

Mythcon 48

Celebrating the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Mythopoeic Society:

All That Is Gold

Progress Report



**Champaign-Urbana, Illinois
St. John's Catholic Newman Center
At the University of Illinois
604 East Armory Avenue
Champaign, IL 61820**

July 28 – 31, 2017

What is a Mythcon, anyway?!

The Mythopoeic Society Conference, informally known as “Mythcon,” is an annual Tolkien and Inklings-focused conference held over an extended weekend late-July to mid-August; the location moves throughout America, beginning Friday afternoon and concluding Monday at noon.

Mythcon has historically been held at a college or university campus. Each conference is constructed around a theme related to Inklings studies and/or fantastic and mythic literature. Conferences usually feature an author and a scholar guest of honor. Papers, panel discussions, readings, entertainment, an art show, a dealers’ room, and other activities fill the four-day event. Another Mythcon highlight is our annual banquet, after which the [Mythopoeic Awards](#) are presented. A small (usually 100-200 people) size and intimate setting makes Mythcon an excellent venue for meeting people with common interests. You may see the full history and individual conference pages by visiting our [Mythcon History](#) page.

The Mythopoeic Society has always encouraged scholarship in mythopoeic and Inklings studies by providing a venue in which scholars, new and established, may present papers which may in turn be considered for publication in *Mythlore*, assisting scholars in need of financial aid to attend Mythcon, and recognizing student scholars with the [Alexei Kondratiev Award](#).

Mythcons are also a lot of fun and feature some serious play: the [Not Ready for Mythcon Players](#) perform a semi-spontaneous piece of topical silliness, a caucus-race of a Masquerade (prizes for everyone), Bardic Circles in the evenings, and Golfimbul (Mythcon 45 Chair and former GOH Mike Drout explains it [here](#)).

The Mythopoeic Society is launching into a series of 50th anniversaries: the founding of the Society in 2017; the initial solicitation of articles for *Mythlore* in 2018; and of our Mythopoeic conferences in 2019. For the fiftieth anniversary of our Society, we are relating to gold - all that is gold!

It is the Golden Anniversary of the Mythopoeic Society and we are celebrating:

All That Is Gold

Gold in fantasy—

Greed for gold: Tolkien's dwarves and gold lust, economic systems in fantasy and fantasy gaming;

Gold as a color: color symbolism in fantasy and heraldry;

Gold as an element: gold and other fantastic elements and materials like mithril, octarine, meteorite metal, unobtainium, or the list of semi-precious gems in Tolkien's "Errantry"....

The Golden Age: in fantasy and myth, of fantasy as a genre.

Digging for Gold in the Archives—

Primary and secondary materials about the Inklings and other fantasy authors in the archives at Marquette University, the Wade Center, Oxford University, and other locations;

Fan material and society archives;

Materials in collections at the University of Illinois, especially the Center for Children’s Books;

Archives, libraries, writing, and research IN fantasy.

Guests of Honor



Laura Schmidt, Archivist, Marion E. Wade Center, Wheaton College, Wheaton IL

Laura Schmidt graduated with a BA in English literature and history from Wheaton College in 2003, and a master's degree in archives and records management from the University of Michigan's School of Information in 2005. The degree she values most highly however might be the Doctor of Hobbit Letters (DhL) she received from the American Tolkien Society in 2003.

She has served as archivist for twelve years at The Marion E. Wade Center at Wheaton College, and also volunteers as the historian at a local historical society and as a church librarian.

She is the author of *Using Archives: A Guide to Effective Research* (Society of American Archivists, 2011), and has spoken extensively on the Wade Center and its seven authors over the years.



Bill Fliss, Archivist, Raynor Memorial Library, Marquette University, WI

William Fliss has been an archivist at Marquette University in Milwaukee since 2003. An ardent Tolkien fan since childhood, Bill assumed the dream job of being curator for Marquette's J. R. R. Tolkien manuscript collection in January 2012. Since 2013, he has presented bi-monthly [public showings](#) of original Tolkien manuscripts, drawing visitors from all over the United States and Canada. Since 2014, Bill has taught an annual Honors Seminar at Marquette on *The Lord of the Rings*, incorporating Tolkien's manuscripts into the instruction. A native of Wisconsin, he received a master's degree in history and a master's degree in library and information science from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. In his free time, Bill is currently completing a doctorate in U.S. History from Marquette.

