

**SWORD OF FIRE** — William McGrath, 22, of 2526 Fairchild demonstrates the flaming sword that plays an integral part in his fantasy adventure novel, *The*

*Sword of Fire*. McGrath is a martial arts expert who hopes to have his book filmed.

Herata photo by Carol Daniel

# *Martial arts apprentice mixes prophecy, politics in his novel*

By **CAROL DANIEL**  
Staff Writer

“When I take a weapon in my hand, it has life of its own. It’s not a dead weight; it’s as if it wants to move.”

Those words — spoken by William McGrath, 22, of 2526 Fairchild — could have been uttered by Ariel or any of the sword-wielding characters of McGrath’s adventure fantasy novel, *The Sword of Fire*.

McGrath, an apprentice of martial arts master Leo Gaje, has for the past five years researched and written a novel that combines Biblical prophecy, conservative political and economic theories, martial arts,

world war and fantastic creatures.

“That’s quite a combination,” McGrath said.

He’s completed only half the book (which is to be 500 to 600 pages long), but armed with a synopsis and several connections he’s attracted the attention of a San Jose, Calif., film producer and a national cable station, McGrath said.

The book is dedicated to “the House of Ragon and all who hold its ideals true.” If one delves into the story, McGrath says, the reader realizes that the hero, Ariel, is Ronald Reagan’s son and that the novel is an

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analogy of current events.

"For the first half I lead the reader to believe it takes place sometime after the exodus, then later he realizes it's 2,000 years in the future," he said.

McGrath, who describes himself as a very conservative Republican and Christian, calls Reagan the "greatest president since Lincoln" and includes him as a character (Arggeus) in the novel.

"I hide things, change things and put things in code," McGrath said. "If the reader wishes to delve he discovers these analogies. I didn't want to hit the reader over the head with it; he can read it as a simple fantasy.

Thus America becomes Asulon, Israel is Eretzel, England is Logres and Russia is Magog. A host of other countries are converted into Greek or Hebrew based names.

"Basically I wrote something I would enjoy reading," he continued. "It's a classic fantasy."

McGrath defines classic fantasy as a story that includes a charming fantasy world on the brink of destruction, absolute good against absolute evil, an idealistic hero, romance and lessons in expertise, such as swordsmanship.

"It's not enough for the hero to save his family, his village or his girl," McGrath said. "He has to save the village, his girl and the entire western civilization."

McGrath said the idea for this first novel originated because he was tired of movies, such as *The Omen*, with conflicts that included Christ only on "apologetic terms" or described the Second Coming as man's move into ultramodern technology.

So he reread Revelations and decided its imagery would be perfect for a fantasy novel.

"The symbolism in the Bible is great," McGrath said. "Imagine an animal, a horse, with a lion's mane and a tail like a serpent. Imagine a whole army riding such a beast."

McGrath, a native of New York City, left his parents to follow Gaje to Big Spring about 18 months ago. He teaches at Gaje's school here and at seminars around the country and works in security at Howard County Industrial Park. He has studied with Gaje, a Filipino

martial arts master, since he was 14 years old.

"I'm one of the few fantasy writers who's actually an expert in swords," McGrath said.

McGrath's main interest, however, seems to be in the political and economic theories threaded through the story.

In the book, McGrath has Israel invading Lebanon followed by a Syrian counterattack. Israel then captures southern Syria up to the river Euphrates and Iraq seizes northern Syria to protect its oil pipeline to the Mediterranean Sea.

Then the King of Jordan is assassinated and the Palestinians take control. Finally, Russia invades Israel and is destroyed by the wrath of God.

McGrath, in "Sword of Fire," rants against the evils of democracies, abortion and graduated income taxes. He says graduated income taxes destroy ownership of private property among the lower and middle classes and that abortion was Hitler's first step in creating callousness towards human life.

*Sword of Fire*, if it is published, won't be McGrath's last book, he said. He's already written another synopsis in which creatures from outer space land on earth and offer to solve the planet's problems as they have on their own world.

The plot twists when it's realized the spacelings are actually a hoax designed by an incredibly wealthy and powerful earthling who wants to take over the world.

Don't worry about the ending though. Another quality McGrath requires in a good fantasy novel is a happy ending.

# UTPB

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the full two years.

Gibson noted that even though the school will continue to offer only junior, senior and graduate level courses, the compromise could attract as many as 800 new students to the Odessa campus.

Dr. Robert L. Clinton, executive director of the Texas Community Junior College Association, also endorsed the plan, saying that it brings UTPB more in line with nine other upper-level schools in Texas and gives the school more flexibility in attracting students.