

**Press Release**  
**Public Meeting about *The Great Amherst Mystery***

In 1878 Amherst, NS made international headlines when Esther Cox, an eighteen year old resident of the town, reportedly found herself at the centre of a bizarre series of events which became known as The Great Amherst Mystery.

Strange rappings and bangings were heard throughout her home. Objects flew through the air. Esther writhed in pain and swelled to twice her normal size. Countless people watched as fires were started and an unknown hand scratched into the wall above Esther's bed, "Esther Cox You Are Mine To Kill."

The story has become known in paranormal literature as one of the best documented cases of poltergeist activity on record. The New York Sun said it was "...in all probability the greatest (tale) of its kind in this or any age," while MacLean's magazine called it "Canada's most famous ghost story and a classic Poltergeist case." The story has been featured in countless books and television programs about the supernatural.

Now Charlie Rhindress has been hired by The Town of Amherst to help the town capitalize on its paranormal past. Preliminary plans are in place to create "Esther Fest," a celebration of Amherst and its paranormal past which will take place in 2017. The centrepiece of the Festival will be a new production of Rhindress's play, *Guilty! The Story of the Great Amherst Mystery*, as well as three weeks of paranormal related activities.

On Wednesday, Nov. 30 Rhindress will host a public meeting at the Community Credit Union Business Innovation Centre on Ratchford St., from 7-9 p.m. to discuss possible plans for the Festival and ideas for branding Amherst as The Home of the Great Amherst Mystery.

Rhindress will recap the story and talk about the strange things that happened when he wrote and produced a play on the subject in 1991. There will then be an open discussion about how Amherst might capitalize on this story to attract tourists and become an economic generator for the town.

Anyone who is interested in helping out with the Festival, would like to share their ideas about how Amherst might take advantage of its storied past or just wants to hear more about this famous tale, is welcome to attend. This is the first of three public meetings. There will be additional meetings with town businesses as well as local arts groups in the new year.

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