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SPEAKEASY

5 Ways to Celebrate H.P. Lovecraft's 125th Birthday

By MICHAEL CALIA



H.P. Lovecraft, circa 1934. — Everett Collection

Thursday marks the 125th birthday of **H.P. Lovecraft**, arguably the most towering figure in the horror-fiction genre and one of the most influential writers of the 20th century.

His influence can be felt **just about anywhere in pop culture**, from film (the works of director John Carpenter, for instance) to comic books ("Watchman" creator Alan Moore and "Hellboy" creator Mike Mignola are two examples) to television (Lovecraft was a character in an episode of "Supernatural," and Rod Serling adapted some of his stories for "Night Gallery"). Modern horror master and fellow New Englander Stephen King has occasionally tapped into Lovecraftian tradition, most recently in his 2014 novel "Revival."

Starting today, HPL's hometown of Providence, R.I., is celebrating the author's 125th birthday in style with **NecronomiCon**, a four-day festival that

will feature writers inspired by Lovecraft's works, academic talks, games, vendors and "social events such as the dreaded Cthulhu Prayer Breakfast."

If you can't make it to New England this weekend, however, there are plenty of ways to celebrate the best of Lovecraft's legacy. We compiled five of them here:

Watch a Lovecraftian movie or two.

Carpenter's "The Thing," about an alien life force in Antarctica that steals the shape of its victims, and "**In the Mouth of Madness**," about a man who learns he is the creation of an author compelled by forces from beyond, tap into the Lovecraft brand of cosmic terror in their own nightmarish ways. B-movie master Stuart Gordon has adapted Lovecraft's "From Beyond" and "Re-animator." If you want something close to the pure, early 20th-century Lovecraft vibe, check out the Mythoscope versions of "**The Call of Cthulhu**," done as a silent film, and "**The Whisperer in the Darkness**," made in the style of 1930s and 1950s horror films.

Listen to radio program-style versions of Lovecraft stories.

Dark Adventure Radio Theater takes Lovecraft stories and turns them into old-fashioned radio plays. These are no mere re-creations of the stories, either. Actors get into their parts, there are scary sound effects and even ominous musical scores. “The Horror at Red Hook,” about ancient evils taking root in Brooklyn, and “**Dreams in the Witch House**,” about a student’s terrifying encounters with another dimension, are among the highlights.



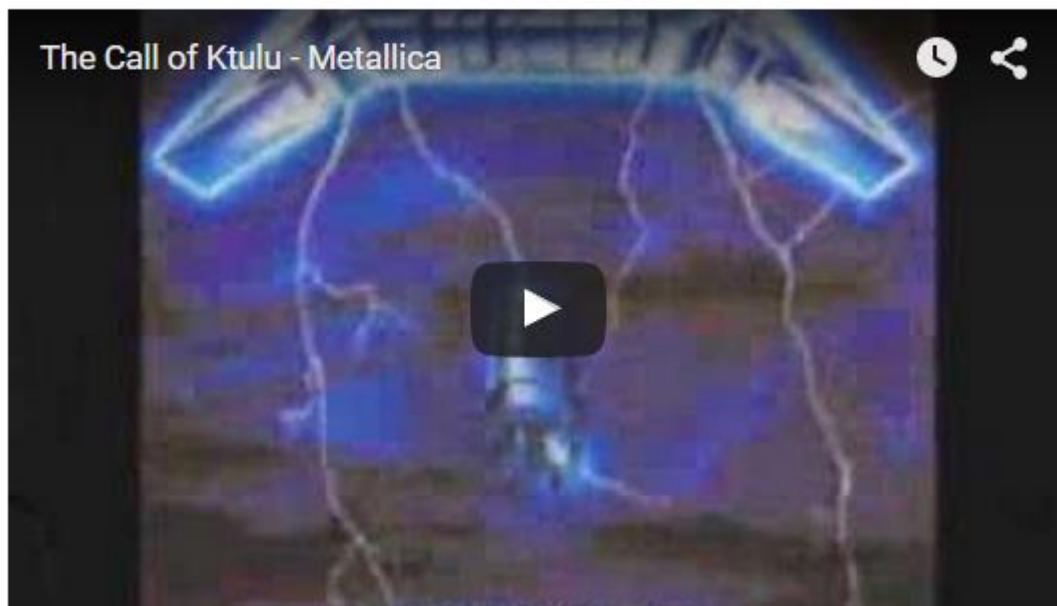
Drink Lovecraft beer.

Rhode Island brewer **Narragansett**, like Lovecraft, celebrates its 125th birthday this year. That's not the company's only connection to the author, though. They have produced two beers inspired by Lovecraft stories and featuring label art by local artists. Lovecraft Honey Ale, a reference to "The Festival," was sold earlier this year, but it is no longer available. Innsmouth Olde Ale, inspired by "The Shadow Over Innsmouth," is still available in some stores. A new Lovecraft beer is on the way early next month, too, but details weren't immediately available.



Listen to Lovecraft-inspired music.

No, we don't mean "**The Music of Erich Zann.**" **Metallica** is perhaps the most famous band inspired by Lovecraft's literature. "**The Thing That Should Not Be,**" inspired by "The Shadow Over Innsmouth," features the lyric, "Not dead which eternal lie/stranger eons death may die," a paraphrase of the evil prayer featured in Lovecraft's work: "That is not dead which can eternal lie, and with strange aeons even death may die." The band also has an instrumental track called "**The Call of Ktulu,**" which is a twist on "The Call of Cthulhu."



There are other Lovecraft-inspired musicians out there, too. The Mountain Goats' "**Lovecraft in Brooklyn**" is inspired by the notoriously xenophobic author's time living in the New York City borough.



Read a Lovecraft story.

This is probably the best and most obvious way to celebrate the writer's legacy. Why not crack open one of the many anthologies and collections "At the Mountains of Madness," in which explores come across the deadly ruins of a lost civilization as well as horrible truths about humanity's origin, or "The Colour Out of Space," about alien plant life invading a pocket of New England? Maybe you're in the mood for something shorter, such as "Dagon," about an ancient aquatic god. Or, you could just read a bunch of them.

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