

Gate City Goosebumps

Sep/Oct 2025

Editor's Note

Apologies, dear readers, for the missing September issue — the presses went a bit haywire after an... *unplanned incident*. Rest assured, Gate City Goosebumps is back on schedule, ink flowing and mysteries mounting. Thanks for sticking with us — you'll find this issue well worth the wait.— **H. Stensvard**, Editor-in-Chief

Phantom Marching Band

Terrifies High School Football Game

Friday night lights turned to fright when an invisible band struck up during Gate City Arena's football matchup. As the Wildcats lined up for kickoff, the unmistakable sound of trumpets, tubas, and drums thundered through the stadium—yet the marching band sat silent in their seats, instruments in their laps.

"I swear I heard the fight song, but it was twisted, like it was being played in reverse," said Keisha Dean, a senior clarinetist. Fans described glowing outlines of uniforms shimmering across the field before dissolving into thin air. The strange performance lasted three minutes, leaving both teams rattled.

Officials brushed it off as a "speaker malfunction," though technicians insist no music systems were active at the time. Some parents have already vowed to keep their kids off the field until the phantom band's encore is explained.

Gate City residents awoke to a chilling sight this week when the Hawthorne River glowed blood red at sunrise. Joggers snapped photos of a wide stretch of crimson water before the current washed the hue away within half an hour.

Authorities moved quickly to calm fears. "Our initial tests suggest it was an algae bloom triggered by unusual temperature changes," said a city environmental officer. But many locals are unconvinced. "That wasn't algae—it looked like blood mixing into the current," argued fisherman Ray Holcomb, who's worked the river for forty years.

Adding fuel to speculation, witnesses upriver insist the water was clear until precisely dawn, leading to whispers of ritual activity or a sacrifice upstream. Police reported no disturbances, though social media is awash with theories ranging from factory runoff to apocalyptic omens.

UFOs or Lanterns?

Strange Lights Above Old Mill Park

Campers at Old Mill Park were treated—or haunted—by a celestial display last Saturday night. Dozens claim to have seen blue-green lights weaving across the sky in perfect triangular formations.

"The lights moved like they were tethered together, then zipped off faster than any plane," said camper Mateo Cruz, who described a low humming vibration that rattled tents and made his phone glitch. The Gate City Astronomy Club dismissed the phenomenon as drones, though no flight permits were filed.

With no official explanation, rumors of extraterrestrial scouts abound. Paranormal enthusiasts have already declared Old Mill Park a new hotspot for "skywatching," drawing both thrill-seekers and skeptics to the area.

Gate City Goosebumps

Sep/Oct 2025

Cat Man Sightings Multiply

The legend of Cat Man has clawed deeper into Gate City's collective imagination. Reports now place the feline humanoid in multiple neighborhoods, always leading swarms of strays in his wake.

"He was seven feet tall if he was an inch, covered in matted fur, with hundreds of cats trailing behind him like worshippers," claimed one homeless resident living near Foster Street. Several shop owners in the warehouse district reported morning scenes of alleys reeking of musk and paw prints layered like carpets.

Animal Control has dismissed the phenomenon as mass hysteria, but even they admit the city's stray population has doubled since July. Some whisper the "Alley King" is gathering his army for something larger.

Shadow Man Lurks in Parking Garages

Late-night workers are rattled after multiple encounters with a mysterious figure haunting downtown parking decks. Witnesses consistently describe a tall, featureless silhouette that appears only where shadows fall thickest.

"I was walking to my car when the lights flickered," said office worker Hannah Price. "He was there by the stairwell, just standing still. The lights buzzed back on, and he was gone." Security cameras captured nothing but empty concrete—except for one frame where a warped shadow stretched across three parked cars at once.

Police dismiss the reports as "lighting tricks," but drivers have begun parking in pairs or avoiding garages altogether. Rumors now spread that the Shadow Man doesn't simply watch—he follows.

Possum Man Strikes Again Near College Campus

Gate City University students are once again on edge after late-night joggers reported an attack by the infamous "Possum Man."

"It leapt out of the bushes, hissed like an animal, and then laughed like a human," said one victim. The creature, described as human-sized with a long ratlike tail and glowing eyes, scampered into the trees before campus security arrived.

Authorities insist it's a prankster in a costume, but Possum Man sightings have grown bolder—moving from simple scares to increasingly aggressive confrontations. On social media, memes mock the marsupial menace, but whispers on campus suggest something darker is at play.

