THE EDITOR'S PAGE
Don C. Marler

In the past year the Laffite Society has lost three members to the foul clutches of the Grim Reaper. Robert B. Looper, Joel B. Kirkpatrick, Jr. and John Howells are remembered in this issue by fellow society members. They will be missed but their contributions and our memory of them will live on.

This issue of The Laffite Society

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AN OPPORTUNITY MISSED
David S. Pettus

The 2003 Laffite Society Christmas Banquet was highlighted by President Jeffrey Modzelewski's address on the Life of Lyle Saxon, biographer of Jean Laffite. After sazeracs and conversation in the Maceo Bakery the assembled Laffite Society members and guests repaired to the Buccaneer Room for a wonderful dinner catered by Restaurant LeCoy. President Modzelewski's address followed the meal.

I knew nothing of Lyle Saxon before the address except that he had written a book entitled Lafitte the Pirate, that I had not read--an oversight now corrected.

During the address I realized that Saxon and I had something in common--we had both been at the St. Charles Hotel in New Orleans at the same time--Saxon as a resident and I as a transient. In 1944 and again in 1945 I stayed at the St. Charles for a few days. I was there for repairs on an injured right hand. My mother and I left Houston on a train from Union Station on Crawford Avenue, now Minute Maid Park. Soldiers were hanging out of windows waving and yelling, I now realize, at girls on the station platform. After an adventurous and wonderful trip, to me at least, we arrived at the Mississippi River. The train was divided into sections and conveyed to the eastside of the river by ferry and then assembled. Our room at the St. Charles was darkened--now I realize it was likely equipped with blackout curtain; remember there was a war on. My most vivid memory of my stay there is that it was Easter and my mother gave me a chocolate chicken. It was the only chocolate chicken I ever had and I loved every bite of it.

Even though I now know that Lyle Saxon was living at the hotel, at the time, I had no idea he was there. At the tender age of four I had never heard of Saxon or Laffite. The only person I remember meeting there was the room service waiter. Being served dinner in a hotel room on a metal cart was a new experience for me. It is possible that Saxon and I passed in the hotel lobby and didn't notice each other. If he saw me he made no effort to introduce himself; thus, an opportunity for our meeting was missed.