



FANTASIES of the MIDDLE LANDS

Mythcon 53 with
Diversicon 31
Minneapolis, Minnesota
Double Tree by Hilton -
Park Place
August 2-5, 2024

Progress Report #2

INCLUDING UPDATES ON THE BANQUET, A LIST OF
SELECTED PAPERS AND PANELS, AND MORE!

A NOTE ON THIS YEAR'S CONFERENCE

This year Mythcon is combining with the local Minneapolis event Diversicon, which is traditionally held the same weekend as Mythcon. The two conventions are of similar sizes and share many of the same interests.

ABOUT MYTHCON

The Mythopoeic Society Conference, informally known as “Mythcon,” is an annual Tolkien and Inklings-focused conference held over an extended weekend in late-July to mid-August; the location moves throughout America, and always begins Friday afternoon and concludes Monday at noon. 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. This year’s conference marks a return to Minneapolis for the first time since Mythcon 24 in 1993.

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](#), performing a semi-spontaneous piece of topical silliness, a Masquerade with prizes for everyone, Bardic Circles in the evenings, an occasional Clerihew Contest, and Golfimbul (which Mythcon 45 Chair and former GOH Michael Drout explains in his entertaining report on the [2014 Mythcon](#)).

ABOUT DIVERSICON

[Diversicon](#) is a project of [SF MINNESOTA](#), a multicultural, multimedia organization dedicated to improving contacts among groups and individuals interested in speculative fiction, in and out of the traditional SF community. Their continuing mission: to provide the most thoughtful Programming and the mellowest, most welcoming Parties of any Minnesota SF convention, and to making our state’s SF community more closely reflect the cultural diversity of Minnesota in the third millennium. SF MINNESOTA also co-produces the Speculations Reading Series monthly at Dreamhaven Books.

GUESTS OF HONOR

ELEANOR ARNASON

Author Guest of Honor

Eleanor Arnason is the award-winning author of dozens of science fiction and fantasy short stories and novels, including stories about a mythic “[Big Mama](#),” and Icelandic troll stories collected in [Hidden Folk](#). She is also a poet, and co-edited the collection *Time Gum and Other Poems* from the Minicon Poetry Readings. Eleanor’s novel *A Woman of the Iron People* not only won the Mythopoeic Fantasy Award in 1992, but was the recipient of the first-ever [James Tiptree Jr. Award](#) (now known as the Otherwise Award). Her stories have been nominated for Hugo and Nebula awards.



Over the past fifty years Eleanor has participated in the local Mythopoeic Society Discussion Group, “Rivendell.” Her incisive and insightful observations on writers’ panels at conventions are always memorable. We are pleased to celebrate a lifetime of stories and thoughtful conversations, and exemplifying so much that is important to all of us as readers.

Note that our program will include a discussion, open to audience members, of Arnason’s works, so brush up on your reading!



BRIAN ATTEBERY

Scholar Guest of Honor

Brian Attebery is a three-time winner of the Mythopoeic Scholarship Award for Myth and Fantasy Studies. Recently retired from Idaho State University, he is a former editor of *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts*.

Thirty-five years ago, Brian was a guest at [Mythcon 19](#), and we recognized his literary history *The Fantasy Tradition in American Literature from Irving to Le Guin*. *Strategies of Fantasy* is one of the most cited authorities in today’s continuing critical discussions, and Attebery continued his inquiry in *Stories About Stories: Fantasy and the Remaking of Myth*, and just last year, in *Fantasy: How It Works*. He also wrote about Eleanor Arnason’s work in his fine study, *Decoding Gender in Science Fiction*.

At Mythcon 53 we hope to celebrate a lifetime of achievement and hear more of his insights. As Ursula Le Guin put it, “Brian Attebery is the most readable, the most knowledgeable, and the least quarrelsome of critics.”

