

# READERCON 7

## PROGRESS REPORT 1

Guest of Honor:

**Ursula K. Le Guin**

Editor GoH: **Terri Windling**

Special Presentation:

**James Tiptree, Jr. Memorial Award**

**July 8–10, 1994 Worcester, MA**

### Notes From the Chair

You don't expect a reward for promoting a good cause, but it does happen sometimes — I know from personal experience. Three years ago I contributed a recipe to a cookbook published to benefit the James Tiptree, Jr. Memorial Award. Today, I am proud to say Readercon 7's, Guest of Honor is Ursula K. LeGuin and that we will host the first "floating" Tiptree Memorial Award.

From the beginning, Readercon was envisioned as something different: a *serious* conference on imaginative literature which brings readers together for a weekend with those who write, edit, publish, illustrate, critique, and market it. We include authors whose works are not marketed as conventional science fiction or fantasy. Our Guests of Honor and pros pursue a highly personal vision of the possibilities of imaginative literature. But serious does not mean stuffy; we embrace the subversive notion that thinking is fun. So, if munching on an endless supply of chocolate-chocolate chip cookies, biscotti, and cheesecake while listening to or participating in one of our panels sounds like your idea of a great time, I'll see you in July.

— B. Diane Martin

### Guests of Honor

A friend of mine and I were talking on the phone recently, about the way that people who read our books seem frequently to think they know us. We agreed that this was a mistake on their part, but, as I often do, I continued the conversation after I'd hung up my phone, now forced to take all sides myself, and I began to wonder how much of a mistake it was.

My first glimpse of **Ursula K. Le Guin** came when I was in college and read her remarkable novel, *The Left Hand of Darkness*. Certain things were obvious about her from the text



— that she was a woman of great wit, great compassion, great tolerance; that she had a lively mind, an educated heart, and an ear for beauty. Now I have met her for real, I know that all these things are dead-on true. And how could they not be? Just read the book.

For me, *The Left Hand of Darkness* is part of that small, special category of books I think every writer has — books that you reread every few years. Something in this particular book nourishes my soul. The ending of the book with the trek across the ice is one of my favorite passages in all literature — the emotional pitch is so very high for me, I actually become short of breath, reading it.

But if you asked me which my favorite Le Guin book is, I would tell you it is the one I have read most recently — *The Scaroad Chronicles*. And this, in itself, I find sort of astonishing. This is her umpteenth book. I forget how many others there've been, and I've read them *all*, and she is still growing, still improving. Almost, *almost* I admire her more for how much she attempts, than for the grace and beauty she achieves. She takes on so much with each book, so much that is new. She *thinks* so much, plays so much, she dances over the pages. As a reader I'm delighted; as a writer, I'm dazzled. The dazzling Ms. Le Guin. May she write forever and may I always be here to read it.

— Karen Joy Fowler

I first met **Terri Windling** at the second Fourth Street Fantasy Convention in Minneapolis in 1987. I was immediately taken with the elegance and clarity of her arguments during several panels. At first glance, Terri does not seem like the kind of woman to argue over anything. She, you think, would be more at home in the Russian Tea Room, calmly discussing the Pre-Raphaelites, poetry, or any airy Victorian folly, and I'm sure she would. But do not let her looks deceive you. Beneath the gracious, gentle exterior beats the heart of a woman with Convictions, and argue she does. She argues for things which she feels have an intrinsic value, above and beyond the value the marketplace puts on them. Truth, Beauty, Art, and Courage. And more often than not, the market has followed her lead.

Terri is an exceptional editor, but you already know this. You know that she began the Fairy Tale series at Ace and brought it with her when she moved to Tor. You know that she is half of the most exciting fantasy and horror editorial team ever to hit the bookshelves.— Terri Windling and Ellen Datlow — or, as some have called them, Sister Light and Sister Dark. You may also know that she has changed the very shape and look of fantasy, encouraging fresh young writers and commissioning unique cover art from such diverse talents as Tom Canty, Rick Berry and Phil Hale.

What you may not know is that Terri is herself an exceptional artist. During her years in Boston, her Endicott Studios occupied the floor above those of Hale and Berry. At the 1989 Worldcon in Boston, Terri hosted an open house at her studio. I still find it difficult to describe the impact her work had on me, and on everyone who saw it. One drawing especially stands out for me, as I know it does for many others. One by one, visitors would file into a little corner of the studio and return shaken and silent. When my turn came, I had already steeled myself, but I was not prepared for the understated eloquence of the simple charcoal drawing that hung there. A child — silent, naked, marked with bruises — looked back at me out of the paper. The title was "She's such a quiet child."

Terri is not silent. In her soft voice, in her art, she argues passionately for these things: Truth, Beauty, and Courage. And, as one friend put it: Terri's life is Art.

