

mythPRINT



Quarterly Bulletin of the Mythopoeic Society with Book Reviews, Short Articles, Event Information, and More!

VOL. 51 NO. 3 * SUMMER 2014 * WHOLE NO. 370

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Cover Art, "The Knighting of Gimli." By Jef Murray ([REDACTED])

Reviews, discussion group reports, news items, letters, art work, and other submissions for *Mythprint* are always welcome, especially to make it easy on our new editor! In return for printed pieces, contributors who are not already subscribers will receive an electronic copy of the issue in which the item appears. Contributors who are already subscribers will not receive an additional copy. Contact or send materials to:

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Editor, *Mythprint*

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Regarding Mythopoeic Society Communications: we strongly encourage everyone with email to sign up for the Mythopoeic Announcements list, particularly during this season between *Mythprint* editors. We will not abuse your inbox with a flurry of non-essential announcements but only important information. You may sign up by sending an email to:

[REDACTED]

or by visiting the list directly online:

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Mythprint is the quarterly review of the Mythopoeic Society, a nonprofit educational organization devoted to the study, discussion, and enjoyment of myth and fantasy literature, especially the works of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, and Charles Williams. To promote these interests, the Society publishes three magazines, operates a small press, maintains a website, sponsors the annual Mythopoeic Conference, and annual awards for fiction and scholarship, as well as local discussion groups.

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[REDACTED]

FROM THE (NEW) EDITOR

Greetings, Mythies! Allow me to introduce myself to you formally, though I may have met many of you rather informally in the past. My name is Megan Abrahamson, and I am your recently appointed *Mythprint* editor, taking up the mantle from the talented Jason Fisher. I recently graduated from the University of New Mexico with my MA in English and a concentration in Medieval Studies, where, among my colleagues in the English Department I was known as the “Tolkien Medievalist”—by which they mean that I was drawn to my study of the Middle Ages by the works of Tolkien (and other Inklings, as well as science-fiction/fantasy media) and most of my scholarship is in medievalism (studying aspects of the medieval in the post-medieval).

I’m also a recent member of the Mythopoeic Society, and I attended my first Mythcon in 2011 purely because it came to me—Mythcon 42 was held in Albuquerque and in part hosted by the UNM Hobbit Society, of which I was then the President. At Mythcon 44 I was honored with the Mythopoeic Society’s Alexi Kondratiev Award for Best Student Paper for “J.R.R. Tolkien, Fanfiction, and the ‘Freedom of the Reader,’” which you can find in *Mythlore* 132. When I heard that a Mythopoeic leadership position was open, nothing was going to keep me from applying, and now here I am! My résumé includes a background of studying Tolkien, fantasy, science-fiction, and fan culture, both as teacher and student. But my love of Mythopoeic literature isn’t purely academic, as I’ve also been an active participant in online fandom (where I’ve gotten into plenty of arguments over whether Obi-Wan, Dumbledore or Gandalf would win in a fight). If you happen to see this face at Mythcon 45 please introduce yourself! But in the meantime, enough about me...



Survey Results

In terms of the future of *Mythprint*, the results of the Survey* question were very enlightening! We had a total of twenty-six respondents

* If your response is “What survey?” contact me to let me know how best to send out future surveys (Facebook, Twitter, the Yahoo! group, or something else) so that you know about them!

(though not everyone answered both questions). This doesn’t exactly make the findings statistically significant when we consider how many members we have, but it is a good start. I reproduce the raw findings below for transparency:

With the change in editor, what would you like <i>Mythprint</i> to remain or become? (select all that apply)	
I would be interested in seeing new content, such as short articles or notes on Mythopoeic authors and texts (things that are too short to be included in <i>Mythlore</i>).	88.00% (22)
I rely on it primarily for reviews—don’t change that	76.00% (19)
I rely on it primarily for news and announcements—don’t change that.	60.00% (15)
I would be interested in seeing new content, such as games, crosswords, or trivia.	20.00% (5)
I would be interested in seeing new content.	8.00% (2)

As we can see, most (88%) of the respondents indicated they would like to see more features such as short articles or notes: an anonymous respondent stated “I would love to see discussion notes like those that were published in the really, really old *Mythprints*.” I personally think this anonymous respondent’s suggestion is a great one: “Interviews with leading scholars of Mythopoeic literature. I would be particularly interested in interviews with independent scholars—not just about their results, but also on how they work.” Lisa Harrigan, former *Mythprint* editor herself, confirms *Mythprint*’s historical importance as “I’ve always felt it is a News and Reviews newsletter with bits of slightly longer stuff.” More than half of the respondents also indicate that both the “news” aspect (60%) and the “reviews” (76%) aspect of *Mythprint* are valuable to them, so those are *not* going away!