Posthumous Guests of Honor

Diversicon traditionally celebrates posthumous guests of honor with panels and discussions of their work. This year the honorees are

L. Frank Baum (1856-1919) and **Clifford D. Simak (1904-1988)**.

For more details about our Guests of Honor, download [Progress Report #1](#)

CONFERENCE THEME: FANTASIES OF THE MIDDLE LANDS

By this time all of the papers have been accepted for the conference and panels are being formed. If you want to suggest or propose a panel, contact Janet at co-chair@mythcon.org. Remember, **all presenters must register** for the full conference; please see the [Mythcon 53 Registration page](#) for information and rates. Participants are encouraged to submit papers chosen for presentation at the conference to *Mythlore*, the refereed journal of the Mythopoeic Society. All papers should conform to the 9th edition of the MLA Style Manual.

Presenters who are full-time undergraduate or graduate students are encouraged to submit their completed conference papers in advance for consideration for the [Alexei Kondratiev Student Paper Award](#).

Presenters who could use some financial help with their travel are encouraged to apply for the [Glen GoodKnight Starving Scholars Fund](#). Awards usually consist of a contribution toward registration or room & board 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. Contact Melody at papers@mythcon.org for more information.

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE OVERVIEW

The registration table will open at noon on Friday, August 2, 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 **Welcome Reception**, sponsored by the Council of Stewards; the reception will honor the 50th anniversary of [Rivendell](#), the Twin Cities area discussion group of the Mythopoeic Society. The **Hospitality Room** and **Bardic Circle** will be open Friday, Saturday, and Sunday nights.

Saturday morning, August 3, the **Procession and Opening Ceremonies** will start at 9:00 a.m., including our **Scholar Guest of Honor address**, followed by more papers and panels throughout the day, breaking for lunch and dinner. After dinner: **entertainments** including the **Masquerade** and post-programming activities. If you have some ideas or suggestions for entertainments, contact David E. at chair@mythcon.org.

Programming continues Sunday, including the **Society Auction** in the afternoon (a joint auction with Diversicon this year, so bring your wallets!), and the **Banquet, Author Guest of Honor address**, and **Awards presentations** on Sunday evening.

Interspersed with all this, we often have **author readings and signings**. If you are an author attending the conference and interested in doing a reading or signing, contact Joan at dealers@mythcon.org at for details.

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

Mythcon 53 online registration for Mythopoeic Society members, general public, and students—prices are in US dollars. If you register on our website right now, you will still get a small discount, but below are the rates as of July 1. In-person rates will go up significantly just before the conference and at the door. Virtual attendance may not include all tracks and papers. Please use online registration if at all possible: <https://www.mythsoc.org/mythcon/mc53-reg.htm>

- Full Conference Registration (MythSoc member) \$90.00
- Full Conference Registration (non-member) \$115.00
- Full Conference Registration (Student*) \$80.00
- Virtual Attendance Only (via Zoom/Discord) \$20.00

* Full-time students; must present current, active student ID at check-in to get this rate.

MAIL-IN REGISTRATION

If you cannot, or do not wish to, use the online registration process, please send checks, made out to The Mythopoeic Society, to the address below. Indicate that the check is for Mythcon 53, and include the name(s) of the person(s) registering, their email and snail-mail addresses, the kind(s) of registration requested (member, non-member, student).

The Mythopoeic Society
P.O. Box 6707
Altadena, CA 91003-6707

NEW: New to Mythcon?

Is this your first Mythcon...or your 53rd? Sign up to be paired with a Veteran or Newbie Buddy at Mythcon 53. Click the following link or follow the QR code to sign up: <https://forms.gle/YiAtxubSUhMCjwoM9>.

Preference will be given to sign ups before July 26, 2024. Signup sheets will also be available at the registration table. Even if you don't do this formally, watch for people with Steward ribbons or dots indicating how many Mythcons they have attended.

Plus: If you're interested in hosting your own Mythcon in a few years, ask about shadowing a committee member when you sign in!



Want to know more about Mythcon in general? See <https://mythsoc.org/mythcon.htm> for an overview, and check out some recent conferences on the [Mythcon History](#) page.

IT'S DANGEROUS TO GO ALONE.
TAKE THIS.



NEW: WHO ELSE WILL BE THERE?

For reasons of privacy and security in this online world, the current list of registered attendees is available only to members of the conference. If you have already joined, you should have received (or will soon receive) an email with a link to this list, and instructions for accessing it. If you haven't already joined, what are you waiting for?!?

