

MYTHOPRINT

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Mythcon XVI

a letter from Paul Ford and Lynn Maudlin

Dear Los Angeles area Mything persons,

Wouldn't it be great for us to fly to Mythcon XVI together?

Well, we've arranged through Pat Kelly Travel Service in Temple City, California, to set aside 50 seats on American Airlines to fly to Chicago for \$350.00 round-trip. If enough people sign up for this Mythcon XVI package, we will rent a bus to get us to and from Wheaton, the con's site.

The super-cheap seats resulting from the current airfare war are mostly already taken, and they carry cancellation penalties and restrictions (including one about buying your tickets within 7 days of making your reservations). Our arrangement with American Airlines has no such penalties, and enables ticket-holders to extend their stays in the Chicago area for up to 30 days after Mythcon (the convention ends on July 29th) just by changing their reservations. No changes can be made less than 7 days prior to departure, and changes on your return must be made by 7 days before your intended return.

As always, fares are guaranteed at the quoted price only to those who have paid for their tickets. In other words, once the ticket is written and paid for, the fare is guaranteed, unless a lower fare comes into existence. So get your payments in right away and secure this low fare. We wouldn't want to lose this special group arrangement by delaying; the cut-off date for making reservations is June 18, 1985. Send a check or money order for \$350.00 to:

Pat Kelly Travel Service
[REDACTED]

or come in person -- they're open weekdays 9-5 and most Saturdays 10-2. To make reservations or to get more information, please write them, or call [REDACTED]. They'll confirm arrangements with you by return of mail.

See you at Wheaton on July 26th!

-- Paul Ford and Lynn Maudlin

REVIEW

Too Long a Sacrifice, by Mildred Downey Broxon, illustrated by Judith Mitchell. Bluejay, trade pb, 224 p., \$7.95. First published (without illustrations), in pb by Dell, 1981. Reviewed by Debra Doyle.

Modern Belfast and its Troubles seem on first thought to be an unlikely background for a fantasy novel -- but Mildred Downey Broxon's story isn't your usual fantasy. It's refreshingly free of the overstuffed heroics and mannered, archaic style which beset so much of the genre; nor is it infested with the cutesy-poo concepts and dear little talking animals which have in recent years climbed out of the neo-Disney children's fare and into works allegedly written by and for adults.

The book's first sentences are deceptive: "On the shores of deep, dreaming Lough Neagh, in the kingdom of Ulaid, when Conn Sleaghear was King of the Cruthini, Tadgh MacNiall and his wife Maire ni Donnall dwelt together in peace. Comely they both were, and young." If you've already fed to surfeit on Celtic Lore (it's easy to do, these days), then an opener like that may give you a sinking feeling. Don't worry: by page 40 we're in modern Ulster, and the bombs are going off.

After that, it's grim reality all the way -- snipings and bombings and rubber bullets, with the human debris washing up in the local emergency ward and the mothers crying at the funerals -- and the fantasy elements come almost as a relief. The husband and wife of the novel's first sentence, taken by the Sidhe and released, but not reunited, centuries later, must find each other while coping with a world not only different but seemingly gone entirely mad. They have problems of their own, too: Tadgh falls in with IRA gun-runners, and Maire is diagnosed as suffering from "acute situational stress reaction" and sent to the local psychiatric ward. And as if that weren't enough, each seems to be possessed, or possibly just overshadowed, by a deity -- Maire by the Goddess and Tadgh by the Horned God. The balanced relationship between the two deities is out of joint somehow, and before the novel ends Tadgh and Maire must find a way to set it right.

TOO LONG A SACRIFICE REVIEW - CONTINUED FROM LAST PAGE

It's at this point (since nothing is ever entirely perfect) that the novel's main problems lie. Broxon never makes entirely clear whether -- in terms of the story's philosophical underpinnings -- the Troubles in Ulster are responsible for the imbalance that's entered into the relationship between the Goddess and the Horned God, or whether the failure of this proper relationship has acted to produce the strife and sectarian violence of the Troubles. As long as this issue remains unsettled, the novel's symbolism and imagery never quite come into focus.

