

# Sun Journal

## TV producer seeks, finds 'oddball things'

By Kathryn Skelton , Staff Writer  
Friday, October 31, 2008

It can all be traced back to the vampire.

He introduced Laurie Notch to the magician and the escape artist, which led, indirectly, to meeting the all-woman team of ghost hunters, which led to a pair of pilots that she thinks could make great TV.

The first pilot, "Strange Attractors," aired Sunday on WPME-TV. The next, "Ghost Quest," is up in November.

"I've always had an interest in strange, unusual things. I have traveled all over the planet. I thought, we've got to have some oddball things happening in Maine," said Notch, an anthropologist and Portland-based writer/producer for the new Wasted Minds Media Group Inc.

That pivotal vampire - he only wants to be called Vlad - hails from Massachusetts. He was a guest last spring at Notch's class on social taboos at Tufts University and talked about the hierarchy in vampire society (he's an elder), the sanguine like himself (the sort that drink voluntary donors' blood) and black swans (non-vamps that like to hang with vampires).

Through other connections, she's discovered there are vampires living in Maine - and where.

"They don't want to be on camera," she said. "I'm courting them."

Notch set up "Strange Attractors" as a weird New England roundup of sorts. The first episode featured Vlad with two magicians, the Nashua, N.H., attraction "Fright Kingdom" and the "Ghost Quest" women out of Manchester, N.H.

Future episodes might focus on zombie filmmakers in Maine or a day in the life of a poker player, noting any lucky charms. She's got a ufologist friend who might talk about aliens. The sky's the limit.

"We might even look at the dark side of curling," Notch said.

The second pilot follows the ghost-hunting women, who teamed up in 2001, as they check out an old house in Alexandria, N.H. She said that like the popular plumbers on Sci-Fi Channel's "Ghost Hunters," they use high-tech gear, try to debunk reports, and check medicine cabinets and electrical outlets for non-paranormal explanations.



**Amber Waterman/Sun Journal**

Laurie Notch, an anthropologist and Portland-based writer/producer for the new Wasted Minds Media Group Inc., with her film crew, left to right, John Hyatt, Kevin Sennett, Jacob Ochsenhirt, and Ted Hemberger at Mount Pleasant Cemetery in South Portland. The group filmed a trailer for a movie there last winter.



**Submitted photo**

Vlad the Vampire talks on film during "Strange Attractors," a pilot by Portland-based Laurie Notch that aired Sunday on WPME-TV.

"They really try to see if there's a logical explanation. If not, two of them are psychics," Notch said.

She's working to persuade homeowners in Alfred to let "Ghost Quest" investigate their haunted house. The women are scheduled as guests on ABC's "The View" on Nov. 14, according to the New Hampshire group's Web site.

Notch, whose company Idea Gems Publications prints the "Adventures for the Average Woman" magazine, also wants to break into filmmaking with a feature film called "Cube Ghoul," about corporate zombies. It's a musical zomedy in need of between \$5 million and \$10 million in backing.

"We're just shopping right now for the money to get it into production," Notch said. "It's Dilbert meets 'Dawn of the Dead.'"

Originally from Arizona, she's lived all over - Europe, Russia, Turkey, Africa, Asia - and settled in Maine four years ago. Her hope, she said, is to grow Wasted Minds Media and stimulate the creative economy here, putting Maine writers, videographers and talent to work.

"Ghost Quest" will debut at 10:30 p.m. Nov. 29. The "Strange Attractors" pilot may rerun on WPME early next year. The station airs on channel 17 on Time Warner cable and channel 35 on digital cable.

Both shows have potential for being picked up by a network, Notch said. And for spinoffs, like, perhaps, an irreverent talk show with one chatty sanguine elder.

"Talk about the economy with Vlad the vampire," she quipped.

#### **Got a strange idea?**

"Strange Attractors" television program is looking for future topics and guests. "A UFO, the biggest pig in the county, anything," says producer Laurie Notch. Send ideas to: [strangerealities@aol.com](mailto:strangerealities@aol.com)