

Crab Lines



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PRESS RELEASE

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ACADIAN HERITAGE WEEK SHOWING OF DOCUMENTARY, RÉVEIL: WAKING UP FRENCH

Lafayette, LA October 3, 2006 - As part of Acadian Heritage Week, there will be a special screening of the documentary, Réveil: Waking Up French, in Thibodaux at Jean Lafitte National Historic Park and Preserves' Wetlands Acadian Cultural Center, 314 St. Mary Street on Thursday, October 12th at 6:30 P.M. Filmmaker, Ben Levine, will be present to discuss his work with New England Franco-Americans faced with the loss of a heritage language. The event is sponsored by Louisiane à la carte. Admission is free.

In the 1920s, when Louisiana children were being punished for speaking French on the school grounds, the Ku Klux Klan was burning crosses on the grounds of New England French Catholics. While there are numerous parallels between the challenges of the past faced by Franco-Americans in New England and Cajuns in Louisiana, rarely have the two groups come together in matters of cultural survival. According to Louisiane à la carte member, Ronald Gaspard, "Réveil is a wake up call and should be seen by anyone wanting to reconnect to his or her French heritage."

With 30 to 40% of Maine's population identified as French-American, there are as many as 60,000 people who still speak French with at least five times as many who lost this "heritage language" growing up or later on. Ben Levine's Réveil explores why the French language and culture of New England - whose past vibrancy was considered an anomaly to "melting pot" America - is now fading away. The film, primarily in English, is a grass-roots model for addressing critical issues of French heritage, language, and culture, leading to new community, cultural and economic initiatives.

Louisiane à la carte is a non-profit organization concerned with preserving Louisiana's French heritage and language through community and media development. For more information about this event or to schedule an interview with Ben Levine, please contact Charles Larroque.