

THE CTHULHU PRAYER SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Sixth Meeting of The Providence H.P. Lovecraft Friends' Group

SEPTEMBER 23, 2001 — Once again, writers, artists, composers and others who are fans of the writing and mythos of H.P. Lovecraft, America's greatest horror writer, gathered at the Union Station Brewery in downtown Providence for the sixth Cthulhu Prayer Brunch. The managers of this micro brewery, famed for its excellent cuisine, waived the usual restrictions on chainsaws, unusual attire, and pets so that all could be comfortably seated at our outdoor tables.

Activities for the survivors of brunch included a trip to Brett Rutherford's apartment on Hope Street for gingerbread, tea and an audition of horror-related classical music. Music for the occasion was selected by Brett Rutherford and Allison Rich.

Documentary film-maker Hal Hamilton was scheduled to update us on the progress of his planned biographical film about Lovecraft. Finally, a trip to a nearby gallery was planned for an inspection of Gothic and "Day of the Dead"-style art.

The fourth Cthulhu Prayer meeting in July was held in Fall River, Massachusetts, hosted by Egyptologist, Latinist and classicist extraordinaire Dr. Jake Rabinowitz. More than 15 persons attended the festivities, which included a guided tour of the Andrew Borden house, where Lizzie Borden may or may not have killed her father and stepmother. Several guests drove all the way from New Jersey to take part in the day's events. Alda Xavier's Gothic presence made a special impression on the Fall River natives.

Other highlights included a fine Portuguese lunch, a visit to the vaults beneath a local cathedral to see the relics of St. Concorde (who appears to be the martyr saint of babysitters, and of supersonic flight), a walk through the winding hills of Fall River where our odd attire attracted genuflections and stares, and, finally, espresso, tea and pastries. At Dr. Jake's apartment, housed in a converted nunnery, we listened to the Mad Scene from Jack Beeson's Lizzie Borden opera, and to another song performed by Cyril Richard whose refrain was "You can't chop up your father in Massachusetts." Attendees were also introduced to the Victorian parlor game of "furtling."



Published every little while by The Poet's Press, 95 Hope Street #6, Providence RI 02906. Tel. 401-861-3272. Subscriptions free to contributors and members of the Cthulhu Prayer Society; others \$10 for 12 issues. Website: www.nywcafe.com. E-mail: erutefer@home.com. Contents Copyright 2001 by The Poet's Press.

FALL RIVER WELCOMES LOVECRAFT GANG WITH FINE FOOD AND A SHUDDER...



Some of the attendees at the July Cthulhu Prayer Society outing in Fall River, MA

We also had a reading of Stephen Ronan's fine poem about Lizzie Borden, based on childhood memories of living in the Lizzie-haunted town.

In August, an impromptu Cthulhu meeting was called, and we were joined by several escapees from the Necronomicon convention. The day ended with a visit to Lovecraft's grave, where the usual ceremonial poems were read. Brett Rutherford's new graveyard poem, "The Harvestman," about daddy-long leg spiders on a monument, was followed by the immediate discovery of daddy-long-leg spiders on a monument adjacent to HPL's grave. The new poem is reprinted below.

The Cthulhu Prayer Brunches are intended to be both social and intellectual, bringing together fellow creative artists and Lovecraft fans of all ages.

Most brunches are followed by field trips to Lovecraftian sites, film viewing, poetry/fiction readings or discussions. Artists engaged in Lovecraft-related work are encouraged to bring their work to show and share.

Artists and writers may also submit work excerpts, poems, graphics files, shameless promotions of their work, and personal ads for trans-dimensional relationships.

THE HARVESTMAN by Brett Rutherford

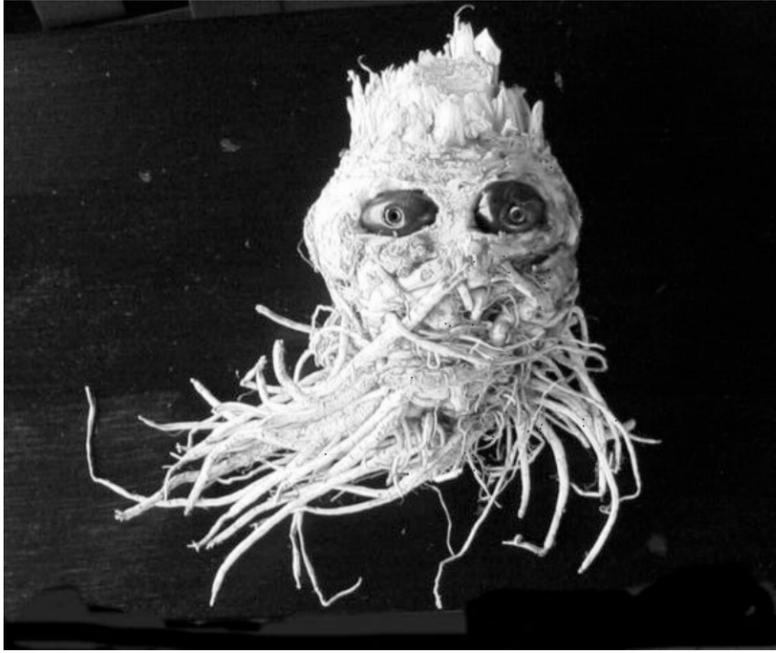
Day fell. The cooling sun careened and set,
an orange flare behind the broiling hill.
August is full upon the town, and yet
the lakeside grove is desolate and still.

