The 45th Annual Mythopoeic Society Conference

Wheaton College, Norton, Massachusetts

Friday, August 8 through Monday, August 11, 2014

WHERE FANTASY FITS

Fantasy literature does not fit comfortably into any scheme. Both old and new, traditional and innovative, popular and elite, mainstream and esoteric, escapist and engaged, high-tech and anti-technology, fantasy defies definitions and transcends categories, dramatizing the incompleteness of our understanding of our own imaginations. At Mythcon 45 we will discuss the place of fantasy in our culture, our institutions, and our hearts.

Guests of Honor

Author Guest of Honor: Ursula Vernon

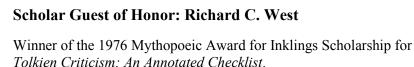Winner of the 2013 Mythopoeic Fantasy Award for Adult Literature for Digger.

Ursula Vernon is the author and illustrator of the Dragonbreath series, Nurk: The Strange, Surprising Adventures of a (Somewhat) Brave Shrew, and *Digger*, winner of the 2013 Mythopoeic Fantasy Award, a first for a graphic novel.

The daughter of an artist, Ursula spent her youth attempting to rebel and become a scientist, but eventually succumbed to the siren song of paint (although not before getting a degree in anthropology, because life isn't complete without student loans, right?). Her work has been nominated for an Eisner award, "Talent Deserving of Wider Recognition" and a number of Webcomics Choice Awards. *Digger*, in addition to winning the Mythopoeic Fantasy Award for Adult Literature in 2013, won the Hugo Award for Best Graphic Story in 2012.

Ursula grew up in Oregon and Arizona, went to college at Macalester College in Minnesota, and stayed there for ten years, until she finally learned to drive in deep snow and was obligated to leave the state.

In addition to writing and making art, Ms. Vernon is "an avid birdwatcher, occasional neophyte practitioner of the sword art of iaido, and an amateur thrower of pots." She is active in her local webcomics community, and can occasionally be found at local science fiction conventions, looking vaguely baffled by the crowd and signing anything put in front of her.

Having moved across the country several times, she eventually settled in Pittsboro, North Carolina, where she works full-time as an artist and creator of oddities. She lives with her boyfriend, a spastic Beagle, a (fairly) mellow Border Collie, a small collection of cats, and a large collection of Indonesian demon masks, which generally manage to keep her out of trouble.

Scholar Guest of Honor: Richard C. West

Winner of the 1976 Mythopoeic Award for Inklings Scholarship for *Tolkien Criticism: An Annotated Checklist*.

Richard C. West is an award-winning Tolkien scholar and serves on the Board of Advisors of the Mythopoeic Society and the editorial board of *Tolkien Studies*. His background in is medieval English, French, and Scandinavian literature, as well as in modern fantasy and science-fiction, and in librarianship. He is a graduate of Boston College (A.B. cum laude, English, 1966) and has graduate degrees in English (1967) and in library science (1974) from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. In September of 1966 while still a student, Richard and several other enthusiastic readers of The Lord of the Rings started a Tolkien society there, the University of Wisconsin Tolkien Society. He was Head of Serials and a reference librarian at the Kurt F. Wendt Library, University of Wisconsin-Madison until his retirement at the end of 2012, and is now Senior Academic Librarian Emeritus.

Richard has published articles on such authors as Peter S. Beagle, C. S. Lewis, Mervyn Peake, T. H. White, and J. R. R. Tolkien. He also contributed to A Tolkien Compass, Tolkien's Legendarium, Tolkien Studies Volume II, Picturing Tolkien, and authored multiple articles in The J.R.R. Tolkien Encyclopedia.

Richard's award-winning Tolkien Criticism: An Annotated Checklist has gone through two editions (Kent State University Press, 1970, 1981) and some of us would love to see a third edition, available digitally! < http://www.amazon.com/Tolkien-Criticism-Annotated-Bibliographies-Checklists/dp/0873382560/?tag=0547928254>

Richard also served on the conference committee for Mythcon 18, the Mythopoeic Conference held at Marquette and featuring Christopher Tolkien as Scholar Guest of Honor. He attends Mythcon whenever it's in the Midwest. He is married to Perri Corrick-West, also retired, who taught chemistry for decades and who loves science fiction even though she spots the scientific errors right away. <http://www.mythsoc.org/mythcon/mythcon-18/>

ROOM & BOARD

Deadline for Room & Board packages is July 24.