— Nevenah Smith

We all know the story of **Cordwainer Smith**: His first SF story, "Scanners Live in Vain," was published in the obscure, short-lived *Fantasy Book*, but was brought to the public eye in Fred Pohl's anthology *Beyond the End of Time*. As a result of that publication, we learned that "Cordwainer Smith" was actually Paul Linebarger, a diplomat, Far East affairs expert, and the man who wrote *the* book on psychological warfare. "Scanners" opened the door to an entire implied future history, the Instrumentality of Mankind, which Smith fleshed out in another 26 stories.

What is not as well known is the impact Smith had on the career of our Guest of Honor, Ursula K. Le Guin. Her interest in SF was rekindled after receiving a collection of Smith's stories. As she explained in an interview: "I realized that if there was a place for him, there must be a place for me. ... Smith had a highly original imagination expressed in original language ... There is one story of his, "Alpha Ralpa Boulevard," that was as important to me as reading Pasternak for the first time and realizing that one could write a novel the way he wrote *Dr. Zhivago*. There are these moments in most writers' careers when you discover that someone else has written down some of these things that have been going on in your own head; that this isn't just a private experience."

—David G. Shaw

## The Program

The Program is not just the heart and soul of Readercon, it's most of the internal organs, several appendages, and perhaps a tattoo. We try to think of panels and events no one has ever done and put fresh new twists on the ones they have. From what folks tell us, we succeed. While most cons leave you (and all too often the panelists) guessing what the panels are about, we provide full descriptions not only in the *Program Guide* but in *PR2*.

Our regular programming consists of four of five simultaneous tracks running from 6 to 9 PM on Friday, 10 AM to 5 PM on Saturday, and 10 AM to 5 PM on Sunday. There are panel discussions in two large rooms, each with a stage with easy chairs and coffee tables, and area microphones to pick up all the panelists' dialogue. Two smaller rooms feature author readings and a writer's mini-track of panels and how-I-wrote-my-book presentations. A third small room hosts occasional discussion groups, often on off-the-wall topics (if you'd like to lead one, let us know).

Our Special Events start Friday evening with our Meet the Pros(e) Party, where you get to meet the writers and their writing, and commit Art (How? See *PR2*). After our last Saturday panel there's nothing but special events, including a break for our Banquet. There will be a speech by Ursula Le Guin (and possibly an interview with her as well), the presentation of the James Tiptree, Jr. Memorial Award, and last — but certainly not least — the Ninth Kirk Poland Memorial Bad Prose Competition, the most popular event at any con.

## Banquet

We're moving our usual pool party and buffet indoors this year and substituting a formal banquet. Your banquet ticket will guarantee you a good seat at the Tiptree Awards ceremony to follow. Banquet price and menu information will appear in *Progress Report 2*.

## The James Tiptree, Jr. Memorial Award

This award is presented annually to the work of fiction which best explores and expands gender roles in science fiction and fantasy. We are honored to have been chosen as the first convention for the award presentation away from its "home" at Wiscon.

### Writer's Workshop

Once again we'll be hosting a three hour closed writer's workshop for a few amateurs or new pros, led by David Alexander Smith and featuring other members of the Cambridge Science Fiction Workshop. Submit up to 7,500 words of fiction by **June 24** directly to David at:

112 Avon Hill Street, Cambridge, MA 02140.

### The Bookshop

The Bookshop is our dealer's room. Expect a varied selection of new and used books and magazines from small and large publishers. If you'd like to have a table here, let us know by **April 30th**. The majority of what you sell must be literary in nature.

### Publications

We've already mentioned our *Program Guide*, which runs 30 or 40 pages. In it you'll find the full conference schedule with panel precis and an index of each participant's appearances, plus a wide variety of useful information. In the back there are complete mini-bibliographies of every participant — that's right, all of their book titles with dates and publishers, and then some. For those who prefer to travel light, we provide a simple pocket schedule in table form.

Last year our annual *Souvenir Book* had a non-ad page count that matched the Worldcon's. Our book will have original material by and about our Guests, more installments of our regular "Books to Cherish" feature, original artwork, and much more.

The *Readercon Rag* is our at-con newsletter, which appears four times during the conference. It includes program changes, news, trivia, and the all-important Saturday evening party list.

### Parties

Most cons with this many pros have large private parties where they congregate. We don't (we're too small overall). So throw your own bash... and anyone might stop by (though probably not Cordwainer Smith.).

### The Tiptree Award Bake Sale

In addition to being the proud hosts of this year's award, Readercon joins other conventions across the country in raising funds for the award the old-fashioned way: with a bake sale. (We will also be selling copies of the two benefit cook-books *The Bakery Men Don't See* and *Her Smoke Rose Up From Supper*). If you'd like to donate goodies and/or help sell them, contact Jamie Siglar at (617) 623-0601.

