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## Welcome, dead or alive

Tavern holds seance; late bar owner among possible guests

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Times Correspondent

LOWELL. | Rasz's Gathering in Lowell is a place known for phantom lights in dark corners, strange unexplained sounds and things that go bump in the night.

Televisions and lights turn on by themselves, and shadowy figures,

including the bar's former owner Benny Lynch, are reported to haunt anyone foolish enough to stay there after-hours.

"I think this is his heaven, and he doesn't want to leave," said Ray Raszewski, who owns the bar along with his wife, Linda.

In light of all the paranormal activity at Rasz's it seemed only natural to invite the Chicago area's famous "Coffee Psychic" Jorianne and her ghost-hunting partner, Greg Gracz, to hold a seance at

Lowell's most famous haunted bar, the Raszewskis said.

"A seance is where a group of well-intentioned people get together with a well-grounded psychic to talk to spirits," Jorianne said as she prepared for Thursday's seance.

The preparation starts with prayer and hymns and the drawing of a protective circle to keep out the bad spirits. The participants hold hands and concentrate on their



"Coffee Psychic" Jorianne holds a traditional seance Thursday at Rasz's Gathering in Lowell, where people were hoping to make contact with the dead.

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NATALIE BATTAGLIA PHOTOS | THE TIMES

"Coffee Psychic" Jorianne gets the room ready Thursday for a traditional seance at Rasz's Gathering. The bar's owner, Ray Raszewski, says it is haunted.

### Seance

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heart's desire while Jorianne seeks answers from the ghosts.

"I want to know where my next job is going to be," said Cheri McHale, a Chicago-area writer who attended Thursday's spirit communion.

Gracz, who says he has been ghost-hunting since he was 10 years old and caught the voice of his departed younger brother on audio tape, swears Jorianne is the real thing.

A wrought-iron cross is placed above one of the bar's mysterious downstairs rooms, one that is reported to be the place's most haunted areas.

Rasz's is full of spirits, and they all want to talk, Jorianne said as she began the seance.



Terry Dulin smudges the aura of Linda Raszewski, who owns Rasz's Gathering with her husband, Ray. Smudging refers to blessing and cleansing the aura of those participating in a seance.