Full room and board packages include lodging for Friday, Saturday, and Sunday night, along with the following meals: Friday dinner; Saturday breakfast, lunch, and dinner; Sunday breakfast, lunch and banquet; and Monday breakfast.

This year we have a unique situation: room and board is figured by person, thus single rooms and double rooms have the same per-person rate. Please also note there are a limited number of air-conditioned dorm rooms available to us so, if you want A/C, buy your room and board package soon! We are able to offer an extra night on Thursday before Mythcon (no meals) but we cannot stay on campus Monday night.

For those staying on campus Thursday night, there is "The Cafe", open weekday mornings at 8:30 until 3pm. Breakfast options include hot sandwiches, pastries, yogurt, fruit, coffee, etc., and lunch includes both hot and cold options. The Cafe is not open on weekends. There are a few dining places within walking distance, a local pizza shop and a small pub; there are many more options within a 5 mile driving radius and we will include a list of these in PR#2.

Air-conditioned rooms are located in Keefe and Gebbie Halls and are arranged in suites of three and four bedrooms with shared common space and bathroom. The non-air-conditioned dorm, Beard Hall, has classic "dorm-style" common bathrooms situated in the hallways.

We encourage attendees to take the room-and-board package. Even if you plan to stay off campus, we strongly recommend that you take meals on campus. Shared meals are a large part of Mythcon, and give attendees the chance to mingle with fellow mythopoeics.

Buy room & board packages here and, for Mythcon 45 members staying off-campus or who live locally, meals-only packages (dinners and lunches, no breakfast) and stand-alone Sunday night banquet tickets are also available on the same webpage. < http://www.mythsoc.org/mythcon/mythcon-45/room/>

GETTING TO WHEATON COLLEGE

Norton, Massachusetts, is situated between Boston and Providence, Rhode Island. If possible, fly into Providence: it's closer, has much less congestion, and is an easier airport to negotiate.

Starting and ending times for Mythcon 45 are still approximate, but for trip planning you can assume that registration will open about noon on Friday and programming will begin no earlier than 1 PM. The first meal on the package is dinner, we expect offered 6-7 PM. Monday breakfast is the final meal in the room & board package but programming will continue into the Mythopoeic Society annual members' meeting (all are welcome) and Mythcon closing ceremonies, which will finish no later than 1 PM.

. There is free parking on campus, for those who drive or rent cars; in PR#2 we will provide a campus map showing the easiest place to unload. <http://wheatoncollege.edu/about/our-location/traveling-to-wheaton/>

Wheaton College webpage on campus wireless networks, available for our use during our time on campus. < http://wheatoncollege.edu/technology/started/networks-wheaton/connecting-to-the-campus-network-wired-wireless/>

Boston is a world-famous city of well-known historic importance but Providence, Rhode Island, is of peculiar interest to fans of H.P Lovecraft and his fantastical works. The H.P. Lovecraft site has a Guide to Lovecraft Sites in Rhode Island website which may be useful to those planning to spend a little extra time in the Northeast. < http://www.hplovecraft.com/creation/sites/rhode.aspx>

PROGRAMMING

Mythcon offers a mix of scholarly papers, discussion panels, readings, films, Bardic Circle, Guest of Honor presentations, and other programming. A dealers' room will sell books and other items of mythopoeic interest. Friday evening will feature the opening night Stewards' Reception. Saturday evening will feature a concert and Sunday evening will feature the Banquet, presentation of the Mythopoeic Awards, a costume presentation, the annual strangeness from the Not Ready for Mythcon Players, and other delights yet to be known.

Some papers already accepted for presentation include *Where Myth and Fantasy Meet: Or Do They?* by Verlyn Flieger, *Noms de Guerre: The Power of Naming in War and Conflict in Middle-earth* by Janet Brennan Croft, *Harry Potter as Dystopian Literature* by Kris Swank, and *C.S. Lewis and C.G. Jung: The Fine Line Between 'Myth' and 'Archetype'* by John McGeary.

