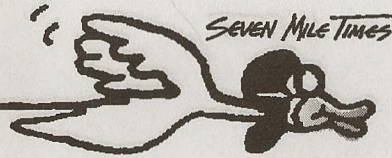


... they're going to catch you in next.
—Franklin P. Jones



MYSTERIOUS Ghost Ship

Sighted at Morey's Piers in Wildwood

By Josh Kinney

An experiment was conducted at The Navy Yard in Philadelphia in 1943 in an attempt to render warships invisible. According to conspiracy theorists, one of these ships did vanish, and now it seems to have reappeared in 2010 on the Wildwood Boardwalk.

Morey's Piers - the largest seaside amusements in the Western Hemisphere - has introduced a new attraction, The Ghost Ship, roughly based on The Philadelphia Experiment. Towering to the left of the famous Wildwood Ferris Wheel lies a rusty decrepit WWII-era vessel of 14,000 square feet and the words "Ignis Fatuus" etched along the bow. The name means a flitting, phosphorescent light believed to be due to the spontaneous combustion of gas from decaying organic matter - or something misleading.

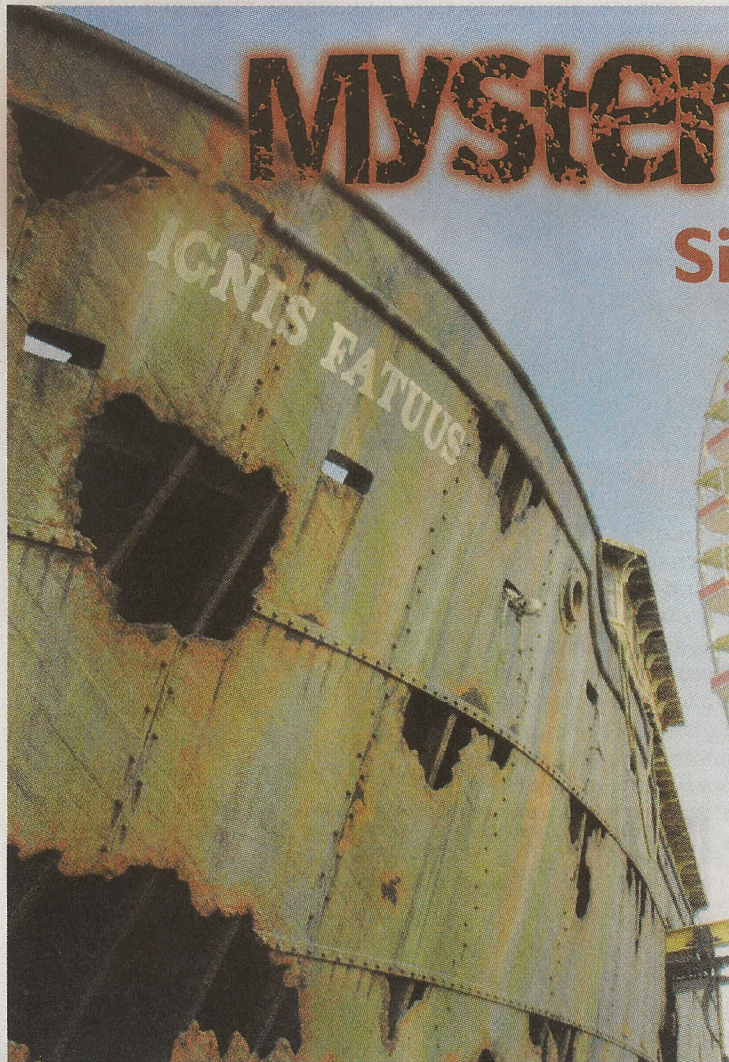
Surely its creators intended to mislead, since they signed a contract of secrecy to keep the ship under wraps during its January construction for its summer debut Memorial Day weekend. The Ghost Ship was creatively

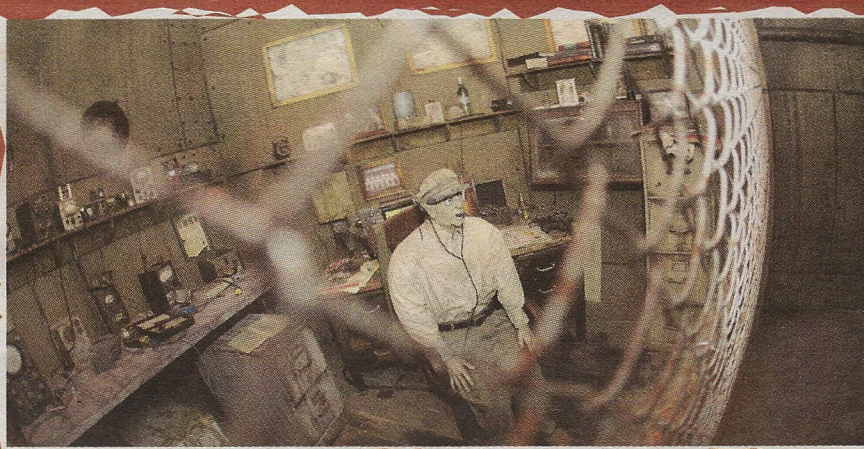
constructed around existing rides such as The Skyship, an elevated pirate-ship ride that appears part of the Fatuus, but is in fact separate, adding to its already vaporous effect.

