GHOSTS IN THE HALLS
Many believe ECSU dorm is home to the paranormal

By AKAYA MCELVEEN
Chronicle Staff Writer

WILLIMANTIC — She had been sleepwalking just as she had been doing for the past few days.

However, this time, instead of returning back to her room to awaken with no recollection of her excursions around the building, Gertrude did something that will make her one of the most infamous students the university now known as Eastern Connecticut State University has ever had.

Haunted by the pressures of failing tests, feeling like an outcast among her peers, and the death of her father a year prior, Gertrude Louise “Trudy” Beer had walked up to the third-floor bathroom, slowly, in a ghost-like state, and opened the window shortly before jumping.

Trudy’s body lay still, in shock, in the courtyard awaiting to be taken to the local hospital, where she died hours later, her soul remains in the halls of Eastern’s Burr Hall dormitory.

This was Jan. 25, 1940 — when the school was known as the Willimantic State Teachers College.

Years later, in 2014, Gertrude’s presence is still felt in the ECSU dorm. Current students describe recollections of ghosts roaming the halls, light switches being flicked on their own, posters being thrown off the walls, doors slamming and many more odd occurrences.

On a normal day for former hall director Jennifer O’Neill, she would be met with some type of sign from a ghost in her apartment.

O’Neill would walk into her apartment, turn her lights on, walk into the bathroom and come out to find that the switch had been flicked off by itself.

And although she had been scared and shook up at first, slowly O’Neill began to come into terms with the fact ghosts would visit her often.

“I enjoyed living with her, it was comforting,” O’Neill said. “I just had to embrace it. So when I... (Eastern dormitory, Page 4)
Eastern dormitory believed to home to the paranormal

(Continued from Page 1)

would leave for the day, I would just say ‘bye Trudy, have a great day.’”

Inquisitive former residents (deemed “the ghost hunters”) believe they have an explanation for everything.

“We did a lot of ghost hunting last year,” said former resident and one of the ghost hunters, Jessica Marcianite.

During one of the hall’s programs for the residents last year, the students used dowsing rods to detect paranormal activity, specifically for the purpose of contacting Trudy and to find out what is really happening in the dorms.

Dowsing rods are L-shaped rods that cross in certain ways that represent a “yes” or “no” response from the paranormal entity in question.

The dowsing rods acted as the voice of Trudy and had revealed Trudy enjoyed her time at the college because she was studying to be a teacher.

It also revealed she was a good ghost, but that there were other spirits there as well who roam the halls.

With the assistance of the rods, Trudy’s spirit let the audience of about 40 students know that the odd, unexplained occurrences are all the doings of the male ghosts in the building.

She said they are mischievous ghosts who like to stir up trouble in the halls.

Those ghosts may be the reason why many students fear studying in the student lounge in the dorm at late hours.

Facility workers who have seen a good deal of students come in and out of the building throughout the years said Trudy is a popular topic of conversation in the building.

They said many students often go exploring around the dorm to discover the truth.

Facility worker Christina Krukoff said she thinks this year’s residents are more afraid of the ghosts because it not something they talk about as often as the students have in the previous years.

Facility worker Juan Quintana said he likes Trudy and that she is very nice.

As for determining whether Trudy’s spirit really haunts Burr Hall, that is something we will never really know for sure.