In addition to our excellent program of papers and panels, we also look forward to some special commemorative program items and displays, plus a Dealers' Room and Art Show.

Call For Papers

Alexei Kondratiev Award (Student Paper)

In 2010, the society introduced a new award for the best paper presented at Mythcon by an undergraduate or graduate student. This award, first presented at Mythcon 41, was named in honor of Alexei Kondratiev, long-time Society member and a scholar of wide-ranging interests in mythopoeic and related studies, who passed away in 2010. The winners of the award receive a certificate, a one-year subscription to *Mythlore*, and half-off registration for the next Mythcon he or she attends. He or she is also strongly encouraged to submit the paper to *Mythlore* for consideration. The winner will be announced at the Mythcon banquet and on the society's website, as well as in *Mythlore* and *Mythprint*. The application can be found at <http://www.mythsoc.org/mythcon/alexei.htm>

In order to be considered for the award, the application form must be submitted to the committee chair, Janet Croft at mythlore@mythsoc.org by June 29.

The finished paper must be submitted electronically to the chair at least ten days before the first day of Mythcon.

The paper must follow *Mythlore* style guidelines and should be between 4000 and 9000 words long. <http://www.mythsoc.org/assets/Alexei-Kondratiev-Award-Application.pdf>

Applicants must be accepted in or currently enrolled in an undergraduate or graduate program at the time their abstract was submitted.

Applicants must attend Mythcon and present the paper to qualify for the award.

Glen GoodKnight Starving Scholars Fund

The Glen GoodKnight Starving Scholars Fund supports attendance at Mythcon for scholars and other participants. Preference is given to persons presenting a paper or participating on a panel, though others are not automatically excluded from consideration. Awards generally consist of a contribution toward room & board costs or, very rarely, other conference expenses such as travel costs. The Mythcon Papers Coordinator, in consultation with the Mythopoeic Society Council of Stewards and the Conference Committee, makes the final decision in regard to award recipients, amounts, and application of funds. No more than half of the Fund's balance may be used in any given year.

The Starving Scholars Fund was conceived by Jane Yolen at the end of Mythcon 24, where she had been our Scholar Guest of Honor; she was so impressed with the focus on scholarship which the Society encourages that she said, "you need a starving scholars fund, to help more scholars attend Mythcon" - and then she put her money where her mouth was and gave us our first contribution to the Starving Scholars Fund. The fund was renamed in honor of our founder, Glen GoodKnight, upon his passing in November 2010. Glen always emphasized the importance of encouraging scholarship in Inklings studies and was happy to see this fund come into existence; we believe he would be pleased to have his name associated with the Starving Scholars Fund.

Those interested in donating to the Glen GoodKnight Starving Scholars Fund may do so here: <http://mythsoc.org/donation-GGSSF.htm>

Conference Schedule

For planning and travel purposes, Mythcon 48 registration will open at noon on Friday, July 28, and there will be program items starting at 2 p.m. Friday afternoon until dinner; after dinner we will have our casual meet-and-greet Stewards' Reception and perhaps some other entertainments/activities.

Saturday morning, July 29, the Procession and Opening Ceremonies will start at 9:30 a.m., including our first plenary Guest of Honor address, followed by more papers and panels throughout the day, breaking for lunch and dinner. After dinner: entertainments and post-programming activities (e.g., Bardic Circle).

Programming continues Sunday, including the Society Auction in the afternoon, and the Banquet, second Guest of Honor address, and Awards presentations Sunday evening.

Final program items will start Monday morning at 9:00 a.m., followed by the Annual Mythopoeic Society Members Meeting (all are welcome) and closing ceremonies, concluding at noon.

Conference Registration

The current Registration rates for Mythcon 48 are as follows (rates will be higher at the door):

Full-Conference Registration for Mythopoeic Society Members: \$75

Full-Conference Registration for General Public: \$90

Full-Conference Registration for Students*: \$55

PLEASE NOTE: You can save money if you join the Mythopoeic Society and then register for Mythcon 48 at the Society Member's Rate. There are other advantages of membership as well. See the Mythopoeic Society's website for details.

