

# OP-ED

## Ghost of a girl haunts cemetery



**CHRISTIAN MCPHATE**  
OPINIONS EDITOR

Mountain ranges of thunderclouds covered the horizon, hovering over the earth like a repressive shroud. Traveling down a cratered dirt road (like most of the dirt roads snaking across the byways of North Texas), I was listening to the soothing sounds of Beethoven while searching for an infamous figure of Montaguian lore—the ghost of Briar Creek Cemetery.

In a book by Olyve Hallmark Abbott, "Ghost in the Texas Cemetery Tales," a lost spirit was stricken with insomnia and rumored to appear within the branches of an ancient oak tree at cemetery.

Well, I, the ever-persistent gadfly, had to find out the reason behind the ghost's insomniacal desire to float around trees in the middle of the night.

Why not float around the countryside and scare the meth heads who litter the countryside like a cancerous overgrowth?

As a torrent of rain poured out of the sky, the windshield wipers of my car scraped across the glass in a rapid motion, screeching out the protest of a much-needed change. A couple of miles of vibrations later, I ended up losing control of my car because of the wet roads and wandering mind. I gripped the wheel and tried to steer my car the best way that I knew how.

With my eyes closed.

I slid into a small driveway of wet grass and sat there for a minute or two, trying to calm my rapid beating heart. I looked around and noticed that my headlights were illuminating a large iron sign with the inscription: "Briar Creek Cemetery."

A waterfall of rain was falling

out of the dark sky, bombarding my windshield with an overflow of water. I looked through the river of rain as it flowed down the glass, trying to figure out my best course of action.

With my flashlight, notepad, pen and keen sense of wit, I stepped out of the comfort of my car and pulled my hat down low. I just wished I had a camera.

As the rain fell from the heavens and soaked through my jacket, my mind began to travel down those confusing highways of creativity, random thought and educational conformity. Images of the numerous ghost stories that my mother made sure to inform me of every Halloween entered my mind.

"The ghosts, well, they're not mean," she said. "Well, as long as you don't upset them."

Fortunate for me, I seemed to have a knack for upsetting people.

Now, I'm not superstitious, but it was Friday 13, a night of infamy made more infamous by the Hollywood installments of a certain zombie who haunted a camp ground, the alleyways of New York City, a small town and a spaceship lost in depths of space.

In addition, I was entering a cemetery where a ghost, who seemed to have a problem sleeping and a knack for climbing trees, supposedly appears at the stroke of midnight.

Deep down, a part of me hoped to see the ghost, but the rational side of my brain—just hoped, she would stay the hell away.

A streak of lightning flashed across the cloudy sky, illuminating a large ancient oak tree. The prehistoric giant reached for the heavens like a black rose blossoming to the night. Giant old limbs encompassed the dark and cloudy atmosphere. A huge knot grew out of the side of the bark like a tumor. Twisted branches extended down like crooked wooden fingers clawing for the earth, digging up the graves of the forgotten.

As I made my way through the sheet of rain and old tombstones, the glow of the lightening bolts illumi-

nated the two halves of the ancient tree.

Yes, this seemed like the perfect place to wait.

After 10 minutes of waiting under the oppressive tree and taking a mound of notes, I noticed a scattering of old tombstones surrounding my position. I felt like I was in the middle of a mini-Stonehenge. I checked my watch. It was almost the witching hour and still no sign of the insomniac ghost. The ticking of my watch mixed with slow rhythm of thunder that roared across the night. I was drenched from the mini-tsunami and ready to call it a night.

Maybe she finished her unfinished business, maybe she finally was tired of hanging around and decided to go haunt the meth heads of the country, or maybe she was just a legend after—

A ghostly light appeared off in the distance near an adjacent tree, interrupting my contemplations. As the rain showered down all around and through the image on the far end of the cemetery, the translucent figure began to flicker off and on like a thousand lightening bugs trapped in a child-like form.

I stood there for a second or two, rubbing the water out of my eyes. Was this she? Did the ghost of Briar Creek finally decide to show her insatiable need? Or was it just a figment of my imagination? Too much caffeine and not enough sleep?

Who knows? All I know is that the rational side of my brain had kicked into overdrive and my legs were moving before my brain could react. I reached my car with my soaked notepad in hand, jumped inside and fired up the engine. I slammed the car into reverse before stopping and rethinking my choice.

I mean, after all, she would be a wellspring of information on the lonely roads of the afterlife.

But as I sat there in the comfort of my car, watched her float up into the tree, and swing her sparkling legs in the air, I realized that some things were better left unanswered.

## Campus Voices

### Q: What should the new MSU mascot be named?



"The Mustang should be named Herbert. It sticks with you because it's so original. People will remember it, like the way they remember Bevo."

— Lindsey Paddock, 19, sophomore, education major



"We should name it Sunwatcher. It's related to the previous mascot, but it's not controversial, so we'd still have a link to our heritage."

