

Resident witch divines book

By TIM RICHARD

"Detroit's just as spooky as London or New Orleans," said Gundella the witch who has a love affair with the metropolitan area.

There's a connection. What makes ghosts in people. And what makes metropolitan Detroit fascinating is people said the witch from Garden City. Gundella makes her case in her new book, "The Werewolf of Grosse Pointe and Other Stories," which is scheduled to be in bookstores any day. Werewolf, \$1.95 in paperback. Farnight Productions, 120 pages, contains 25 stories and myths, all of a nature at least slightly spooky.

ONE STORY takes place in a churchyard in Farmington. It was related to Gundella by a local resident because it actually happened to him. That story first appeared in her column in Observer & Eccentric Newspapers.

"Some go back to Indian legends like the snake goddess of Belle Isle," said Gundella, bubbling.

"Another is the Red Dwarf—Nain Rouge," she said. "The most recent sighting of the dwarf was March 1 of this year by a Detroit Edison lineman."

Other stories occur at Pêche Isle in the Detroit River; the Seven Islands in Lake Erie; the site of the Renaissance Center in downtown Detroit; L'Anse Creuse, now St. Clair Shores; Mount Clemens; Lincoln Park; the Renaissance Park section of north-west Detroit; Van Arbor Ypanti and River Rouge.

The characters range from Indians to modern artists. French ribbon farmers to just plain homeowners.

THEY DON'T occur in graveyards. That's the least likely place to find a ghost. Gundella said, eyes glowing. "If I ghost hunt, it's because he wants to communicate, and who's it going to communicate with in a graveyard?"

"If anyone sees a ghost and it isn't a figment of their imagination, it's because the ghost wants to communicate or doesn't know it's dead."

"Werewolf" is Gundella's first book of this sort, although in her 22 years as a school teacher, she has written children's books and teacher manuals.

Sociologist Marcello Truzzi, Eastern Michigan University specialist in the study of witchcraft, wrote the book's introduction. He calls it "an important contribution to regional and urban folklore."

"THE WAY I happened to write the book," Gundella said, "is that I've always been interested in folklore. The story about dolls at the Renaissance Center—that was in my history book in third grade in Texas."

Roman Rabaak, head of Farnight Productions, once suggested that Gundella lead a ghost tour of New Orleans and learned it was too bad there couldn't be such a tour of the Detroit area.

"I said I could write a book," Gundella responded. "He said, 'Do it, and I had it done in two months.'"

She had collected the material over the years. Some tales were from letters in response to her columns; others were scattered in history books; others she had learned from interviewing the elderly in the days when she was a social worker.

WHAT MAKES the Detroit area a tremendous place for ghost stories, she said, is not only the people but the rivers and lakes.

Many of these stories occur on the banks of the river. The Detroit River is a transportation link with the world. It's also a link with the spirit world. Her hands rolled through the air like fog.

With such assets, Detroit is in the same ballpark with London and New Orleans as a sewer for ghost stories.

Her love affair with Detroit—Gundella uses the name loosely to designate the tri-county metropolitan area—began on her high school senior trip to the city at the age of 16.

In 1968, she arrived here as a fledgling teacher in the downriver area and, except for one spell of a few months, has lived in the area ever since.

Her love of writing and ability to handle the English language date back to when she was a 35-cent-an-hour printer's

devil. "You should pardon the jargon of the trade for a little old lady who owned the Toaco County weekly paper."

"And I admired an English teacher at Central Michigan University. He sang folk songs and got an idea for a folk song story tour," Gundella said.

"IF THIS BOOK is successful," she went on, "I'd like to do one on the ghosts of Michigan."

That won't be a two-month project, however, because it will mean some story collecting from scratch.

Gundella has one suggestion for reading her book.

"Read it not just to yourself but aloud at your next party. Then get the others to tell their own stories."

Pretty soon you'll find the person you least expect will come up with the most amazing—

Arthritis group meets Sept. 1

The fall sessions of the Michigan Chapter Arthritis Foundation "Mutual Support" program, will resume at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 1 at 7 in St. David Episcopal Church, Twelve Mile west of Greenfield, in Southfield.

The first guest speaker of these sessions, held the first Wednesday of each month, will be Dr. James J. Lightbody, medical director of the Michigan Chapter Arthritis Foundation. He will present slides and lecture on various forms of arthritis.

The "Mutual Support" program encourages arthritics and members of their families to participate in information classes to

help them discuss problems which arthritis has caused them.

The sessions are open to the public without charge as a service of the Michigan Chapter Arthritis Foundation, an agency of the United Way of Michigan.

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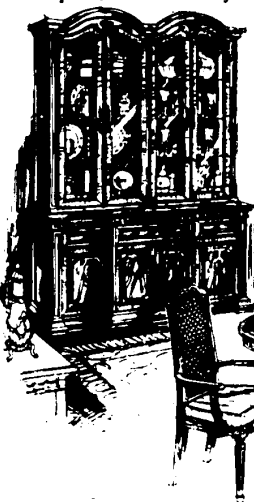
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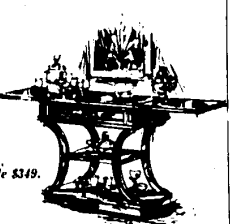
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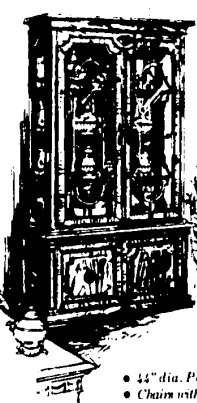
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