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The Rispin Mansion at 2004 Wharf Road in Capitola is believed to be haunted, according to Maryanne Porter, who is part of Santa Cruz Ghost Hunters. She led an investigation recently and found strange temperature changes within the mansion and bizarre happenings.

Paranormal investigators on the prowl

Ghost Stories

Capitola's Rispin Mansion is boarded up, but is it haunted?

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By JONDI GUMZ

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CAPITOLA — Ghost hunters who got permission for a midnight visit Saturday at the boarded-up Rispin Mansion are reporting some spooky goings-on.

"It's almost like a portal where spirits come through," said Monnica Sepulveda, 61, an intuitive medium since 1972.

She prefers to be known as a medium rather than a psychic but she is a top-rated psychic medium on SelectPsychics.com.

Maryanne Porter, owner of the nonprofit Santa Cruz Ghost Hunters, arranged for the visit by her film and recording crew, inviting Sepulveda, who lives in Aptos, and two members of SPIRIT, a paranormal ghost group in Santa Rosa.

At SantaCruzGhostHunters.com, Porter reports sensing a female presence in the mansion during a preliminary visit but her camera, lights and equipment malfunctioned, leaving her with no evidence.

Asked about the midnight visit, Sepulveda said she felt the presence of a female spirit who said she did God's work and warned her about a bullying male spirit downstairs, telling her that before she left, she would hear a fall.

"The nice spirit told me not to go downstairs," Sepulveda said. "I'm telepathic, I'm able to hear."

Another woman with Porter headed downstairs, saying she was not afraid.

"As she was going down the stairs, she was pushed," Sepulveda said. "There was

a large shoe print on the back of her pants. ... I wanted to pray for that man. He's one of the most unhappy lonely people."

The visitors set up two flashlights in a hallway and asked questions like "Does the man below exist?"

The flashlights turned off and on by themselves, according to Sepulveda.

"I asked the lady how many spirits have come through," she said.

The flashlight flashed 15 times then stopped, according to Sepulveda, who believes the spirits are passing through rather than part of the Rispin family.

Henry Allen Rispin built the four-story mansion in 1921 but was able to keep it only until 1929, according to Capitola historian Carolyn Swift. A religious order acquired the property in 1941 but after the nuns moved out in 1959, the mansion remained largely unused and frequently targeted by vandals.

The city bought the property in 1985 for the mansion's historical significance, but the dream of developers to turn it into a boutique hotel went up in smoke after a mysterious fire three years ago. The cause of the fire was never determined.

Sepulveda said she was not familiar with the history of the Rispin property.

"I've lived here 21 years and I've never heard of that mansion," she said, adding that building a hotel there "would be a bad idea."

Asked about her findings, Porter was circumspect.

"We may have captured something, we

may not have," she said. "We still have footage to go through."

She observed the temperature inside the mansion got colder.

"This place is entirely boarded up, there's nothing to create this temperature change, so it was rather unusual," she said.

"It got really cold, but I was sweating because of the energy coming through," Sepulveda said.

The city invested more than \$600,000 in repairs to mothball the mansion after the fire, and council members worry about vandalism.

"It wasn't easy to get permission," Porter said, noting Capitola Mayor Michael Termini accompanied the group.

"He sat and watched," Sepulveda said of the mayor. "He didn't comment at all."

Termini, on vacation until Aug. 27, called from Nevada to share his perspective. He pointed out the "ghostbusters" had a \$1 million insurance policy and personal indemnification to minimize the city's liability.

"They've been asking us for five years to do this," he said.

Termini said he felt the temperature drop, and so did a paramedic who came with him for safety reasons.

Did he see anything? Nothing life-changing, he said, but he added, "The mediums were certain spirits were there."

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