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Lovecraft Fans and Scholars Gather for NecronomiCon Providence 2013

Peter Cannon | Aug 29, 2013

August 22 marked the official start of the largest convention ever devoted to horror writer H.P. Lovecraft (1890-1937). Some 1,200 of his acolytes started arriving that day in his hometown of Providence, R.I., according to Niels-Viggo Hobbs, arch-director of the Lovecraft Arts & Sciences Council and the convention's host.



H.P. Lovecraft

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That afternoon S.T. Joshi, the world's leading Lovecraft scholar and one of the guests of honor, gave the keynote address at the First Baptist Church, where Lovecraft briefly went to Sunday school before deciding he preferred the gods of ancient Greece and Rome. At one point, Joshi's speech was interrupted by the playing of "Yes, We Have No Bananas" on the church organ. This was, in fact, part of the program. Decades before, Lovecraft himself had slipped into the church one day and attempted to play this popular song of his era, but, as he reported in a letter, without success because the organ was not "a self-starter."

The Lovecraft Arts & Sciences Council later bestowed the Robert Bloch Award--named for the author of *Psycho* who as a teenage fan corresponded with Lovecraft--on Joshi. Also announced was the S.T. Joshi Endowed Research Fellowship, established by the Aeroflex Foundation and Hippocampus Press to support research to be conducted at Brown University's John Hay Library, home to the world's largest collection of Lovecraft printed and manuscript materials.

Other guests of honor included Robert M. Price, founder of the legendary zine *Crypt of Cthulhu*; filmmaker Stuart Gordon, of Re-Animator fame; and horror writers Laird Barron and Caitlin R. Kiernan. Among the panelists discussing Lovecraft's life and work over the course of the weekend were such notable experts as Kenneth W. Faig, Jr., Steven J. Mariconda, Jason C. Eckhardt, and Scott Connors. A relative newcomer to this group was Les Klinger, compiler of *The New Annotated Sherlock Holmes* and *The New Annotated Dracula*, who is preparing *The New Annotated Lovecraft*, to be published by W.W. Norton in October 2014.

In one major tribute to Lovecraft, a bust of the writer was unveiled at the Providence Atheneum, which also had an exhibit of Lovecraft materials from the John Hay Library. The intersection of Angell and Prospect streets on College Hill, the East Side neighborhood full of colonial-era houses that was so dear to Lovecraft, was recently named Lovecraft Square.