And, because I am a “Tolkien Medievalist,” I couldn’t help but ask “Which of J. R. R. Tolkien’s recently published medieval texts is your favorite, and why?” The raw results:

<i>The Fall of Arthur</i>	36.36% (8)
<i>The Legend of Sigurd and Gudrun</i>	22.73% (5)
I’m unfamiliar with most or all of these. There are other important Inklings, you know.	22.73% (5)
<i>Beowulf: A Translation and Commentary</i>	18.18% (4)

While a bit of a close contest, the top choice here is *The Fall of Arthur*, although we have a strong contingent of those of us who are either less interested in Tolkien’s medieval works or haven’t read these texts yet. David Bratman I think speaks for most of us when he says that “Choosing be-

tween these works is a tough question. I felt that with *The Fall of Arthur* there was the most of the chilly and eerie mythical atmosphere in the language that I find so evocative in his other works.” Other respondents who helped *The Fall of Arthur* pull ahead were already “a fan of the Arthurian Mythos,” or simply hadn’t gotten around to reading the others yet. Troels Forchhammer, from Denmark, chose *The Legend of Sigurd and Gudrun* for what might be obvious reasons: “In his work on the story of the *Völsungasaga*, I think that we see some of Tolkien’s strongest (long) work in the alliterative meter of which he was a master. Also, I cannot preclude the possibility that it also has an affect that the story hits ‘closer to home’ as it were.” It is because it is more recent that I think *Beowulf* fared so poorly (but see Janet Brennan Croft’s review, pg 5, and get inspired!). I do wonder how these results would change if this question was posed in a few years—after everyone clears out their to-read piles a bit!

In closing, thank you, Stewards, for the appointment. I look forward to joining a long and great tradition of *Mythprint* editors, and I look forward to getting to know the Mythopoeic Society better!

At Your Service,

Megan B. Abrahamson
Editor, *Mythprint*



MYTHCON 45:

August 8-11, Wheaton College

Author Guest of Honor: Ursula Vernon

Winner of the 2013 Mythopoeic Fantasy Award for Adult Literature for [Digger](#). **Scholar Guest of Honor: Richard C. West** Winner of the 1976 Mythopoeic Award for Inklings Scholarship for *Tolkien Criticism: An Annotated Checklist*.

Mythopoeic Awards Finalists

Mythopoeic Fantasy Award for Adult Literature

- Yangsze Choo, *The Ghost Bride* (William Morrow)
- Neil Gaiman, *The Ocean at the End of the Lane* (William Morrow)

- Max Gladstone, *Three Parts Dead* (Tor)
- Mark H. Williams, *Sleepless Knights* (Atomic Fez Publishing)
- Helene Wecker, *The Golem and the Jinni* (Harper)

Mythopoeic Fantasy Award for Children’s Literature

- William Alexander, *Ghoulish Song* (Margaret K. McElderry)
- Holly Black, *Doll Bones* (Margaret K. McElderry)
- Joseph Bruchac, *Killer of Enemies* (Tu Books)
- Sara Beth Durst, *Conjured* (Walker Children’s)
- Robin McKinley, *Shadows* (Nancy Paulsen Books)

Mythopoeic Scholarship Award in Inklings Studies

- Mark Atherton, *There and Back Again: J.R.R. Tolkien and the Origins of the Hobbit* (I.B. Tauris, 2012)
- Robert Boenig, *C.S. Lewis and the Middle Ages* (Kent State Univ. Press, 2012)
- Jason Fisher, ed., *Tolkien and the Study of His Sources: Critical Essays* (McFarland, 2011)
- Alister McGrath, *C.S. Lewis—A Life: Eccentric Genius, Reluctant Prophet* (Tyndale House, 2013)
- Corey Olsen, *Exploring J.R.R. Tolkien’s The Hobbit* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012)

Mythopoeic Scholarship Award in Myth and Fantasy Studies

- Umberto Eco and Alastair McEwan, trans., *The Book of Legendary Lands* (Rizzoli Ex Libris, 2013)
- Sandra J. Lindow, *Dancing the Tao: Le Guin and Moral Development* (Cambridge Scholars, 2012)
- G. Ronald Murphy, *Tree of Salvation: Yggdrasil and the Cross in the North* (Oxford Univ. Press, 2013)
- Michael Saler, *As If: Modern Enchantment and the Literary Prehistory of Virtual Reality* (Oxford Univ. Press, 2012)
- David Sandner, *Critical Discourses of the Fantastic, 1712-1831* (Ashgate, 2011)

Congratulations to the finalists! Winners will be announced at Mythcon 45.

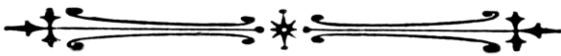
Registration

For Mythcon 45, **room & board packages, meal packages, and solo banquet tickets all MUST be purchased by July 24th**. Full & day member-

ships are available currently online and will also be available at the door.

Two helpful progress reports are available online (www.mythcon.org) as well as PDF versions which we recommend you download or print.

