



NEWS

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El Camino College Communications Professor to Present “Phantasms: Can We Communicate with the Dead?”

When El Camino College associate professor Jason Davidson takes the stage for his upcoming lecture “Phantasms,” the audience should not be surprised if the presentation comes with a bit of a ghostly aura. And maybe even some magic.

Just in time for Halloween, Davidson will discuss the history and demonstrate the methods of the Spiritualist Movement popular in America during the late 1800s, as well as explain how these techniques are often used today. His presentation “Phantasms” is scheduled for **8 p.m. October 18** at Marsee Auditorium.

The Spiritualism Movement reached its peak in popularity in the 1840s and into the early 20th century. Followers believed they could communicate with the spirits of the dead either by contacting them personally, or through a medium. The movement spread throughout the United States and Great Britain, with thousands of people attending meetings, séances, lectures, and conventions.

Along with the meetings and séances in both private and public forums came many “contacts” and mediums who turned out to be no more than a hoax.

“I first became interested in explaining how magicians have been debunking fraudulent mediums for years,” said Davidson, noting the irony that a communications professor will be discussing communicating with spirits. “But I just won’t tell you – I will show you.”

In addition to being a communications professor, Davidson is a magician. He is a member of the Magic Castle, the International Brotherhood of Magicians, the Society of American Magicians, and the Academy of Magical Arts, headquartered at the Hollywood Magic Castle. For the demonstration, he also plans to introduce and work with award-winning magicians David Blatter and Leeman Parker to show some “tricky” techniques false mediums often use.

“We are going to take an academic approach to this subject – it’s all in good fun,” he said. “We will talk about the historical background of the movement and how many aspects of the movement are still relevant today.

“There are many shows on TV where people try to reach spirits – these shows and the people involved make lots of money, so there is a lot of interest here. It is still a very popular subject. Humans have been involved with talking to spirits since prehistoric times. Even Queen Victoria had a medium from New Jersey visit to do a séance for her. And with Halloween coming, this is just a fun time to talk about it all.”

For tickets and more information, call 1-800-832-ARTS (2787) or go to:
www.elcamino.edu/commadv/centerforarts/tickets.html.

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