If you are uncertain of your Society membership status, please contact our Membership Secretary, Lynne Darga (email: membership@mythsoc.org). To register online using PayPal, please visit <http://www.mythcon.org>. To pay by check, please download the registration form: <http://www.mythsoc.org/assets/MC48-REGonly.pdf> - make checks payable to The Mythopoeic Society, and mail them to:

Mythcon 48
Attn: Registration
Box 71
Napoleon MI 49261-007

*Full Time students at an accredited college or University. Must present a valid student ID to receive this rate. For children attending with parent(s) or legal guardian(s), 12 and under are free, 12 to 18 pay student rate.

The Venue

St. John's Catholic Newman Center is a private dorm on The University of Illinois' campus. The U of I is a public, research-intensive University, home to one of the largest University libraries in the United States—second only to Harvard. It is across the street from U of I's Rare Book and Manuscript Library, one of the largest special collection repositories in the United States.

Conference Room and Board

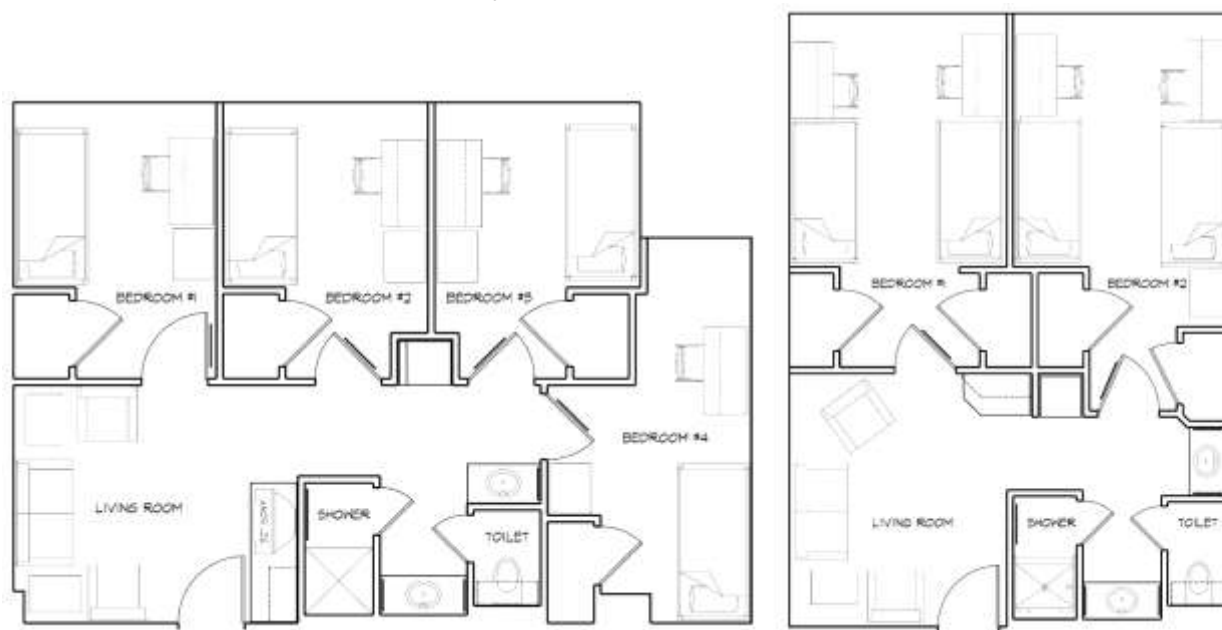
This year there are several options for conference room and board. You may choose to stay directly at the **St. John's Catholic Newman Center** at University of Illinois, where the conference is being held. This is an air-conditioned suite-style dorm, with various options: four private bedrooms sharing one living room and bathroom; two rooms each with two single beds sharing one living room and bathroom; or "jack & jill" style singles (single bedroom sharing a bathroom with the room next door). There is also a very limited number of single rooms with wheelchair access.

