

TV's 'Ghost Hunter' plumbers scare up a crowd in Newport

Paranormal investigators sign books

By Kevin Kelly
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NEWPORT – Jason Hawes and Grant Wilson agree that there are similarities between being a plumber and a paranormal investigator.

“You’re going in as a problem-solver trying to figure out what’s truly going on,” Hawes said. “Just because somebody’s got a leak in a certain area of their house doesn’t mean that’s where it’s coming from. Just like if somebody has a paranormal issue: It doesn’t really mean that there’s a ghost.”

The **Roto-Rooter** plumbers and Syfy channel “Ghost Hunters” stars visited the Barnes & Noble at Newport on the Levee on Friday to sign copies of the new book “Chilling Tales from the Porcelain Seat.”

The 100-page book is a collection of outrageous plumbing stories and expert advice from Cincinnati-based Roto-Rooter and features commentary from Hawes and Wilson.

“We always said we need to collect these stories and write them down,” said Wilson, whose mother was born in Cincinnati.

“You read through that book and there’s some crazy stuff – guys losing prosthetic eyes down the drain. There are a lot of stories that people should hear

that are just funny. And there’s some educational stuff in there, too, so you don’t make mistakes.”

The three-hour book signing drew a crowd that snaked through the store, out the front doors and around the building. The store had to turn people away who wanted to camp out overnight Thursday.

Applause and camera flashes greeted Hawes, 37, and Wilson, 35, as they walked past a toilet sculpted from a block of ice and took their places at the signing table.

“It’s so strange. Especially as plumbers, most of the time people didn’t want you at their house,” said Hawes, who with Wilson founded The Atlantic Paranormal Society (TAPS). “And now, you look outside, and there’s 800 to 1,000 people out there. I’ve got to tell you, that startles you every single time. ... I’m just hoping we’re able to see everybody.”

First in line Friday were friends and amateur ghost hunters Mike Vance and Ronald Hawkins. The men drove from Dry Ridge and arrived at 7:30 a.m. Friday.

In addition to getting signed copies of the book, Vance had Hawes and Wilson sign a K2 meter that he uses on investigations. Hawkins had the men autograph his laptop computer.

“I was up until 4:30 this morning, nervous about going to meet my idols,” Vance said. “It was worth it. I’d do it all over again.”

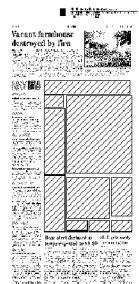
In line behind Vance and Hawkins was Eddie Linville, his mother, Linda, and stepfather, Charlie. The family drove four hours from their home in Crown City, Ohio. They got to the store about 8:30 a.m.

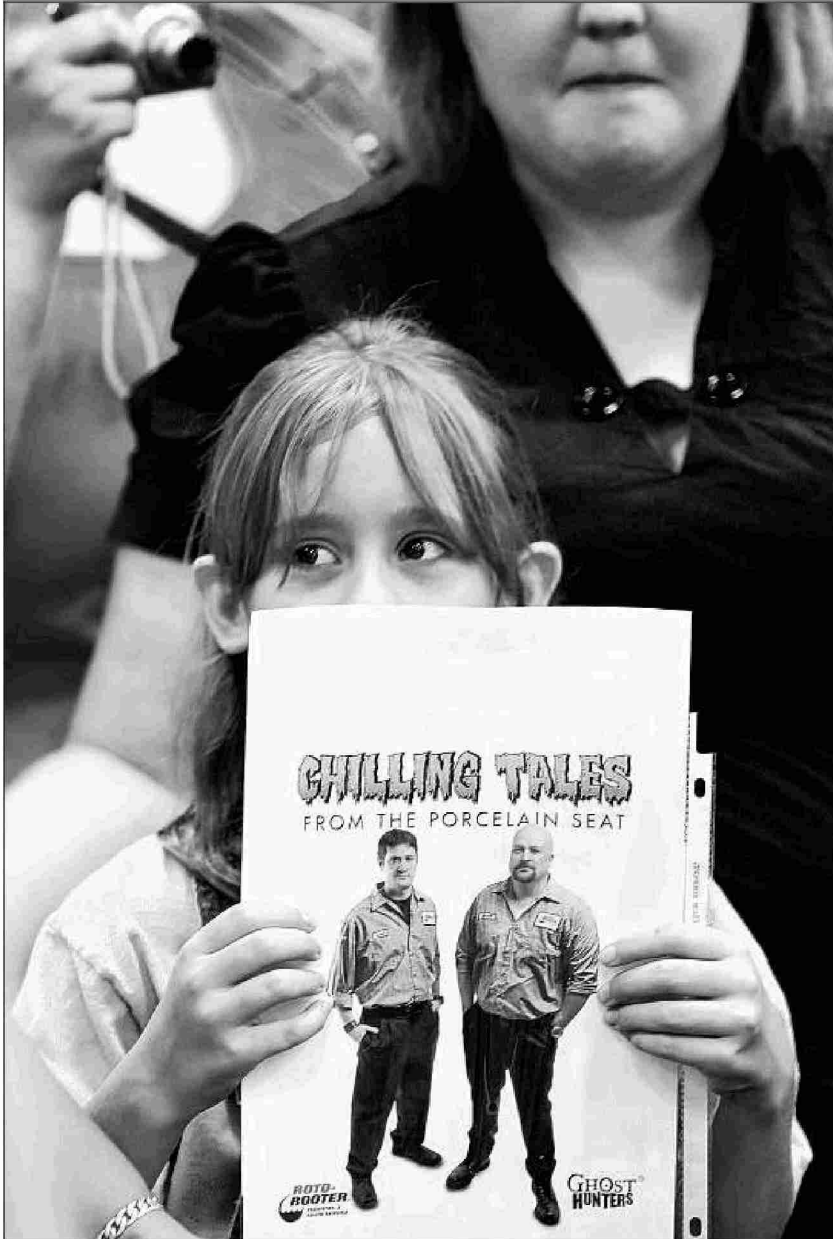
“It was exciting,” Linda said. “I didn’t think I’d ever meet them.”

The fifth season of “Ghost Hunters” premieres Aug. 19.

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Maranda Mar-kee, 10, of Price Hill, clutches a photo of Syfy television channel "Ghost Hunters" stars Grant Wilson (left) and Jason Hawes as she waits in line at a book signing for their book "Chilling Tales from the Porcelain Seat" at Barnes & Noble bookstore, Newport. "I'm shaking," she said after they signed her photo. "I think I'm going to faint." The men work as plumbers by day and paranormal investigators by night.



Photos by Patrick Reddy/The Enquirer

Wilson bumps fists with Andrew Roesch, 9, of McNabb, Ill., at Friday's book signing.