

# READERCON

## PROGRESS REPORT 2

Writer GoH: Gene Wolfe  
Publisher GoH: Mark Ziesing  
Holiday Inn of Brookline (Opens 1/87)  
June 27-28, 1987

Hello again. It's been a little over six months since I last sat down to talk to you all at once. There are a lot more of you now (71 instead of 28). What does this mean? Most probably, that this will be a convention very different from the one we originally envisioned (in March '85) for our first time out. That one would have been a gathering of some 50-100 people, almost all local, with a sprinkling of local authors, but one that would have been created almost entirely by its' attendees: a *participatory* rather than passive gathering, with everyone involved. With 10 months left to go at this writing, it's now clear that the Attending membership total alone should have little trouble clearing 400, that you'll be coming from more places than the 14 states (and one Canadian province) that you currently inhabit, and that there'll be more "pros" around for you to meet and talk to.

But one thing is unlikely to change much: the participatory nature of our programming. We like to think that our focus on SF and fantasy as forms of *literature* will draw a unique group of people. We like to think that you're a bit different. And we'll be arranging our programming to match, designing it to facilitate active exchange of ideas and opinions. We'll also be soliciting your ideas in planning this whole process (see the "Announcement" pages for more information on the enclosed questionnaire).

**ABOUT THIS ISSUE:** Those of you who are reading this first (current members and complementary-list people) have probably noticed that this is not July, our announced publication date (if you were fortunate, you might have seen the dummy of this issue that we were passing around at Worldcon). This is more-or-less equally due to my underestimating the time needed to generate this much copy, and to our decision to switch to *real* printing now, so as to gain experience in the present, when time isn't quite as critical as it would be at, say, Program Book time. Our apologies to you, and to our advertisers. We've got a handle on this now, honest.

For our GOH sections this time out we asked both Gene Wolfe and Mark Ziesing for short bios. In response we got some interesting facts from Mark, and an essay from Gene. We'll be back early next year. -RC

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(MITSFS)

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

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### About the change-over

If you read the section of our first Progress Report entitled "About the Bradford", you might have noticed a bit of uncertainty on our part as to whether things were going to go exactly as we'd planned. They didn't. It seems as though the sale that had been announced for April fell through (the second time that had happened); simultaneously, the renovation schedule was pushed back to a point dangerously close to con-time (our new hotel's renovation schedule has slipped a bit too, but the process is far enough along, and the dates far enough away, so as to cause us no worries). Obviously, some changes were called for, and we think we've been pretty lucky in finding an even better deal than we'd had already. We do hope things work out at the Bradford, and are still considering it for the future (it's bigger, for one thing). For more information on our new hotel, see "About the Holiday Inn of Brookline".

### About the Questionnaire

Enclosed with this report you will find a questionnaire. It has two main purposes. First, it will give us an idea of how to plan the con physically. It will give us a feeling for, among other things, what percentage of Attending members (especially those of you from out-of-state) are actually coming, for how many nights (and starting which night), as well as giving us a percentage breakdown for single, double, triple, and quad accommodations. It will also tell us what percentage of Supporters are likely to become Attendees. All of the above will be helpful to us in two ways; it will enable us to handle room bookings with the hotel in an intelligent fashion (alerting us well in advance if we need to book overflow rooms nearby), and it will give us an early indication of crowd size, helping us to estimate the number of at-con volunteers needed and various expenses. The second purpose of the questionnaire is to gauge your interest in various types of programming ideas, and to solicit suggestions. You'll notice a number of questions relating to things which other cons have done in the past, but the most important lines in this section are the *blank* ones, the ones where you give us your own vision of what a readers' convention could be like, and what it might mean to have one in the first place. The Readercon Lexicon defines *tradition* as "a decision someone else had all the fun of making for you". Together we can do a fair amount of re-inventing here, and keep some of that fun for ourselves.

### New Rates

We have added a new rate. Memberships purchased at-the-door will now be \$15. This is a step aimed at encouraging early sign-up which, like the questionnaire, should give us a better idea of what's going to happen before it actually does. We now also have our room rates (see "About the Holiday Inn of Brookline" for details).

