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## Reviews

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## Reviews

### Abstract

*The 1992 J.R.R. Tolkien Calendar*. Illus. by Ted Nasmith. Reviewed by Paula DiSante.

*Word and Story in C.S. Lewis*. Ed. Peter J. Schakel and Charles A. Huttar. Reviewed by Nancy-Lou Patterson.

*Dorothy L. Sayers, Solving the Mystery of Wickedness*. Mitzi Brunsdale. Reviewed by Nancy-Lou Patterson.

*The Lord of the Rings (Original Motion Picture Soundtrack)*. Leonard Rosenman. Reviewed by Chris Seeman.



# REVIEWS



## Nasmith Victorious

*The 1992 J.R.R. Tolkien Calendar.* Illustrated by Ted Nasmith. New York: Ballantine books, ISBN: 0-345-37320-0.

The 1992 J.R.R. Tolkien Calendar can best be described by a four-letter word: EPIC. To celebrate the Tolkien Centenary, Ballantine Books gives us cause for great delight in this stunning, awe-inspiring achievement by artist Ted Nasmith. Design-wise, Ballantine continues its association with Alex Jay/Studio J for the layout of the individual month grids. Cover design is by Dale Fiorillo, and this includes the official seal the Tolkien Centenary. The individual months (provided, as is the custom, with important Middle-earth dates) each contain a smaller version of the same seal. Borders around the month grids are an improvement from last year's calendar, with a simple, tasteful Art Nouveau style replacing the screaming Art Deco borders of the 1991 John Howe calendar. A minor annoyance is that these new borders, like those from last year, change color from blue to green to yellow to red, apparently in an attempt to represent the seasons. It would have been better to stick with one color — preferably the blue — which is the most subtle and serene of the lot.

If you are a lover of clouds, this is the calendar for you. Nasmith gathers them in by the fistful. In nine of the twelve paintings, the sky and its elements play an important role in conveying mood, feeling and visual texture, to the supreme benefit of each work's central theme and composition.

### January

"At the Court of the Fountain." This is unforgettable, and an exquisite follow-up to Nasmith's definitive "Minas Tirith at Dawn" (December, 1990 Calendar). In that piece, we were presented with the expansive whole of the City. The Tower and the Citadel were small, tantalizing details which we strained to see in this architectural vastness, imagining in our minds the wonders of the Seventh Circle. Now we see it up close and personal, and the splendor of the Númenóreans has seldom, if ever, been shown so vividly.

This is a Citadel of Kings, and its Tower is a testament to their glory of old. The great hall, accented by spires of sable and gold, gleams white in the sunshine. To convey the monumentality of the Citadel and the Tower, Nasmith sets the horizon line very low. The viewer is positioned as if standing in the lustrous, marble-flagged courtyard. From this low vantage point, the Tower soars into the sky, rivaling the very pinnacle of snow-swept Mindolluin.

Far below, led by a Guard of the Tower, Gandalf and

Pippin stride toward the viewer. Their relative size reinforces the immensity of the place, but not more than the two minuscule guards who flank the great entrance to the hall. To the viewer's right is the beautiful reflecting pool and fountain, and the White Tree, mournful in its barrenness, but still possessed of its dignity, drips with the fountain spray.

The sky is mottled with clouds of white and steely gray, and one senses in their presence Hope and Doom in rivalry, balanced on the knife's edge. The Tower is all that one could imagine. "Tall and shapely" it was called by Tolkien, and thus it is painted. One can clearly envision the light of the Palantrir flickering in the chamber far up in the Tower of Ecthelion. The only thing missing from the text description is the white banner of the Stewards flying from the top of the Tower. But that point is so minor in the face of such artistry and beauty that it is hardly worth a mention. The only regret is that this painting was not reproduced as a centerfold so that we might see it in even greater detail.

### February

"No Way Down." This painting gives new meaning to the phrase "having a dark cloud over one's head." Frodo and Sam struggle onward against a bitter wind in the bleak Emyrn Muil. In a tiny corner on the lower left-hand side, Anduin flows on, separating the hobbits from the world they knew. The pair are stuck, searching for a way off these impossibly sheer cliffs. Above them, gloom gathers in a smothering ceiling of dark brooding clouds, which is as unnerving as the harsh cold lands around them. Nasmith isolates the hobbits on a small stone perch, and we clearly sense their vulnerability in this dangerous and unforgiving country.