Mythcon 46 will be held July 31st to August 3rd, 2015, in Colorado Springs, CO. Memberships will go on sale at Mythcon 45 and shortly thereafter online. The theme will be “The Arthurian Mythos” and Guests of Honor will be announced as they are available.



REVIEWS

A Wrinkle in Time at the 2014 Oregon Shakespeare Festival. By Madeleine L'Engle, adapted by Tracy Young. Reviewed by Berni Phillips & David Bratman.

What lover of L'Engle's classic could pass up a chance to see a stage production of *A Wrinkle in Time*? The Oregon Shakespeare Festival presented a faithful-to-the-book production, utilizing all the resources of their modern Angus Bowmer Theatre, but staging the show in a charmingly low-tech way in keeping with the setting.

Even before the play began, popular music of 1962 and black-and-white films of schoolchildren practicing duck-and-cover under their school desks and mushroom clouds, shown on an old-fashioned film projector, told us we were in the original time period. It was the middle of the Cold War, and America was at the height of her paranoia regarding those who don't fit in. (We're going to assume that readers of this review are familiar with the book, so plot points are freely given.)

The play itself begins with the cast all as readers, each with his or her own copy of the book, reading aloud the opening sentences: “It was a dark and stormy night. In her attic bedroom Margaret Murry, wrapped in an old patchwork quilt, sat on the foot of her bed and watched the trees tossing in the frenzied lashing of the wind.” As the readers fade out and move off-stage, Meg (Alejandra Escalante) appears in bed, moaning and groaning about the weather and about her life. Escalante, looking like a young Gilda Radner in frizzy hair and oversized glasses, gave us a louder and brattier Meg than Berni had imagined, but she was very effective in establishing just how old Meg is and how she has progressed in her psychological development. She was a believable young adolescent type.

The biggest casting surprise came when we meet her family. Five-year-old Charles Wallace was played by a small-framed and high-voiced but tall adult woman (Sara Bruner). In an after-performance chat, Bruner explained that, apart from the obvious issues of dealing with a child actor such as him having limited hours in which to work, the director wanted an adult for a more nuanced interpretation of the role, and a grown woman would add to the sense of otherness which is so vital to the character. Charles Wallace reiterates his variation from the norm when he meets Calvin O'Keefe (Joe Wegner) and each declares himself to be a genetic sport. After seeing Charles Wallace as a woman, it was no surprise at all to see the dog, Fortinbras, being played by a human being (U. Jonathan Toppo). And he did an excellent imitation of a big dog.

The principal actors also took smaller incidental roles. This was often both clear and charming, as a further manifestation of the low-tech milieu. It was less successful as a continuation of the “reading” frame—the occasional interspersing of actors strolling across the set, reading narration from their own copies of the book, often while action was occurring—which became a problem when a child actress (“Science Girl,” Jada Rae Perry) climbed into Meg's bed by the side while teenage Meg was at center stage with Aunt Beast. Perry's hair style was similar to Escalante's, and some audience members thought she was supposed to be a young Meg. L'Engle establishes that the Murry family was new to their home, so that probably wasn't the intention. But it was confusing. Aunt Beast was played by a man (Daniel T. Parker) affecting blindness, and apart from his face wrapped up in a blob of sheets, making for a decent stage replication of the eyelessness and amorphous shape of the character in the book.

Aside from the necessary props and occasional furniture, the stage was kept bare. While the lighting and sound systems were unobtrusively high tech, the physical effects were charmingly restricted to what a really, really low-tech production of 1962 would have come up with, re-emphasizing the period atmosphere. Mrs. Which, who has trouble materializing, was portrayed by a flashlight and a black witch's hat. When Mrs. Whatsit reveals her true form, lengths of white sheets were unfurled, stacked double, with a white umbrella with a smiling face drawn on as her head. At another point the sheets were used as walls. The Not Ready for Mythcon Players and its mythic use of sheets came inevitably to mind.

When the children visit the Happy Medium (Kate Mulligan), shadow puppets were used to show their mothers at home, unaware that they're being observed.

As L'Engle was a Christian, and Mrs. Which quotes from (among other things) First Corinthians, the show could not cut all Christian references, but the script did omit Calvin's identification of the three witches as angels. They do admit to being stars which had burned out in their fight against The Black Thing (also in the book). More secular names were added to the litany of Earth people the children cite as lights fighting against evil on our own planet.

The stage version portrays the essence of L'Engle's terrifying view of conformity taken to the extreme in the world of Camazotz. U. Jonathan Toppo and the actors playing the Murry twins (Mark Bedard and Jeremy Thompson) take the additional parts of the boys of Camazotz all bouncing balls in precise synchronization as in the book. When Charles Wallace succumbs to IT, he is replaced with a child-sized articulated puppet, manipulated from behind and spoken for by one of the other actors (Bedard), while the actual Charles Wallace (Bruner) lies wrapped up in those sheets, writhing in a locked trunk. This combination came across as seriously creepy, aiding the atmosphere of rigid inflexibility which messy Meg struggles against. When Meg returns to Camazotz to free Charles Wallace, Bruner is revealed as providing the pulsing motion of the brain which is IT—again, an effective use of a sheet.