### Volunteers Needed!!!

We are at the point where we need to expand our staff. At the moment we could use a few people to help us organize the program (and solicit participants). By mid-winter we would like to assign most of the main responsibilities within Operations (Hotel Liaison, Supplies, Registration, Complaint Desk, etc.), so as to have, by spring, a solid structure in which to fit at-con volunteers. So if there is any way in which you would like to help, please get in touch (we'll be especially happy to hear from out-of-staters who would be willing to donate a few hours of their time).

### Future Publications

February should see the release of the final Progress Report for Readercon 1. It will feature all the programming information available at that time, and updated information on everything else. It will be mailed 1st class. The Program Book will be available at the con, run from 36-40 pages (not including cover), and be mailed 3rd-class to non-attendees. The Final Report will be produced as soon after the con as is possible (we'll probably shoot for the end of October), and will contain photos, speeches, some edited transcripts, quotes, and other memory-inducing material, plus a financial statement and the first Progress Report for Readercon 2 (as a four-page center-spread). It will be mailed 3rd-class.

## READERCON QUESTIONNAIRE

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Geographic Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Which nights do you expect to stay in the hotel? Fri \_\_\_ Sat \_\_\_ Sun \_\_\_ None \_\_\_

Check the room type you'll request:

Single \_\_\_ Double \_\_\_ Triple \_\_\_ Quad \_\_\_ Don't Know \_\_\_

Are you actively involved in any of the following sf/fantasy -related activities (check all that apply)?

fandom \_\_\_ writing/fiction \_\_\_ writing/criticism \_\_\_ art \_\_\_ editing \_\_\_ publishing \_\_\_ other \_\_\_\_\_

Is your involvement professional? yes \_\_\_ no \_\_\_

Three authors whose work you admire:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### INTERESTS

Readercon won't be bound by tradition, but we'd like to know how our membership feels about some of the standard convention activities. Please rate your interest in each of the following on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is "not at all interested" and 5 is "extremely interested." If you are actively hostile to an item, rate it as 0.

#### General Areas of Interest

"hard" science fiction (e.g. C.J. Cherryh): \_\_\_ "magical realism" (e.g. Jorge Luis Borges) \_\_\_  
"soft" science fiction (e.g. Ursula K. LeGuin): \_\_\_  
fantasy \_\_\_ horror \_\_\_ fandom \_\_\_ social issues \_\_\_  
sword and sorcery \_\_\_ science and technology \_\_\_  
other \_\_\_\_\_

#### Activities

Art show	___	Evening party	___	Huckster Room	___
Authors' readings	___	Fanzine room	___	Late-night sessions	___
Autographing	___	Filksinging	___	One-shot production	___
Banquet	___	Gaming	___	Rare book auction	___
Con newsletter	___	Gripe session	___	Small press awards	___
Costume party	___	GOH speeches	___	Writer's workshop	___

#### Eras of Fiction

Pre-Campbell sf	___	Classic fantasy	___
"Golden Age" sf	___	Modern fantasy	___
"New Wave" sf	___	Roots of horror	___
"Cyberpunk" sf	___		



## WOLFE ON WOLFE

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### Where Castle?



I read Kipling a lot as a kid, and I'm reading him again now. What separates these dips into the British raj is most of my life. I still have his collected poetry, inscribed in my mother's hand: *Gene R. Wolfe, Xmas 1945, 1619 Vassar St., Houston 6, Tex. K3 1929.*

Well, it just goes to show you. We let one little number, that "6", in between the town and the state, and now we have nine-digit zip codes. Extrapolation proves conclusively that within a hundred years each zip code will occupy an entire page of fine print. I'm going to hate that.

But to get back to Kipling and me, the frontispiece shows a bald man with very small glasses and a white mustache. Although I loved some of his poems, it never occurred to me that he and I really had much in common. To start with, he was dead. I, on the other hand, was alive, a gawky fourteen-year-old with hair, a nude upper lip, and big glasses.