### March

"The Glittering Caves of Aglarond." Would you believe (according to the artist himself) that this was one of the most rapidly painted works in the entire calendar? Hard to fathom when one considers the profusion of its glorious detail. Here is the fairy world of Gimli's eloquent description. Even the most claustrophobic Middle-earth aficionado would want to go spelunking in this underground marvel. Nasmith gives us walls sparkling with gems and crystals, and adds shimmering subterranean pools and cataracts to dazzle us all the more. The sheer volume of this one cave (other caverns are discreetly hinted at with soft, glowing areas of light) is made manifest by the tiny figures of Legolas and Gimli, who are lit by torch-light in the lower right-hand portion of this jewel-like painting.

### April

"Éowyn and the Lord of the Nazgûl." Here's what it

means to be on the field of battle, with only a sword and shield standing between you and death — if you're lucky. Nasmith gets in just about every imaginable element described in this scene. The slaughter is real, and the horror is palpable. The first circle of the beleaguered City burns in a reek nearly as dark as night. The great gates are riven, shattered by the power of Grond. Horses flee, wild with fear, and blood-stained bodies litter the field.

Nasmith accentuates the main event with a slash of sunlight — that brief glimmer that falls upon Éowyn before the final attack of the Lord of the Nazgûl. In the right foreground is the carcass of the beast, and its neatly lopped-off head lays nearby. Théoden lies stricken a scant few feet from his valiant niece. Nasmith captures the action as the Nazgûl Lord is about to smash Éowyn's shield. In the shadowed left foreground, Merry crawls forward, sword in hand. The angle of his glinting blade telegraphs its destination — the back of the Nazgûl Lord's knee. There is such a sense of stop-action immediacy here that one wishes this single frame in time could be run forward so that we could see what happens next as the scene unfolds.

#### May

"An Unexpected Morning Visit." This is the morning that started it all — at least where the hobbits are concerned. Nasmith relies not only on Tolkien's description, but also on the Professor's painting entitled "The Hill: Hobbiton-across-the-Water." Who wouldn't want to live in this pastoral splendor? The farmlands and grasslands glow with life. Bag End dominates this composition, but does not overpower it. Gandalf and Bilbo are small figures, and their encounter seems benign enough. But perhaps we get a hint of the momentous things to come in the voluminous, majestic presence of the mighty cumulus cloud that splits the pale blue sky. Nasmith's observations of nature are rich and fair, full of the quiet energy of living things, and this gives vibrancy and grace to his vision of Hobbiton.

#### June

"The Shores of Valinor." This is enough to make any mortal wish that he or she were a ringbearer, "if only for a little while," if that burden would mean a chance to someday sail to these shores. Again, the horizon line is low, allowing the sky to play a dominant role. The westering sun turns the Undying Lands to gold as a stately white swan ship sails toward the coastline. The water, reflecting the rays of an almost too-brilliant sun, looks as if it were carved from sapphire. The sky hold a stunning display of lowering stratus, feathery cirrus, and mountainous cumulus clouds. This painting could single-handedly explain to the uninitiated the mystery of the Sea-Longing, the yearning for Elvenhome, and "the desire for deathlessness."

#### July

"Tuor at Vinyamar." This painting is as close as Nasmith gets to an out-and-out portrait in the calendar. Tuor has just emerged from the deserted halls, arrayed in the arms which Turgon left there years before at Ulmo's command. Surrounding Tuor are the seven large swans

that led him on his journey. Nasmith captures the feel of a once-beautiful hall that is slowly being overgrown in its abandoned state. Tuor stands proud and determined. The feathered crest of his helm echoes the outstretched wings of the airborne swans. If other paintings show off Nasmith's keen attention to nature, this one surely indicates that he's no slouch with man-made (or elf-made) objects. The sword and the gem-like quality of Tuor's shield are especially indicative of Nasmith's observational talents.

#### August

"Farewell to Lórien." In this handsome painting, one truly understands what Sam meant when he felt as if he were "inside a song." There is a dream-like quality here that gives Lórien a real sense of *otherness*. The play of light, reflection and color is a mix that puts the viewer's mind in an altered state, if you will, capable of comprehending this land that Time has passed by. The trees vibrate with green and gold. The gentle wakes of the boats are hypnotic. One can almost see the ripples grow like living things from the prows, and hear the dip and splash of oars in the still waters.