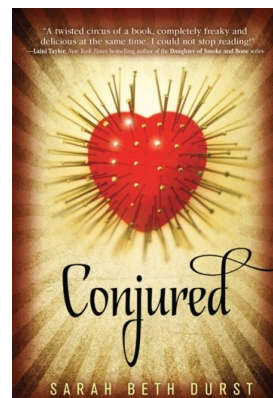
OSF's productions tend to simply burst with energy and verve. "A Wrinkle in Time" is a slower-paced and more quietly dark story than some more dynamic works, but it partakes of the same fount of energy at its more deliberate speed. The acting was all excellent to the point of fervency, and the ensemble timing was impeccable.

A Wrinkle in Time is playing in the Angus Bowmer Theatre in Ashland, Oregon, until November 1, 2014. The Oregon Shakespeare Festival website is [REDACTED]

SARAH BETH DURST. *Conjured*. Walker Childrens, 2013. 368pp, \$13.72. Reviewed by Alana Joli Abbott.

Durst's newest YA novel, *Conjured*, is very likely to appear on the long list for the 2013 MFA nominations, despite being very different from its predecessor. The book opens with Eve, an amnesiac who is being protected by WitSec—the Witness Security Program. Though the world in the story feels like modern Earth, the setting is never stated, but as Eve begins to regain some memories of who she is, and the crimes she has witnessed, she discovers that the world where she is being kept safe is one where there is no magic. The magic worlds that touch it of-

ten perform trials against magical criminals in this magicless place—and protect the potential victims of crimes within its boundaries. Left by her protector Malcolm with his fellow agent "Aunt Nicki," Eve is encouraged to have a normal life as a normal girl. But Eve's magic, which makes her lose her short



term memory whenever she uses it, keeps her from believing in normality, and the realization that WitSec might have her killed after they no longer have any use for her makes her question who to trust. Only Zach, a boy she meets at the library where she has been assigned to work as part of her "normal" life, seems trustworthy—and with Zach, her magic can fly free, without causing her any memory loss or terrifying visions of her past, and of the serial murderer she witnessed killing teens with magic powers.

The book's narration style follows Eve's journey of self-discovery, from a limited third person involved in Eve's struggles to remember who she is and discover what she's meant to remember, to a detached third person when all is lost, finally to first person when Eve comes into her own true self-awareness. The structure brilliantly captures Eve's journey, and despite her prickles, she's a compelling narrator. Because the reader discovers the world, and the plot, through Eve's eyes, knowledge of what is actually happening is always in question—Eve isn't an unreliable narrator intentionally, but because she struggles to recognize what is real and what is make-believe, neither she nor the reader is ever sure what is actually transpiring until close to the end of the book. And while I had some idea where the book was headed, I was shocked by the twist, toward the end of the book, that revealed Eve's true identity.

Full of quirky characters—the likeable Zach who refuses to lie, the compassionate Malcolm, the stand-offish Aunt Nicki, a troop of violent teen magic-users who want to convert Eve to their own agenda, and confused and soulful Eve herself—*Conjured* is a fascinating story that centers around the theme of what makes someone human. Despite now being aware of the big reveal, I'm looking forward to reading this again and tracking the clues as Durst provides them. *An advance copy of this novel was provided to the reviewer by the publisher through NetGalley.*

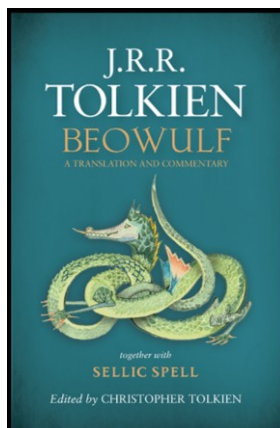
J.R.R. Tolkien, edited by Christopher Tolkien. *Beowulf: A Translation and Commentary*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2014. 448pp, \$28. Reviewed by Janet Brennan Croft.

I am neither a linguist nor a medievalist and can claim no special scholarly familiarity with *Beowulf*. It interests and moves me, but I have to confess that I am primarily interested and moved by it because Tolkien was. What I intend to briefly address here is what fresh insights into Tolkien we might look forward to gleaning from his commentary on the poem.

The commentary, first of all, reveals even more than the poem itself the roots of Rohan in the world of *Beowulf*. The discussion of Unferth on pages 208-13, for example, resonates with the parallel character of Worm-tongue in *The Lord of the Rings*, casting light on the origins of his personality and actions. Aragorn, though, in contrast to *Beowulf*, never allows himself to be goaded to the point of being “forgetful of all courtesy” (212), proving his mettle under stress. We can also see, in Tolkien’s commentary on the dragon’s hoard on 351-52, hints of the dangers of gold long brooded over by great worms, to become a “staggerment” to a poor fellow who just wants to steal off with a souvenir or two.