Lately that's started to seem wrong. For one thing, Kipling and I have the same British agent--A. P. Watt. I haven't yet grown a mustache, but my glasses are becoming smaller. Kipling said that England was the most interesting foreign country he had ever visited, and I feel just the same way. Kipling was born in Bombay, India; I was raised in Houston, which has the same murderously hot and muggy climate.

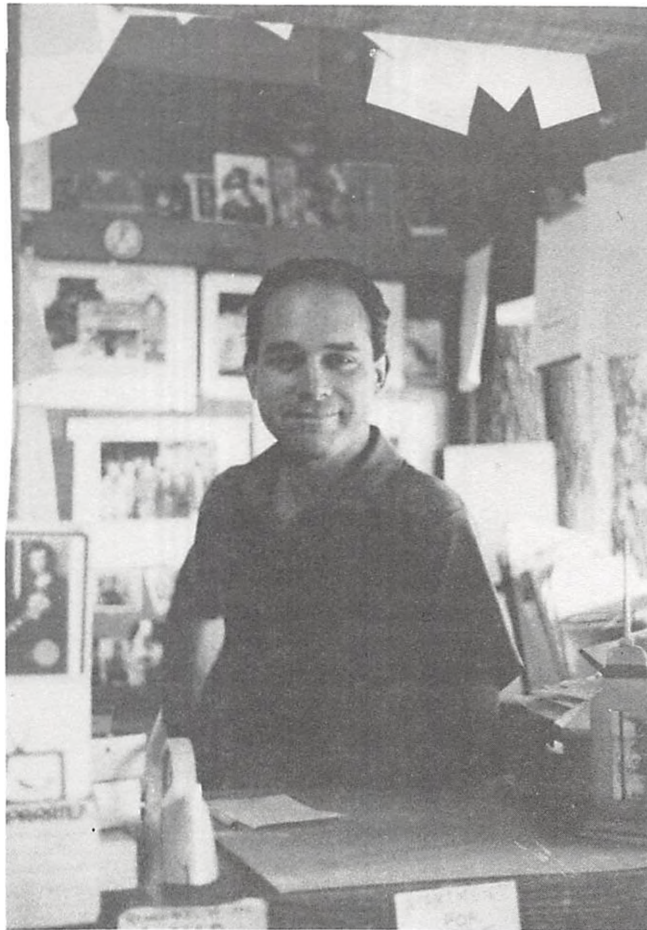
Kipling wrote some science fiction, of course; but not everything he wrote was science fiction. He wrote a book about a man who compulsively recalled the ancient world; I recently finished a book about a man who compulsively forgets the ancient world: *SOLDIER OF THE MIST*.

And yet I can't escape the feeling that parallels equally valid or invalid could be found in the lives of most writers; we are shaped by our craft as least as much as Mr. Sherlock Holmes (surely as great a Kipling fan as I) found weavers and sailors to be molded by theirs. And I think most of us are shaped as much by the reading as by the writing; it's a poor writer who doesn't read two or three times as much as he writes. If that's so, then we are not only people *very* much like you-- we *are* you. Publishers would like to pigeonhole us, or so it seems to me; but we are forever climbing out and going next door to visit. Because we are living people, after all, people who don't always obey the rules because we're so much older than the rules, older than Kipling, older far than the ancient stone dwelling into which he settled after so much globe trotting.

Here, then, is our castle. And if it looks remarkably like a bookcase to those who don't live here, so much the worse for them. Our home is our castle, after all; and it is our hope. Welcome to our family reunion.

## ABOUT MARK ZIESING

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Our Publisher GOH was born on March 25, 1953. He entered the book business in 1973 as a bookseller, and, with his brother, began a small publishing operation in the late 70's as a sideline. It became something more with the publication in 1982 of Gene Wolfe's *CASTLE OF THE OTTER* (a book of essays revolving around the creation of *THE BOOK OF THE NEW SUN*), now a genuine collectors' item. He's been publishing (on his own) ever since, and says he's had the good fortune to publish most of his favorite writers (among his favorites that he *hasn't* published are Iain Banks, J. G. Ballard, and Michael Moorcock). In the meantime, he's continued as a bookseller and, when not engaged in his GOH functions, will be seen in the Readercon Huckster Room.