The Newman Center includes free wifi, Direct TV in each shared living room, air conditioning, a 24-hour fitness center, and coffee and tea available 24 hours in the dining room. It is in close walking distance to a large number of restaurants and bars on Green street.

The full meal package (included in the room & board packages) includes Friday dinner, Saturday breakfast, lunch, and dinner, Sunday breakfast, lunch, and banquet, and Monday breakfast. The supplemental meal package does not include breakfasts.

The Newman Center's dining room features organic, locally grown meat, produce and eggs. Vegetarian and dairy-free options are available for each meal. Coffee and tea are available 24 hours a day; all meals (except the banquet) are served at a multi-station buffet.

Newman Center Room Layouts (suites)



Double Occupancy Room & Board: \$220 per person* (Friday dinner through Monday breakfast; sheet, pillow, blanket, towel, washcloth included)

Single Occupancy Room & Board: \$245 per person* (Friday dinner through Monday breakfast; sheet, pillow, blanket, towel, washcloth included)

Newman Center Conference Parking \$30 for the weekend; limited availability!

Book online: <http://www.mythsoc.org/mythcon/mc48-room.htm>

***About roommates / suite-mates:** We place people in double rooms (two beds in one bedroom) according to your roommate requests; we will *try* to put people into suite groupings according to your requests but we cannot guarantee it. If you book a double room without specifying your roommate, we will try to assign you a suitable roommate (and suite-mates) BUT we cannot guarantee it; it is possible that someone requesting a roommate be assigned will have to 'upgrade' to a single; happily the price difference isn't very big this year.

About "jack & jill" single rooms: we will assign rooms so that shared bathrooms are with the same sex *unless you specify the person with whom you will be sharing the bathroom.*



HOTEL OPTION:

For those who prefer hotel amenities (and larger beds!), we have arranged for some rooms at the **Illini Student Union Hotel**, which is several blocks away from the Newman Center and will probably require walking between locations, due to limited parking at the Newman Center.

The Illini Student Union Hotel is a classy hotel which includes free wifi, free access to U of I's workout center, 42-inch TV in each room, free parking, and a \$5 breakfast voucher for each day you stay, good for use at one of the following restaurants in the Student Union: Einstein Bros. Bagels, Jamba Juice, Qdoba, Quad Shop, or Starbucks. It is also within walking distance of Green Street, which boasts a large number of restaurants.

Please call the Illini Student Union Hotel at (217) 333-1241 and use the conference code "myth" in order to receive our special rate (approximately \$110/night, before taxes).
<http://union.illinois.edu/stay/illini-union-hotel>

We strongly encourage folks who choose to stay at the hotel, as well as commuter members of Mythcon 48, to buy the **Meal Package for \$135** – this includes Friday dinner, Saturday lunch and dinner, Sunday lunch and banquet (no breakfasts), available at our website.



We also offer stand-alone **Banquet Tickets for \$60**, available at our website. Please remember the banquet is *already included* in both the room & board packages and in the meal packages!

<http://www.mythsoc.org/mythcon/mc48-room.htm>

Getting Here

For those who live too far away to drive directly to Champaign-Urbana, there are several ways to get here. The first is to fly directly to Champaign's commercial airport, Willard. This summer, both United Airlines and American Airlines will have flights directly to this airport. This airport is six miles away from the Newman Center. We are working on gathering a team of volunteers to give individual rides to those flying into Willard: more information will be available about this soon.

For those who prefer bigger airports, Champaign-Urbana is a 2.5 hours drive south of Chicago O'Hare. You may consider flying into O'Hare early, renting a car, and visiting the Wade Center at Wheaton before driving down to Champaign. You may also wish to fly into Chicago O'Hare and take advantage of Peoria Charter Coach's bus service which travels multiple times a day from O'Hare's Bus Shuttle Center to U of I's Armory, just a few blocks away from the Newman Center. For more information:

<https://peoriacharter.com/>

For those who prefer to travel by train, Champaign also has an Amtrak station. The Illinois Terminal is just a little over one mile away from the Newman Center. For more information:

<https://www.amtrak.com>

Champaign-Urbana is about a 3 hours drive from St. Louis, Missouri.

