Written by Carrie Poppy Friday, 31 August 2012 14:04

Every day at the James Randi Educational Foundation, we hear about "psychics" manipulating people, financially and emotionally; we hear from families who have been burned by false mediums, clients who have been scarred (literally and figuratively) by unfounded alternative medicine procedures, and even violence committed in the name of the supernatural. It can be easy to be overwhelmed by these stories coming in from seemingly every corner of the globe. But what can **you** do about it?

Introducing a new weekly column, right here at Randi.org, "What You Can Do to Fight Woo." Every week, I will share with you new stories from around the world (and next door too), about unfounded claims and the people (and sometimes animals) they hurt. But most importantly, I will tell you a quick way you can fight back, and make a difference. Here's what's on our radar this week.

New Jersey "Psychics" Co-Opt the Tragedy of Witch Burning to Defend their Practices



The Problem: "Psychics" Lee Van Zyl and Lee Ann LaRocca claim they have the ability to talk to the dead, converse with non-human animals, and have other psychic powers. Van Zyl, who once worked directly with remote villages in South Africa where people were assaulted and brutally killed for "witchcraft," used those experiences to defend her own alleged abilities. Of the comparison between witch burning and being ostracized for her own psychics claims, she said "I kind of saw what could happen if people were misinformed," in a recent

What You Can Do to Fight Woo (in Five Minutes or Less)

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article at

nj.com. For \$10-75 a class, you too can learn from Van Zyl and LaRocca how to perform reiki, channel a dead relative, or psychoanalyze your cat... or so they say. Their website

even states that during a mediumship session, they will not demand a penny from you until they provide you with "proof of [the] identity and personality" of your dead loved one. Yet, not a single piece of scientific evidence currently supports the claim that mediums can talk to the dead.

What You Can Do: Ask Van Zyl and LaRocca to put *our* money where *their* mouth is! Challenge them to take the JREF's

Million Dollar Challenge

, to

prove

they have psychic abilities. If they win, they can give the winnings to the charity of their choice. Perhaps one that fights childhood witch burnings? Write to them at metaphysicalcenter@gmail.com or call 973-866-0192.

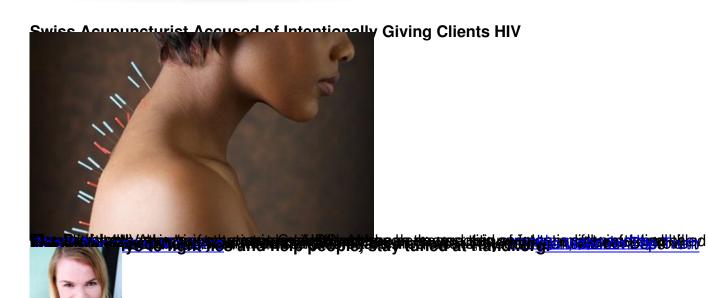
Always be brief and polite, for the best results.

Simply challenge them to take the test and if they refuse, ask them to stop using the real tragedy of witch burning to defend their groundless claims.

[&]quot;Ghost Hunter" Britt Griffith Uses Old Parlor Tricks to Mimick Ghosts

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