When not involved with books in one way or another, or with his family (he's married, with two children), he drums part-time with a rock and roll band called the Gadgets, whom he's been with for the last four years. He's been a drummer since age 11, and his current favorite bands (a rapidly-changing list) include the Drongos, Meat Puppets, Suburbs, and Bodeans.

## SOME EVENTS...(Our thinking to date)

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### **Small Press Awards**

Our purpose in establishing an award for the small press sector of SF/Fantasy publishing is to bring your work that you might otherwise miss. Now that imaginative literature is no longer an overlooked category of publishing, it is often subject to the same marketing pressures that attend other successful enterprises (e.g. hit records or movies). And when books of a particular type have the potential to become best-sellers, you can imagine how hard those pressures are to ignore. Historically, one of the most vital things that small presses, both in the mainstream and in genres, have done is to publish ambitious, high-quality work that might not be in accord with what large publishers believe will sell. With the pressures listed above, we believe that much important work in this field will come to be done in the small presses, and we think this is something that readers should know about.

In the next few months, we will be soliciting the opinions of many people involved in the Small Press scene as to what they believe a meaningful award in this area would be like, how it would be picked, etc. Of course, an award like this can only be as good (*and* as meaningful) as the level of input and participation that goes into it. Being realists, we realize that it may take a few years for the award to attain the significance we hope for it, but we've got to start somewhere, right?

### Party/Banquet

Not too much to say about the party. It'll be on Saturday night, in Ballroom A, and will probably have a cash bar and no purpose other than socializing. The banquet will depend largely on your responses. Should we have one at all? Should it be tied to the GOH speeches? To the award? Should it be just before the party?

### Rare Book Auction

Something we definitely want to do (can you think of anything more *appropriate?*), but we're counting on you to produce enough items to make it worthwhile. Items we're looking for include out-of-print titles, special editions, galleys, manuscripts, correspondence, etc. We'll be asking a 10% commission (and are looking for a willing, experienced volunteer auctioneer). Here's a chance to provide yourself *and* Readercon with a little extra income.

## ABOUT THE HOLIDAY INN OF BROOKLINE

### General Information

Our new hotel, the Holiday Inn of Brookline, will open as a Holiday Inn in January of '87 (it's currently a Travelodge, and undergoing total renovation). When done, there will be 200 sleeping rooms (not counting 8 suites), 170 of which will be available to us during the weekend (Friday, Saturday, and Sunday nights). Many of these rooms will be arranged around a large courtyard, with pool.

### Location

Our hotel is located on Beacon Street, one of the Boston area's main thoroughfares, just west of Kenmore Square, famed for Fenway Park, legendary punk club "the Rat", and the CITGO sign. While thanks to Boston traffic, it wouldn't be fair to say that *anything* is easy to reach, this is at least quite easy to *find*. Our next report will contain detailed directions from all points (including subways), and suggest ETAs and other advice designed to reduce bumper-to-bumper frustration. (Eric Van)

### Rates, etc.

The con rate for the 40 single rooms (referred to as 'Kings') is \$65 per night. Double rooms (containing two double beds) go for \$75. The additional-person rate on these rooms is \$6, giving a triple rate of \$81, and a quad (maximum allowed) rate of \$87. Please note: these prices do not include room tax (9.7%).

Reservation cards should be going out early in '87. If it turns out that overflow rooms are required, they will probably be booked at the Howard Johnson Inn in Kenmore Square (a five-minute ride away on the Green Line).

### Function Rooms

Most of our function space will be located in a conference center beneath the main level of the building. It includes a dividable ballroom (4600 sq. ft.), a 1000-sq. ft conference room, an 1800 sq. ft. lobby, and an adjacent lounge.

We've also reserved two small rooms (500 sq. ft. each) and our committee suite on a level above the main level. Here are our early ideas for using that space.