Things to Do Around Champaign-Urbana

While in Champaign-Urbana, you may want to stay an extra day or arrive a day early to enjoy local attractions. The Rare Book and Manuscript library at U of I houses many fascinating documents, including a cuneiform tablet, medieval illuminated manuscripts, and 82 cubic feet of H. G. Well's personal papers. For more information: <http://www.library.illinois.edu/rbx/>

The U of I is also home to the Spurlock Museum, a museum focusing on objects of cultural heritage. It includes galleries focused on Ancient Mediterranean, Egyptian, African and Mediterranean cultures, as well as Asia, Europe, and America. Highlights include replicas of well-known ancient Greek statues, the mummy of an Egyptian child, and the oldest extant fragments of a papyrus manuscript of the epistle of James. Admission is free, but a \$3 donation is suggested. For more information:

<http://www.spurlock.illinois.edu/>

For those who have a vehicle and time, the Robert A. Allerton Park is roughly a half hour's drive away from the Newman Center. Formerly the home of Robert Allerton, the beautiful park boasts several hiking trails, formal gardens, and statues—some hidden in the woods; others in formal gardens. To fully enjoy the various gardens and look for statues and other decorations hidden in the woods, one does need a sturdy pair of walking shoes and a good amount of time. Hiking and visiting the gardens are free; the mansion can only be toured by pre-arrangement. For more information:

<http://allerton.illinois.edu/>

Weather is likely to be in the mid-80s, tending toward humid. Mosquitoes are also likely, especially in the evenings, so be prepared!

A Brief History of the Mythopoeic Society

The Mythopoeic Society was born during the first major flurry of interest in J.R.R. Tolkien: the mid-1960s boom encouraged by the publication of U. S. paperback editions of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. Many Tolkien societies were founded at that time but most of them died off during the next few years; one reason The Mythopoeic Society not only survived, but flourished, was its interest in scholarship.

The Society grew out of a Bilbo's and Frodo's birthday picnic held in Los Angeles in September 1967, called by a college student named **Glen GoodKnight**. Glen wanted to start a group to hold serious discussions of the works not just of Tolkien, but of his Inklings colleagues C.S. Lewis and Charles Williams. He wanted a group with a balanced interest in all three writers, and in the traditions their work belonged to, without either narrowing to a sectarian religious interest or broadening into a general fantasy literature club.

In 1971 the Mythopoeic Society incorporated in California as a non-profit organization and composed its first Bylaws. When, in 1972, **Ed Meškys** was unable to continue running **The Tolkien Society of America** (originally the New York Tolkien Society founded by **Richard Plotz** in 1965), its assets and memberships were absorbed by The Mythopoeic Society. Subscriptions to its journal (***Tolkien Journal***) were subsumed into the Society's journal, ***Mythlore***.

The first monthly discussion meeting was held at the home of Lewis scholar **Kathryn Lindskoog** in Orange, California, in January, 1968. The topic was Lewis's *The Screwtape Letters*. Soon there were four groups around the Los Angeles area, each discussing the same work on different weekends, and within a few years many groups all across the U.S. and in Canada. The groups began to pick separate topics, as the older groups wanted to explore more of the variety of mythopoeic literature, while the newer ones grounded themselves in the Inklings. They began publishing reports of their meetings in Society publications. Over the years, fewer Society members have lived where groups were meeting, and the importance of the groups to the Society has receded, but twenty-one chartered discussion groups in thirteen states are still meeting regularly today, with others in the process of forming. The Society also sponsors two online discussion groups through **Yahoo Groups** and **LiveJournal** and has an active presence on **Facebook** and **Twitter**.

