

Spook Central

Every campus has its ghost stories, but it seems the campus of U. of Illinois, Champaign, and nearby areas are particularly phantasmagoric. Students there are said to huddle nervously together, trembling with fear and white with terror. And that's just during finals week.

Chief among the local legends is the story of the Blue Man, the notorious glowing-blue spectre who roams the Clements Cemetery in Champaign County.

Natalia Belting, a former U.I. history professor who lives next door to the cemetery, says the story of the Blue Man has been circulating for decades. Legend has it that in 1841, a man was found hanged from a tree in the vicinity of the cemetery — either a suicide or a lynching, depending on who you talk to.

"He only comes out on a full moon," Belting says. Although she claims she's never seen the ghost herself, she has seen carloads of thrill-seeking college students venture into the cemetery to brave the horror that is the Blue Man.

"Eventually, the sheriff patrols started watching the area and have now been able to keep the kids from running around the cemetery at night," she says. Sure, maybe the cops scared the kids away — or maybe it was something else! Something sinister! Something terrifying! Oh, never mind.

Folklorist and former U.I. English professor Larry Danielson says that of the many allegedly haunted places on campus, the most notorious is the English building. In the old days, Danielson says, the building served as a women's dormitory where, it is rumored, an angst-ridden female student killed herself.

Flickering lights and slamming doors are not uncommon on the third floor, Danielson says, particularly in the former rhetoric room — now the office of a graduate teaching assistant. According to legend, the persistent poltergeist wanders the building, stalking strict professors. Now there's a friendly ghost.

Champaign mayor Dannel McCollum says the historic West Side Park neighborhood contains at least two haunted mansions. One was the site of a foiled robbery attempt near the turn of the century. As the story goes, a guest caught the robbers in the act and shot one of them dead on the stairs. McCollum says he heard tales of the spectral thief wandering the mansion when he (McCollum, not the dead crook) was growing up in the 1930s.

The nearby Wilbur mansion, now home to the Champaign County Historical Museum, was originally built for Ella, the daughter of the Wilbur family. To this day, tour guides say the



nonthreatening presence of Ella can be felt. Sure, Ella's nonthreatening now, but wait till she sprouts fangs and goes after your jugular with a blood-curling wail! Then you'll be singing a different tune.

But hey — we here at *U. Magazine* are nothing if not practical, so we've dug up (heh, heh) an authority on the subject of how to handle a ghost if you meet one. If you come in contact with an apparition, it is important to stay calm, says Champaign tarot card reader Deborah Stewart.

"If you see a ghost," Stewart says, "all you have to do is share your love with the ghost; that's what they want. You don't have to be afraid."

OK, Deborah. You first.

■ Michael Dizon and Niki Ziegler, *The Daily Illini*, U. of Illinois

U NEWS

WHEN THE LIGHTS WENT OUT IN SQUIRRELTOWN

U. of Southern Florida — Maybe the squirrel was having a bad fur day, or was stressed out from the steep cashew prices when it entangled itself in USF's main power substation. Whatever the reason, the kamikaze rodent

caused a power outage that swept through campus, downing computers, stopping elevators and halting classes.

"A squirrel committed suicide," says associate director of the power plant, Frank Catanzarite. Funeral plans for the squirrel have not yet been scheduled.

IS THAT A SCHOLARSHIP IN YOUR POCKET... ?

Marshall U., W. Virginia — The early bird may get the worm, but in Matt Glover's case, being late paid off.

Just weeks before classes started at the U. of Virginia, Glover was informed that his admission had been revoked. Too late to apply anywhere else, Glover filed a lawsuit against the U. of Virginia.

However, in a strange public relations twist, nearby Marshall U.'s president, J. Wade Gilley, learned of Glover's predicament and offered him a full tuition scholarship worth \$1,500 to Marshall U.

Glover, learning of his admission to Marshall U., dropped the suit against the U. of Virginia. "I don't want a place that doesn't want me," Glover says. "I'd rather be in a place that wanted me."

And \$1,500 is a pretty good indication of desire.

CREDIT WHERE ACCREDITATION IS DUE

Oxnard College, Calif. — A name may be just a name, but a title can move mountains. Or at least stop the presses.

Oxnard College President Elise D. Schneider halted the printing of the college's new catalogue when it was discovered that Chancellor Thomas G. Lakin was identified only as a Ph.D. and not a doctor.

Although Schneider assured the public that the alteration didn't cost taxpayers any money, some students were doubtful. With an average of 5,000 copies of the catalogue printed, it seems unlikely that a 1,000-copy printing error wouldn't affect costs.

More importantly, will anyone even notice? "Students don't look at that first page to see whose title was left off," says an employee at the Oxnard College bookstore. "They look at the class requirements."

Wanted: Gay Faculty

"We want you," Northeastern U. is telling gays and lesbians. A new policy of actively recruiting gay and lesbian employees is stirring up some members of the Northeastern community who insist that such measures are unnecessary.

English professor Arthur Weitzman, one of the most vocal opponents, says he does not believe gays and lesbians need an affirmative action plan and that the university has no history of overt discrimination.

"In many cases, they are very talented people, and they don't need affirmative action to find entry into universities," he says.

NU president John Curry says the new policy doesn't mean the university will hire gays just for the sake of hiring gays. The university will actively recruit "quality" gay and lesbian job candidates through such avenues as gay rights organizations, he says.

The issue is not just a matter of the rights of prospective faculty members, Curry says, but of student rights.

Student reaction to the proposal has been mixed.

"As a gay student, I think it's wonderful, because gay and lesbian students don't have enough role models at the university," senior Kevin Watts says.

Chris Schoeneberger, a Student Government Association vice president, calls the role model argument "an excuse

to recruit professors who are not of the quality we could get."

But this is not the official opinion of the association, says Dan Bernal, SGA president, who supports the policy.

Peter Furth, a civil engineering associate professor, thinks homosexuality should be tolerated, but not necessarily promoted. He voiced this opinion in a letter to the editor of the university-subsidized newspaper and ignited a war of words.

Faculty members who refuse to "promote the gay rights agenda will never be promoted to positions of administrative responsibility," he wrote.

Jack Levin, a sociology professor, wrote to say that active recruitment is necessary: "Gays are bashed more than any other group on campuses across America.... [They] are an oppressed and stereotyped minority group."

Curry stresses that the new policy doesn't mean hiring individuals just because of their sexual preference. "It isn't enough to be tolerant," he says. "We should be willing to celebrate diversity."

■ Pamela Walsh, *The Northeastern News*, Northeastern U.



Illustration by: Rantz A. Hoseley