NEW: RECEPTION AND BANQUET INFORMATION

The Stewards will host a Reception with light refreshments, cake, and a cash bar on Friday afternoon, and there will be a hospitality room on the top floor of the hotel every night after the end of programming with more treats and goodies. The hotel has an on-site restaurant and a grab-and-go market, and there are lots of great eating options within walking distance. You can pre-pay for a breakfast voucher for the hotel when you register, if you want, but it's the same cost as walking in to their restaurant.

Registration is now available for the banquet, which will be a plated dinner. Tickets are \$70 per person (including all taxes and service charges), and there will be a cash bar if you want something other than water, iced tea, or coffee with your meal. Choice of entrees (no fish or nuts in any of these meals):

- Braised Short Rib with Yukon mashed potatoes, steamed carrots, and herb demi
- Semi-boneless chicken breast with Yukon smashed potatoes, seasonal vegetables, and herb jus
- Ricotta stuffed pasta shells with wilted greens, roasted mushrooms, marinara, and mushroom cream sauce

Each entrée comes with rolls, salad, and dessert. (*Are you thinking about the food sculpture already?*)

Purchase your banquet tickets at <https://mythsoc.org/mythcon/mc53-reg.htm#banquet>.

NEW: AWARDS

The Mythopoeic Awards will be presented at the Mythcon 53 banquet. There are five categories this year. You can view the lists of finalists at <https://www.mythsoc.org/news/news-2024-05-28.htm>

- Mythopoeic Award for Adult Literature
- Mythopoeic Award for Young Adult Literature
- Mythopoeic Award for Children's Literature
- Mythopoeic Scholarship Award in Inklings Studies
- Mythopoeic Scholarship Award in Myth & Fantasy Studies

The Alexei Kondratiev Student Paper Award will also be presented at the banquet.

NEW: JUST A FEW OF THE PAPERS THAT HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED!

- “Eleanor Arnason’s Fantastic Mitochondrial Humor” by Sandra Lindow
- “Questioning Attebery’s ‘Bullseye’: Interviews with Young Readers of Fantasy may De-center *The Lord of the Rings*” by Luke Shelton
- “Exploring Middle-earth’s Second Age Architecture via Alan Lee’s Artworks” by Sultana Raza
- “Our Flag Means Romance ... Middle English Romance, That Is” by Megan Abrahamson
- “Desert Power: Decolonization of the Fremen Narrative in *Dune: Part Two*” by Tim Lenz
- “The Middle-(un)man of Desire: A Girardian Reading of Lewis’s *Perelandra*” by Clinton Manley
- “John Wain: The Inkling in the Middle” by David Bratman
- “Middles and Centers in Chinese Translations of Tolkien” by Eric Reinders
- “The Middle People of Middle-earth: Dwarven Displacement and Reconciliation in Tolkien’s Legendarium” by Andrew V. Hickman
- “Middle Ground Across East and West: Post-Secular Daoist Mythology in Earthsea Trilogy” by Shiquing Zhang

NEW: DEALERS ROOM

Dealer room tables are \$40. If you’re interested in bringing your wares to sell, please contact Joan Marie Verba by email at dealers@mythcon.org and she will provide more details.

Vendors who have already committed to be at Mythcon include:

- Michael Merriam/Queen of Swords Press
- Dreamhaven Books
- FTL Publications

NEW: ART SHOW???

Many past Mythcons have had art shows. Unfortunately, due to lack of staff, we do not currently have plans to host an art show this year. However, if someone who is enthusiastic about such things would like to volunteer to run one (hint! hint!), we would gladly accept help in that area. Contact the con chair at chair@mythcon.org to offer your services.

MASQUERADE

Mythcon 53 will have a masquerade as part of one of our evening entertainments. A Mythcon masquerade is a staged costume presentation that ranges from the sublime to the silly; its focus is fun and entertainment. Everyone is invited to participate; sign-up forms will be at Mythcon.

