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The Psyche of Psychics

By Jane Fessenden



Jane Fessenden, a senior at Miramonte High School, loves to play soccer and work at the local Head Start facility. She is currently playing for the Lamorinda Soccer Club and working on her Girl Scout Gold Award.

palm reader who was dared one day to say the exact opposite of what the palm read. When Hyman did this with one client, the woman was so aghast at his accuracy that she didn't say a word throughout the entire reading. Hyman now believes that "it doesn't make a difference what you tell them, [it's] more of what you convince them."

Why do we ascribe to these paranormal systems? Perhaps because psychics offer a world of magic that uplifts us in our mundane lives. Though it could be legend, could there be otherworldly things amongst us here in Lamorinda?

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In 1997, J.K. Rowling published "Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone" - known in this country as "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone" - a book about magic and wizardry that captured millions of people's imaginations. "Harry Potter, books and movies, is awesome! I literally buy everything wizard," local teen Sarah M. exclaimed. However, this fascination with the paranormal has been around for centuries, and the latest "Twilight" movie is not recent phenomena.

Since the beginning, man has believed that supernatural is in some way real. The excitement of ghosts and telekinesis has been used for profit by industry, through books, television and film, to make millions of dollars. Though there is no viable evidence for any paranormal claims, the industry continues to grow. Are we falling for a huge psychic scam?

Since 1854, the Ouija board, marked with letters and numbers that "communicate" with spirits, has sold over 20 million sets. "I always pull out the Ouija board for game night," says the McDonald family, one of thousands who have a Ouija board in their home. Hundreds claim that spirit boards join the user and the dead by connecting to an inner channel within people. "Everyone is always so pumped to play the Ouija board! It's pretty spooky when you get an answer and nobody says they moved it," says Orinda student Claire R. Though, another line of thought is that the user is consciously or subconsciously controlling the reading device. Even more simply, the power of suggestion.

From bending spoons to telepathy, psychics have used trickery and illusion to perform supernatural activities. Some psychics claim to be able to read one's palm to foretell the future or the past. "I usually followed reading rules but to spice up sessions, I said fabricated things," says Lamorinda mom Mrs. Gee, who once read palms at dances.

Ray Hyman, a psychologist, was once a professional

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