

Seeking answers for the unexplained

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Jim and Tamara Dourney reject the label "Ghost Hunters," preferring "paranormal researchers." They say no one can prove ghosts even exist, but they do say there are things which can not be explained and that is what they try to find and explain.

FORT PIERCE -- Jim Dourney, 40, and his wife, Tamara, 35, were both born in Fort Pierce, graduated from local high schools, married, had three children and, when not at their day jobs, engage in what they define as "paranormal research." They reject the title "ghost hunters," even though they belong to an organization with the formal name of the GRIM Society, with the acronym standing for "Ghostly Research and Investigation into the Metaphysical."

Q. What is the GRIM Society?

A. We are paranormal researchers; basically a big family and some friends, who go out to people's houses to look for ghosts.

Q. Do you find ghosts?

A. Sometimes we find things we can't explain. I've never had a ghost come down the hall and talk to me. Basically, we find some stuff we just can't explain.

Q. So, you try to explain things that cause people to think they have ghosts?

A. Yes. We look for explanations. For example, one man thought someone was walking on his porch in cold weather. We found out the supports of the porch were expanding and contracting with temperature changes and it sounded like footsteps.

Q. How did you get into this activity?

A. Tamara has had experiences with ghosts since she was a small child, and it just blossomed from that. We started asking how things happen and why.

Q. So, are you ghost hunters?

A. We prefer paranormal researchers because the word "ghost" implies that there's something specific out there we are stalking. That's not what we do.

Q. Did you take any special training to do this?

A. We have done tons of research, spent time with other paranormal investigative groups. The members of our group are family and friends with a wide range of life experiences, some with emotional sensitivities. When we find things we don't understand, we try to ask people with technical and scientific training to explain it to us.

Q. How many cases have you handled?

A. Five private residences and a couple of outdoor locations. We met with the owners, asked them what they were experiencing and what they had done to find natural explanations, then we looked to see what was unexplainable. The investigations can take days looking into records and newspapers. The last might be a paranormal study, where we move into the house with our equipment.

Q. Your group is planning an event near Halloween. What is it?

A. A free Halloween history tour and ghost hunt at Old Fort Pierce Park on Indian River Drive in Fort Pierce on Oct. 29. We will explain some of the things people have thought ghostly about the park, conduct tours and talk about the site's long history. The first 50 participants will receive goody bags with a brochure on the park, a compass and a flashlight.

Q. How can people contact you?

A. Our website is the grimsociety.com; or by e-mail at thegrimsociety@gmail.com.

or our telephone is (772) 801-0177.

Caption: T. Dourney J. Dourney