

Make Fast Tracks ...
to Nantucket with the STEAMSHIP AUTHORITY Fast Ferry
 One Hour Passenger Service

- Your Town
- Today's Edition
- Check it out

- Things to Do
- Subscribers Only
- About Us

- Your Town**
- Acushnet
 - Dartmouth
 - Fairhaven
 - Fall River
 - Freetown
 - Lakeville
 - Marion
 - Mattapoissett
 - New Bedford
 - Rochester
 - Wareham
 - Westport

- Today's Edition**
- Top Stories
 - Headlines
 - Local News
 - World/Nation
 - State/Region
 - Living
 - Sports
 - Opinion

- Classified Ads**
- All
 - Announcements
 - Boating
 - Employment
 - Financial
 - Legal Notices
 - Miscellaneous
 - Personals
 - Real Estate
 - Rentals
 - Service
 - Professionals
 - Transportation

- Subscribers Only**
- Full Headlines
 - Obituaries
 - Lottery
 - Crossword
 - Horoscopes
 - Back Editions
 - Special Reports
 - Police Logs
 - Building Permits



Reading skills

Correspondent consults three mediums to see what his future holds in store

By DAVID COSTA, Standard-Times correspondent

Sitting on a pile of pillows in Maureen Hancock's softly lit office, I realized that the moment of truth had arrived.

"Most people who come to me want to connect with passed loved ones," the Middleboro medium told me.

Suddenly, I was afraid. What was I doing here at her holistic healing center? Had my curiosity about psychics and "fortune telling" taken me too far?

Did I really want to converse with the dead?

I wasn't sure about any of this but I did know that I couldn't turn back now. Besides, Ms. Hancock seemed normal enough -- even if she was now telling me that five of my deceased loved ones were waiting to talk to me.

Maybe it was my religious upbringing that had brought me to this moment. I was brought up Pentecostal (that is, extremely religious) and the notion of visiting a medium was considered both evil and taboo.

Of course, this made me all the more curious. And, lately, as it happens, I had more questions than answers in my life.

For these reasons, I decided to seek out three SouthCoast practitioners of the New Age arts, to see what they could tell me about myself and my place in the infinite universe.

Apparently, I am one of a vast ocean of people seeking the same answers. They are reaching out for more meaning and direction in their busy, stressful lives.

At least, that's what the Rev. Gail Hicks of Fall River believes.

"People are in search of spirituality," she says. "I think more and more people want to have someone to confirm or help them make decisions."

Zanna Camaioni, an ordained minister, holistic consultant and owner of the Infinity shops in New Bedford, adds that the stigma once associated with New Age practices is fading as more traditional folks discover its healing powers.

"All of this is really energy work," said Zanna, who goes by her first name professionally. "Everything is made up of energy."

Well, I knew this much from my seventh-grade science class. What I didn't know was how practitioners interact with that energy to help people feel better, both spiritually and physically.

That's how I found myself at Rev. Hicks' apartment one afternoon earlier this fall.

For the past 12 years, Rev. Hicks' full-time job has been that of a spiritualist minister, medium and healer, although she considers herself a healer first. She offers a "Meet Your Guides" meditation class on Wednesday evenings, among other activities.

She believes that everyone needs healing, and that sometimes a reading can do the trick.

The term "psychic," she says, is over-used and has negative connotations. But Rev. Hicks doesn't deny it's a gift she has.

"Since I was 5," she says, "I could hear spirit."

Rev. Hicks asked me to come with written questions. Ever the skeptic, I sealed my questions in a manila envelope. I figured that way, even if she held the envelope up to the light, she couldn't see what I'd written.

Rev. Hicks held my envelope to her ear, actually, and began her reading.



SCOTT CABRAL/Standard-Times special
 Zanna Camaioni speaks with a customer at Infinity, her New Age store in New Bedford. She gave Standard-Times correspondent David Costa a tarot reading -- and predicted a change of address. The Rev. Ruth Hicks performs a resonance technique at her Fall River apartment. She "read" written questions from Mr. Costa without opening the envelope in which they were sealed. Maureen Hancock of Middleboro calls herself the Medium Comedian and raises funds for cancer patients. She told Mr. Costa that a number of loved ones from the spirit world wanted to speak with him.

SOUTHCOAST TODAY'S Daily Specials!

