

## MONROE-AREA HOME IN BOOK ABOUT PARANORMAL

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Around this time of year, a lot of houses get a bad rap. Anyone who's seen *The Amityville Horror*, *Poltergeist*, or *The Haunting of Hill House* knows this.

Barry Brickey isn't helping matters with *The Silence*, a novel about the paranormal that he says is based in part on his own youthful experiences in a Monroe-area home.

"There were a lot of rumors of the place being haunted," he remembers. "Kids would come over just to witness things."

The two-story brick farmhouse stands outside of town near I-75 and Nadeau Road. Mr. Brickey asked to keep the exact location a secret to protect the privacy of the owner.



Barry Brickey, author of 'The Silence'

It's been years since the 40-year-old man spent much time inside it, but as a teenager he frequently visited a friend who lived there. He said lights turned off, doors mysteriously opened and closed, and there were unexplained noises. Mr. Brickey recalls one day when he entered the house and heard footsteps coming from upstairs, only to find no one was home.

The friend who lived there, Arthur Richards, now of Flat Rock, Mich., remembers once hearing an unexplained scream coming from the basement that made his hair stand on end. He said the area had Native American artifacts, and his mother's research discovered three deaths in the home not long after it was built.

Mr. Brickey, of Carleton, Mich., said, "I always wanted to write a story about the house."

A nightmare more than 10 years ago gave Mr. Brickey the impetus to get started and supplied the horror novel's opening sequence. The book itself takes place in Caseville, in Michigan's Thumb, where the author spent time as a boy. It follows a Florida woman and her two kids who move into a house that has a history of children who live there dying mysteriously.

Mr. Brickey, a career development facilitator, will sign copies of his self-published book Nov. 8 at the Monroe County Library System's Ellis Reference & Information Center, 3700 South Custer Rd. More than 40 authors will participate with him there in Writers on the River from noon to 3 p.m.

Over the years, Mr. Brickey said he's become a believer in the paranormal, and he's not alone. Just look at the barrage of ghost hunters and psychics on television.

But Joe Nickell, senior research fellow for the Committee for Skeptical Inquiry in Amherst, N.Y., says that so far there has been no credible scientific evidence, just misperceptions. His first case, he said, was a house in Toronto where the caretakers reported hearing footsteps on the stairs late at night.

"There really were footsteps on the stairs," Mr. Nickell said. "The footsteps were coming from a parallel staircase in the building next door."

Still, he doesn't expect the notion of the paranormal to go away. It's right at home with human nature.

"The paranormal has always been around," he said. "We always have had ghosts. We always will have ghosts. They are a really fundamental paranormal claim because we don't want to believe that we die and we certainly don't want to believe that our loved ones die."

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