Still, Too Long a Sacrifice is a good read, and an excellent counter-remedy for too many hours spent listening to the Clancy Brothers over glasses of Tullamore Dew.



Time To Renew?

If the top right corner of your mailing label has a 60, it is once again time to renew your subscription to Mythprint. Otherwise, you will expire with the May, 1985 issue! Dues are now \$7 (for one year) for the USA, \$9.64 if you want Mythprint sent first class or if you live in Canada. If you live across the sea, it's \$9.00 for surface mail and \$12 for airmail. Checks, in US, Canadian, or UK funds, should be made payable to the Mythopoeic Society, and mailed to Lee Speth, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED].

Do it NOW and avoid the rush! And also be secure in knowing that you won't miss an issue of Mythprint.

Discussion Report

Romenna (New Jersey)

Topic: The Old Forest

Reported by Margaret Purdy

We began our discussion with a quip from Randolph that the trees in the Old Forest were "mean sons of beeches". That led to an inquiry into just what kind of trees actually were in the Forest. Tolkien mentions pines and firs in the higher areas, and oaks and alders and "nameless trees" in the deep forest. And the willows, of course. We also wondered what had been the model for the Old Forest, whether it was a place that Tolkien had been himself. It didn't sound to us like an English or French forest. The Black Forest in Germany was suggested, and Per said the description reminded him of forests in Scandinavia, especially the thickets of heavy undergrowth which he remembered struggling through with difficulty. The description was good enough for us to presume that Tolkien had been in such a forest, though we couldn't think of any evidence that he'd been to Scandinavia before writing The Lord of the Rings.

The hobbits take bearings as they travel, but unfortunately the forest is actively trying to get them lost. We noted that they seem to assume that only people make paths, never having heard of game trails. On the other hand, we didn't see any mentions of animals in the descriptions of the Forest. Perhaps the trees don't like animals much. In The Adventures of Tom Bombadil, though, animals appear as characters in the poems -- the badgers, the otter, and the kingfisher and swan.

We wondered what Old Man Willow intended to do with Merry and Pippin once he'd captured them. We couldn't think of any specific purpose he might have had in mind, and decided he would probably just have kept them in there.

We now passed on to the fertile subject of Tom Bombadil. He states that he is "Eldest", which led to the suggestion that he was possibly the first of the Ainur to enter Arda. His saying that he had seen "the dark under the stars when it was fearless, before the Dark Lord came from Outside" would

DISCUSSION REPORT - CONTINUED FROM LAST PAGE

suggest that he predated Morgoth, although it's not clear which Dark Lord he's referring to. We decided that he isn't easily classifiable, but he certainly belongs.

In the Letters, Tolkien describes Bombadil as being something like an embodiment of "pure science", which observes without getting involved or taking responsibility. This is why the Ring has no effect on him; since he has no desire for power, it can't get any hold on him. He was described as a sort of Maia Thoreau, and compared with Pan. Mention was made of Celtic deities; Tom, being associated with a piece of land, is more like the female Celtic deities than the male ones (who tend to be associated with tribal groups). Since Goldberry is associated with water, perhaps she is Water while Tom is Earth. All around, he's a creature of contradictions. We wondered if Tolkien had put him in at an early stage of the composition, and forgotten either to take him out or to explain him, but we decided that for a perfectionist author such carelessness was unlikely. Later on we found the passage in the Letters that describes Bombadil as an intentional enigma. We concluded by imagining the meeting of Gandalf and Tom which Gandalf mentions near the end of the book; that must have been interesting.

We went on to discuss the barrow-wights. We clarified that they are dark spirits from elsewhere, not the ghosts of the people buried in the barrows, who were the lords and ladies of the kingdom that had formerly been there (probably Cardolan, while the kingdom that had chartered the Shire was Arthedain). We decided that the brooch that Tom took from the barrow had probably belonged to a Dunadan lady that he had known.

We were astonished at the naivete of the hobbits, shown by the fact that they had never considered that they might have to fight on their travels. The first they do consider it is when Tom gives them each a small sword from the barrow. They had, after all, heard about Bilbo's adventures, in which he had had to fight. Probably that all seemed very long ago and far away, something that didn't really apply to them. Gandalf should have given Frodo a Boy Scout manual.