The Company greets the approaching swan ship, where sits the noble Celeborn. Behind him, Galadriel plays upon a small harp as she sings. This is all straight out of Tolkien's text. The quibbles here are minor: Celeborn's hair should be silver, not golden, and most (if not all) of the elves on the swan ship should have dark hair. But other than this, "Farewell to Lórien" is a lovely, impressive work.

#### September

"Gollum's Debate." This scene is truly bleak, pervaded by a feeling of death and despair. Nasmith sets the horizon line high, putting us in the ash pit with the exhausted hobbits. Gollum, reaching out to the senseless Frodo, struggles not only with his mad desire for the Ring, but also with keeping his promise to his hobbit master. Sam lies in a heap just under the lip of the pit. The choking quality of the volcanic ash is convincingly portrayed. The menacing walls of the Land of Shadow tell of the struggles and sorrows to come. Nasmith severely limits his palette, sticking exclusively to greys, purples, and blue-blacks — a wise, and effective choice. This is, even in its deceptive stillness, a chilling picture of dread.

#### October

"Morgoth and the High King of the Noldor." If this year's calendar is to be called "epic," then that appellation must have validation. Well, here it is. If you are a First-Age Elf or Man, then this is your worst nightmare. Again, the point of view is placed very low — the better to scare you to death, my dear! Morgoth looms as a mighty, implacable destroyer above the small, but steadfast and glorious High King Fingolfin. Here is Hell-on-Middle-earth as the two foes face off. Fingolfin holds aloft his glittering sword Ringil even as Morgoth swings his great hammer, Grond (inspiration for the battering ram that devastated the gates of Minas Tirith). Fire-pits, opened by the tremendous force

of Grond, roar with realistic fury at the feet of the combatants. Morgoth is terrible to behold, made more hideous in contrast to the imperishable Simearils that sparkle in his iron crown. The fruits of his cruel labor lay scattered all about: the dried, cracked bones and skulls of countless Elves and Men.

The tormented skies are slashed by lightning that bathes the scene in a deadly glare. The entrance to Angband glows ominously behind the formidable Dark Lord. The reeking fires swirl ghastly fumes around the two enemies, and seem to wreath them in the arms of Doom. This painting is a splendid feat—a terrifying triumph. If it troubles your dreams, this only proves you are human. Yikes! Mommy, leave a light on in the hallway!

### November

“The Last Words of Boromir.” Although more intimate than “Tuor at Vinyamar,” this is not a portrait piece, *per se*. Boromir, slumped against a tree trunk, is cradled in the arms of Aragorn, who kisses the brow of the dying man. All of the elements of the scene are here in sharp, accurate detail (save that the orc’s blood should be black, not red). Compositionally, Aragorn and Boromir form a diamond shape from which our eye does not readily break away. This self-contained drama is quiet, poignant, and sad, the calm after the storm that has just swept by. Atmospherically, one really gets a sense of the “forestry” nature of the scene, and this is intensified by the soft green-grey light that suffuses the background.

Although shorter than perhaps it ought to be, Aragorn’s hair has just the right amount of grey in it. This may seem a minor point, but every detail like this adds to the truth of the scene. Details *always* make the difference.

### December

“The Anger of the Mountain.” Featured, in part, on the calendar’s cover, this painting depicts the Company’s defeat by the mountain Caradhras. The Company has retreated, having just broken through the last big snow drift. In a final fit of anger, the mountain hurls down rock and snow, forcing the small band to race for shelter, away from the perilous edge of the path. Ice blue dominates in a blue-purple-white palette. Again, Nasmith’s cloud formations are impressive. His judicious use of airbrush (in this and several other paintings in the calendar) lends a sense of speed to the avalanche as this misty disaster roars down upon the Company. The figures are placed just below the center of the picture plane, allowing for a feeling of immensity and danger both above and below them. Nasmith’s treatment of snow and ice is masterful, obviously studied with an intense, accurate eye.