Gate City Goosebumps

Sep/Oct 2025

Eerie Choir in the Woods

Hawthorne Park hikers stumbled upon a chilling chorus last week: dozens of voices singing in unison, chanting words backwards under a starless sky.

“It sounded like children singing a hymn—but reversed, like a tape being rewound,” said hiker Daryl Weeks, who fled with his dog. Rangers dispatched to investigate found no campsites, no footprints, and their recording equipment picked up only static.

Paranormal enthusiasts argue the choir is a recurring September phenomenon, with some claiming the woods “echo with unfinished rituals.” Officials urge caution, but hikers are already daring each other to find the phantom chorus again.

Hospital Staff Fall Ill After Treating Mystery Patient



Gate City General is under fire after multiple staff members fell ill while treating an unidentified patient.

“This is not an outbreak. We are monitoring the situation closely,” insisted **Health Commissioner Darren Cole**, who denied public danger. Still, families of the sick workers demand answers after hearing whispers of symptoms resembling smallpox.

Anonymous sources describe the patient’s lesions as “wrong—like they weren’t natural.” With secrecy thick and rumors spreading, the hospital has quietly tightened security. Officials say the facility remains safe, but many staff have begun calling out rather than risk exposure.

Moth-Winged Figure Seen on Rail Bridge

Truckers crossing Jefferson Rail Bridge in the early morning hours reported a winged humanoid clinging to the steel beams.

“It turned its head and stared straight into our windshield with glowing red eyes,” said one driver, who nearly lost control of his rig. Witnesses described enormous moth-like wings stretching across the girders before the creature launched into the night sky.

Just two days later, a freight train derailed on the same tracks. Paranormal researchers draw comparisons to the legendary Mothman of Point Pleasant, WV, claiming such sightings are harbingers of disaster. Gate City’s bridge may have earned a new omen.

Gate City Goosebumps

Sep/Oct 2025

Mystery Crop Circles in Community Gardens

Gardeners tending the downtown plots were stunned to discover spiraling geometric patterns carved into their pumpkin patches.

"These weren't footprints or vandalism—it was art," said gardener Ellen Barlow. The crops weren't just flattened; some were singed at the edges, as if brushed by invisible heat.

Witnesses claim to have seen glowing spheres bobbing over the gardens at dawn. Skeptics call it a seasonal prank, but paranormal investigators argue the precision suggests more than human hands at work. The pumpkins, at least, are growing back stronger—though locals eye them warily.

Abandoned Carnival Lights Up Again

The Riverside Carnival grounds, shuttered since the 1970s after a fire, inexplicably roared back to life this week.

Motorists along the bypass reported Ferris wheel lights turning, calliope music echoing, and carousel shadows spinning. Yet when investigators arrived, the midway stood silent and charred. "I saw people moving between the rides—families holding hands—but they weren't solid," said one shaken driver.

Paranormal experts suggest the carnival replays itself under certain conditions, a "ghost of a fairground" trapped in time. Police re-fenced the grounds, but thrill-seekers are already daring each other to sneak in after dark.

The Singing Tree of Lake Townsend

Kayakers on Lake Townsend have begun hearing a faint, harmonic hum drifting from the forested western bank. One witness described the sound as "like a choir trapped in wood." Local botanists deny the existence of any musical flora, though one ranger privately admitted the tree bark patterns "look an awful lot like vocal cords."

Ghost Taxi Offers Midnight Rides

A black cab has been spotted prowling Main Street after midnight, picking up unsuspecting passengers and vanishing without explanation. "It just appeared when I needed it most," said witness Clarissa Yoon. "I blinked, and suddenly I was at my apartment miles away. The door slammed shut behind me, but the cab was already gone." Historians note Gate City once had a thriving taxi company in the 1930s, whose depot burned down in a mysterious fire that claimed multiple drivers. The so-called "ghost taxi" accepts no fare, only silence—and perhaps a piece of one's peace of mind.

Phantom Commuter Returns to the Elm Street Line

City workers report seeing an antique streetcar gliding soundlessly through the old Elm Street tunnel just after midnight. The problem? The line's been closed since 1947. Witnesses describe flickering gaslight and a single passenger staring out the window — "looked like he was waiting for his stop," said one sanitation worker. Transportation officials refuse to comment, but several have quietly started carrying silver tokens.

Faerie Door Discovered Behind Thrift Store Mirror

A volunteer at the East Market Thrift uncovered a hidden hinge behind a vintage dressing mirror. When opened, the space behind it revealed a tunnel barely large enough for a cat — and the scent of lilacs despite the winter cold. The mirror has since been sold. The buyer has not been seen in three days.