### Ballroom A (2200+ sq.ft.)/State Room (1000 sq. ft.)

This will be the area for our main track of panels. Given our small size, our other attractions described below, and our confidence that most of our programming will be strong enough to attract a large percentage of you, we'll be running one track of panels (with perhaps an occasional second panel for special interests, and possible lunch/dinner breaks). However, since good ideas don't stop being interesting after a set amount of time, we'd like to provide a mechanism to let one panel trail off naturally while starting up the next. There's two ways to do this:

- a) declare the State Room an official 'continuation' area, and have people move over from Ballroom A (right next door) when it's time for the next panel to start there.

# THE SCIENCE FANTASY BOOKSTORE



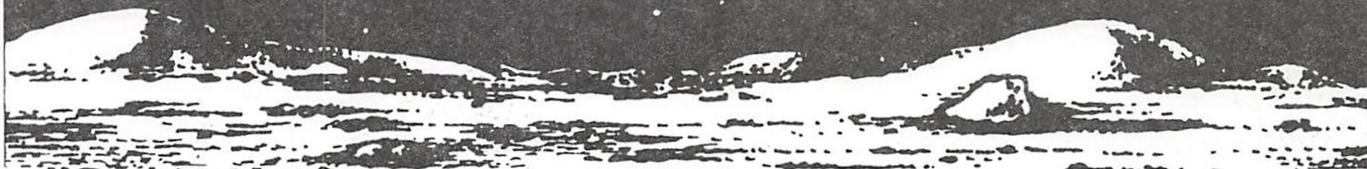
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b) stagger scheduling so that, for instance, a 2:00 panel will begin in Ballroom A, a 3:00 in State, a 4:00 in Ballroom A, etc.

Your advice is requested in helping us choose between these two methods. Ballroom A will also be the site of our GOH speeches and other events (see 'Some Events' for details).

## Ballroom B (2300+ sq.ft.)

This will be our Huckster Room. Preliminary mapping suggests that we'll be able to get in the neighborhood of 25 tables in here (6 are already reserved). It is our intention to use those tables to create the best specialty bookstore going. We will attempt to do this by concentrating our recruitment efforts on a mix of small presses (book and magazine) and booksellers designed to present you with a wide range of items usually not available in the general bookstores, and often not in specialty stores, either.

As an introductory offer, we'll be offering these tables (to publishers and booksellers only) at a special rate until 10/15/86. Until then, the 1st table will go for \$15, and a 2nd (maximum of 2 tables per dealer) will go for an additional \$25. After that date, the prices will be \$25 for the 1st, and another \$40 for the 2nd. Please note: membership is not included in table rates, and those working in the room must be Attending members.

As part of our attempt to compensate for the two-day span of this con (as opposed to the usual three days), we will try to keep our hours for this room as long as is possible and practical.

## Lobby (1800 sq. ft.)

We'll be doing Registration here, as well as posting bulletins, handling problems, etc. There's ample room for socializing here, and the lounge is next door.

## Small Rooms (500 sq. ft. each)/Committee Suite

Depending on a number of factors (how big the living-room area of our under-construction Committee Suite turns out to be, how many readings and discussion groups are booked, etc.) we may or may not use our suite as the official Con Suite, may have readings and discussion groups in separate areas (or in one combined one), and may use one of the 500-sq. ft rooms as a separate Con Suite or for some other purpose altogether (workshop, fanzine room, whatever). We hope to decide this by next time. For now, we can say that whether or not the Committee Suite becomes our Con Suite, it will be used as such Friday evening so as to provide those arriving Friday with a place to meet. And as we are a new organization, and running on a very tight budget, we'd also like to say here that we would be *very* appreciative of any donations of goodies you might want to contribute to the Con Suite.



