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Editorial

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EDITORIAL

Much has happened since the last issue, primarily the 28th Annual Mythopoeic Conference, August 8-11, 1997, at Pepperdine University in Malibu, California. Let me explain the connection with *Mythlore*. It has been a number of years since the last Conference was held in Southern California, and last year there wasn't a group on the horizon anywhere on the globe who was prepared to organize a Conference for 1997. The Council of Stewards (the Society's Board of Directors) decided that by default "it was Southern California's turn." The group that had the most active Society members, Niggle's Parish, seemed to provide a core group of people who had the potential of organizing such a conference. Since Niggle's Parish meets in my home, I found myself as the *ad hoc* leader of those in Southern California trying to get a Conference organized for 1997. There had been a Society Conference every year since the first one in 1970, but if something wasn't done quickly, there very possibly would not have been one in 1997. We were in good fortune to have the support of Michael Collings, Professor at Pepperdine, and Scholar Guest of Honor at the 1995 Conference. Through his good offices, we were able to plan for the 1997 Conference to be held at Pepperdine - a truly remarkable location.

While I certainly did want to see a Southern California Conference this year, I didn't especially relish Chairing the Committee to bring it about, primarily due to the personal conflict of time between it and being the Editor of *Mythlore*, and thereby producing issues regularly. When I did agree to Chair the 1997 Committee, I had a cold spot in my stomach, fearing the conflict of priorities this might cause if I were not racing like Alice's Red Queen, just to keep in the same place. The last issue of *Mythlore* was mailed in early January, and work proceeded on this issue and on the Conference with equal enthusiasm and time commitments. Then one day while standing on a chair to install lights on a bookcase, the chair's legs fractured and I found myself falling to the floor, badly bruising my tail bone. I had to use a rubber donut cushion for several months while it recovered. At the same time a nasty virus took hold and it took three different antibiotics to shake it off after three months. Work on the Conference and this issue suffered. I continued preparing this issue, and had it mostly finished when the advancing calendar overtook me with the increasing demands of organizing the conference growing closer.

I came to the point where I realized I could not get both done together. Since the date of Conference was fixed and could not be postponed, it was my beloved *Mythlore* who perforce had to wait. I am personally very concerned about this chain of events, and have some thoughts on it:

This year's Conference was a *very* good one, receiving

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many compliments from both new comers and those who are there every year. That said, I can relax from a labor that I undertook, not for "power and glory," but because the Society was in *need*. I do not foresee repeating the honor of Chairing another Conference for the foreseeable future. Unforseen delays after the conference included my daughter's wedding, other urgent family matters, and yet more problems in my complex, this time involving unreliable contractors.

The fear that caused the cold spot in my stomach a year ago has come back. Some people who were agreeing that it was Southern California's turn last year, and that it was the Stewards in the region who needed to take responsibility, have criticized *Mythlore* for not appearing on schedule. I do feel disheartened about this. In some eyes I am "damned" no matter what happens.

Even so, what about bruised tailbones and viruses delaying the *Mythlore* production process? On this there are four things: 1. To take stress off the furniture, I have lost about 35 pounds of fat and gained about 15 pounds of muscle. 2. My health has dramatically improved — I feel younger and stronger — and I seem to fight off allergies and viruses much better. 3. Our Submissions Editor has agreed to provide greater textual preparation in the form of scanning submissions that are not directly available on disk. This will save a great deal of my time in formatting issues. 4. The finding of a new Associate Editor, to help keep production moving (see page 53).

The future looks very good right now. We have a number of excellent submissions, that will create a good "mix" for a number of issues.

There is another issue that should be shared, because I personally very much want to hear what *you* think. Upon it being suggested by various others, *Mythlore* a number of years ago implemented its program of becoming a juried or refereed journal (the two terms mean basically the same thing). Under this system papers are reviewed by members of the Editorial Advisors before publication. This gives the publication more academic prestige, and does help some paper writers gain tenure if their work is printed in a juried journal.

If we had a paid staff subsidized by a university to handle the considerable correspondence this entails, the work would be much easier. We are a staff of volunteers, who have other professional duties to carry out first. The

juried process can be "correspondence intensive." In the past, each paper needed to be reviewed by three editorial advisors before publication. The problem arose when all three evaluations did not come back in the time frame needed to put together a given issue. Either we had to make last minute changes in the issues contents, or publish the paper before all the evaluations were in. Matters worsened when the former submissions editor became heavily involved with family-related issues, and the process became increasingly bogged down.

With all the concern raised the last few years about the frequency of the issues, delaying an issue for this reason has not seemed like a justifiable reason. As a result, not all the papers published have gone through the full three panel jury system. How does this effect you? Not a great deal to most people, I surmise, since most of the papers that go through this process are printed as originally written.

I have had extensive discussions with our new Submissions Editor, who has suggested "streamlining the process" by sending the papers to two editorial advisors, besides being reviewed by the Submissions Editor and myself.

My primary concern is serving the ongoing readers of *Mythlore*; this takes precedence over possibly helping a non-subscribing papers submitter obtain tenure (most papers submitters do not have this problem). For those that are going through this difficult process of seeking tenure, I give my full sympathy and sensitivity.

I would very much like to know *what do you think?* Is continuing the juried process meaningful to you? Is the extra work necessary for the improvement of the journal?

A related note: submissions do not come in a regular flow. There are dry periods and times when many good things come in together. More than half of all papers printed in *Mythlore* are first given at a Mythopoeic Conference. This organic link between *Mythlore* and the Conferences cannot be overlooked or minimized.

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