This scene is a fitting finale to this dignified, resplendent calendar. Nasmith has outdone himself in bringing his dream of Middle-earth to us. With luck (and some letters of strong support to Ballantine—get out your pens and let them know how you feel!), Ted Nasmith will continue to astound us year after year

with his elegant vision and impressive skill.

— Paula DiSante

## Language and Narrative of Lewis

Peter J. Schakel and Charles A. Huttar, Editors, *Word and Story in C.S. Lewis* (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1991), 316 pp. ISBN 0-8262-0760-X.

Including sixteen superb essays by American, British, and Canadian scholars, an excellent introduction by Peter J. Schakel, and a characteristically intriguing afterword by Owen Barfield, this valuable volume is ordered in two parts—Language (the Word of the title) and Narrative (the Story of the title). Professor Schakel has characterized these essays so effectively in his introduction that I will only report briefly on them here.

The essays exploring Language are as follows. Lyle H. Smith Jr.’s “C.S. Lewis and the Making of Metaphor” discusses Lewis’ own writings on Metaphor, and compares these ideas with those of various post-war theorists of metaphor, including some who have been rattling the bones of literary thought in recent years. Michael A. Covington’s “C.S. Lewis as a Student of Words” gives an elegant analysis of *Studies in Words*, C.S. Lewis’ book exploring the changes in meaning of significant English words. Verlyn Flieger in “The Sound of Silence: Language and Experience in *Out of the Silent Planet*,” dwells upon Lewis’ debt to Owen Barfield. Gregory Wolfe’s “Essential Speech: Language and Myth in the Ransom Trilogy” continues the Barfieldian theme for the whole trilogy. Thomas Wege in “Sanctifying the Literal: Images and Incarnation in *Miracles*” argues eloquently on behalf of the book somewhat neglected since the Anscrombe incident, and to quite another point: in *Miracles*, he says, Lewis shows that “The Incarnation reconciles the ancient gnostic dualisms between spirit and matter, nature and transcendence.” (p. 85) Charles A. Huttar offers a spirited defence of Lewis’ equally neglected poems in “A Lifelong Love Affair with Language: C.S. Lewis’s Poetry.” The most exciting essay in this section may be Stephen Medcal’s “Language and Self-Consciousness: the Making and Breaking of C.S. Lewis’s Personae.” The “personae” in this essay concern not Lewis’ use of his own persona as a fictional device in his various writings (which would make an interesting study) but Lewis’ own persona or public self in the Jungian sense, and the changes it underwent during his life, specifically in relation to the two phases of his conversion, first to Theism and second to Christianity.

The second half of the book concerns “Narrative.” Gilbert Meilander skillfully analyses Lewis’ use of narrative for theological purposes in “Theology in Stories: C.S. Lewis and the Narrative Quality of Experience.” Mara E. Donaldson, whose superb little book *Holy Places are Dark Places* I have reviewed before, gives us “Orual’s Story as the Art of Retelling: A Study of *Till We Have Faces*,” calling upon Ricœur as she does in her volume, but to a different point. Donald E. Glover in “Bent Language in *Perelandra*:

The Story Teller's Temptation," which discusses the temptation theme in the novel, explores this central element in *Perelandra* effectively. "C.S. Lewis and the Tradition of Visionary Romance" by John D. Haigh properly derives Lewis' romances from George MacDonald and William Morris as well as many other sources. Paul Piehler's excellent essay, "Myth or Allegory? Archetype and Transcendence in the Fiction of C.S. Lewis" discusses the paradise motif in Lewis' prose work. He makes one statement which I, with respect, must question: "only *That Hideous Strength*, with its grim, back to 'the silent planet' theme, lacks a paradise" (p. 208). I have argued in considerable detail elsewhere that the garden of St. Anne's Manor is precisely a Paradise; it is there that Jane is reminded of "the garden on top of some Mesopotamian ziggurat which had probably given rise to the whole legend of Paradise" and there (in its highest part) that Camilla points out Venus in the night sky and declares, "Paradise is still going on there." Jared C. Lobell argues in "C.S. Lewis's Ransom Stories and Their Eighteenth Century Ancestry" that the pedigree of Lewis' romances precedes the twentieth and nineteenth centuries. One of the best essays I have ever read on Lewis, and on which I reviewed previously when it appeared in VII (1982), is Michael Murrin's "The Multiple Worlds of the Narnia Stories," an intricate and sophisticated work which certainly deserves reprinting here. Colin Manlove contributes "Caught Up into the Larger Pattern: Images and Narrative Structures in C.S. Lewis's Fiction," which provides an interesting overview of its subject but contains one striking reading with which I, again with respect, strongly disagree. He says that in *That Hideous Strength*, "Mark and Jane Studdock can come together once more as man and wife at the end, but they have changed too much in isolation from one another to be able to do so." (pp. 272-73) I think Lewis is saying the opposite — that their separate adventures have so changed them that only at the end of the novel do they prepare to celebrate their true nuptials. Marius Buning's "Perelandra Revisited in the Light of Modern Allegorical Theory" discusses the great romance in terms of recent writing, especially those of Angus Fletcher, providing readers with striking new insights into Lewis' use of allegory — yes allegory! New theories of the subject are, in some ways, the central theme of this entire book, and it is no longer considered improper, in these new terms, to search Lewis' writings for allegorical content. Very highly recommended!