In addition to plenary sessions with our Guests of Honor and our usual array of excellent academic and entertaining papers and panels, Mythcon 45 enjoys unique physical proximity to Turbine, Inc., the company that created The Lord of the Rings Online™.

For many regular Mythcon attendees, the world of massively multiplayer online role playing games is entirely foreign territory. But Mythcon 45's theme is "Where Fantasy Fits" and nine years of The Lord of the Rings Online™ demonstrates that one of the places where fantasy fits is MMORPG, in computers and across the interwebs!

For The Lord of the Rings Online™ in specific, Turbine has a team dedicated to creating an authentic representation of Middle-earth. "This is a world where you can walk around (in three dimensions) as a Man, Elf, Dwarf, or Hobbit and stand against the shadow of Sauron's armies. The people who play our games do so with thousands of others, and form a vast community that visits in Middle-earth every day," says Aaron Campbell, Executive Producer of The Lord of the Rings Online™.

Aaron Campbell, Chris Pierson (Senior World Developer), and their community team are planning to participate with talks and demo stations, and possibly a presentation with Turbine's Art Director, focusing on their concept and development of either Orthanc or the Hornburg. <http://www.turbine.com/en/company/life-at-turbine>

Some general history of the game: in March of 2005, Turbine, Inc., announced that it finalized a deal with Tolkien Enterprises and Vivendi Universal Games (VU Games) that granted Turbine the exclusive right to develop and publish massively multiplayer online worlds based on The Lord of the Rings and The Hobbit literary works. As part of the agreement, Turbine owns all of the game assets to The Lord of the

Rings™: Middle-Earth™ Online, which quickly became one of the most highly anticipated massively multiplayer online role playing games (MMORPG).

Eighteen months later, The Lord of the Rings Online™: Shadows of Angmar™ (LOTRO) went Beta with some 200,000 players worldwide signing up, and on October 30, 2007, The Lord of the Rings Online™: Shadows of Angmar™ was awarded the highly coveted Golden Joystick award for 2007 PC Game of the Year, beating out a stellar list of nominees, including World of Warcraft: The Burning Crusade, Command & Conquer 3: Tiberium Wars and S.T.A.L.K.E.R: Shadow of Chernobyl. In January of 2008 The Lord of the Rings Online™: Shadows of Angmar™ was named Best Persistent World Game of 2007 by IGN, one of the leading online destinations offering videogame, entertainment and lifestyle content and resources.

In November 2008 The Lord of the Rings Online™: Mines of Moria™ expansion launched and was quickly named "Best MMORPG" in the 1up.com 2008 Reader's Choice Awards; two years later The Lord of the Rings Online™: Rise of Isengard™ was released as the latest expansion to the award-winning free-to-play massively multiplayer online roleplaying game.

On September 5, 2012, Turbine released The Lord of the Rings Online™: Riders of Rohan™, the next expansion to the award-winning free-to-play massively multiplayer online role playing game. The Lord of the Rings Online™: Helm's Deep™ was released in April of 2013.

COMMITTEE

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Stephanie Lowell, Assistant
David Oberhelman, Papers & Programming
Marion Van Loo, Registrar
Eleanor Farrell, Program Book
Leslie Donovan, Janet Brennan Croft, David Bratman, consultants
Lynn Maudlin, Steward for Mythopoeic Conferences

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Bratman, Berni Phillips	Doyle, Eric	Hunnewell, Sylvia
Bratman, David	Drout, Michael D.C.	Hunnewell, Rachel
Bülles, Marcel	Emerson, David	Kaminsky, Mark
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Callahan, Tim	Flieger, Verlyn	Keating, Christine
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West, Richard C. (GOH)
West-Milani, Susan
Williams, Donald

The Mythopoeic Society is an international literary and educational organization devoted to the study, discussion, and enjoyment of the works of J. R. R. Tolkien, C. S. Lewis, Charles Williams, and mythopoeic literature. We believe the study of these writers can lead to greater understanding and appreciation of the literary, philosophical, and spiritual traditions which underlie their works, and can engender an interest in the study of myth, legend, and the genre of fantasy. Find out about past conferences at Mythcon History <http://www.mythsoc.org/mythcon/history/>

A photo of Wheaton College in early spring, courtesy of Marcel Aubron-Bülles
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