closed. There was no wind blowing inside or outside that evening.

Another time, Roland turned an antique clock off to reset the time. The clock has a heavy pendulum, which must be pushed manually to restart. He set off to do something else, planning to return later to start the clock. When he came back, the clock had started on its own.

According to Sandy Held, the ghosts often play with the hotel's large-screen television set. On one occasion, she was meeting with an insurance agent for about 45 minutes when the TV turned on by itself.

The insurance agent asked Held who had turned on the television? She told him it was the hotel's

ghost. He quickly left.

She said if any meeting goes on beyond 45 minutes, the TV goes on.

The television seems to be a favorite with the ghosts. Once, Sandy and Roland left the hotel to attend an auction. A block down the road, she remembered that she needed to turn the vacancy sign off. She went back and found the television on.

Another time, Kimberlee, a friend who works in the office, turned the TV on to a music station. The ghosts changed the channel. Every time she turned the channel back to the music, the ghosts waited 10 minutes before changing it again.

They play the same game with Sandy Held. She said the ghosts are letting her know they are there in a playful manner.

There is a large framed picture which hangs on the wall in the TV room. According to Held, the ghosts love to tilt the picture. She comes into the room in the mornings and often finds the picture crooked the same way every time.

The ghosts also enjoy playing with the computers. Naomi, Held's daughter, was helping in the office. When she turned off the computer, the ghosts would turn it on again. This happened a few times. Naomi complained that someone kept turning

the computer back on. Held told her it was just the ghosts.

Ghostly experiences are not limited to Held's family. A close friend, Lilly Wallace, was helping out one day when she found that a bouquet of fern leaves that had been sitting in a vase in the hallway, were now placed side by side, in a row, down the length of the hall.

Gwen, who used to work at the hotel, sometimes heard footsteps. She would look up to see who was there and would see no one. Once, as she passed the attic stairway she felt someone touch her shoulder, but she was alone.

Guests of the hotel have also reported strange happenings. One guest saw a woman and child in the bathroom. Others have heard singing in the hallways, heard footsteps and smelled perfume.

In room 14, on the third floor, small objects would disappear only to be found later in different locations.

According to Held, guests often ask her if the hotel is haunted. When she tells them about the ghosts, they love the idea and hope to experience something ghostly.

"The ghosts that reside in the hotel are friendly and playful," Held said.

"They never do anything bad. It is more like they just want you to know they are here, saying 'We're here!'

We're here!'"

Experiences with the ghosts happen around people who are open to them. According to Held, it's as if the ghosts respect the non-believers and leave them alone.

Halloween would be a good time to stay at the Bayview Hotel. But I think any time would be a great time to stay at such a beautiful place, ghosts or not.





The Bayview Hotel has added stately elegance to Aptos since the 1870s. At right, owner Sandy Held has run the hotel with her husband, Roland, since moving from Salt Lake City. She is sitting in a refurbished guest room at the bed and breakfast.



Bill Lovejoy/Sentinel photos