THE (NOT VERY ANNUAL) MARY STOLZENBACH MEMORIAL CLERIHUEW CONTEST

Will there be a [clerihew](#) contest this year? Who can tell? Just in case, polish up your skills for our Not Very Annual Clerihew Contest, named in honor of the late Mary Stolzenbach, who used to sweep the awards regularly. A distinguished panel of judges, They Who Must Never Be Named, will evaluate each entry based on the HOC criteria of Humor, Originality, and Clerihewness. Winners in each category will be rewarded with the traditional prize of a jeroboam of Chateau de Porteur d'Anneau invisible champagne, and we'll all toast the memory of beloved clerihew enthusiast Mike Foster.

HOTEL / CONFERENCE VENUE

Mythcon 53 will be held at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The hotel has full conference and catering facilities, so nearly everything we need will be in one place. This hotel is in a bustling shopping area full of stores, restaurants, and a megaplex movie theater, all within walking distances. We will be able to hold our Welcome Reception sponsored by the Council of Stewards, as well as our Sunday evening banquet, in this same building.



Sleeping room rates for convention attendees have been set at \$129* per night for a regular room, and \$139* per night for a small suite. The suites are the same as the regular room except for a small sitting room at the front, and that they open onto the hotel atrium. To reserve rooms online at the special convention rate, go to this link: <https://www.mythsoc.org/mythcon/mc53-room.htm>. Note the special instructions to follow to get EXACTLY the nights you want! The conference rate is available from Tuesday July 30 through Thursday Aug. 8, so you can come early and stay a few days later at the same great rate. If you prefer not to use web access to reserve a room, you can call the hotel directly at +1 (952) 542-8600 and use the code MCA.

* Plus the usual taxes & fees, of course. We can't avoid that these days, can we?

NEW: WHAT'S NEARBY?

Our conference hotel is right next to [The Shops at West End](#). So that means, within walking distance:

- Eateries: Lots of options! Crave or Raku for sushi, Rojo for Mexican, Roti for Mediterranean, Punch Bowl for cocktails, Yard House for beer, The Local West End for an Irish pub experience, Hope Breakfast Bar. Plus several familiar national chains.
- Entertainment: Showplace Icon is a 14-screen theatre.
- Shopping: For general grocery needs, there's local chain Cub and bulk discount store Costco, and a Home Depot if you need to fix something. And plenty of spas, boutiques, and other shopping opportunities for fun and souvenirs.

- A short drive east is the [Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden and Bird Sanctuary](#) and [Theodore Wirth Regional Park](#).

GETTING THERE—AIRPORT, GROUND TRANSPORTATION, PARKING

- **Plane:** MSP (Minneapolis-Saint Paul) Airport is one of the more pleasant airports in the country, and as a major hub, it's easy to get to. There's a do-able but not great public transit option (take the Metro Blue Line light rail north to downtown Minneapolis and pick up a bus from there), but you'd get to the hotel a lot quicker via Lyft, Uber, SuperShuttle, or cab, or by renting a car. It's about a 25-minute drive from the airport.
- If you heard about problems with [Lyft and Uber](#) earlier this year, they have been resolved, but there are now a couple of new independent start-ups also offering similar services in the Twin Cities.
- **Train:** The Amtrak station is in Saint Paul. From there, it's about a 25-minute drive to the hotel. There's a brand-new line from St. Paul to Chicago called the [Borealis](#), with stops in Milwaukee—this might be a game-changer for some attendees! There are also several other public transit options.
- **Automobile:** Minneapolis is easy to drive to and through; I-35 cuts through north-south, and I-94 east-west. The hotel is in the western suburbs, so you can most likely avoid driving through downtown. Parking at the hotel is free.
- **Public transit in general:** Minneapolis has a great [public transit system](#) with light rail and bus options. There's a bus stop quite close to the hotel. If you come in through the airport, you can buy a transit pass there before you descend to the light rail platform.

THINGS TO DO

Plan to take advantage of the special hotel rate before and after the conference—there's lots to do and see in the Twin Cities!

Let's start with the bookstores!

