Ghostly stories add to kids' reading enjoyment

By CHRISTINE WALDEN

The noise seemed to reverberate in the room and, his head under covers, he shivered every time the noise came.

Finally, it was more than he could bear and slowly and carefully he arose from his bed. With stealthy movements he tip-toed across the dark room, lit only by strange traces of moonlight.

"Uhh!" he screamed as he stumbled in the dark. He looked down and felt foolish. He had tripped over his shoes.

He wondered if he wasn't being silly, but there it was again that strange "clunckerunk."

He moved again, this time watching the floor.

Quickly he reached the closet and as he put his hand on the knob a chill ran through his rigid body. He turned the knob and pulled open the door.

"Psssssssss", in a flash two eyes darted out. His heart stopped he felt faint, he turned to follow the eyes and saw his old gray alley cat, licking his paws and purring.

THINGS THAT GO bump in the night. They scare the bejabbers out of adults, but for some reason youngsters love to hear (but not witness) those creepy, crawling adventures.

And what better time to get out the spooky tales than on Halloween eve when all the ghosties and ghoulies come out of their graves and the great pumpkin rises in the East.

Of course, you won't want to scare your child out of his wits, but you can provide momentary thrills with stories you enact during the telling.

For example, "The Thing at the Foot of the Bed and other stores" by Maria Leach, contains many stories designed so you, the parent, can get into the act.

"The Golden Arm" is a terrific thriller.

The story begins with a woman with a golden arm, which she was very, very proud of and which she liked even better than her real arm.

Well, the woman loved her arm so much she made her husband promise that if she died first he would bury her arm with her.

That he promised and one day the woman died, and buried her with the golden arm.

Then he got to thinking about how much that old arm was worth. And he thought and thought and finally one night he scurried along darkened streets to the cemetery and dug up the arm.

Then he hurried home and having no place to hide the arm, he took it to bed with him. But he couldn't sleep because the arm was so cold.

Soon, he heard a voice.

"Wheeerrree's my gooolllden armmm?" it asked.

(At this point the teller goes into his award winning act).

The voice was coming closer. Again asking, "where's my golden arm?"

Now it was on the porch. "Where's!"

Now it was in the living room "my."

Next it was on the stairs. "golden arm."

And then he saw it and suddenly it said (here the teller must pounce) "You've got it!"

And they all lived happily ever after.

THE STORY ABOUT "The Thing at the Foot of the Bed," though slightly violent, has its merits because it exhibits unnecessary fear.

As the story goes, a man was dared to sleep all night in a haunted house. Boasting he wasn't afraid of anything and that there were no ghosts he headed for the house.

When he got there he checked all the rooms. He checked the living room, the kitchen. He checked the halls, the attic. He checked everywhere.

Convinced there were no ghosts he finally went upstairs to bed.

Lying there he looked down and there, at the foot of the bed, staring right at him and not even blinking, were two eyes.

He was scared, but the only move he made was for his gun.

Carefully he aimed and fired

"Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhh," he screamed. After the scream, the teller remains silent, waiting for someone to ask what it was.

The man was so scared he shot off his own big toe, which was sticking out from beneath the sheet.

THERE ARE hundreds of spooky tales to tell. Some are too frightening, even for adults. But others, some fact, some fiction, coincide nicely with this holiday.

Some good books for children include "13 Ghostly Yarns" by Elizabeth Hough Sechrist and "Haunted Houses" by Larry Kettelkamp. The latter includes tales of the ghost of Ann Bolyn and recorded cases of ghostly encounters.

And when all else fails, imagination can work wonders.

Mary Tobin is given honor

Mary Tobin, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John Tobin of Hemlock Drive in Farmington, was one of 53 students awarded a nursing cap by the Saint Mary's College department of nursing Oct. 10 in the first capping ceremony since the nursing program was reinstated in 1973.

Caps are awarded to students who have attained junior standing in the nursing department. The nursing curriculum, which leads to a bachelor of science degree, provides four years of study in liberal arts and nursing. Clinics and health care agencies in the South Bend, Ind., area provide practical experience for the student nurses.

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