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By paranormal investigators . . .

Spirits sought at county museum

Are ghosts haunting the Freestone County Museum in Fairfield?

There could be, and that is what a team of real life ghost hunters, Texas Paranormal Advanced Research Team (TEX-PART), came to town Friday evening to determine.

Museum curator Sandy Bell and several volunteers believe the museum grounds, which includes a former Freestone county

jail, are haunted and cite a number of happenings they can't explain.

—Often she hears tapping sounds, such as on a window or counter, and there is nothing around that could be making the racket.

—The covers on an old bed in the exhibit building get ruffled as if someone sat on the bed, and after Ms. Bell straightens the covers they get ruffled again.



TEXAS PARANORMAL ADVANCED Research Team members spent the weekend investigating the Freestone County Museum in Fairfield. The team the first night consisted of: front l-r, Chrissy Snider, J.J. Rice, museum curator Sandy Bell, Kim Williams and Diane Johnson; back l-r, Jet Rice, Aaron Ramirez, Jimmy Billman, Mike Johnson and George Williams.

—A picture of an old firetruck displayed on the museum grounds appears to show a fireman sitting behind the steering wheel, even though the windshield is almost opaque with dust.

—Lights in the old jail building turn on and off, although nobody has been in the jail.

—Ms. Bell says that while talking with visitors in the exhibit building, she was hit by a small bead that came from nowhere.

“We would like to know,” the curator says. “Also, if it is haunted it could become a tourism destination.”

“Ghost hunting has become one of the top activities in the nation.”

A check of television listings shows seven television programs are currently airing that deal with ghosts and the paranormal.

The old jail, a brick structure that resembles a structure on E. Main Street, served Freestone county from 1879-1913, and was a private residence from 1913-1966 when it was deemed to Freestone County Historical Association for use as a county museum.

As the site for a possible haunting it has the bona fides—four legal hangings were conducted on the grounds.

The old jail, the third built in the county, sits on the site of two other county jails.

First hanging was in 1861 of a man convicted of murder, second was in 1875 of a man convicted of rape, third was in 1878 of a man convicted of murdering his wife and stepdaughter and the last was in 1880 of a man convicted of killing his wife.

The last hanging was conducted inside the old jail that now is part of the museum complex.

See SPIRITS, p5-a

Fairfield to host girls' nationals

Fairfield Girls' Little Dribblers have received word that it has been moved up the line and will host a national tournament this June, instead of next year.

The organization had won a bid to host the 2011 national tournament and Navasota was to host the event in 2010.

However, Navasota backed out of its agreement last month.

Fairfield Boys' Little Dribblers is hosting a national tournament in April—that makes two national events in the same year.

This will be the second time that Fairfield has hosted the girls' national tourney, and is the sixth time to host

See NATIONALS, p2-a

Slow start to 2010 . . .

Sales tax income declines

Sales tax revenue for the City of Fairfield fell off 41.71 percent this month in comparison with what was reimbursed by the state comptroller in January 2009.

Fairfield receives a sales tax check this month for \$123,067, down from the \$211,133 reimbursed last January and continuing a period of decreasing receipts.

The January payment reflects taxes collected on November 2009 retail sales and reported to the comptroller in December.

Statewide, sales tax payments to 1,138 cities that collect the optional levy are down 11.43 percent this month, from \$310 million a year ago to \$275 million.

Teague experiences a 24.72 percent drop in sales tax revenue to \$32,363 from \$49,995 last January.

Going against the trend are Wortham and Streetman, which both show increases in their January checks.

The City of Wortham receives \$13,157, up 86.06 percent from the \$7,071 reimbursed a year ago.

Streetman is reimbursed \$2,480, a 101.19 percent increase from the January 2009 payment of \$1,232.

Payments to cities in Anderson county are down 8.84 percent this month, from \$449,207 to \$409,497.

In Leon county, communities receive checks totaling \$93,538 this month, down 32.1 percent from the \$137,734 reimbursed last January.

Limestone county pay-

See SALES, p2-a



FREESTONE COUNTY MUSEUM curator Sandy Bell, left, and museum board member Kathleen McKee show a picture of Fairfield's first firetruck in which a ghostly fireman appears to be sitting behind the wheel.



FAIRFIELD LADY EAGLE Kiresten Cox signs a letter of intent to play volleyball at Trinity Valley Community College. Attending the signing were: front l-r, Daniel Ransom, Yolanda Ransom, Miss Cox, Adante Austin and Dianne Manning; back l-r Fairfield girls athletics coordinator Stephen Heers, TVCC coach Tosha Spain, Fairfield head volleyball coach Dennis Johnson, assistant coach LaDonna Brackens and Fairfield athletic director Darrell Piske.

3-sport Fairfield athlete . . .

Spiker signs with TVCC

Fairfield 3-sport athlete Kiresten Cox picked one on which to concentrate last week when she signed a letter accepting a volleyball scholarship to Trinity Valley Community College in Athens.

The signing ceremony was held Friday at Fairfield high school and was attended by family members, coaches and teammates.

Snacks, a cake in the red and white TVCC colors and soft drinks were laid out for the event.

“We’re very proud of you, Kiresten,” FHS girls’ athletic coordinator Stephen Heers says. “You lead by example.”

TVCC is establishing a volleyball program to start competing in fall under the direction of coach Tosha Spain, who has been the head girls’ volleyball coach at Athens high school.

In her position at AHS, coach Spain witnessed Miss Cox’s talents firsthand, noting: “Unfortunately, we had to play against her.”

The coach has been recruiting players

for the debut season, but the FHS athlete is the only one picked up from District 20-AAA.

“I’m excited about the group of girls. It’s a good group,” coach Spain says.

Miss Cox, a 17-year-old FHS senior student, lettered three years in volleyball for the Lady Eagles and was an anchor for the squad that won the district championship title in 2008 with an unbeaten record and shared the district title in 2009.

She was named “Offensive Player of the Year” in the district her junior and senior seasons.

The TVCC recruit plays outside hitter, a position coach Spain says she will probably fill in college, and averaged 11.8 kill shots per match in 2009.

Miss Cox attended a practice at TVCC with about 60 prospects, even though she had already been offered a scholarship, participating in drills, physical tests and

See SPIKER, p3-a

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