ROSTER (as of 9/12/86)

A001 Robert Colby	A024 Richard Fawcett	A049 Donald P. Wakefield
A002 Spike MacPhee	A025 Nancy Willard	A050 Jean M. Wakefield
A003 Eric Van	A026 Wayne Johnson	A051 Bradley Munn
A004 Mark Ziesing	A027 Patrick Nielsen Hayden	A052 Greg Scott
A005 Kathei Logue	A028 Teresa Nielsen Hayden	A053 Brad Collins
A006 Scott Edelman	S029 Howard Elliot	A054 Richard Lary
A007 Tim Fitzgibbons	A030 Virginia Kidd	A055 Misha Chocholak
A008 Joe Shea	A031 Donald M. Hassler	A056 Sean K. Arthur
A009 Gene Wolfe	A032 Bernadette Bosky	A057 Curtis Olsen
A010 Gene Vega	A033 Arthur D. Hlavaty	A058 Thomas Psyck
S011 Patricia F. Swingle	A034 Roy A. Squires	A059 Katherine Psyck
A012 Devra L. Kunin	A035 Walter Froelich	A060 Priya Mirkin
S013 New Haven Science Fiction and Fantasy Association (AKA "Fred")	A036 C. W. Merrick	A061 Louise Sachter
A014 Janice Eisen	A037 T. C. Baker	S062 Daniel Murphy
A015 Kenneth Meltsner	A038 Daniel P. Whitworth	A063 W. Paul Ganley
A016 Dr. Ahmed Fishmonger	A039 James M. Turner	A064 Eric Kramer
S017 Fernando Q. Gouvea	S040 Vicki Rosenzweig	A065 Paul Lappen
S018 Vivian Moreau	S041 Andy Hickmott	A066 Marsha Finley
A019 Sonia Orin Lyrus	A042 William E. Shawcross	A067 Kenneth Hill
A020 Carol R. Morrison	A043 Bryan Cholfin	A068 John Faley
A021 B. J. Herbison	A044 Gina M. Villa	A069 Steven Pasechnick
A022 Robert Ingria	A045 Perry Peckham	A070 Rob Caswell
A023 Geary Gravel	S046 Thomas J. Treckme	A071 Deb Zeigler
	S047 Jerry Kaufman	
	A048 George Phillies	

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FROM: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is \$\_\_ for the following:

- \* \_\_ Attending membership (\$8 to 10/15/86, \$10 to 6/05/87)
- \_\_ Conversion from Supporting to Attending (\$3 to 10/15/86, \$5 to 6/05/87)
- \_\_ Supporting membership (\$5)
- \_\_ 2 22-cent stamps each for \_\_ additional copies of PROGRESS REPORT1
- \* \_\_ 2 22-cent stamps each for \_\_ additional copies of PROGRESS REPORT2
- \*\* \_\_ 2 39-cent stamps each for \_\_ copies of PROGRESS REPORT #3 (due early '87)

\* If replying to PKDS offer, please so state

Please pay by check or m.o./no cash (payable to READERCON)

\_\_ Please check here for our rate card

**FOLLOW THE READER**



**READERCON**  
P.O.Box 6138  
Boston, Ma. 02209

**SPECIAL NOTE:** Besides our staff and various members, we would like to thank 1986 Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund delegate Greg Pickersgill and Mexicon 2 chair Linda Pickersgill for contributing insights on the above based on their experiences with Mexicon, a British convention with leanings similar to our own.

## ABOUT THE PROGRAM

### Intro

Ideally, we would have a whole new set of neat ideas to share with you this time out. Well, we don't (except for the discussion group theme, courtesy of Eric Van, that's described below). What to do?

Well, we do promise to step up our efforts at soliciting ideas from the people we've met in the pursuit of this venture, but it's really up to you in the end. So please, use the enclosed questionnaire and let us take a few things from the back of your mind and put them in front of the rest of us. If you'd like some examples of the kind of thinking we've been doing ourselves, we refer you towards "Notes Towards a Program" by Eric Van in Report #1 (which should be in the hands of all members; if you are one and don't have one, yell). Report #3 will update this list with all subsequent ideas and suggestions that we decide to use.