Gate City Goosebumps

Sep/Oct 2025

The Unblinking Man at Friendly Center

Multiple late-night shoppers have reported a tall man in outdated formalwear standing perfectly still near the old fountain. He doesn't move, doesn't blink, and disappears between camera frames. Security footage shows him appearing in reflections, never directly. Some think he's an art installation. Others whisper he's a bargain hunter from another time.

The Possum Prophet of Wendover Avenue

A possum wearing what appeared to be a child's plastic crown has been sighted leading other possums across Wendover — single file, eyes glowing blue. Locals call him "The Possum Prophet." Animal Control says it's mass hysteria, but one officer admits every trap they've set vanishes overnight, replaced by neat piles of cookies.

Lights in the Old Quarry

Teens exploring the disused quarry north of town claim strange lights hover over the pit after dusk — sometimes green, sometimes red, once spelling out the word "DOWN." One witness vanished for three hours and returned with mud up to his knees and a pocket full of quartz that hummed softly until morning.

Faerie Market Found Under the Dogwood Bridge

A jogger's smartwatch recorded faint music beneath the Dogwood pedestrian bridge last Saturday. Following the trail led to small footprints, discarded rose petals, and a receipt written in ink that shimmered and rearranged itself to say, "*See you next Spring.*" Locals are leaving out honey jars "just in case."

The Man Who Eats Shadows

A woman on Spring Garden Road claims her shadow began shrinking after encountering a ragged man who asked if she "had any to spare." Days later, she fainted at noon — no shadow visible. Doctors call it stress. Occult sources recommend salt lines and brighter bulb

The Library That Moves at Night

Patrons of the downtown public library insist the stacks subtly shift positions between visits. Some aisles stretch longer, others loop back on themselves. A custodian claims he found a section labeled "*Books That Shouldn't Be Here.*" He checked out a volume titled *The Gate City Goosebumps*. It hasn't been returned.

Gate City Goosebumps

Sep/Oct 2025

Gate City Ghost Ducks Invade Country Park

Dozens of parkgoers swear they've been followed by translucent ducks that quack without sound. Children throw bread, which vanishes mid-air. One paranormal researcher believes these are echoes of the 1950s "Duck Pond Massacre" (when a chlorine spill poisoned the lake). The researcher's audio recorder captured a faint chorus: "*We forgive you.*"

Holiday Happenings

Deedee Robertson

Chills in the air, leaves changing colors, and strange occurrences being reported more frequently can only mean one thing...IT'S ALMOST HALLOWEEN!! Time to dust off that costume in the back of your wardrobe or put the finishing touches on your outfit and go out and enjoy the festivities of the local businesses of Gate City. Be sure to stop into the Secret Garden for the costume party and contest, hosted by the bar's owner. Don the funniest costume you can muster and you may just win!

Local haunts are also hosting contests, murder mysteries, scavenger hunts and participating in a city wide trick or treat. If you find that there is nothing to do or you are bored, maybe it's time to hop off of the couch, dust off those Doritos crumbs and step outside. I can assure you that there is more to do than there is time for.

Be warned though. As many are aware of the origins of the Jack O' Lanterns, costumes and masks, and bonfires, there is one that is not as well known. **Pixie Panic!** With access to excessive sweets and shiny bobbles, pixies are more mischievous than what we are used to during this time of year. Be sure to secure your beverages and loose items, or they may be sampled or relocated. It is also a good idea to keep some candy or small shiny objects as offerings to the tiny beings so they may leave you be for a period of time.

Celebrity Sightings

Deedee Robertson

I had the pleasure of interviewing social media celebrity and brilliant herbologist, Luna. Her bubbly personality is more than just an internet persona. She was a joy to speak with and be around. If you want to see and learn about different local flora, be sure to follow her on any social media platform at @lurpetology. Not only is she effective at educating others on plant species, Luna is also fearless in the face of danger. When the Secret Garden was attacked by a couple of brutes, she took a bullet while helping Jannis take cover.

I also had the pleasure of attending FearFest this weekend in Skyland. For those that do not know, FearFest is an annual gaming convention with games of all kinds for all ages. If you missed it this year, you will want to plan to make it next year. The highlight of the evening for me was meeting the amazing GC Costars, a well known cosplayer. This year, he appeared as a humanoid possum. If you are not already, be sure to follow his twitter @GCC.Cosplay.

