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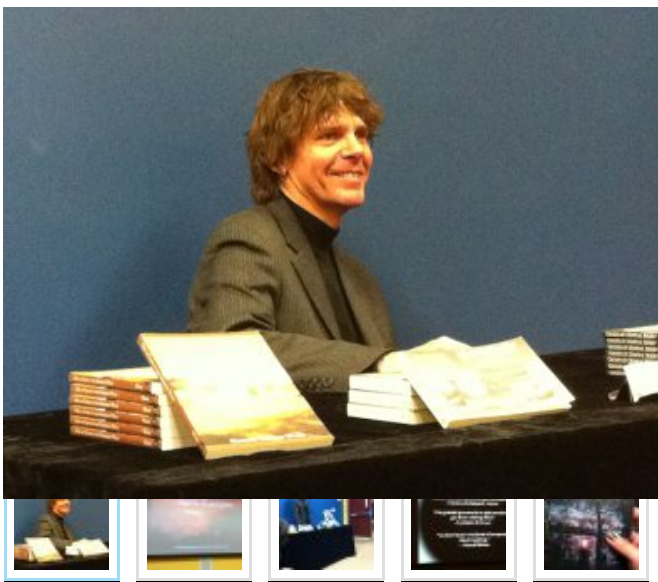
# Got Spooks? A Little Paranormal Activity Right Here in Hillsborough

Ever have a spooky encounter? I have. So the other night I sought out an expert in the ghostly field, Gordon Ward.

Posted by [Laura Madsen](#) , November 09, 2011 at 08:44 PM

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I don't walk around my home seeing or feeling ghosts all the time. Nor do I think about them a lot. I'm not some crackpot looking for orbs on a daily basis, either. But there have been times when the inexplicable has happened, so like many, I turn to the experts for answers.

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On the night after Halloween, I went to a paranormal presentation. Yes, a ghostly evening event held right here at the [Hillsborough Public Library](#). It was eerily dark outside; the moon was slightly larger than a crescent. It was cold and damp as some mist rose from the remains of the snow on the side streets. And that's when I met Gordon Ward.

[Gordon Ward](#) is a ghost expert, if you will. He also is a presenter, educator, and an author, and was the center of attention at "Ghosts: What They Are and How to Investigate Them" that evening. He actually wrote a book called "[Ghosts of Central Jersey: Historic Haunts of the Somerset Hills](#)", among others. During his presentation he shot down the myths and magic of supposed paranormal proof, while recounting his own experiences with "forces of energy", and telling tales of local ghostly legends.

His manner of logically and methodically explaining how to investigate a possible paranormal presence, allowed my six year-old daughter to enjoy and learn from his presentation, too. What? Did I *really* bring my young daughter to a ghost-hunting gathering? Yes, I did.

And at first I was a bit apprehensive. I was afraid she would be spooked, or walk away from it with nightmares, dreaming of [Freddie Kruger](#) or [Poltergeist](#). But once the presentation started, and Mr. Ward explained how there really is no reason to be afraid of these unexplained phenomena (which he was very good at explaining), I relaxed; because my daughter was quite interested in what he had to say about apparitions, poltergeists, and the like. So was I.

We learned a lot that night. First, if you think you see or sense an apparition or spectral spirit, use your common sense. Can this event be explained in a logical way? Is the wind blowing, tapping a tree against my window? Are my heating pipes just cooling down making noises? Maybe that was a flash of light from a car passing by outside my window. Or, maybe not.

Ward explained that there are very inexpensive ways you can investigate if what you are witnessing is a true ghostly meeting. First, you can do some research on the location, building, land, and/or area where this experience has happened. Maybe there was an event or something that happened in the past that could explain something like hearing children's voices, or seeing a figure walk across a room and then disappear. And the events don't necessarily have to be something terrifying either. Maybe these spirits just resided there in the past while they were in living bodies, and they are "stuck" since passing away.

Secondly, try to communicate with the entity. If you want to get "proof", try making a digital recording of the conversation you initiate. For some reason, when you speak to a spirit, you may not be able to hear their response. But! If you play back your recording, sometimes you can hear a reply; not always, but sometimes. It takes a lot of energy to communicate when you no longer have a physical body with vocal chords, so the supernatural try their best.

There's no need to hold séances or turn out the lights. According to Ward, that just adds an unnecessary panic factor to heighten people's fears conjured in their own minds, and also encourages people to trip and hurt themselves in the dark.

In my experience, whenever something "unusual" has happened in my presence, I feel as if it's benevolent in nature. Just someone visiting, perhaps, or passing through saying "hi". Nothing to panic about.

Ward does confirm that animals and children are sometimes more sensitive to ghosts in the area; perhaps because they don't have any pre-existing prejudices about what is "real" and what isn't.

Oh, and ghosts aren't limited to humans. Sometimes animals like to cross-over back into this realm for their own reasons, too.

I can't do Gordon Ward's presentation the justice it deserves. He isn't a ghost chaser looking to sensationalize every spooky legend out there, and he's not in denial that there are things that happen that we are just beginning to understand. Instead he presents a very level-headed and logical approach to proving that we are not alone.

While attending the presentation I had the opportunity to purchase one of Gordon's books and he graciously autographed it. One thing I will tell you is that after hearing Gordon Ward lecture on "*The Real Ghosts of Central Jersey*", so to speak, I have a more educated perspective on local legends and am not spooked out in the least.

And for those of you who do chase orbs with your cameras, go see one of Gordon's presentations. (He has his speaking schedule posted on his [website](#).) Hate to break it to you, but Gordon has logically and educationally proven that most of the time those "orbs" aren't anything but dust particles that your camera lens decided to capture on film. No wonder orbs tend to haunt old places - the older, the dustier, no?

Actually friends of mine who live in Florida were visiting haunted sites on a tour the other week and one of them took some photos with orbs in them. I asked Jennifer Durand, "Why would ghosts appear as orbs anyway? What's with that shape? If I were coming back to haunt someone, I'd be a little more creative and be a triangle."

I joke, but rest assured, there is a lot of verifiable information out there on ghostly encounters, and Gordon Ward does a great job of explaining how to be a modern-day "Ghostbuster", without all the hype - and you won't get slimed.

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**Beverly Gilbert** November 09, 2011 at 10:04 PM

As a young child, My daughter experienced a ghost in our home. She would see her standing either in her bedroom doorway or over her at her bedside. When we approached a neighbor about what my daughter saw, the neighbor was able to verify it was the old woman who we bought the house from. We learned she had recently passed away. We like to think she was visiting to check on the new family in her home. It has been over 10 years since anything has happened. We kind of like it that way.



**Laura Madsen** November 09, 2011 at 10:14 PM

"It's has been over 10 years since anything has happene. We kind of like it that way." - LOL Thanks for making me laugh. :) Maybe the old woman realized the house wasn't hers anymore and figured she'd better find a new place to "live". :) I think it's really interesting your daughter saw her. How old was she when she did? Kids sense a lot of things, I think.

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