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## Editor's Opening - Two Decades: Looking Back

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## Mythcon 51: The Mythic, the Fantastic, and the Alien

Albuquerque, New Mexico • Postponed to: July 30 – August 2, 2021



### Additional Keywords

Bernard Zuber; Paula DiSante



During the Society's second year a second monthly discussion group was begun in another area; by the third year, two more came into being. I was commuting each Saturday to different portions of the Los Angeles basin in order to lead the discussions. The Society grew steadily and several more groups were proposed, which necessitated the first structural change. Each group was to have its own (elected) Moderator, Secretary and Treasurer. These Officers met regularly for general planning, and to coordinate the organization of the biannual picnics: September for the Birthday Party and April for the Memorial Victory Celebration of the Destruction of the Ring and the Elvish New Year. Each month I'd send out a one-page announcement of the discussion topic, with a second page of maps and directions to various meeting places. These announcements evolved into Mythprint in 1970.

From the first, voices were raised in favor of a lengthy publication that would contain articles, reviews and art related to the Society's interests. So, on January 3, 1969, the first issue of Mythlore was finished just in time for a special party celebrating Tolkien's birthday.

Now the members expressed a wish for a general, and more lengthy, gathering. In 1969 we held a one-day Narnia Conference, which was very successful. From the beginning we had had cordial relations with the Tolkien Society of America; a year and a half later, the first Mythopoeic Conference was planned in conjunction with the third Tolkien Conference. C.S. Kilby was our first Guest of Honor, and the Conference activities were proof positive of the number of creative and talented people who belonged to the Society.

By 1971, the average age of the Society's membership was somewhere in the mid-twenties. In the spring of that year, after a long series of meetings of what was called "The Great Council" (comprised of all the discussion group officers), a set of Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws was hammered out, and the Society incorporated as a non-profit, tax-exempt literary and educational organization.

That same year saw a merger. In 1965, Richard Plotz had gathered a few friends and started the Tolkien Society of America. The overwhelming response began to conflict with his plans to enter college, causing him to turn leadership of the TSA over to Ed Meskys in September, 1967. Following several unsuccessful eye operations over the next years, Ed Meskys suggested a merger of the TSA with the Mythopoeic Society. This merger was accomplished in 1972; at the same time, the Society's membership not only extended across the country but into other nations.



The Procession at the second Mythopoeic Conference, 1971; Mary McDermott Shideler as Guest of Honor

During the next three years the Society continued to grow steadily, but it became increasingly obvious that a major change was taking place. Numbers of subscribers, from all over the North American continent, were not members of local discussion groups -- and could not possibly participate in decision-making at "Great Council" meetings in Southern California. These members now comprised a goodly portion of the Society, yet they had no voice. The Society was reorganized again, shifting decision-making from the Council to the membership at large, via Mythprint and Mythlore. The title of the Society's steering committee, which had been "The Board of Directors," was changed to "The Council of Stewards."

By now Mythopoeic Conferences were held both in Southern and in Northern California. Meanwhile, the Society's participation in other types of creative expression continued to grow. In Inklings II Writers' Workshop, started in 1970, began publishing a fiction journal, which was superseded by Mythellany in 1981, and in 1987 by The Mythic Circle.

In 1979-80, the Bylaws were rewritten in order to conform to changes in state law pertaining to non-profit organizations. The Stewards used this opportunity to make other structural changes. These Bylaws, with some subsequent minor emendation, are the ones governing the Society today.

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## Mythopoeic Core Reading List

*Mythlore* frequently publishes articles that presuppose the reader is already familiar with the works they discuss. This is natural, given the special nature of *Mythlore*. In order to assist some readers, the following is what might be considered a "core" mythopoeic reading list, containing the most well known and discussed works. Due to the many editions printed, only the title and original date of publication are given. Good reading!

### J.R.R. Tolkien

*The Hobbit* (1937); "Leaf by Niggle" (1945); "On Fairy-Stories" (1945); *The Lord of the Rings: Vol. 1, The Fellowship of the Ring* (1954); Vol. II, *The Two Towers* (1954); Vol. III, *The Return of the King* (1955); *The Silmarillion* (1977); *Unfinished Tales* (1980).

### C.S. Lewis

*Out of the Silent Planet* (1938); *Perelandra* (1943); *That Hideous Strength* (1945); *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (1950); *Prince Caspian* (1951); *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* (1952); *The Silver Chair* (1953); *The Horse and His Boy* (1954); *The Magician's Nephew* (1955); *The Last Battle* (1956); *Till We Have Faces* (1956).

