



The Lovecraft Lovefest

***"I am disillusioned enough to know that no man's opinion on any subject is worth a damn unless backed up with enough genuine information to make him really know what he's talking about."* - H.P. Lovecraft**

In his lifetime, his following was limited. Since his passing, Lovecraft has become revered as one of the most influential horror writers of the 20th century, often compared to Edgar Allan Poe. And, as with any good cult, a following (which includes Stephen King and Joyce Carol Oates) has been created.

In August, the NecronomiCon Conference came to town to celebrate H.P. Lovecraft's legacy and to follow his admonition to gather information by experiencing first hand the streets and buildings that formed such an important part of his writing. It was a terrific event.

The opening convocation address was held in a packed First Baptist Church. Eerie organ music added the appropriate milieu to the proceedings. Attendees from all over the country were in town to pay homage to the Providence born and bred author. Yet while the occasional cult gathering has taken place in the city in the past... always involving a pilgrimage to his "I Am Providence" tombstone in Swan Point Cemetery... his local admirers here often complained he has received

very little love in his hometown.

This changed dramatically with the convention. Organizing groups put together a wonderful multi-day celebration of Lovecraft's writings and the artwork that it spawned. None other than Barnaby Evans took on a leadership role and created a special WaterFire that was highlighted by phantasmagoric creatures that fit perfectly with the nocturnal water pageantry and represented creatures from the author's Cthulhu stories.

The City's arts department joined in too and created plaques and events that finally give the author some of the local recognition he deserves. (By the way, the house where he grew up, though now privately owned, has been moved to Prospect Street at Meeting if you're curious to see it.) More important though, Providence's arts, educational and tourist leaders came together and put on one hell of a show for our visitors.

It excited the attendees. It certainly provided both a creative and economic stimulus to the city. And best of all, it has the makings of a replicable event for Lovecraftians in the future.

Kudos to all concerned for creating a wonderful week's worth of events and demonstrating what can happen when our city, tourism and the arts communities get together and are allowed to do their thing.