In the long commentary on lines 301-304 (214-220), Tolkien provides a somewhat unexpectedly astute political analysis of the state of Hrothgar’s court; here the motivations and ramifications of the sort of situation that might be obscured by the bare annalistic style of one of his appendices are examined in far greater detail. It’s not a mode we often encounter in Tolkien’s fiction, but one can see that there must be similar analysis behind the entries in the various chronologies.

Also interesting are Tolkien’s artistic judgments throughout, especially where he considers that a later editorial hand has “retouched” a passage to drive home a Christian point (e.g. 310-311) or a scribe has made a particularly egregious transcription blunder. (The reader particularly interested in such interpolations and rewritings might regret the fact that Christopher Tolkien left some of his father’s longer essays on the topic out of the finished volume. Perhaps they will be published elsewhere?) These scholarly



judgments could cast particularly interesting light on the conceit that much of Tolkien’s *legendarium* was written by contemporary authors and only much later transcribed by Tolkien, or on the revisions made between the editions of *The Hobbit* and alluded to in *The Lord of the Rings*.

Buried in the commentary is also a bit of linguistic play, a delightful translation of “high” archaic language into very modern British, akin to an example in the *Letters* where he updates Théoden’s post-healing speech to Gandalf into modern idiom (225-6): “My dear *Beowulf*! How very good of you to come to this country, where we once had the honor of receiving your father and helping him in his troubles. [...] As for Grendel, it is *painful* to be reminded of the shame he has put me to. [...] Well, well: take a seat now, and something to eat and drink” (246). One is reminded of T.H. White’s style in his retelling of the Matter of Britain.

What I have done here, of course, is precisely what Tolkien inveighed against in his essay on *Beowulf*: mined the work for mere tidbits, ignoring the story and its monsters. So be it—those tidbits can whet one’s appetite for the full meal: the rhythmic, vigorous, fast-moving prose translation, the eccentric retelling of “Sellic Spell” (think of it as *Beowulf* fanfiction!), the rousing meter of “The Lay of *Beowulf*,” and the riches of the commentary for the serious student of the poem. Is it a good translation of *Beowulf* from a technical standpoint? That is for others more expert than me to decide. Is it a good telling of the story, something a scop could be proud of? Indeed it is. “Sit now at the feast.”



TOLKIEN READ-ALONG ON TUMBLR

Decades after his books were published, J.R.R. Tolkien continues to entertain and inspire readers all over the world. And as the world changes each new generation of Tolkien fans finds a new way to appreciate Middle-earth. Today, for many of the youngest and newest lovers of Tolkien’s works, that means the Internet. From July to November I’ll be gathering with a few thousand of these online fans on the website Tumblr.com to enjoy reading *The Silmarillion* together through The *Silmarillion* Read-Along.

Tumblr is a microblogging website (if blogs are journals, then microblogs are scrapbooks) that is home to a vibrant and growing community of Tolkien fans. The *Silmarillion* Read-

Along is modeled after an online book club. There is a schedule that tells readers what chapter they should be reading during which week. At its most basic, it's just a group of people reading the same book at the same time. But Tumblr's active and enthusiastic Tolkien fans allow it to be so much more. Throughout the course of the read-along there will be prompts encouraging all sorts of fanworks—whether it be art, fanfiction (stories written by fans within Tolkien's world, or borrowing Tolkien's characters), cosplay (dressing up like a character from the book), meta/analyses, themed playlists (for example, a list of songs that remind you of Lúthien), or anything else.

Beyond that, we're taking advantage of the various factions acting within the *Quenta Silmarillion* to divide participants up into teams (for those who want extra involvement). The six teams will become a convenient forum for discussion, interaction and socialization, as well as further motivation for productivity (certain activities can earn your team points, and everyone's competing for the prize – extreme nerd pride and a chance to be entered in a small giveaway.) And to keep everyone focused (both those who are struggling to keep up with the schedule, and those who are at risk of reading too far ahead), each team will host a "Team Party" – basically a team spirit week. During the week that we read about the Flight of the Noldor, for example, Team Fëanorians will show their team pride by inviting all the readers to participate in specially-themed activities.

This may sound like a fairly daunting task—keeping a couple thousand "social-medialites" focused and interested for eighteen weeks. But in fact it's already been done. Barely a month ago we finished the even longer twenty-week *Lord of the Rings* Read-Along, and it was a huge success. We had a strong turnout of both new and old fans, participation remained strong throughout the five months, and many readers enthusiastically chose to continue the journey on to the current *Silmarillion* Read-Along. In fact, it was such a success that there are already tentative plans to host a *Hobbit* Read-Along in the spring of 2015 (after the final Peter Jackson movie has been released.)