To give its far-flung membership a chance to meet, and to present papers orally with audience response, The Mythopoeic Society has been holding conferences since its early days. These began with a one-day Narnia Conference in 1969, and the first annual [Mythopoeic Conference](#) was held at the Claremont Colleges (near Los Angeles) in September, 1970. This conference, "Mythcon" for short, has continued each year since. Through 1975 it was always in the Los Angeles area, then branched out elsewhere in California and Nevada. The first Midwestern Mythcon was held in 1985 at Wheaton College, Illinois, because of the presence of the Marion E. Wade Center there. Since then it has been in various places in the continental United States, once in Hawaii, and once in Canada. In 1998, Mythcon returned to Wheaton for a special C.S. Lewis Centenary Conference, and twice, in 1992 and 2005, has crossed the ocean to Great Britain for the large anniversary Tolkien conferences in Oxford and Birmingham (organized by the Tolkien Society) which The Mythopoeic Society co-sponsored. From its earliest days, Mythcon has had a Scholar Guest of Honor (whose interests are reflected in the conference theme) and, somewhat later, an Author (or artist) Guest of Honor. Their keynote addresses have been highlights of the conference, and on several occasions have become chapters in the scholars' subsequent books. Mythcon also hosts numerous papers and presentations on all aspects of mythopoeic scholarship. Following the 1969 Narnia conference and the first three Mythcons, the

Society published small informal volumes of conference proceedings, but in subsequent years, papers were submitted to *Mythlore* if the scholar so chose.

The annual [Mythopoeic Awards](#) were first presented at Mythcon II in 1971. They came in two categories: one for fantasy fiction and one for scholarship. In 1992 the categories were increased to four: fiction was split into adult and juvenile categories, and the original scholarship category in *Inklings* studies was joined by one for general myth and fantasy studies, reflecting the broadening basis of Society scholarship. Fiction awards go to a work published during the previous year that best exemplifies “the spirit of the *Inklings*”. The scholarship awards go to books published in the previous three years. Each year the Awards are chosen by volunteer juries of Society members, then announced and presented in a ceremony at the Mythcon banquet. The actual award is a reproduction of one of the [lion statues](#) that rest outside the entrance of the New York Public Library. Inevitably, it became known as the “Aslan.”

So from its small beginnings, The Mythopoeic Society has blossomed into expressing and supporting mythopoeic interests and scholarship in many ways—discussions, conferences, magazine and book publications, and awards. Our members include tenured professors, independent scholars, devoted readers with no academic background at all, writers and artists. All are united in finding mythopoeic literature richly enjoyable, worth studying in detail, worth expressing one’s thoughts on in print, and worth discussing with each other.

To read more about the history of the Mythopoeic Society and its publications, etc., please visit <http://mythsoc.org/about.htm>

The Mythopoeic Society is administered by an Executive Board of ten to thirteen unpaid volunteers known as the [Council of Stewards](#), which includes the editors of Society publications as well as the usual (and unusual) departmental and executive officers.

Mythcon 48 Members *as of* May 7, 2017

Megan B. Abrahamson
Jennifer Agee
Edward H. Alexander
Moses Allen
Diane Joy Baker
Marcia E. Bigger
Berni Bratman
David Bratman
Matthew Breith
Bonnie Callahan
Joe Christopher
Lynn Christopher
Anne V. Osborn Coopersmith
Janet Brennan Croft
Margaret R. Dean
Paula DiSante
Leslie A. Donovan
David Emerson

Eleanor M. Farrell
Alicia Fox-Lenz
Stephen P. Gaddis
Christopher Gilson
Melody Green
Cary C. Hoagland
Laura Holt
Carl Hostetter
John Houghton
Sumner G. Hunnewell
Sylvia Hunnewell
Sylvia Hyde
Linda James
Mary Jo Kapsalis
Carol King
David Lenander
Bruce Leonard
Michele Mack

Lynn Maudlin
Lithlasiel Elise McKenna
Melodie McKenzie
Robert McKenzie
Jeffrey Mendoza
Jewell Morow
Amy Nyman
Barbara Oas
Peter Oas
David Oberhelman
Jeanell Pelsor
Karla Powell

Bonnie Rauscher
Emily Rauscher
Eric Rauscher
John Rosegrant
Arden R. Smith
Lee Speth
Hannah Thomas
Kevin Treacy
Aidan W. VanLoo
Marion P. VanLoo
Donald T. Williams

Mythcon 48 Committee

Chair: Melody Green
Papers Coordinator: Janet Brennan Croft
Registration: Marion Van Loo
Art Show Coordinator: Will Coats
Treasurer: Lisa Deutsch Harrigan
Steward Oversight/Liaison: Lynn Maudlin
Committee Member: Elizabeth McKenna