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The Counsel of Elrond

Glen GoodKnight

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The Counsel of Elrond
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(3) Hobbits
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TOLKIEN JOURNAL 12

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The name of this column comes from the fact that I have from the first admired the quiet wisdom of Elrond, and have tenaciously identified with him in the sense that I always come to the picnics as that character.

For many of you this will be the first time you have seen Mythlore since you are receiving it as part of your Tolkien Journal subscription. There is the possibility that Mythlore may again combine with Tolkien Journal. Mythlore comes out quarterly on a regular basis, and therefore if you wish to get all future issues of Mythlore, it will be necessary to subscribe on a separate basis. If you like Mythlore, and want to subscribe, please say whether or not you are also a subscriber to Tolkien Journal when you send in your subscription. That way we will not count joint issues of Mythlore-Tolkien Journal as part of your regular Mythlore subscription.

I should briefly describe the purposes and activities of The Mythopoeic Society: the main purpose of the Society is to study and discuss the fictional and mythic works of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, and Charles Williams. It is also interested in fantasy and myth in general and their relevance for contemporary man. Some people have wrongly taken by implication that the Society sees no value in and takes no interest in other works. The Society has focused on these three authors particularly because we believe they capture a feeling of ultimate joy and optimism in a very enjoyable and relevant way, almost unique in the 20th century. Many other writers and works are much discussed informally among the individual members, and starting in 1970 will be discussed in the Society as part of the new elective system.

The word mythopoeic means “myth-making” or “myth-maker.” It was chosen as the best adjective to describe the three men. It is pronounced variously as myth-o-po-ay-ic, myth-o-pay-ic, myth-o-pie-ic, the last one used most commonly. It should not be pronounced myth-o-po-ic.

The main activity of The Mythopoeic Society is the monthly branch meetings. The monthly bulletin and newsletter, Mythrant, gives the locations of the meetings for the various branches, overall news of the Society and related interests. The meetings are held in the volunteered homes of members. The regular list of books discussed in the Society is found on page 23. Beginning this year the Society has made some major structural and procedural changes. Due to the increasing number of branches, it is no longer practical to continue the policy of each branch discussing the same book or topic each month. The new policy is called the Elective System. It allows for each branch to have a great amount of self-determination and local autonomy, while being united with all other members of The Mythopoeic Society in our common interests and purposes. Each branch votes among its members as to what order it want to discuss the books from the regular list. Besides this, newly formed branches have too “electives” for the first year. Electives may be used in several ways: 1) to discuss any work or author from a wide range of related interests, 2) to discuss more Tolkien, or Lewis, or Williams from the regular list, or 3) discuss other books written by the three authors. Branches older than one year will have three electives, and those of two years or older will have four electives. Since it is impossible to discuss the entire The Lord of The Rings at one meeting, the Society has approached this work by topics for discussion. Some of the past topics have been “The Hobbits,” “The Elves,” “Frodo, Sam, and Gollum,” “The Rings of Power,” and “Rohan and Gondor.”

The Mythopoeic Society was founded in October 1967. The first branch is in the San Gabriel area of Southern California. The San Fernando Valley Branch in October 1968, The Upland-Pomona Valley Branch in May 1969, The West Los Angeles Branch in

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July 1969, The Claremont Colleges Branch in October 1969, and in January 1970 The Santa Barbara Branch, The Orange County Branch, and the Los Angeles Branch. At the present time there are 12 branches in Southern California, however there is a possibility of branches being formed in Northern California and other states. The Society has continued to grow, not only because of the interesting material we send out, but also because of the positive or negative reactions (but not fanaticism) of the members. It is a great personal pleasure to me to know so many diverse yet highly interesting personalities. Some might think the Society is a literary cult. In a cult, the object of worship can not say or do any wrong.

The purpose of the Mythopoeic Society is discussion, not worship. Besides the monthly meetings, the Society has its special events, primarily the semi-annual picnics. Each September there is the Bilbo and Frodo Birthday Picnic and the first in July. At this picnic-party there are relay races, folk dancing, a LOTR quiz, birthday cake and auction, and costume judging with prizes given for the best Tolkien character costumes. Each year the costumes become more elaborate and well thought out. The 1969 picnic saw over 200 attending, most in costume.