Jack and Will Morey have invested their business in the revival of the Wildwoods. Jack is the head of the Doo Wop Preservation League, which seeks to maintain the architecture and character of the '50s and '60s that the island's distinctive motels and hotels display. These two highly regarded leaders in the Wildwood community have been earnestly excited about the much-needed new appeal - a wild attraction that people wouldn't forget.

Jack said he was interested in "taking fun seriously" and was "blessed to have an opportunity that's special, classic, fresh and one of a kind." Thirty-three years have passed since a ride like this has shown up in South Jersey because of the mammoth task required to pull it off. Leading a team of builders, artists, mechanics, writers and actors

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involves intricate and creative planning as well as dedication, which the Moreys have shown to Wildwood and to their idea of fun.

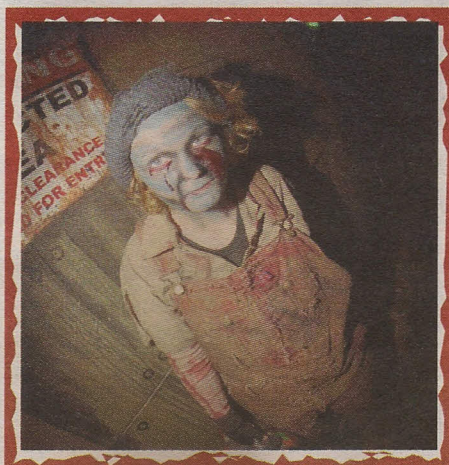
The walk-through ship has a full staff of about 12 actors. Each room tells an unusual part of a story about a top-secret navy experiment out at sea gone terribly wrong, leaving behind a mutated ship and crew. Dark, cavernous tunnels and murky corridors snake through the boat, leading to the deck and various rooms of the 11,020-foot, three-story ship.

You can hear the actors' screams and the rattling of a faint radio transmission desperately trying to contact the Fatuus. Children under 12 – or anyone with a weak stomach or fear of the unknown – are not recommended to board The Ghost Ship.

Lissa Sola handles the gift shop and loves running this attraction.

"Who doesn't love the idea of a creepy haunted ghost ship?" asked Sola, her enthusiasm evident.

Some children actually ask her if the ship suddenly washed up on shore. She replies with eyes wide and a sinister smirk, "Yes!" When the staff occasionally breaks for increments of time, Sola tells the children that the ship has to shut down so that the North Atlantic Paranormal Society (NAPS) can investigate the strange occurrences aboard.



Aside from its sheer size and being what Jack calls "alive with actors," the tale behind the Fatuus makes it much different than any ride in South Jersey, with a partially true story carved into it that can't help but spur the curiosity of its thrill-seekers. One of these, Javier Rivera of Vineland, appeared smiling through the exit door with his family.

"It just got better and better," he said.

Everyone leaves the ship differently – some running, others screaming and laughing, and some still and shaken. Most agree that it's best to board at night.

The Moreys have made a profound impact on the amusement industry and the island of Wildwood as dependable leaders with authentic passion.

"We're not done yet," Jack said. "Hopefully we'll never be done. We believe in a collaboration of creative people."

The Ghost Ship is the perfect example of this relationship. After its 67-year disappearance following a supposed experiment gone wrong in the Philadelphia shipyard, a vessel has materialized during the summer of 2010 in Wildwood, N.J.: the Ignis Fatuus. Twelve tickets grants your entry – but only if you have the guts.

IF YOU (DARE) TO GO ...

Mariner's Landing and Raging Waters Waterpark, Spencer Avenue and the Boardwalk

You can also visit Morey's other piers:

Morey's Pier and Beachfront Waterpark, 25th Street and the Boardwalk

Surfside Pier and Ocean Oasis Waterpark, Schellenger Avenue and the Boardwalk

The piers are open most days until midnight, but we suggest that you visit Morey's Web site, moreyspiers.com, which even lists rides and attractions by suggested age.

Josh Kinney, a journalism and creative writing double major at Asbury University in Kentucky, is a native of the Philadelphia area. He spends his summers at the Jersey Shore. Throughout high school and college he has worked with agencies such as Invisible Children to help children in Africa. He hopes to have some of his novels published.