The read-alongs have become a great way for new fans of Tolkien's works to tackle his books with company and guidance, as well as for long-time fans to revisit their favorite stories with friends (new and old). And while they are proba-



bly the longest lasting Tumblr-hosted activity for Tolkien fans, they are by no means the only ones. It seems like every month there is a new online event calling for the appreciation of some aspect of Tolkien's world (whether it be a specific character, race, or entire gender.) And this is particularly important because these events help keep the newest of the Tolkien fans—those drawn in by Peter Jackson's adaptations—interested in Middle-earth after the movies have left the theaters.

It's this new wave of fans, actually, that got me involved in the Tumblr Tolkien fandom in the first place. Having read *The Lord of the Rings*, *The Hobbit*, and *The Silmarillion* before *An Unexpected Journey* was released, I found myself enjoying many of the subtler references made in the first Hobbit movie—references that my friends didn't understand, and parts of the movie that confused fans that hadn't read the books (and parts of the movies that confused fans of the books!). So I decided to create a blog—[REDACTED]—that offered to answer any questions these new fans had. What I didn't expect was for the blog to become so popular, or for fans to show an astounding ability to continually come up with new questions. My daily research in answering these posed questions over the past year and a half has taught me more about Tolkien and Middle-earth than I ever expected to know. And it's shown me, time and time again, just how curious and active the online Tolkien community is.

The premise is simple: if you have a question, you send it to me as a message. I research the answer to your question, write up a post explaining it, and publish it on the blog for everyone to read and enjoy. Some of the questions are pretty straightforward ("How many children does Sam Gamgee have?"), while some are much more complex ("Did different elvish groups get along?"). Some questions don't really have answers ("How old is Legolas?"), and some questions are most interesting simply because they *do* have answers ("What do elves smell like?").

The absolute best part of the blog, though, is the community of fans that frequent it. Not only do they fuel the very blog itself with their interesting questions, but show real community spirit in their respectful and helpful attitudes. My research is hardly perfect, and I often have readers send in corrections or additions for past posts, add "real world" expertise to a subject I know little about, or help answer questions that I

couldn't, as well as add their own thoughts and comments, creating discussion among other fans. And it's many of these same incredible fans that form the base of the read-alongs.

The *Silmarillion* Read-Along started on July 18, but late arrivals are absolutely welcome. I would love for members of the Mythopoeic Society to join us, no doubt adding your unique voices to the event (having a Tumblr account makes it easier to participate, but is not required to follow along.) I invite you to take a look at

for more information. And whether you have a question of your own or just want to sit back and watch the show, come visit me at . I've no doubt that you'll find Tumblr's Tolkien fan community as welcoming and energetic as I do.



A TRIBUTE TO CHRISTOPHER W. MITCHELL

C.S. Lewis scholar and professor at Biola University passed away July 10, 2014.

Remembered by David Bratman:

The news came in Friday evening, July 11th, that Chris Mitchell had suddenly collapsed and died on a fishing trip in Colorado. A native of Oregon, he loved the outdoors, and appreciated the natural essence of any place that he found himself in, so at least he had been doing something that he enjoyed and that would—as he would surely put it - help him appreciate the bounty of God's creation. Though he was taken too soon—he was, I think, 62 or 63, and in wry good health. He's survived by his wife, Julie, four children, and several grandchildren.

Up until a year ago, when he left for a new post at Biola University in southern California that would be more teaching and less administration, he was the director of the Marion E. Wade Center, the Inklings & others study center at Wheaton College outside Chicago. Because he was not just an administrator but a scholar and polemicist, author of a number of articles, this made him - and I know he'd wince at this characterization, because he was both modest and sensitive to discourse—the high priest of Inklings studies in the U.S. He was primarily a Lewisian, but he paid due attention to all seven authors under his care. He did much to promote their study. Some of those things I was involved in, and worked with him on. He

was the faculty sponsor and did much for coordination, setup, and running of the Lewis Centenary Conference (alias Mythcon 29) in 1998; I was vice-chair and executive officer of that conference. He made available the manuscripts and provided assistance, advice, and logistical help when I edited Charles Williams' *The Masques of Amen House* for the Mythopoeic Press. He began the process of getting the Wade's rare and valuable book holdings cataloged, and hired me to study the initial feasibility of this project. We had many long conversations in his office over all these matters.

Most importantly, he accepted and applied the great donation that enabled the Wade Center to move out of a back room in the college library and into its own purpose-built, spacious, free-standing facility (and one with a state-of-the-art fire-proof vault for its rare-book and manuscript holdings). I attended the dedication ceremony for this building, and a joyous, companionable, and well-organized event it was.

Chris was trained and steeped in theological understanding. Like Lewis, he'd gone through a youthful period of unbelief, which made his faith richer and deeper when it came to him. He was a theological historian by training, with a Ph.D. from St. Andrews University. He'd already been teaching at Wheaton for some years before receiving the appointment as director of the Wade in 1994. He also held a professorship in Christian thought.