No gravestones bear my surname here —
(my forebears have vanished
to scattered dust) —
yet this is where I contemplate a bier,
a monument, a poet's shattered bust.

This burial ground of proud
and prudent Scot
is now a blasted place of toppled stones,
storm-blasted trunks and layered,
fungal rot,
tree ears and bell-shaped mushrooms
white as bones.

The ancient limestone markers,
tumble-tossed,
cast off like cards at the end of a game,
speak of loves played and
grand illusions lost,
fragmented now to letters from a name,

scrabbled by giants or angry,
spiteful youth,
treefall, or lightning's vengeful, jabbing
pen,
first from surname pulled
like a broken tooth,
birth date from death, there where of it,
the when



HOW TO MAKE YOUR OWN CTHULHU IDOL Using Loathsome Vegetables From the East Side Market!

At past gatherings at Lovecraft's grave, I have several times left my own Cthulhu idol against Howard's gravestone. It is made from a celery root, which can often be found at supermarkets with dozens or tentacle-like roots still attached. I usually cut eye holes with a paring knife and insert cranberries for eyes. Recently I discovered the Cthulhu idol shown above on my doorstep, and Pierre Ford and Jennifer Booth finally confessed it was their handiwork. They used black olives for eyes (disturbing) and pushed in small machine nuts for irises (even more disturbing).

So, for those casual readers who have wondered "Who or what is Cthulhu, anyway?" the image above provides a vague hint of the visage of the God you don't want to preside over your daughter's wedding.

For Halloween parties, I recommend an "Elder God Platter," graced with several of these celeriac Cthulhus, plus fresh okra painted with malevolent little faces (use Saddam Hussein as a model.)

Anyone who has created other Lovecraftian food sculptures is welcome to submit photographs of their handiwork.



EVENTS

**WEDNESDAY OCT 3
OPEN POETRY READING**
6:30 pm, Rochambeau Library,
708 Hope Street, Providence.

**SUNDAY OCT 21st
CTHULHU PRAYER BRUNCH**
11:30 am, Union Station Brewery.
Program to be announced.

**WEDNESDAY NOV 7th
OPEN POETRY READING**
6:30 pm, Rochambeau Library,
708 Hope Street, Providence.

**SUNDAY NOV 18th
CTHULHU PRAYER BRUNCH**
11:30 am, Union Station Brewery.
Recreating HPL's "Dark Swamp"
search in Chepachet, Foster, Gloucester with Allison Rich.

**SUNDAY DEC 16th
CTHULHU PRAYER BRUNCH**
11:30 am, Union Station Brewery.
Program to be announced.

**Dec 31st — JAN 1
POETS' NEW YEARS EVE**
Second annual Poet's Press Gothic
New Years' dinner & fireside New
Years' in historic Bristol, RI. Indian
dinner in Warren, B&B in Bristol in
historic house with fireplace, decadent
New Years' breakfast. By reservation
only, attendance limited.

MISKATONIC UNIVERSITY DRINKING SONG

created for
THE FIRST CTHULHU PRAYER
BREAKFAST

Yog-Sothoth! Yog Sothoth!
Bless our broth!
Tekelili, Tekelili!
Bend the knee,
Drink the tea!
Nyarlahotep! Nyarlahotep!
Nothing rhymes with Thee!
Azathoth! Azathoth!
Not more broth?
Herbert West? Be my guest!
Dexter Ward — but not possessed!
Ech Pi El! Ech Pi El!
Taste the ale!
Cthulhu! Cthulhu!
Union Brew! Union Brew!

Is This the Ur-Cthulhu? Fleur-de-Lys Building Shows Its Fishy Face

Legend has it that Lovecraft was inspired to create his ocean-bound god Cthulhu after being haunted by a sculpted face on the front of Providence's Fleur-de-Lys building, a structure still intact and owned by the Providence Art Club. Here's CPS member Pierre Ford recreating that moment of cosmic horror..



