

KERRIANN FLANAGAN BROSKY TELLS LONG ISLAND GHOST STORIES IN HUNTINGTON

On October 23, 2009 News 12's Danielle Campbell hosted a lecture and book signing event at her Harbor Lights Yoga Studio in Huntington. The featured guest of the evening was historian and ghost investigator Kerriann Flanagan Brosky who spoke about and signed her latest book, *Ghost of Long Island II; More Stories of the Paranormal*. Danielle graciously provided wine and hors d'oeuvres. With a glass of wine in hand we all eagerly took our seats.

My expectations for a paranormal investigator ran to someone like Amy Winehouse fighting bouts of sobriety. Expectations and reality couldn't have been further apart. Brosky's appearance is more that of a cookie-baking mom in *Good Housekeeping* magazine. She's smart too. Kerriann is a Magna Cum Laude graduate of Long Island University at C.W. Post, with a BFA degree in Photography. She worked as a photographer for *Newsday*, and then went on to photograph and write for a local paper. That led her to write her own column on Huntington's history. She went on to publish two books on the subject and did extensive lecturing as well. At one particular lecture she noticed that people were more intrigued with the ghost stories of old historical buildings than they were in more general island history. According to Kerriann, Long Island is chock full of ghosts.

Kerriann told us she met and partnered with Joe Giaquinto, a paranormal investigator in 2005 when she decided to take on the challenge of writing about ghosts and haunted locales all over Long Island. Giaquinto is a Magna Cum Laude graduate himself, from Adelphi University with a degree in Broadcast Communications. After the success of the first *Ghosts of Long Island; Stories of the Paranormal* (2006) fans wanted more. Brosky and Giaquinto obliged with the current book that focuses on the spiritual side of ghost investigation, while incorporating local history and interviews with people who have had paranormal experiences.

Kerriann is a firm believer in the Roman Catholic faith. Her belief in the spirit world does not in any way conflict with her religious beliefs. In fact, she found that becoming a ghost investigator has led her on a spiritual journey that she never anticipated. She remains a historian first and a ghost investigator second.

In case you are an aspiring ghost hunter, here are a few vocabulary words you need to keep handy:

ELECTRONIC VOICE PHENOMENA (EVP): spirit voices that show up on a digital recording. For EVPs on demand check out Joe Giaquinto's website at www.joegpi.com

ORBS: According to Wikipedia, orbs have been broadly interpreted as a highly variable range of paranormal phenomenon without verifiable causation — including invisible spirits, auras, angels, ghosts, energy fields, psycho energetic artifacts, energy balls, etc

Now remember, Kerriann is a professional photographer, so when she discovered orbs on her photos she knew that they were not just tricks of light or a dust particle or a smudge from a dog's nose. She says that they are most likely spirits who use the energy from the camera to show themselves. Often, she believes they are relatives who have passed on but want to stay close to their families. Being from a big family that put me at ease. After all, dead relatives who want to hang around aren't so scary. It's the live ones who show up unexpectedly for a long weekend that are frightening.

Ghost meter: A device that measures electromagnetic fields, radiation and temperature. You can buy this and other ghost hunting tools at <http://www.theghosthunterstore.com>, although you might just want to wait for an iPhone app. When a ghost is present the meter starts to move. When the meter pins itself to the far end of the screen it is time to decide whether to ask uncle Fred where he hid the diamonds or to just run away.

After we'd all been given a glimpse into Kerriann's work we were primed for some stories. Kerriann began with her interview of a couple who *used* to live in a haunted house in Huntington Station but have since moved. As Kerriann tells it, she set her tape recorder down on the coffee table between the couple and herself and never left the room. Her partner Joe was late and did not get there until after the interview. Kerriann took her recorder home and played it back. As she was transcribing the conversation she had had with the couple, suddenly she heard a little girl's voice that sounded like her mouth was right next to the speaker saying "Hold me." There was never anyone else in the room with them! She ran downstairs and played it for her husband who naturally felt a little freaked out. I'd have decided that this was a good time to abort the mission and maybe turn to writing cookbooks. Kerriann proved to be made of sturdier stuff and instead became more fascinated with the paranormal. Joe told her that it was a first class EVP. Wow, what a score!

Brosky then read a passage from the chapter about Execution Rocks Lighthouse which was pretty eerie. Execution Rocks is off Kings Point and has a very horrible history to it. The lighthouse used to have a keeper, but no one has lived there for years. Perhaps the name has something to do with it? While they were leaving the lighthouse, Joe, Kerriann and their coastguard escort heard an unexplainable, otherworldly scream. She believes that it was from one of the tortured souls who had their life ended chained to the rocks.

Throughout the night Kerriann was very matter of fact about all of the really strange phenomena that she has witnessed in the course of researching and writing her books. She was actually more comforting than scary. She told of people who tragically lost family members only to find that they are not lost at all. The spirits often gave signs to their loved ones. Kerriann only briefly touched upon demonic spirits and basically said that if it feels wrong where you are then leave.

Wanting to learn more, I bought the book and left the lecture feeling pretty good about how unafraid I felt. Of course it could have been the Pinot Noir.

I do not recommend reading this book alone and late at night. Early morning runs before sunrise have taken on some additional nuances. Lucky me, two of the chapters are devoted to paranormal activities in two houses that I run past almost every day.

The book is a good fast read. Each chapter gives some interesting history on some very cool places on Long Island. These chapters are like individual short stories, and while some can make you feel pretty freaked out, others are actually somewhat calming. This book would be a great gift for pre-teens through adults; it's like history with a shot of absinthe.

For example, there is a story in the book about a home further east that Kerriann visited. She interviewed the owner who told her that ever since she and her family moved into their old house, her young daughter would wake up screaming. The daughter claimed to see two spirits consistently. One was an old woman hanging from the ceiling and sometimes a sad black man in overalls standing in the corner. Of course her mother thought that they were nightmares. Later on she discovered that a slave had been hung in that room. There are many things in the book that just can't be easily explained, and which tie back to the history of the places where they happened.

If you get an opportunity to hear Brosky speak, I recommend going. It's thought provoking and Kerriann comes across as a pretty straight shooter. Are there spirits living among us? If we open ourselves up to them would we have more spiritual experiences? Why do human beings always feel the need to have proof that there is life after death?

All Souls day is November 2. You might want to be on guard. Is it some cats fighting that you hear, or your grandpa coming back to retrieve that whiskey bottle you stole from under his sink for the Homecoming Dance. Be prepared! Happy Halloween!

By Rosey Mulderrig, Publisher
www.villagetattler.com