Chris also did other, more personal, things for me. He fed me Gino's East pizza. He taught me the meaning of the Book of Job, or tried to. He showed me the glories of midwestern fireflies. His faith and spirituality were constants in his life, and, like Lewis, he refused to live in a holy void but applied them to his appreciation and understanding of this-worldly matters. A good man, a man to inspire his auditors to their own best things.

Remembered by Mike and Jo Foster:

My wife Jo and I were staggered and shocked by the sudden, sorrowful news of Chris Mitchell's death. A gentleman and a scholar, he was blessed, and blessed his friends, with a wry wit. Vivid happy memories of our times together at the Wade have flooded back to the days when I would bring up vanloads of my Illinois Central College fantasy literature students to study the treasure trove of Inklings material, particularly the C.S. Lewis items. But I'd always stop by to visit with Chris in his office. He'd share rare gems from the Wade collection, like a chronicle of Lewis' library. I'd pursue my scholarship of Jack's woefully under-rated older brother, eighteenth-century French historian Warnie Lewis, including his journals, as well as fellow Inklings and friends Dr. Robert E. Havard and Lewis' pupil and biographer George Sayer.

When his schedule allowed, Chris and I would scamper out to share lunch at Wheaton College's gourmandic food court or, better yet, an English-style pub for fish and chips and a proper 1420 for me. There our talk was as much familial as literary. His honest intimacy encouraged reciprocation. I always left at day's end wishing I needn't go.

In 1996, I encouraged a new friend, young Catholic Northwestern University history scholar Adam Schwartz, to join my class there. Adam, the only child of my much-admired Marquette University teacher and mentor Dr. Joseph Schwartz, met us. But he spent all his time engrossed in talk with Pam Shade, the Wade receptionist. Love at first chat. Not long after, Chris and I were standing up as groomsmen for Pam and Adam's wedding. When the wedding photographer snapped the portrait of us men in our formal morning coats, our hands were folded over our groins. "The pose of Adam," Chris whispered roguishly. A few years later, Chris, Jo, and I attended Joseph Schwartz' requiem Mass and burial in Fox Point, Wisconsin.

We met often at Lewis-Tolkien events, at Belmont University in Nashville and the 2005 Mythopoeic Conference at Aston University, sharing a table at the Black Sheep pub with him, Jo, and Colin Manlove, and other venues. Seeing him was always a relief. I knew I'd have one kindred soul to spend the days with and one scholar whose presentations I would surely attend. I'll always recall the time he prayed calmly with me minutes before I spoke at the Cornerstone "Jesus People" Festival near Bushnell, Illinois, on the upcoming Jackson Tolkien films, praying for me to feel peace, the Holy Spirit, clarity, and grace in my talk there.

His passing was peaceful. He was fishing in the Colorado Rockies—something he loved—with his son-in-law Mike Lowe, Nisha's husband—someone he loved—and suddenly, he was gone. He was only 63. One thinks of St. Joseph's "happy death," happy except for Julie, his family, and his many bereft friends. Always, our memories come back to that calm voice, that radiant smile, that genial laugh. He was a gentle gentleman and a scholar's scholar. I always thought I'd see him again. Not in this life. We look forward to sharing scholarship and cheer with him in the next.

Remembered by Diana Gyer:

The first drafts of this essay looked like this: No. No no no no. No no. No no. No no no no no.

It's not that it's hard to write about Chris Mitchell, my friend for some 20 years, my co-conspirator on endless projects, my neighbor just a little ways down the road. It's that I simply can't believe he's gone. And I want to engage in high-powered magical thinking, squeezing my eyes shut and pretending that if I cross my fingers and refuse to write in the past tense, I'll still be able to stop by his house, have a



sandwich, play with his new puppy, plan our next Lewis-inspired event. If only it worked that way....

Death always hits hard and always seems unfair. But in this case, it's just plain crazy because Chris was one of the most fully alive human beings that I have ever met. That impish grin. That bouncy walk. That warm and urgent way of speaking. That endless energy and sparkle of enthusiasm. How could he be gone? I admire Chris as a scholar, especially for the way he

brought his deep knowledge of church history to bear on the topics he addressed. That gave a richness to his thinking that only sustained thought and long perspective can bring. I love Chris as a brother. When we met and talked, the love of Jesus radiated from that man, and I was always, always, always blessed. I cherish Chris as a friend. And as an embodiment of friendship itself. Our conversation inevitably would circle back to people we both knew, friends we hold in common, and much of the time, Chris was conspiring to connect me to someone new. "You know what would be fun," he would say. "We should get you together with...." And then he'd name four of five people I didn't yet know. Good times. Good, good times.

Getting great people together. Bringing big ideas together. Making connections and infusing it all with warmth and vitality. Those were Chris Mitchell's great gifts. I miss that man more than words can say.

