

# Score is Skeptics 2, Psychics 0

By SEAN C. LEDIG  
of The Tampa Tribune

**TAMPA** — For only the second time in its 10-year history, the Tampa Bay Skeptics tested a professed psychic's abilities, offering a \$1,000 prize.

And like the last time, the psychic lost.

Virginia Levy of Titusville accepted the Skeptics' \$1,000 challenge Saturday at the Downtown Tampa-Hillsborough Public Library, 900 N. Ashley Drive, to prove some type of paranormal occurrence such as UFOs, ghosts or psychic abilities.

"We've had this challenge for 10 years," said Skeptics chairman Terry Smiljanich. "We believe in having a critical inquiry about such things as UFOs, channeling and ESP. I'm not saying they don't exist, just that these claims should be critically examined."

Levy's test consisted of picking which box out of 10 contained a crystal she had placed inside. The test was repeated seven times. The odds of picking the correct box all seven times are 1 in 10 million, according to Gary Posner, a Tampa physi-

cian and founder of the Skeptics.

Levy failed to pick the right box all seven times.

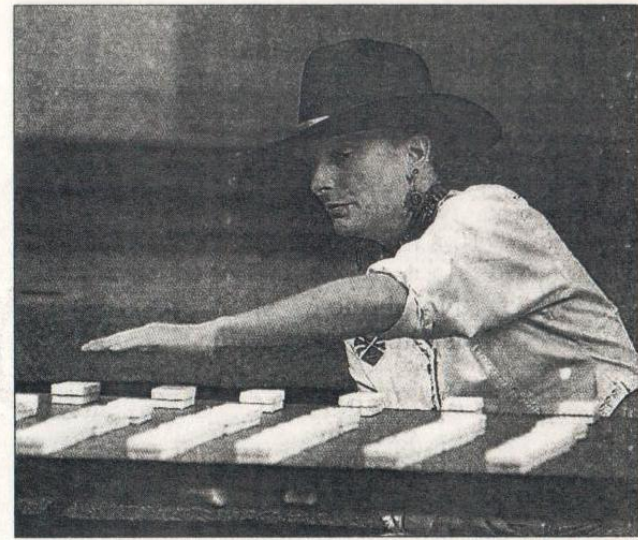
Levy said she still believes in her own abilities. She said she intends to someday face magician and psychic debunker James "The Amazing" Randi, who has offered \$1 million to someone who can demonstrate psychic abilities under controlled conditions.

"I am a psychic before and after this, regardless of the outcome," Levy said. "Regardless of what happens, me and James are going to rumble."

In 1989, Largo psychic Joan Morin attempted to prove her own abilities by guessing which of 23 boxes had an object placed in it and which were empty.

The odds of correctly guessing all 23 boxes are approximately 8 million-to-1, Posner said. Morin correctly guessed 10 boxes, which is average, he said.

► Sean C. Ledig works out of the Plant City office. He can be reached at (813) 754-3763.



CLIFF McBRIDE/Tribune photo

Professed psychic Virginia Levy tries to find a crystal she had put in a box at the Downtown Tampa-Hillsborough Public Library.

9/20/98