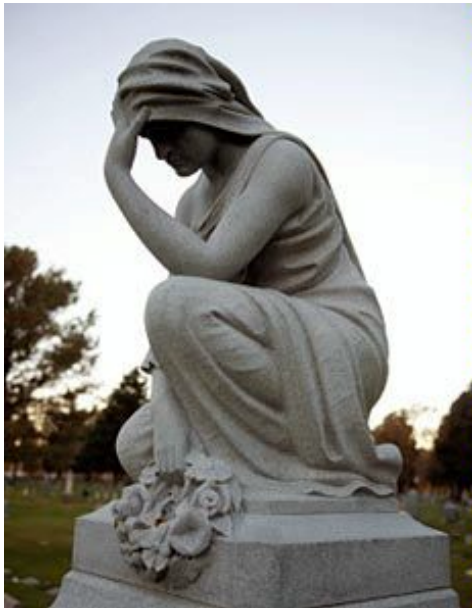


Thursday, Oct. 24, 2013

## STAFF REPORT: USU has lots of Haunted History



(image from the USU Statesman Online)

The Student Life section of *Utah State Today* highlights work written by the talented student journalists at Utah State University. Each week, the editor selects a story that has been published in *The Utah Statesman* or the *Hard News Café* or both for inclusion in *Utah State Today*. Stories are republished without editing.

### STAFF REPORT: USU has lots of Haunted History

By [Jared Dangerfield](#), staff writer, from *The Utah Statesman*, Thursday, October 24, 2013

As Halloween draws closer, the amount of scary stories and legends being told around campus increases. Students go on the search for haunted houses, corn mazes and other scary places to get a fright as they celebrate the Halloween season.

USU is famous for celebrating Halloween statewide thanks to the ever-popular Howl. But the USU campus also has a history of spooky tales to accompany the party and the time of year.

Legends of hauntings and ghost encounters have been widely spread around campus. From being able to hear an organ being played in Old Main during graduation to a haunted pool at a fraternity house to a ghost sighting on the top floor of the Merrill-Cazier Library, these kind of stories become popular among students this time of year.

Professor Steve Siporin of the English department said there are many haunting legends associated with the university, and he shared one with *The Statesman*.

“Barre Toelken, a student attending Utah State University during the 1950s, was on his way back to school, traveling through Logan Canyon late on a Saturday night,” Siporin said. “The night was cold and rainy, and just as he was about to reach the pass, he saw a person standing on the side of the road hitchhiking.”

As Toelken stopped, he saw that it was a woman who was waiting for a ride out of the cold night, Siporin said.

“She was also a student and was heading back to Logan, so he decided to give her a ride the rest of the way,” Siporin said. “Since it was so cold outside, he offered his jacket to her so she could warm up. As they got into the Logan valley, she let him know that she would like to be dropped off right across the street from the Logan cemetery where the main gate is on the east.”

“As the girl walked towards her house, Toelken drove away,” Siporin said. “Toelken soon realized that he had not got his jacket back from the girl. He decided it would be better to wait till the morning to retrieve his jacket, and he continued home.”

“The next day he drove back to where he dropped her off, and went up to the house where she had walked to,” Siporin said. “Her mother answered the door, and as he began to ask if her daughter was home so he could take back his jacket, she said, ‘Oh, of course it’s this again.’”

According to Siporin, Toelken was confused by the mother’s comment.

“He asked, ‘What do you mean?’ She continued, ‘Well, you know, every year on this night someone shows up the next morning saying that they gave our daughter a ride home, but she died that night ten years ago in a crash in the canyon.’”

Toelken knew he had a very real experience the night before and believed the mother just didn't want him to see her daughter.

“The mother persisted, ‘If you don’t believe me, you can go across the street, over to the cemetery, and find her headstone,’ and then gave him directions to where the gravesite was located,” Siporin said. “While

searching for what he thought was a made up story to send him away, curiosity set in and he decided he would get to the end of the story. After searching through the cemetery he ended up finding the grave, but this was not his only surprise. To his amazement, his jacket was tied around her headstone.”

Siporin said many other stories like this can be found by students looking for a good ghost story in the Special Collections and Archives room located in the basement of the Merrill-Cazier Library. The legends located within this section have been compiled by past students who encountered such situations or heard the story from a friend.

Enjoying a scary story with friends as well as knowing which places to look out for can be a great activity to celebrate this spooky time of the year. Enjoy, Aggies.