### Charles Williams

*War in Heaven* (1930); *Many Dimensions* (1931); *The Place of the Lion* (1931); *The Greater Trumps* (1932); *Shadows of Ecstasy* (1933); *Descent into Hell* (1937); *All Hallow's Eve* (1945); *Taliessin through Logres* (1938); and *The Region of the Summer Stars* (1944) (printed together in 1954).

Two Decades: Looking Back, continued from page 4

In 1980, the first Mythopoeic Conference to be held beyond California took place in Nevada. In 1985 the Conference was held in Wheaton, Illinois, and in 1987 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Society members are located in all parts of the United States and 15% of the membership lives outside the borders of the United States.

It took the vision and enthusiasm of youth to bring the Society into being. Now, and in the future, it requires the experience and determination of maturity to fulfill the original vision of the Society.

There is no progress without change, and no change without some feeling a sense of dislocation. We have had our critical junctures of transition. Underlying each was a challenge to the original vision, and purpose. I have always stood firm in my resolve that these not be changed, but remain active in the evolving process of how the original purpose and vision are best carried out. Looking forward to the coming decade, and into the next century, I can see exciting and ever-expanding possibilities for living out that vision.

### Please Stand By...

First some information about this issue, and then about the future: Mythlore is delighted to have full color covers for the first time. This is done to mark the 50th issue and the Society's 20th anniversary. It was made possible by the very generous underwriting of the additional cost involved with the color printing by Bonnie Callahan, and we are all deeply grateful to her to see this long held dream at last come true. This one-time event could be repeated again if other generous underwriters would step forward. It could also come about if Mythlore added about another 250 subscribers. Adding to what I wrote about in the last issue on what readers can personally do to promote the journal, if those steps are taken by each of us, then we could see color artwork and other varied benefits in the future. Whether you are a potential



DiSante '87

underwriter or can simply post Mythlore flyers, your help is needed.

You will notice a new typeface in this issue, mixed with typing done previously with the old style (plus and article submitted on a separate word processor). We hope you like the new typeface.

In the future we hope to see Mythlore completely typeset. Good things can happen if we expect and work for them. Please stand by for future improvements.

The Society is rich in many things: people who are gifted, intelligent, creative, and enthusiastic -- all for good reason, namely what the Society means. Our biggest lack is sufficient funds, which keeps us from realizing much that could be done. A combination of generous donations and an increase in new readers would make a great deal possible. This is surely not new, but our spirit to challenge the seemingly impossible can be. Onward and Upward.

Glen GoodKnight

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elaborate composition and its rendering with such bold, sure lines and delicate, carefully controlled stipple. But the piece is even my impressive in the sense of mystic grandeur it conveys. I love the stylized, yet somehow plausible, architecture (a specialty of Ms. Patterson) which sweeps towards St. Anne's and culminates in the walled garden jutting up impossibly among the sun, moon, and stars (reminiscent of Tolkien's image of the holy mountain Taniquetil, whether coincidentally or intentionally); and the magnificent arc of planetary names, each overlaid with its appropriate symbol of power. This is St. Anne's, not as it would appear to one's physical eyes, but as it would appear to one's soul.

Equal praise is also due Ms. Patterson for her other fine illustrations from That Hideous Strength appearing in ML this past year, namely the cover of ML 45 and the superb portraits of the book's "good" characters in ML 47. The latter were amazing in their sensitivity -- these were the very faces I had seen in my own mind's eye when reading Lewis' book. I would love to see NLP's versions of the book's villains, especially Fairy Hardcaste. Perhaps she can be persuaded to try!

I'll bring this to a close before I begin to wax lugubrious (unless I'm too late already); but suffice it to say that I am looking forward to seeing more of Ms. Patterson's work (both artistic and scholarly) in future issues of ML, Maleldil willing.

Tales Newly Told, continued from page 14

Christian myths so that they illuminate and reinforce each other. He never tries to side-step the full emotional impact of myth, as so many modern treatments do. He does make more use of genuine horror than any of the Inking writers would have (though one should remember that there is a strong element of horror in Lewis' own writing: witness the "Miserific Vision" in Perelandra, and the many levels of ghastliness suggested in That Hideous Strength), and let, despite the bleakness of so many of the episodes, the novel ends on an image of warmth and goodness. To gaze upon death in its most disquieting aspects and still be able to offer hope -- a deep, lasting hope -- is a precious gift indeed in a writer.