- [Uncle Hugo's/Uncle Edgar's](#): New and used science fiction/fantasy and mysteries; recently moved to a new location. Say hi to Ecko, the store dog!
- [Dreamhaven](#) New and used SF, fantasy, horror, film and media, comics, and graphic novels.
- [The Irreverent Bookworm](#): Queer-owned; new and used books, media, and other merch; one of the owners is a big Tolkien fan!
- [Magers and Quinn](#): A big general new and used bookstore in the bustling Uptown area.
- Need more, more, more? Check out the [Midwest Independent Booksellers Association's Bookstore Roadmap](#)! Or pick up a paper copy at any indie bookstore.

Looking for a great place to eat?

Minneapolis is a multicultural food paradise! Feast your eyes on these:

- <https://www.exploreminnesota.com/list/best-minneapolis-restaurants>
- <https://twincities.eater.com/maps/best-restaurants-minneapolis-st-paul-38-map>
- <https://www.startribune.com/the-ultimate-patio-guide-60-all-star-patios-in-the-twin-cities/600366249/>
- If you're really serious about your food, check out these Minneapolis winners, finalists, and nominees for the James Beard Award. We can personally recommend Owamni and Hai Hai:
<https://www.jamesbeard.org/awards/search?year=&keyword=minneapolis>

Looking for other cool things to do?

- <https://www.exploreminnesota.com/article/where-to-shop-minneapolis-st-paul-area>
- <https://www.exploreminnesota.com/minneapolis-st-paul-area>
- The New York Times recently featured “36 Hours in Minneapolis”:
<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/05/02/travel/things-to-do-minneapolis.html>
- There's always the [Mall of America](#)—for the shopping, if that's your thing, or just to people-watch and to experience of the endangered mid-American megamall.

Looking for fantasies set in Minneapolis and the surrounding area? There are a lot of them!

- The OG, and a groundbreaking urban/paranormal romance fantasy, is Emma Bull's [War for the Oaks](#). Back when it was new, local SF conventions offered tours of the city based on its locations!
- Local author Naomi Kritzer often uses a Minneapolis setting in her fiction, like in *Catfishing on CatNet* and *Chaos on CatNet*. Her Minneapolis-set short story “[The Year Without Sunshine](#)” recently won a Nebula and conveys the feel of one of Minneapolis's great old neighborhoods.
- Our Guest of Honor Eleanor Arnason's [Daughter of the Bear King](#) features a Minneapolis housewife encountering another world.
- Check out this list on GoodReads for [Minneapolis-set tales in other genres](#).
- And let's not forget other media! [Films and television series set or filmed in Minnesota](#)

Cautions

ALLERGENS: There must be NO NUTS, NO PEANUTS, and NO PETS in our function rooms due to potentially DEADLY allergy reactions. This is non-negotiable. Foods prepared in the hotel **for our conference** will meet the “no nuts” and “no peanuts” requirements. Please wash your hands after eating nuts and peanuts outside the convention area before entering the function rooms. If you have a service animal who must be with you in public function spaces, please contact a conference committee member well in advance so we can plan how to handle this.

COVID Safety Policy: Any COVID masking and vaccination policies will be tied to local recommendations at the time of the conference. Please check the conference webpage before you travel. The Mythopoeic Society accepts no responsibility for any spread of COVID-19 as part of travel to, from, or participation in Mythcon 53.

For more information

If you have questions or ideas, or wish to volunteer to help out, please email the appropriate committee member or the chair:

Mythcon 53 Committee

- David Emerson, Chair: chair@mythcon.org
- Janet Brennan Croft, Vice Chair and Alexei Kondratiev Award coordinator: co-chair@mythcon.org, mythlore@mythsoc.org
- Melody Green, Paper Coordinator and Glen GoodKnight Award coordinator: papers@mythcon.org
- Joan Marie Verba, Dealer’s Room, Author Readings, Publications: dealers@mythcon.org
- David Lenander, GoH Liaison and Local Publicity: david_lenander@icloud.com
- Megan Abrahamson, Buddy System Coordinator: mythprint@mythsoc.org
- Tim Lenz, Mythopoeic Society Steward for Conferences: mythcon@mythsoc.org

Diversicon 31 Committee

- Diversicon: diversicon@gmail.com
- Scott Lohman, D31 Chair: scottl2605@aol.com
- Eric M. Heideman, Programming: eheideman@dhzone.com