ACTIVITY

Deadline for the Activity Calendar is the first of the month preceeding the month of publication, i.e. May issue information will be due the 1st of April. June information will be due the 1st of May. Thank you.

SECRETARY FOR DISCUSSION GROUPS (Please write to him about forming groups, or if you have any questions):

Scott Norton
[REDACTED]

DISCUSSION GROUP MEETINGS

CALIFORNIA: North

Oakland-Berkeley: STORISENDE

Daniel Oakes, [REDACTED]

Sacramento: AVALON

Laurine White, [REDACTED]

South Bay: KHAZAD-DUM

Pat Witham, [REDACTED]

*Apr. 14, 1985 (Sunday) 1 PM

The Sword is Forged by Evangeline Walton. At Harold & Lisa Harrigan's, [REDACTED]

*May 5, 1985 (Sunday) 1 PM

Damiano Trilogy by R.A. MacAvoy. At Jo Wilcox's, [REDACTED]

*June 2, 1985 (Sunday) 1 PM

Cards of Grief by Jane Yolan.

At Frankie Jemison's, [REDACTED]

*August, 1985

The Oz Series by L. Frank Baum

CALIFORNIA: South

Hollywood-Wilshire:

Dolores Speth, [REDACTED]

*April 14, 1985 (S

Mr. Pye by Mervyn

At Gary Myers, 74 [REDACTED]

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA,

Washington & Maryland

Wendell Wagner, Jr [REDACTED]

*April, 1985

Job by Robert Heil

Date & Place To Be

*May, 1985

Talisman by King

Date & Place To Be

*June, 1985

The Magician's Ne

Date & Place To Be

HAWAII

Honolulu: SAMMATH NA

Stephen L. Brown [REDACTED]

All meetings start

located at: Ken [REDACTED]

LOUISIANA

Baton Rouge: ROKE

Deborah Wilson, 15 [REDACTED]

CALENDAR

YDGARD

nday) 2:30 PM
Peake

MARYLAND

Suburbs:KNOSSOS

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Determined.

ew by C.S. Lewis
Determined.

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urtness,

MICHIGAN

Ann Arbor: GALADHREMMIN ENNORATH
Dave & Grace Lovelace,

MINNESOTA

Minneapolis-St. Paul: RIVENDELL
David Lenander,

*April Meeting at Minicon (April 5-7)
God Stalk & Dark of the Moon by Pat
Hodgell.

*May 11, 1985 (Tentative)
Books by Nicholas Stuart Grey, incl.
The Seventh Swan.

All meetings take place in
Coffman Union, Univ. of Minn. Mpls.,
East Bank Campus.

NEW YORK/NEW JERSEY

New York City Area: Rómenna
Margaret Purdy,

Currently discussing The Lord of the
Rings.

OHIO

Dayton-Kettering: THE PRANCING PONY
Eileen Ribbler,

VIRGINIA

Washington Suburbs: SPARE OOM
Veida & Steve Wissler,

Review

Cards of Grief, by Jane Yolen. Ace pb, \$2.75. Reviewed by David Bratman.

This paperback original is billed as Jane Yolen's first novel for adults (after eighty or so works for children). The experience has stood the author well. Cards of Grief is one of those rare books that blend fantasy and science fiction into a rich broth that benefits from the cross-breeding. Although the science fiction content does not reach the usual techie standards of scientific rigor, the mythic qualities of the theme of contact between two civilizations transcends such concerns and gains strength from the setting. Although this is a short book, it has a great scope. It summarizes a whole alien culture, and the events of many years, in a succinct and memorable way.

The publisher has shown amazing taste in the packaging of this book. Not only is it graced with a beautiful cover by David Palladini, there is no potted plot summary to be found anywhere in the blurbs. This is wise, because the plot is basically simple. It gains its power from Yolen's profound ability as a storyteller, and any attempt to describe it in fifty words or less is doomed to failure of tone. I will merely say that the book describes a society in which grieving for the dead is the highest form of art. Nor is there any need to describe the setting: as she has done in other books, Yolen begins the story with a brief, appropriately dry, introduction to the planet on which it occurs.