### Hours

Unlike most cons, we are running on a two-day, as opposed to three-day, schedule. The reason for this is purely financial; function space would be 50% more expensive otherwise, requiring us to either charge more than an unestablished, unproven con could credibly ask, or dilute our concept so as to reach a much larger audience first time out. We expect that three-day cons will come with future, gradual growth.

We're responding to this situation in various ways: opening our committee suite Friday evening for the benefit of Friday arrivals, starting programming early on Saturday and running fairly late on Sunday, and trying in any other way we can to get the feel of a three-day con out of two days worth of function space rental. We hope you'll understand.

### Panels and readings

To abstract what Eric said last time, panels will revolve around four areas: the literature itself (literary considerations), the subject matter behind it, the business of writing and publishing, and the literatures' reception in what fans call the 'mundane' world (i.e. that which lies *outside* SF culture). Special-interest areas (such as the world of fanzines) will also be looked at.

While our readings will be primarily fiction, we are also considering fan, critical, and poetry readings. We hope to have a preliminary list of authors who will be giving readings next time.

### Discussion groups

If you've spent any time at larger cons, you may have seen announcements for these posted up on bulletin boards, directing you to somebody's room. We think enough of this kind of activity to give it its own track (or part of one, anyway), and would like to see much of the work involved in setting this up come from outside the committee/staff structure. In other words, if you have led or would like to lead such a group, please get in touch with us as soon as possible. There's plenty of time to fill.

In the meantime, we'd like to start things off with our own suggestion. We call it "If you like X, then you're gonna *love* Y", and it comes in several parts. It works like this; say you're nuts about Gene Wolfe and Ursula K. LeGuin. Or William Gibson and Bruce Sterling. Or Philip K. Dick. Or Clive Barker and Ramsey Campbell. Or J. G. Ballard and William F. Burroughs. Or John Crowley and Mervyn Peake. Or Jorge Luis Borges and Italo Calvino. Or Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle. Or Lucius Shepard and Kim Stanley Robinson. Or whatever. What do you think other fans of that particular sort of thing might like, what *other* writers would you like to turn like-minded souls onto?

We will come up with a list (not necessarily matching that above) of names which will have some correspondence to various styles or schools of thought in imaginative literature. Your job will be (and we would urge *everyone* to go to at least one of these) to go to a group or groups you feel in sympathy with, and turn your fellow participants onto works, *not* by that author or authors, but by other authors you think will be of interest to people who share those tastes. We will be recording these sessions, and comparing the results. Our findings (and such excerpts as we have room for) will be published in the Final Report.

### Writer's Workshop

This *may* be a part of our program (like several other things, it's determined by your responses; both from those who would like to attend, and from those published writers who would like to lead). With luck, we'll have gotten enough response by the end of the year that we'll be able to make a more definite announcement in time for Report #3.

**NOW AVAILABLE:**

**HERO OF DREAMS**

by **Brian Lumley**

illustrated by **Jean Corbin**

This new novel features a new hero — David Hero — and his friend Eldin the Wanderer, two waking-worlders adventuring in dreamland.

But dreamland is the "Dreamland" of H. P. Lovecraft — the dreamland of Randolph Carter and King Kuran — and awesome Cthulhu, too, is a great dreamer. In dreamland are to be found not only wonders but horrors, for it is here that Leng and Kadath in the Cold Waste are located.

**HERO OF DREAMS** is the first of three novels to be published within the next year. Also scheduled for publication is a complete set of the Titus Crow shorter stories, **THE COMPLEAT CROW**.

**HERO OF DREAMS** is available in three different versions:

paper cover edition: \$7.50

hard cover edition: \$21

signed edition (numbered, in slipcase): \$35

Please add \$1.25 toward postage and handling. Dealer inquiries are welcome.

**W. PAUL GANLEY: PUBLISHER, P O Box 149, Amherst Branch, Buffalo, NY 14226-0149.**

PS: Please send for my catalog which features other books (like **PULPTIME**, with H. P. Lovecraft and Sherlock Holmes as characters, and **THE NEW DEVIL'S DICTIONARY**) and describes the available back issues of **WEIRDBOOK Magazine**.