

Cramahe author World Fantasy judge

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By BOB OWEN
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Cramahe Township resident Ed Greenwood, author of dozens of fantasy books and hundreds of articles on the subject, was recently named a judge for the 2007 World Fantasy Awards.

The announcement, made Feb. 20 by the President of the World Fantasy Awards Association, Peter Dennis Pautz, names Mr. Greenwood and four others to the panel. Three are from the United States, the fourth resides in Germany.



Ed Greenwood

Prizes will be awarded for books printed in 2006 at the 2007 World Fantasy Association Nov. 1-4, at Saratoga Springs, New York.

The contest includes categories for magazine articles, novellas, short stories, anthologies and novels.

The World Fantasy Awards (WFA) are annual, international awards given to authors and artists who have demonstrated outstanding achievement in the field of fantasy. Since 1975, when they were first awarded, they have been handed out at the World Fantasy convention. The awards are considered among the most prestigious in the speculative fiction genre, and can be awarded to any work falling within the realm of fantasy, although some media are restricted.

WFA winners are chosen by a panel of judges, which differs every year. Winners are chosen from groups of nominees (generally five or six per category), also selected largely by the judges, with two picked by members of the annual convention.

Because of the small number of WFA judges, and because they usually try to read very comprehensively in the field, selections for the awards are often eclectic.

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For example, low-selling but high-quality works from small press publications, which may be overlooked by other awards, often receive a critical spotlight in the World Fantasy Awards. The World Fantasy Awards are also unique in having categories for single-author collections and multi-author anthologies. Enormously intelligent with an incredible memory, and one of the best-selling authors in Canada, Mr. Greenwood can't be defined by what he does. Perhaps he can be best described as a man fascinated with his life experiences.

Fantasy writing has always been a part of his life. As a seven-year-old, in the winter of 1967-68 he began writing about his own fantasy world, the Forgotten Realms, following his reading of a linked series of fantasy stories by Fritz Leiber in Fantastic magazine. He has elaborated on the Realms ever since.

Ed's life path has given him many freedoms. He's aware writers are known for their oddities. Those idiosyncrasies allowed a writer were underscored five years ago at a World Science Fiction Convention when Ed stopped to take a look around him. Fans are known for dressing up in strange costumes at conventions, but Ed was in the "Green Room" set aside for writers, and found it crowded with men in propeller beanies and T-shirts with cryptic sayings, women dressed as (male) Prohibition-era American gangsters, men dressed as wizards, and other women dressed as fairies in diaphanous gowns with wings from British folklore. One man was scooting muffins and bagels around the room on a remote-controlled robot, almost everyone not in costume was wearing old, comfortable clothes, "and almost everyone was

wearing funny hats." People were imitating the voices of well-known actors, singing snatches of opera with invented funny lyrics and generally "playing, just as if they were still children - and that appealed to me."

The Cramahe Township author writes about eight hours a day on one of his numerous computers.

In the world of fantasy Ed Greenwood is one of the welcome mats.

Some find their ways into the genre because of his congenial nature; others enter through his books which are considered "low fantasy." In low fantasy the characters don't have high moral purposes. They strive to survive in situations that parallel real life, though they may battle with swords and spells.

In Ed's novels magic works, and the characters can have wish fulfillment we can't have in real life. They can quickly fix the problems we can't repair on Earth, and make the solutions stay. Principles are followed and the world is honourable - the way you want it to be.

His writings have sold millions of copies worldwide in over a dozen languages. He has been editor, co-editor, or contributing editor of the yearbook Orbit, the literary magazines IBID and White Wall Review, and DRAGON Magazine. Ed's novels regularly climb the New York Times, Chicago Tribune, Wall Street Journal, USA Today, and Locus bestseller lists.

Responding to the appointment as judge, Mr. Greenwood commented, "Fantasy is the root literature of humanity, the way we express our fears, desires, dreams, and most of all hope. We all need more hope, and these awards celebrate and point the wider public to the best fantasy fiction of each passing year. I am honoured to represent Canada in examining and promoting the best the world's fantasy writers offer us all."