— Nancy-Lou Patterson

## Life, Works, and Meaning

Mitzi Brunsdale, *Dorothy L. Sayers, Solving the Mystery of Wickedness* (New York: Berg, 1990). 232 pp. ISBN 0-85496-249-2.

This excellent literary biography, published in the Berg Women's Series, makes an important contribution to the study of Miss Sayers' writings and life, through emphasis

upon two significant elements. First, her life and writings are treated as both developing and interrelated, as a series of events and works which culminate in her translation of *The Divine Comedy*, an effort which is seen as the crown of her life's achievement. Second, the emphasis of the study is upon Miss Sayers' position as a Christian, specifically as an Anglo-Catholic — that is, a high church Anglican. This key to her intellectual stance is consistently applied to unlock the meaning of her works, the relation of them to her life, and the relation of her life to her religion.

The facts of the case are, as is to be expected in a series biography, based mostly upon secondary sources, but the results of Ms Brunsdale's unwavering focus is a fresh and illuminating study, which reads as if told for the first time. Important for this achievement is the recent publication of Barbara Reynolds' indispensable study of the Sayers *Commedia* — *The Passionate Intellect* — by which the last phase of Miss Sayers' life can be seen as a balanced and understandable final phase in her creative achievements.

Miss Sayers emerges as a fully developed human being, a passionate woman, whose intellect, sexuality, spirituality, and all other elements of her selfhood, are portrayed with discernment, compassion, and clarity. If this study has a weakness, it is in the brief passages upon C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, and Charles Williams. Here Ms Brunsdale's reliance upon secondary sources has betrayed her into certain inaccuracies, a glaring example of which is her questionable notion (which she attributes to Humphrey Carpenter) that Lewis "considered a married male friend just as lost as a dead one." Had this been true, both Tolkien and Williams would have been "lost" to Lewis!

Dorothy L. Sayers' life was devoted to her work, which for her was the fulfillment of her Christian vocation. The detective novels, the plays, the apologetic works, the transitions fulfilled her as a creative writer, a theologian, and a scholar. Ms Brunsdale has succeeded in presenting a balanced, clear, and well-argued study of these works, and of their maker.

— Nancy-Lou Patterson

## LoTR on CD

Leonard Rosenman, *The Lord of the Rings* (Original Motion Picture Soundtrack) 1978 (1991) Intrada Film Music Treasury Series: FMT 8003D.

The task of scoring music for a fantasy film presents an interesting challenge for any composer. Unlike other cinematic genres such as western, urban cop drama, or even science fiction — genres whose musical as well as visual codes are highly conventionalized — fantasy has never possessed a comparable generic unity within which such well-defined musical conventions might be exploited. By "fantasy" I mean those films explicitly produced and consumed as such, and not in any broader theoretical sense of romance, adventure or "the fantastic"

in general (which could easily include science fiction and horror, for instance). The principal referent of this more specific definition of fantasy film is literary: the great majority of fantasy films that have been produced since the early 1920s have been directly based upon already existing literary sources, whether it be traditional mythology or the Victorian fairy-tale. To be sure, traditions of fantasy music do exist, but they are diverse; and thematic choices often play a central role in identifying what sort of story is being told — see Miklos Rozsa's orientalism in *The Golden Voyage of Sinbad* (1958) or John Boorman's Wagnerian evocations in *Excalibur* (1981), or more recently Michael Kamen's resurrection of Korngold's high romantic style for *Robin Hood, Prince of Thieves* (1991).

