Look! Out in the swamp! It’s Crawfish Man!

By GAIL GARCIA
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LOREAUVILLE — Another super hero has burst on the scene. It’s a super hero just for the Cajun children of Louisiana — the mysterious Crawfish Man.

Like many super heroes, no one knows his true identity. Perhaps he’s the character of Mr. Bomnin in the stories written by Mr. Bomnin, the creator of Crawfish Man.

No one knows. No one, that is, except Crawfish Man’s creator, Tim Edler.

Edler, a native of Loreauville, admits that since creating Crawfish Man six years ago, he has done everything possible to conceal crayfish man’s true identity.

“Crawfish Man’s identity is a well kept secret. The kids love it. I’ve never been so happy because I don’t have to take my picture anymore,” Edler said.

Edler uses only one picture of himself in his books to promote his work.

It’s a picture of him when he attended first grade in Loreauville.

Edler, now a resident of Baton Rouge, resigned from his engineering job in 1978 to turn his attention to writing.

“I started writing in 1974 in secret. They say there’s diamonds in your backyard. There’s no diamonds in my backyard. Heck, all they had in my backyard was moss and crayfish and turtles and snakes,” Edler said.

“And then I said, ‘Well, now I know what they mean when they say there’s diamonds in your backyard. That’s what you talk about, that’s what you write about,’ he added.

In 1977, he wrote his first book about the things he had seen when he was growing up.

The book, “Maurice’s Snake and Gaston the Near Sighted Turtle,” was originally a bedtime story told to his daughter who was 2 years old at the time.

He knew at that time that he would write a series of 15 books about a little Cajun boy.

The series is referred to as “The Atchafalaya Series.”

He has 13 out of 15 books completed in the series.

“They say you can paste your bedroom walls with rejection slips,” Edler said. “I said, ‘I’m not going to get a single one because I’m going to publish the books myself.’”

“I started publishing when I published my first book. The people you see writing books are mostly with white hair and over 65, so when I was 28, 29, I said I was going to do it,” he said.

“So I quit my engineering job and started writing. I have over 100,000 books in print. I’m proud of that. I do one or two books a year,” he said.

“Anybody can write a book, anybody can publish a book, but nobody can sell a book. It’s very, very hard. I do a little bit of everything in order to make ends meet,” Edler said.

He said no special skills are needed to become a writer, just a high school education. But books are expensive to publish.

It costs anywhere from $3,000-5,000 to publish a children’s book.

Edler justifies the cost by saying that many people own boats and motors just for enjoyment and that his books are his enjoyment.

He received most of his inspiration for his books from everyday things most of us seem to take for granted.

He uses as many Louisiana items as possible in each of his stories and attributes much of his success to family’s help.

“My parents gave me confidence, and I grew up with that. I just push forward. If I think I can do something I just go ahead and do it,” he said.

“My daddy was born in the Atchafalaya swamp in the Bayou Chene area. In 1927 there were 1,600 families living in the area. Now when you go there, the church steeple is barely sticking out. It’s been silted up over 50 feet,” Edler said.

“There was an Atlanta down there in 1927 that America doesn’t know about that silted up. All the people who live there meet every year at Bayou Chene,” he said.

Edler studied the history and the lives of the people of the area because his father was born there.

He refers to his novel, which he has been working on since 1979 and will publish in paperback form, as his “big bomb.”

By using the information he gathered, Edler plans to continue the Tom Sawyer story, saying that Mark Twain has been his inspiration to do the story.

A goal of his is to move back to Iberia Parish. He hopes that his increasing popularity as an author will allow him to do so.

Edler’s 13-book series includes:


Each one of his books contains a part of his life.

The story of Maurice and Gaston was written from his experiences of walking home after school in Loreauville near the bayou.

T-Boy was inspired by his grandfather who lived off the land selling fish and moss.

Then six years ago, Edler decided to make a super hero.

“We needed to have a super hero right here in Louisiana. We needed to have something we could call ours. So I wrote about Crawfish Man,” Edler said.

He described the hero as being part man, part crustacean, and with secret powers.

Crawfish Man’s popularity increased rapidly, Edler said.

He hopes that one day a 500-foot crawfish man statue will be built on the highway.

“We need something over here that people will come to see, but something that kids will want to see. Why not a huge crawfish man?” he said.

“People go to New York to see the Statue of Liberty or to Disneyland to see Mickey Mouse,” he said.

He said with the help of welders and his structural engineering background, his dream may come true some day.

But for now, he’s content just writing stories to please children.

Being the father of five children — ages 2, 3, 5, 11 and 13 — has given Edler all the experience he needs to write children’s books.

He has seen the world through the eyes of his children as he has grown accustomed to the editing of his 11-year-old daughter during the past eight years.

And listening to his children has afforded him with the stong popularity of Crawfish Man and his other books.

As for Crawfish Man’s true identity, Edler plans to keep it a secret for a long, long time.