Remembered by John Ratcliff:

I find myself stunned by the unexpected sad news of the sudden death of Chris Mitchell, former head of the Wade. He had been out enjoying a hiking and fishing trip with friends when he collapsed; apparently it was all over within minutes. Which isn't a bad way to go—no long lingering illness—but hard on those left behind, who thought they'd be able to enjoy his friendship for years to come (he was just sixty-two). And I'm sure it's very hard on his family to cope with the sudden loss.

I got to know Chris when he first came to the Wade Center, twenty years ago now, replacing Lyle Dorsett (also a scholar and a gentleman) who wanted to get back into teaching. Chris was an excellent Director, making scholars from around the world feel welcome, healing old rifts, and expanding the collection in a lot of interesting ways (for example, by acquiring the papers of scholars who'd worked on Lewis or other Wade authors). I didn't get to see him that often—usually once or twice a year—but I always enjoyed our get-togethers when I did. About a year or so ago he left Wheaton in order to be able to spend more time teaching and in scholarship: his current big project was a close look at Lewis's *The Abolition of Man*. It's a good indicator of Chris's talents that while I think this one of CSL's worst books, I was looking forward to seeing

what Chris had to say about it, to see if I could appreciate any virtues it might have through Chris's eyes.

For those who weren't lucky enough to know him in person, luckily there are a number of pieces of him online—such as a lecture he gave at Seattle Pacific University (“C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien: Scholars and Friends”) available through iTunes, and some videotaped lectures at the Biola College site. I particularly recommend a four-DVD set of Chris presenting a series of lectures on *Mere Christianity* (another work I rank relatively low among CSL's books) which I've pulled out and been watching this past week as a way to commemorate Chris's life and work. As always, Chris presents Lewis's ideas rather better than Lewis himself did, so that the strengths (and weaknesses) of Lewis's argument come across more clearly in his explication than in the original.

But that's the work; it's the man himself I'll miss. Since I only saw Chris once or twice a year, the reality of his absence won't be felt at first, until those meetings fail to happen, and then keep on failing to happen, from now on. I'll miss him. He was a good man, a scholar and a gentleman. Rest in Peace.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

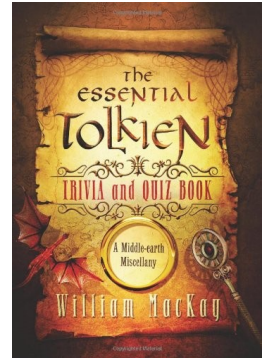
Perilous and Fair: Women in the Works and Life of J.R.R. Tolkien, the newest title from Mythopoeic Press will be released at this year's Mythcon. Edited by *Mythlore* editor Janet Brennan Croft and *MythPress* editor Leslie A. Donovan, this collection contains seven articles first published between 1984 and 2007 as well as seven brand new articles the topic. Among others, new articles cover such topics as Tolkien's support of women in higher education, relationships between *The Lord of the Rings* and Victorian boys' books, and critical response of women readers through fan fiction. Other articles, both new and classic, examine specific female characters. Through this collection, the editors and authors aim to remedy perceptions that Tolkien has nothing useful or modern to say about women and to recognize that women enact essential, rather than merely supportive, roles in Tolkien's Middle-earth fiction and in his life. Look for this new MythPress publication at the Mythopoeic Society table during Mythcon or on our website shortly after Mythcon (www.mythsoc.org).

Baptism of Fire: The Birth of British Fantasy in World War I will be out early this fall. Like *Perilous and Fair*, it will consist of a mix of classic and new articles on the topic. In addition to papers

addressing the formative World War I experiences of J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis, the book includes essays on E.R. Eddison, G.K. Chesterton, T.H. White, Lord Dunsany, Sylvia Townsend Warner, and alternate histories.

Giveaway!

***The Essential Tolkien Trivia and Quiz Book* by William MacKay (Fall River, 2014).** *The Essential Tolkien Trivia and Quiz Book* by quizmaster William MacKay is a comprehensive volume of Tolkien trivia. Fans of the series will be able to challenge themselves with questions that range in both difficulty and topic, covering everything from Tolkien's life to the most trivial details of the books and films. Put yourself and friends to the test as you ask and learn answers to questions like:



- What was Tolkien's academic specialty?
- According to Hobbits, how was golf invented?
- For the 1951 release of *The Hobbit*, Tolkien significantly revised one episode. What chapter, and why did he rework it?
- With what event do the years in Middle-earth begin to be numbered?

Subscribers who write in (mythprint@mythsoc.org) with the correct answers to any of these trivia questions by August 31st, 2014, will be entered in a drawing for a **free** copy of the book (US addresses only, sorry)!

Call for Peer Reviewers:

The editor of the forthcoming volume *The Inklings and King Arthur* seeks experienced, published scholars to serve as peer reviewers on chapters in the fields of Inklings studies, Arthuriana, or 20th-century British Literature, beginning November 1st, 2014. Please send credentials to Sorina Higgins at [REDACTED]

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Register online at www.Mythcon.org. Deadline for room & board packages is July 24. Meals only packages and separate banquet tickets are available.