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Louisiana Book News: These books get you into the Halloween spirit

Need some good reads to get you in the Halloween spirit? Here are a few that may do the trick.

The second edition of *Dixie Spirits* by Christopher K. Coleman (Cumberland House, \$16.95) came out this fall and now includes a handy listing of ghost tours, haunted hotels and spooky places to visit. Coleman includes dozens of ghost stories and hauntings throughout the Deep South, including Louisiana, although our state could easily demand a book of its own.

If you're looking for something new within our borders, you'll be disappointed. Coleman discusses the over-publicized Myrtles Plantation in St. Francisville and the Voodoo Queen Marie Laveau in New Orleans, two popular tales that overshadow Louisiana ghost stories way more interesting, in my opinion. He also includes a section on the Cajun folktale of *les loup-garou* and their annual frolicking at the St. John's Eve Ball on Bayou Goula, a fascinating exploration of the French werewolf legend, but in need of some tweaking concerning Cajun and Louisiana history.

Overall, *Dixie Spirits* provides a nice roadmap throughout the South's haunts, with handy references on places to stay, including T-Frere's bed and breakfast in Lafayette. Maybe for the third edition, the author might examine their ghost, a deceased Cajun teacher named Amelie.

Cemetery expert Douglas Keister, author of *Stories in Stone: A Field Guide to Cemetery Symbolism and Iconography*, has published a field guide to Southern cemeteries titled *Forever Dixie* (Gibbs Smith, \$19.99). Formatted for easy travel and references, the book provides an in-depth look at cemeteries throughout the South, including Metairie Cemetery in New Orleans and Key Underwood Coon Dog Memorial Graveyard in Tusculumbia, Ala., where man's best friend lies in imaginative graves.

Keister also stumbles a bit on facts - the year of Katrina and "crawfish gumbo" - but it's easily overshadowed by the enormous research done on individual tombs and the additional chapters on architecture, symbolism and secret societies. One could also ask why he didn't choose other cemeteries in Louisiana, but that would be a book of its own as well. Let's hope Keister's next publishing effort will focus on the Bayou State and include some Cajun resting spots as well.

Note: If you have a great loup garou tale, or have your own opinions on Coleman's Cajun chapter in *Dixie Spirits*, please let me know at bacoen@cox.net.

Some children's books to consider for Halloween:

The Mystery of the Fool and the Vanisher by David and Ruth Ellwand (Candlewick Press) follows an early English photographer who stumbles on a mysterious box in an abandoned house. An old phonograph cylinder explains its contents and the former owner's brush with pixies. Incredibly imaginative and complemented by David Ellwand's striking photographs, this supernatural book provides just enough spook to entertain and is thankfully a respite from the usual gore and horror of the season.

A Practical Guide to Wizardry and *A Practical Guide to Dragon Riding* are both the newest

"guides" from Mirrorstone, fun books that offer everything a young reader would want to know about wizardry and dragons.

Can You See What I See? On a Scary Scary Night by Walter Wick (Scholastic) is this season's picture puzzle book for all ages.

Words and Music 2008

Words and Music 2008 literary festival will be Nov. 2 to 23 throughout New Orleans with headquarters at the Hotel Monteleone in the French Quarter. Headlining the festival is TV mogul Ted Turner, author of the forthcoming autobiography *Call Me Ted*, who will be interviewed by Roy Blount Jr.

Nonfiction authors include F. Scott Fitzgerald biographer Scott Donaldson with Kirk Curnutt, vice president of the national Fitzgerald Society; rock star biographer Holly George Warren and co-author of her current memoir project on Michael Lang, the man who created Woodstock; and NFL star and author Jason Peter and his ghost writer Tony O'Neill. Fiction writers include Robert Olen Butler, Andrew Davidson, Elizabeth Dewberry, Karen Essex, Pamela Ewen, Jack Fuller, Julia Glass, Stewart O'Nan, Tom Piazza, Michael Malone and short fiction writers Simon Van Booy and Barb Johnson.

For information, schedule and writing classes, go to www.wordsandmusic.org.

Book Events

Toni McGee Causey, author of *Bobbie Faye's (kinda, sorta, not exactly) Family Jewels* will speak at the October meeting of the Writer's Guild of Acadiana at 7 p.m. Tuesday at Barnes and Noble Lafayette.

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