10-15-1981

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Recommended Citation
Available at: https://dc.swosu.edu/mythlore/vol8/iss3/14

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Mythcon XII Report

Abstract
Report of Mythcon XII by David Bratman with photographs by Bonnie Callaghan
PICTURES FROM MYTHECON XII

Front of the Procession with Don Studebaker as Master of Ceremonies.

(From right to left) Paul Edwin Zimmerman, Arwen GoodKnight, Diana Paxson, Glen GoodKnight, and Joe Christopher.

At the Opening Session. Paul Edwin Zimmerman is standing. Joe Christopher on the right and Elizabeth Pope on the left.

Scene from "The Feast of the Fisher King" written by Diana Paxson. Kelson on the right as Perceval and Don Studebaker on the left as the Fisher King.
D uring th e  e v en in g , P a u l Edwin Zim m er, re d -b e a rd e d , k ilte d ,
p a r tic ip a n ts  and th e ir  mood. C o-Guest-of-H onor Jo e

The setting is what one noticed first. Mills is an enclave of
trees, grass, a creek, an occasional covey of quails, and
attractive buildings, hidden from the world. The heart of
the convention was the Revelhall, a room built as an Anglo-
Saxon mead hall in many tones of wood. The major programs
in the environment were held underground their big and
program books from registrar Bonnie Rauscher. It was a small
gathering, but a warm one. Most of the members were locals
or from elsewhere on the West Coast, but there were some
from as far away as Alberta and Michigan, plus one guest
from an unusual locale — Tisa Ho, who teaches English at
Hong Kong University.

During the evening, Paul Edwin Zimmer, red-bearded, kilted,
and possessed of a magnificent voice, began presenting over
the first Bardic Revel of the conference. The Revels — we
couldn’t call them by the usual name of Bardic Circles, because
the participants were frequently scattered about the
room in more of a tessaract — were the most continuous and
continually variegated of Mythcon XII’s programming events.
There were Revels in the Revelhall of an evening, on the
lawns in the afternoon, and in the dorm lounges deep into
the night. The songs and poems presented ranged from light
and funny to serious and deeply moving, depending on the
participants and their mood. Co-Guest-of-Honor Joe
Christopher read from a pamphlet of poetry he’s recently
published, and presented members with copies.

Saturday morning, after breakfast, the convention held the
traditional concenter Procession, from the dining commons to
the Revelhall, to hear the opening ceremonies and the first
Guest of Honor speech, by Elizabeth Pope. Miss Pope gave a
fascinating and well-received talk on myth and fairy tales, the
relationship between them, and how one can be turned into
the other. There followed during the next two days a variety of papers and panels. I did not attend them all —
there was too much going on for anyone to see everything —
but those I did attend were all well-presented and highly
thought-provoking. They included Joe Christopher’s Guest of
Honor speech, “Androcles and the Lion” Monday morning,
on the role and symbolism of fairies in Lewis’ early poetry; a
panel on the new explosion in fantasy publishing, which
produced, as panels will, unexpected but lively discussions,
particularly one on the danger to the freedom of reading of
the Moral Majority onslaught; Howard Davis’ talk on the
patterns of world-creation in Tolkien’s “Ainulindale”; and
a paper by Tisa Ho, which turned into an earnest discussion of
how fantasy stories are embodied in the words they’re made of.

The Art Show (a “Garden of Bright Images”) and the Dealers’
Room (the “Goblin Market”) opened late Saturday morning.
The dealers, under the coordination of Clint Biggleston,
featured books, games, magazines (there was a vast run of
past Society publications), and miniature sculptures. The
Art Show, organized by Edith Crowe, had a variety of paint-

ings, drawings, stained glass, and other works. At the
auction on Sunday afternoon, presided over by Glen
GoodKnight, the most sales seemed to go to airbrush-wielder
Bonnie GoodKnight and calligrapher Patty Gould. The book
auction which followed, with the tradition of bidding at
ten-cent increments on minor items, was at a minimum this
year (which was just as well for the books).

Mythcon this year featured several major events that brought
most of the membership together. The opening and closing
 Oddities in Faerie.

. . .And much more that I did not see. One aspect of which I
saw only a little was the fine and thoughtful work by the
committee which went into making this Mythcon smoothly-run
and full of rich mythopoeic atmosphere: the composing of
the beautifully embellished, 28 page program book; the
rides to get people to and from the airport in time; the
help of security and gofers; and much else.

The conference was not entirely perfect, of course. There
were glitches, inevitably, and some of us who did not get
enough sleep had bouts of unexpected inappropriateness. But
overall, I had a joyous and magical weekend, and I think
everyone else did too, even the committee, exhausted as they
were by the end. And for that we have to thank each other:
for the company and the conversation, intelligent and merry.
I’m eagerly awaiting next year’s already.