Advertising highlights from Today's Standard-Times

[View all advertisers](#)

- Sears**
New Natick Store
- Domino's Pizza**
Specials
- NB Credit Union**
Make Holidays Brighter
- Regal House**
2 For 1 Recliner
- Town Fair Tire**
Best Value Lowest Price
- Alden Buick**
Score Big Savings
- Spinner Publications**
New Book!
- Grossman's**
Get Up To 50% Off
- Cingular**
500 Bonus Minutes
- Zeiterion Theatre**
Latest Shows
- A.C. Moore**
Moonlight Madness
- Fleet Bank**
Value Package
- Slade's Ferry Bank**
Equity Line of Credit
- CCBT Financial**
Tax Specialists
- Papa John's**
New Location
- FirstFed**
Free Checking
- My Travel Agency**
30th Anniversary
- Dining Guide**
Eat Out!

Search our ads by product:

At first, she dwelt on images of a theater. She described the theater as having burgundy seats, a balcony and boxes. She said she saw me performing on stage. She also shared that the show was in more than one place and a man "with a T name" was coming through loud and clear.

At the time, I had no idea what she was talking about. I am involved with theater, but had never performed in a theater with a balcony, nor did I know any man with a T name.

It wasn't until four weeks later that I figured out what Rev. Hicks had seen. That's when I received a callback from Providence's Trinity Repertory Company for its production of "A Christmas Carol." This year, the company will perform the classic play at the Majestic Theater in Boston, as well as in Providence. The Majestic Theater has burgundy seats and boxes.

The part I was called back for: Topper.

One of the questions I had written down to ask Rev. Hicks was a purely practical one, if not at all in her line of business. I wanted to know which children's book publisher to contact about the manuscripts I had written.

All of a sudden, she said that I had asked about a certain company. She told me to contact a company with a H name with a "ton" on the end. I had been trying, without a literary agent, to get Houghton Mifflin to read my manuscripts, but they refused.

The next day I called and the children's editor told me to send in my manuscripts.

The 10 questions that I had written were very specific and Rev. Hicks touched on each. I became so intent on what she was telling me, she had to keep reminding me to breath. Apparently, I wasn't.

She never opened my envelope.

My next visit was to Zanna. I met her at her Infinity shop on Acushnet Avenue (she also runs the one on Ashley Boulevard). Infinity is a store as well as a learning center that sells books, giftware, jewelry -- or as Zanna calls it, "All the tools to shift energy."

Certified in reiki, hypnosis, herbalism and aromatherapy, to name a few, Zanna says that her interests took root in her childhood and she never really wanted to do anything else.

"I couldn't imagine a day not doing it," she says of her interests. "It's my life."

Everyone has psychic abilities, she says, but not everyone knows what to do with it. "I feel we are getting messages all the time from a higher power, whether you believe it's God, guides, etc."

She says meditation is the key to being open to receiving those messages. To help people learn more, Zanna has psychic faieres four times a year as well as a magick circle (a discussion group) once a month. In these circles, the floor is always open to any discussion on spirituality.

Zanna used tarot cards for my reading. She instructed me to pick cards from the tarot deck, explaining their meaning as we went along. Although she was not as specific as Rev. Hicks, both women agreed on one thing: I am going to move from my current address before Christmas.

Rev. Hicks said I would be moving to Providence. Zanna said my new location would be a place of solitude, but when she put her hand on a card at this point, she jumped. She'd seen a lot of big buildings, she told me. My place of solitude would be a city.

My third visit was to Maureen Hancock, who co-owns Enchanted Garden's Pathways to Healing Holistic Healing Center in Middleboro. She calls herself the Medium Comedian and appears on Fairhaven's Fun 107, does presentations for groups and parties (including at Looks Unlimited in Wareham tomorrow) and founded Manifest a Miracle, a nonprofit organization that raises funds to cover the care of cancer patients (on Dec. 12, she will be at Middleboro Town Hall for the Best of Boston Medium).

Ms. Hancock, like her peers, is certified in a number of disciplines, including Shiatsu, a kind of massage, and she also teaches stress management techniques.

But it was her invitation to speak with the dead that made the biggest impression on me.

Right as we started our session, three grandparents, a great-grandmother and a close friend wanted to talk with me. My grandfather Louis insisted on taking center stage.

Through Ms. Hancock, he identified himself by telling me where he was born (the Azores), how old I was when he died (7) and whose parent he was (my mom's).

He said that I was his third grandson and that we were much alike. He said he was my "No. 1" guardian angel and that my prayers were heard up in Heaven.

I cried at that. And I left Pathways to Healing feeling ... healed.

I don't know how the mediums I consulted do what they do. I did not set out to investigate them. I only wanted to ask some questions and see how they'd answer them. Did they make some educated guesses? Did they just get lucky? Or do they have a gift, as they say they do? I don't know. The next person may have a different experience. This was mine.

David Costa is a former elementary school teacher, an actor and a model who currently lives in Dartmouth.

This story appeared on Page C1 of The Standard-Times on November 16, 2003.



DISCUSS
THIS STORY



PRINT THIS
PAGE



EMAIL TO
A FRIEND