But the relative ease with which an Arabian Nights, Arthurian or Robin Hood score might be imagined is a luxury that is denied to a composer seeking to tackle an author like Tolkien. The uniqueness and novelty of Tolkien's literary creation places high demands upon the creativity of film-maker and composer alike — how can one cinematically evoke the sense of a mythology for which no real precedent exists? The Rankin-Bass animated productions of *The Hobbit* (1977) and *The Return of the King* (1981) demonstrate the disastrous effects, both musically and narratively, of imbuing Tolkien's world with the infantile attributes of "Disneyesque" fantasy which Tolkien himself so despised. Whatever one may feel about the Bakshi production of *The Lord of the Rings* (1978), as a film it represents (at least at the time when it was released) a major aesthetic achievement in visual artistry. Moreover, as a fantasy film it signified a unity of narrative and music which we owe mainly to Leonard Rosenman's powerful orchestral score. It was therefore with much anticipation that the San Francisco-based film music specialists Intrada announced their intention to produce an entirely remixed version of the Rosenman score on compact disc, which was finally released on July 2nd of this year.

The score has been rearranged in chronological order and includes four previously unreleased cues that appeared in the film. A booklet accompanying the CD contains an introduction and commentary by Rosenman on each individual cue. Also the remixing has greatly extended the audio range of many of the pieces, foregrounding instruments and effects which are not adequately represented on the original 1978 LP release. The increased quality of the sound is complemented by the richness of the new cues, which encompass some of the most interesting variations of the principal themes. The first of these, "Gandalf Throws the Ring", evokes the mystery and seduction of the One Ring as Gandalf reveals its dark legacy to Frodo. The second, "Trying to Kill the Hobbits" encompasses the terrifying drama of the Nazgul attack on Bree with the unsettling chant of "Mordor" in the background. The third is perhaps the most powerful, "Company of the Ring", which narrates the Fellowship's struggles to cross the Misty Mountains and contains a unique version of the Lord of the Rings march. The fourth new cue

is "Fleeing Orcs" which accompanies Eomer's pursuit and attack of the Uruk-Hai over the plains of Rohan. Finally, the previously released cue "The Dawn Battle" now appears intact with its full introduction. Of the music itself, Rosenman writes:

Composing the score was probably the most challenging assignment I have ever dealt with. How was it possible to write approximately 80 minutes of music, consisting mostly of violence, eerie marches, strange chases, and wild battle scenes without it becoming one dimensional and therefore boring? The answer was complex. 1) I had to create an overall style establishing a context of an other-worldly nature. This was done by an almost surrealistic superimposition of traditional triadic harmonies over dissonant and even serial techniques. Moreover, a great variety of orchestral color was necessary, including odd instruments like amplified Rams' Horn, a "Lion's Roar" percussion instrument, plus others as well as human voices singing a language which I invented for the occasion. 2) Thematic material, particularly in the marches and battle scenes, had both to be varied and accessible, as they were connected to the various characters in the film. 3) The score builds to the climax of the film where the full "Lord of the Rings" theme (the last march) is revealed. This is done by the gradual establishment of fragments of the theme throughout the film, so that the final march is a fulfilling "pay-off" to what has been hinted at throughout the entire composition. This technique is also used with respect to other motifs in the film, the climax of most of them coming during the last battle scene, "Helm's Deep". 4) The opportunity to write lyrical and/or tranquil passages in the work were welcomed enthusiastically as a needed contrast to the rest of the score. I speak of "Mithrandir" in particular. All in all, this score, viewed objectively after all these years, constitutes almost a lexicon of alien and strange sounds, wild marches and even wilder battle scenes.

This rerelease of *The Lord of the Rings* is a soundtrack well worth hearing, not only for its full seventy-seven minutes of music, but for its unique presentation of Rosenman's score as a musical work and not simply as accompaniment for a film. The respect extended by Intrada to Rosenman as an artist is paralleled by the respect that Rosenman's music itself has for Tolkien's creation, and thus deserves to be heard independently of its cinematic context.

— Chris Seeman