In the Spring a picnic is held to celebrate two events: the Elvish New Year and the Destruction of The Ring. There are the relay races, folk dancing, quiz, birthday cake and auction, and costume judging with prizes given for the best Tolkien character costumes. Each year the costumes become more elaborate and well thought out. The 1968 picnic saw over 200 attending, most in costume.

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The works of Tolkien, Lewis, and Williams inspired the creation of the Mythopoeic Society and the Society, in turn, has created a bond of communication and fellowship between its members. It’s as though the Inklings started a snowball which has rolled ever since to create a larger and larger snowball which has rolled over to us from England and across the years. I think it’s still rolling and growing to encompass more and more. What I’m trying to say here is based on personal experience within the Society. I found out that most members are not only devoted readers, but also creative individuals, who like to share their experiences with others. The majority of our membership is of the younger generation everyone is so concerned about these days, what with demonstrations, drugs, new morality, etc. I, on the other hand, am one of the members over thirty and, I suppose, part of the so-called establishment. When I first joined I wasn’t sure I’d fit in, but soon found out that there was no generation gap in the Society. I even had the strange feeling I was among the same type of friends I had known when I was in school. It’s true that the medieval and semi-hippie clothes worn at Mythopoeic picnics and parties, or semi-hippie clothes worn at Mythopoeic picnics and parties, or semi-hippie clothes worn at Mythopoeic picnics and parties, or semi-hippie clothes worn at Mythopoeic picnics and parties, or semi-hippie clothes worn at Mythopoeic picnics and parties, or semi-hippie clothes worn at Mythopoeic picnics and parties, or semi-hippie clothes worn at Mythopoeic picnics and parties, or semi-hippie clothes worn at Mythopoeic picnics and parties, or semi-hippie clothes worn at Mythopoeic picnics and parties, or semi-hippie clothes worn at Mythopoeic picnics and parties, or semi-hippie clothes worn at Mythopoeic picnics and parties, or semi-hippie clothes worn at Mythopoeic picnics and parties, or semi-hippie clothes worn at Mythopoeic picnics and parties, or semi-hippie clothes worn at Mythopoeic picnics and parties, or semi-hippie clothes worn at Mythopoeic picnics and parties, or semi-hippie clothes worn at Mythopoeic picnics and parties, or semi-hippie clothes worn at Mythopoeic picnics and parties, or semi-hippie clothes worn at Mythopoeic picnics and parties, or semi-hippie clothes worn at Mythopoeic picnics and parties, or semi-hippie clothes worn at Mythopoeic picnics and parties, or semi-hippie clothes worn at Mythopoeic picnics and parties, or semi-hippie clothes worn at Mythopoeic picnics and parties, or semi-hippie clothes worn at Mythopoeic picnics and parties, or semi-hippie clothes worn at Mythopoeic picnics and parties, or semi-hippie clothes worn at Mythopoeic picnics and parties, or semi-hippie clothes worn at Mythopoeic picnics and parties, or semi-hippie clothes worn at Mythopoeic picnics and parties, or semi-hippie clothes worn at Mythopoeic picnics and parties, or semi-hippie clothes worn at Mythopoeic picnics and parties, or semi-hippie clothes worn at Mythopoeic picnics and parties, or semi-hippie clothes worn at Mythopoeic picnics and parties, or semi-hippie clothes worn at Mythopoeic picnics and parties, or semi-hippie clothes worn at Mythopoeic picnics and parties, or semi-hippie clothes worn at Mythopoeic picnics and parties, or semi-hippie clothes worn at Mythopoeic picnics and parties, or semi-hippie clothes worn at Mythopoeic picnics and parties, or semi-hippie clothes worn at Mythopoeic picnics and parties, or semi-hippie clothes worn at Mythopoeic picnics and parties, or semi-hippie clothes worn at Mythopoeic picnics and parties, or semi-hippie clothes worn at Mythopoeic picnics and parties, or semi-hippie clothes worn at Mythopoeic picnics and parties, or semi-hippie clothes worn at Mythopoeic picnics and parties, or semi-hippie clothes worn at Mythopoeic picnics and parties, or semi-hippie clothes worn at Mythopoeic picnics and parties, or semi-hippie clothes worn at Mythopoeic picnics and parties, or semi-hippie clothes worn at Mythopoeic picnics and parties, or semi-hippie clothes worn at Mythopoeic p...