### The Con Suite

The Con Suite is Readercon's own party, where you'll find munchies both nutritious and politically incorrect, and people to talk to (there is a causal relationship here). We try to keep it open during all convention hours (with a little help from volunteers).

### Volunteering

Readercon is run entirely by volunteers. We can always use more help, in every area. If you're new to conventions, volunteering is a great and time-tested way to meet people. Let us know you're interested on the form below, and we'll contact you about scheduling you in the areas you'd like to work — or you can just volunteer at the con (although the most interesting jobs may be taken by then). Work enough hours and you'll earn some cool thing or another.

### Progress Report 2

PR2 will have an updated guest list, a complete description of the program, and expanded practical information. It will be sent to *members only* in mid-May. If you won't know by then whether you can attend but would like to receive a copy, check the box on the reply form.

### (Some) Policies

- No smoking in programming or Bookshop.
- Only guide animals in convention area.
- No weapon in convention areas.
- While we have no costuming policy, no one at a Readercon has ever worn one.
- Young children who are always with an adult are admitted for free; others need a membership. Readercon does not have children's programming or babysitting.

### Getting There

Worcester is about an hour west of Boston by car. The Marriott is just twenty minutes from Worcester Airport and ten from the Amtrak station; bus stations are even closer. Just off I-290 it's very easy to find, *Progress Report 2* will have driving directions, maps, and up-to-date fare and carrier info.

### Our Hotel

The Worcester Marriott is just about perfectly laid out for a conference of our size. From a spot near the elevators, it is nearly possible to see all of the program area as well as the courtyard and indoor/outdoor pool. Both of the hotel's restaurants are good, and there are other restaurants within walking distance. This is our fourth year here; our relationship with the staff is terrific.

## WANT TO KNOW MORE?

**WRITE:** P.O. Box 381246 Cambridge, MA 02238 or **CALL:** 617-625-6507

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

/PR1

- \_\_\_ Attending membership(s) (\$32 to 6/1/94, \$40 afterwards)
- \_\_\_ Supporting membership(s) (\$10, includes all publications)

- ( ) I'm not ready to join yet, but send me *Progress Report 2*
- ( ) I would like to organize a discussion group or workshop.
- ( ) Please send \_\_\_ Volunteer info \_\_\_ Bookshop Info

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Home Phone/Hrs \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone/Hrs \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail to: READERCON, P.O. Box 381246, Cambridge, MA 02238.  
 Make your check or money order out to READERCON. Please don't send cash through the mail.

# **Who's coming to Readercon 7? GOH's Ursula K. Le Guin and Terri Windling**

**Hal Clement • Suzy McKee Charnas • Ellen Datlow • Gardner Dozois •  
David. G. Hartwell • Nancy Kress • Ellen Kushner •  
Barry N. Malzberg • Rachel Pollack**

Ellen Asher • Lisa A. Barnett • Bernadette Bosky • Aline Boucher-Kaplan • Stephen P. Brown •  
Susan Casper • Jeffrey A. Carver • Adam-Troy Castro • Bryan Cholfin • John Costello •  
Kathryn Cramer • Shira Daemon • Don D'Amassa • Daniel P. Dern • Paul Di Filippo •  
Thomas A. Easton • Scott Edelman • Lise Eisenberg • Moshe Feder • Robert Frazier •  
Esther M. Friesner • Elizabeth Hand • Nancy Hanger • Patrick Nielsen Hayden •  
Theresa Nielsen Hayden • Jeff Hecht • Arthur Hlavaty • Franklin Hummel •  
Greer Ilene Gilman • Kathleen Ann Goonan • Geary Gravel • Alexander Jablokov •  
P.M.F. Johnson • Anne Jordan • Michael Kandel • Rick Katze • Marjorie Bradley Kellogg •  
Rosemary Kirstein • Lissanne Lake • Warren Lapine • Fred Lerner • S. N. Lewitt •  
Holly Lisle • Will Murray • Steven Popkes • John G. McDaid • Yves Meynard • Sandra Rector •  
Charles C. Ryan • Darrell Schweitzer • Melissa Scott • Delia Sherman • Cortney Skinner •  
David Alexander Smith • Sarah Smith • Susanna J. Sturgis • Jean-Louis Trudel •  
Gordon Van Gelder • Stanley Wiater • Sheila Williams

**...and more to come!**

The logo for Readercon 7 features a stylized 'R' with a circle above it, followed by the word 'READERCON' in a bold, sans-serif font, and a large '7' to the right.

PO Box 381246 Cambridge, MA 02238

NONPROFIT  
ORG.  
U S POSTAGE  
PAID  
BOSTON, MA  
PERMIT NO.  
51508