THE HARVESTMAN

— continue from page 1

now jumbled like a madman's ransom note.
Words carved in stone as certain history confound the reader now in jumbled quote, turning church'd facts to puzzled mystery.

Upon an obelisk of limestone, cold with the chill of glacial remembering, beneath the wizened shade of maples, old with a century's Novembering,

a host of Harvestmen ride skitter-skit, legs tracing Braille of infant's monument. Daddy-Long-Legs! sly arachnids, unfit for sunlight, silent raptors, demon-sent —

Why do you writhe and twine
those wiry limbs
(too many to count as they crouch
and leap)?
Why herd like worshipers entranced
by hymns,
then fly like clerks with appointments
to keep?

One moment you're here
in a skittering tide;
then, as my shadow touches your eyes,
you race to the obelisk's other side,
the way a tree'd squirrel is caught
by surprise.

We play out this Harvestman
hide-and-seek,
round and round the moss-fringed,
ancient grave,
'til I can almost hear these
monsters, meek
and voiceless, moving in a song, a wave

of primal hungering. Bad luck,
cursed crops,
they say, if you kill one. Better to dread
their venomless fangs, their sinister drops
from overhanging branch or dusty bed!

What do they eat? What do those tiny eyes
seek out and chase
amid marble and slate?
Leaf-litter bugs, dead things of any size,
trapped beneath fangs and feeders (eight!)

Are you the harvesters of suicides?
Do the soul buds of babies appease you?
Do you drink the tears
of abandoned brides?
Does the mist from rotting coffins
please you?

Your mouths are not for speaking,
Harvestmen.
Your secrets, like the truth
behind the stones
(how did they really die, and why,
and when?)
are told in your thousand-leg dance
on bones.

Night now. The knowing moon will rise
and set,
an umber globe behind the misty hill.
Pregnant autumn is in the air, and yet
the still-green grove is desolate and still.

All night, ten thousand eyes are
watching here,
shepherds tending their ectoplasmic fold,
forty thousand spider tendrils, fear
incarnate, soul vampires, patient and old!

Harvestman, Harvestman, whom do you seek?

[This poem is cast in the meter and rhyme scheme of Grey's "Elegy in a Country Churchyard."]

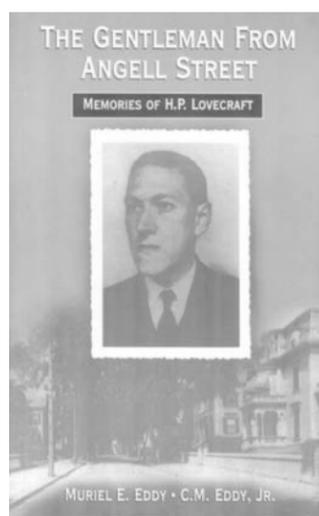
Photo: Keith Johnson



THE OLD GENT'S FRIENDS

Howard P. Lovecraft always seems to lure new friends to Providence. One of the latest additions to the CPS member roster is British-American actor and documentary film-maker **Hal Hamilton**, who dwells in a stone-walled house perched on the hill below The Shunned House. Hal moved to Providence last winter and is hard at work on plans for a film documentary about Lovecraft, tentatively titled "H P Lovecraft: The Man Who Was Halloween." Hal's abode has already attracted a number of odd & spectral visitors, including a scurrying rat, and a possessed, perhaps re-animated, skeletal cat named Spike. "It eats, but it doesn't have to — that's the really awful part."

Alda Xavier, the Gothic mistress of Northern New Jersey, flew up on bat wings to join our Lizzie Borden tour, and came again with friends for a busy Providence weekend. She hopes to come back and explore Providence's sinister night haunts. Alda recently returned from a trip to Transylvania, and her memoir of the tour appeared in Issue 14 of *Underground Entertainment*.



tainment.

Jim Dyer of Narragansett has shown us that the last word has not been said about HPL's life in Providence. Mr. Dyer is the grandson of C.M. and Muriel Eddy, both writers and personal friends of The Old Gent. Here in the just-published, slender book, *The Gentleman from Angell Street: Memories of H.P. Lovecraft*, the flourishing Fenham Publishing prints and reprints various articles and memoirs by the Eddys regarding their friendship with the nocturnal HPL. We learn about HPL arriving at midnight with bags of broken crackers and broken pieces of chocolate (cheap, he assured them, but just as good as the unbroken

items!). We also read about Lovecraft's divorce, and the Eddys' vain attempts to stir up a romance between HPL and writer Hazel Heald. There are also details about Lovecraft's friendship with Harry Houdini. I do not doubt that past Lovecraft biographers had access to some if not all this material, but I think we should all be grateful to have the Eddy materials gathered into a single book. It's available for \$9.95 at local bookstores. The book is also available from Fenham Publishing, P.O. Box 767, Narragansett, RI 02882.