The various chapters are presented as tape recordings (some open, some surreptitious) of conversations, mythic orations, and memoirs of the characters -- a combination of oral history and oral documentation. A few of the chapters have previously been published separately, in slightly rewritten form.

I realize that I've said very little about this book -- less, perhaps, than on any other books I've ever reviewed. I can't describe it, I can only give my reaction. Cards of Grief is not a perfect book, but it is very fine indeed. I do not doubt that any reader who can be touched by mythic storytelling will respond to this work.

NEWS NOTES

We're pleased to announce the arrival of two exciting newcomers from the Virginia home of Veida and Steven Wissler, the staff of Mythellany, the Mythopoeic Society's fiction-and-whatever annual. One is the '84-'85 issue of the magazine (very soon to be available from the Society at [REDACTED] for \$3.50 postpaid). And the other is Samuel Paul Wissler (alias "Woody" or "The Nip"), who made his appearance early on February 2nd.

"C.S. Lewis: The Late Work" is a three-evening course on Till We Have Faces and Letters to Malcolm taught by Sister Cora Brady as part of this spring's Barat House program at Manhattanville College in Purchase, N.Y. The course will be taught Thursday evenings, April 18th & 25th and May 2nd. Fee of \$12 includes dinners. Write: Sister Eileen O'Gorman, Sect'y, Barat House, Manhattanville College, Purchase, NY.

Katherine Kurtz fans. Deryni Archives #11 is finally out. It includes the usual progress report from Katherine and articles, short stories, poetry, and art work inspired by her works. Cost is \$3 (checks should be made payable to Yvonne John) and sent to Deryni Archives, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Include a SASE if you want a notice sent to you about DA #12.

BOOKS BOOKS BOOKS BOOKS BOOKS BOOKS BOOKS BOOKS BOOKS

L. Sprague de Camp and Fletcher Pratt in collaboration are best known for the whimsical Incomplete Enchanter stories, but they wrote other stuff in the same vein. The Land of Unreason was last seen in print as a Ballantine Unicorn Head fantasy a decade ago. Now it's a gorgeous trade paperback from Bluejay (\$7.95), lavishly illustrated by Tim Kirk.

Michael Ende, the German author of The Neverending Story, wrote another fantasy novel in the far-off year of 1973, which has just been reissued in a new English translation. It's titled Momo, and tells of a young girl of that name, who contends with the mysterious Men in Gray (who sound rather like the Blue Meanies). The translator is J. Maxwell Brownjohn (of Das Boot, er, I mean The Boat), and it's published by Doubleday, hardcover, \$14.95.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Tanith Lee, who is to my tastes the finest short-story writer in fantasy today, has written a new book of shorts, The Gorgon and Other Beastly Tales. The stories are grim and gripping without being standard "horror". The book is a paperback original from DAW, \$2.95, 288 p. -- dsb

Guy Kay, whose name should be familiar to trivia buffs as Christopher Tolkien's editorial assistant on The Silmarillion, has written a novel of his own. The Summer Tree is the first volume of a trilogy, and tells of the adventures of five humans in the world of Fionavar. It's a hardcover from Toronto publishers McClelland & Stewart, for \$19.95 in Canadian money.

The second volume of Jack Vance's Lyonnesse series, The Green Pearl, will premiere from specialty publisher Underwood-Miller in April. The first edition will be 500 signed and numbered hardcover copies of the 400 page book, with full-color dustjacket, for \$60.

Lady Gregory: The Woman Behind the Irish Renaissance, by Mary Lou Kohfeldt, is a biography of a woman who played an important role in Celtic literature, collecting anthologies of Irish legends, and sponsoring young writers like W.B. Yeats. Atheneum hc, \$19.95.

Capra Press' new back-to-back series of short writings includes a 43 page item from Ursula K. Le Guin: The Visionary: The Life Story of Flicker of the Serpentine is an excerpt from a forthcoming novel. It's paired with a piece of biographical fiction about the furtrader J.J. Audobon, by Scott R. Sanders. Capra Press trade paperback, \$7.95.

