

## Casper and Other Ghosts

*By Cindy Peters*

My first ghostly experience was the summer I graduated from high school. I was traveling across the country from South Dakota to Philadelphia with my friend Dina and her family. Her dad was the pastor of my church. Her dad and mother were Latvian. Her mother Austrid had been a New York Opera Singer prior to her marriage to the Pastor Cepure. I was happy to help them with their move to Philadelphia. Once we arrived we discovered that their church was next door to their row house. The neighborhood had become run down and had turned into a bad part of the city. We heard the shocking news from the church council that the prior pastor had died in the church during a robbery.

Austrid considered herself a psychic and she was sure the church and home were haunted. The doorbells went off at all hours of the evening with no human by the door. Dina's room was in the corner of the top floor of their row house. It was a hot humid summer with no air conditioning in the home. One evening I heard footsteps on the stairs and scratching at the door. I thought it was one of their cats wanting into the room. As I opened up the door I reached my hand out to feel a wall of icy cold air. It was like sticking my hand in a freezer. I quickly slammed the door shut, ran into bed and pulled the covers over my head in fear.

My next unexplained experience was when I worked the night shift at a girls' group home. None of the staff wanted to work the night shift as there were reports of strange happenings at night. One evening the 21 girls were upstairs sleeping. I was seated downstairs in the living room with the dining room behind me. The dining room had a tile floor and metal chairs. Suddenly I heard the screech of a metal chair moving across the floor. When I built up the courage to turn around and look, I saw a chair which had moved 20 feet across the floor. I was so terrified that I ran upstairs to stay close to the girls asleep upstairs. I never volunteered for the night shift again.

My last ghostly experience was when I worked with my friend Deb. One day in broad daylight I was with her in her office. She explained to me that she had a ghost she named Casper who followed her around. In disbelief I taunted the ghost. Suddenly her bottom desk drawer slid out unassisted. I thought Deb was playing tricks on me so I continued to dare the ghost to show himself. Then three huge flashes of light appeared from the ceiling.

You would have thought I would have learned my lesson from that episode. However, a few weeks later I sat on a rocker in Deb's apartment. She was telling me that she was so annoyed with Casper as he was setting off all of her music boxes in the middle of the night. I made some snide remark about Casper. As I rocked in the rocking chair I suddenly felt a thump on my head. Deb reported that her aunt had a similar experience when she doubted the presence of Casper.

These were all unexplained events which terrified me and made me a believer in ghosts. All of these experiences I hope never to repeat!