— Andrew Coleman, 19, freshman, computer science major



"Monty. We should name it after Monty, the head guy in the weight room. He's big and intimidating. Monty sounds like a good western name, too."

— Klint Newton, 23, senior, general business major



"Mad Max! It's got the M's so it rolls off the tongue good. It'd be fun to yell out at games and would get everyone pumped up."

— Xzarché Stegall, 21, sophomore, criminal justice major

## Rockers thrive in fictional world



**KONNIE SEWELL**  
STAFF REPORTER

a while, and now I absolutely have to get it off my chest. But this just between me and you, okay?

Secretly, somewhere deep down inside, a tiny, microscopic, for all intents and purposes minuscule part of me kinda sorta (but only just a little bit!) likes the band Panic! at the Disco.

I know. *I know!* Now that it's off my chest, I should feel better, but I don't. Mostly I reckon I just feel confused.

I think I started disliking the band before I actually listened to any of their songs. They were the band all the cool kids liked and constantly talked about. And by constantly talked about, I mean all the cool kids were up in my face about how much I'd like them, constantly.

"Have you heard about them? Have you downloaded any of their stuff yet? Don't you think they're the best band on earth? Am I annoying you yet with my non-stop badgering and incessant pestering that won't stop until you buy the album and, like, think and talk about them every waking moment the way me and everyone else does?"

I'm more inclined not to do certain things just because everybody else is doing them. Anti-social? Nah, not so much. I'm just deliberately uncooperative by nature. But the buzz on the band started up right when they were signed to a record label.

Were these cool kids telling me to get into the band because they liked the music, or were they just blindly following creepy Pete Wentz' orders? Strangely, what should have been a strike against the cool kids or Wentz became in my mind a strike against Panic! at the Disco.

There were other strikes as well as they quickly became the new It

band. Everybody was talking about them and clamoring to take their photographs. Not only were they overrated, but now they were overexposed.

Singer Brendon Urie cannot sing. He's too much for my ears. Song titles that are actually sentences aren't cute anymore. I don't even know if they ever were in the first place.

Also, it's one thing to get dressed up when they perform, but it's another entirely to live in such a bizarrely exaggerated world. The makeup, the costumes, and the Moulin Rouge orgies... it's all too, too much.

It's as if they're playing caricatures of the band they wish they were. Rockstars are allowed to live in alternate realities, I suppose, but this is just ridiculous. The band also, as a whole, seems to liken itself as the leader of an angsty congregation of the downtrodden and broken-hearted. Excuse me, but a big *What?* on that one. The guys are mostly in their late teens — the oldest band member is only 20 years old!

With one album under their belt, not only are they too green to be parading around as the Fourth Estate of the music scene — I don't trust them — they're all too young to be writing about stuff like this.

But... they *are* really young. There'll be enough time for them to grow and mature and realize their first album was a horrendous mistake. To be honest, I don't know any of the band members personally. How can I hate a group of kids I don't even know? All they did was play some instruments together. They're definitely more talented than I am in that respect.

They tour a lot, so they're probably way more driven and energetic than I am, too. I shouldn't even hate the cool kids who were too eager about them emerging as a top 10 artist. They're just excited about their band being successful, which I also do. None of them, the band or their fans, are bad people at heart.

Then there's the interview with the band in the most recent issue of *Spin* magazine. The feature, by Nick Catucci, really shows the band as they are: just a group of young guys trying to make it in a tough industry, never mind a tough world. "A lot of people either really loved our band or completely hated us before our

record was even written," guitarist/songwriter Ryan Ross was quoted as saying.

And that breaks my heart, because I know I was one of those people.

There's also, in the article, talk of fans who only want the frontman's signature, which will more than likely be a factor in future band hostilities. But after I read the story I was left rooting for them. Do I like their music? Well, I'm not too proud to admit I'm learning how to stand Urie's voice, if that counts. But that doesn't mean I don't want to see good people come into their own, have their cake and eat it, too.

I've realized the problems lies within myself. I'm the person in a group who always stands back and tries to take the entire situation in — and that means spending too much time on the bad. I'm the one who's always bursting bubbles. A lot of other people who do this like to call themselves "realistic," but I wonder if it also has to do with being bitter, pessimistic, or just flat-out cruel. We're nitpickers and dream killers.

We don't just do ourselves harm when we act like that; we crush other people, too. Somehow we've grown up expecting the worst or we've come to realize the world really isn't a happy place.

While it can be good, sometimes, to expect the worst in order to prepare yourself, you shouldn't live your life that way. True, the world isn't a happy place, but it takes more courage to look for the good and not worry about any possible fallout. It takes more courage to consciously say you won't let yourself become jaded.

But remember, all this is just between you and me. I don't know what I would do if any of this ever got out.

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