FILMS FILMS FILMS FILMS FILMS FILMS FILMS FILMS FILMS FILMS

Peter S. Beagle, author of The Last Unicorn and of the admirable screenplay for the otherwise dubious Bakshi Lord of the Rings film, is writing another screenplay. This time it's for a story of his own, "Lila the Werewolf". The film is being made on a low budget by a small company in New York, where the story is set. Beagle's writing is in collaboration with the film's producer, Max Rosenberg. He is

NEWS NOTES - CONTINUED FROM LAST PAGE

also still working on a rewriting of his long-awaited novel about Joe Farrell, the hero of "Lila". (In it, Farrell joins a medievalist group called the Society for Archaic Pleasures.)

CONS CONS CONS CONS CONS CONS CONS CONS CONS CONS CONS

* Denotes a new or significantly updated listing

* MINICON 20, April 5-7, 1985. Minneapolis, MN. GOH: James P. Hogan. Rivendell Branch will be having their April meeting at the con. Membership: \$20 at the door. Write: [REDACTED]

ALTI-EGOS, April 26-28, 1985. At the Sheraton Denver Tech Center, Denver, CO. GOH: Anne McCaffrey. Artist GOHs: Real & Muff Musgrave, Hap Henriksen. Membership: \$35 at the door. Write: [REDACTED]

* CONJURATION 2, May 10-12, 1985. At the Camelot Hotel, Tulsa, OK. GOH: R.A. MacAvoy. Membership: \$12 at the door. Write: [REDACTED]

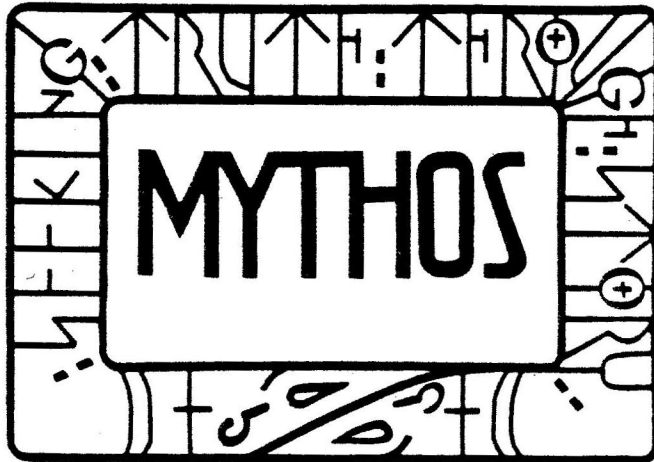
* KEYCON, May 17-19, 1985. At the Winnipeg Marlborough Inn, Winnipeg, Man., Canada. Guest: Vonda McIntyre. Membership: C\$20. Write: [REDACTED]

* V-CON 13, May 24-27, 1985. At the Gage Towers, Univ. of B.C., Vancouver, B.C., Canada. Ghost of Honor: Mason Harris (H.P. Lovecraft). Write: [REDACTED]

MYTHCON XVI, July 26-29, 1985. At Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL. Theme: "A Kinship of Dancers." Room, board, & registration (including feast): \$141.50. Registration only: \$31.50 (in addition, a \$21 facilities fee is required at the door). All rates will be higher at the door (if available). Write: Mythcon XVI, [REDACTED]

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SUBSCRIPTIONS

The address for subscriptions and back issues of Mythprint is c/o Lee Speth, [REDACTED] Subscription, including membership in the Society is \$7 for 12 issues (one year) in the USA. Please add \$2.64 if you desire first class delivery or if you live in Canada. The rate is \$9.00 for overseas surface subscriptions; airmail is \$12. Checks should be payable to The Mythopoeic Society, and may be paid in US or the equivalent funds. The Mythopoeic Society also publishes Mythlore, a quarterly journal of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, Charles Williams, General Fantasy and Mythic Studies. Subscription is \$12 per year and should also be sent to Lee Speth.

SUBMISSIONS

If you wish to submit something to Mythprint in camera ready copy, the columns should be 60 characters of 10 to the inch ie 6 inches wide. The usual conditions apply: make sure your typer is clean, has a good ribbon, and don't end a page in the middle of a paragraph. I can retype something into the computer, too!

Artwork is always wanted. We always need more cover art! The maximum cover art size is 6 inches high by 6 1/2 wide. And it can be smaller!

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