Strange... But True? by: Tonya J. Cook

It's Not a Bird, It's Not a Plane, It's Not Even Superman...It's the Spook Light!, part II

For many years there have been strange, mysterious lights mystifying onlookers around the world. The lights appear two to three feet from the ground and appear in a variety of colors. The lights may be red, orange, green, yellow, or blue. The source of the lights are unknown. However, many people have been lured away in search of finding the origin of the light. As you approach, the light moves farther away, making it impossible to ever overtake the strange light. The lights have various names depending on the location or country of origin. Some of the names in American and English folklore are "will-o-the-wisp", "ignis fatuus" or "foolish fire" in the Latin, "jack-olantern", "hinky punk", and "hobby lantern". Of course, we examined the history of the "spook light" in the Joplin, Missouri area last week. Many of the lights have a legend of the origin such as the Native lovers near Joplin who were supposedly killed and their spirits remain, searching for

each other. This week the lights or orbs will be examined again in hopes of understanding

this mystery a degree better. "Will-o-the-wisp" refers to a bundle of sticks or papers used as a torch, the "will of the torch". "Jack of the lantern" has a similar meaning. K. M. Briggs' book, "A Dictionary of Fairies", explains that Will was a blacksmith who was wicked but was given a second chance by Saint Peter at the gates of heaven. On Earth again, Will proved to

be just as wicked. He was now doomed to wander the Earth for eternity. The devil gave him one burning ember for light and heat.

On the other hand, "Jack" was too evil for heaven and even tricked the devil when he came to collect his soul in exchange for a pub tab. The devil held a grudge against him and would not allow Jack a place in hell. However, the devil gave him one ember which would not burn out, which Jack placed in a turnip (or pumpkin) in which he used to carry the ember. He, too, is to wander Earth for eternity. These two tales come from Ireland, Scotland, England, Wales, and Newfoundland. The tales migrated with the colonists and the pioneers to Appala-

Also, according to European folklore, these lights are the mischievous spirits of the dead or even fairies attempting to lead travelers astray. The Americanized version has the lights along roads or railroad tracks where someone was killed. Some even believe the lights are the spirits of the unbaptized or stillborn children neither in heaven or in

In northern Europe, the story varies. The Danes, Finns, Swedes, Estonians, Latvians, and Irish believe the "will-o-the-wisp" is the guardian of buried treasure. The treasure could only be recovered while the fire is there. Usually, magic spells and/or a dead man's hand (it has magical powers) were used in getting the treasure.

Next week, "Strange...But True?" series will explore even more events around the world concerning the "spook light" orb.

Deadline for next week's paper is 4 p.m. Monday due to the July 4th holiday!!

First Rockcastle 5-Miler scheduled for July 13th

Come out and join Rockcastle Regional Hospital & Respiratory Care Center for the first ever Rockcastle 5-Miler on Saturday, July 13 at Renfro Valley Entertainment Center. This event features a 5-mile run and 5K walk beginning at 8:00 a.m. (Registration begins at 7:00 a.m.). This is race seven of 12 in the 2013 County-Wide Stride Series.

For registration information visit website at www.rockcastleregional.org/ countywidestride. Preregister on-line or dropoff your registration form at Rockcastle Regional by Wednesday, July 10 for \$12. Race day registration fee will be \$15. Race participants will receive a free gift (while supplies last). All proceeds benefit Alzheimer's Association.

Awards will be given to the overall male and female race winner and fastest male and female walker. Top three male and female finishers in each of the following age groups will also be recognized: 12 & under, 13-17, 18-24, 25-29, 30-34, 35-39, 40-44, 45-49, 50-54, 55-59, 60-64, 65-69, and 70+.

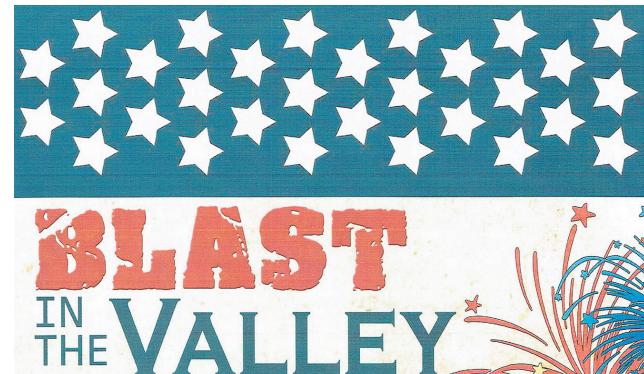
For questions or more information contact Susan Turley at (606) 256-7746 email s.turley@rhrcc.org.

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