



# Friends of the Wade

The Marion E. Wade Center      Wheaton College

## The Wade and “Narnia Mania”

“The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe” premieres December 9<sup>th</sup> in movie theaters around the United States, and in the months following, around the world. This big-budget feature film produced by Walden Media and Disney integrates a script faithful to the original story with the latest special effects technology to recreate the marvels of Narnia onscreen.

The implications of such a high-profile project for the Wade Center are manifold, especially as the project involves some of our most popular materials—those resources associated with C.S. Lewis. Over the last several months, the Wade Center staff has been writing, speaking, and helping host events related to the movie, Lewis, and *The Chronicles of Narnia*. We are also receiving an ever growing number of Lewis-related materials to add to our collection, and are daily responding to large numbers of researchers, publishers, and visitors interested in C.S. Lewis and his children’s stories.

Before filming began on “The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe,” Cary Granat, head of Walden Media, visited the Wade Center. As production progressed, the Wade Center worked with location publicist Ernie Malik and his team to give him resources and background on C.S. Lewis. Subsequently, Director Chris Mitchell, as the representative of the Wade Center, attended an early screening of

parts of the movie in Los Angeles, and has since shared his impressions in numerous interviews for radio and print.

Meanwhile, Associate Director Marj Mead teamed with Wheaton College English professor and Wade Center Steering Committee member Leland Ryken to write *A Reader’s Guide Through the Wardrobe* (InterVarsity Press). The Wade Center is often asked for study guides to C.S. Lewis’s books, but despite the abundance of quality critical

works, there has been little that serves as a general reader’s guide to specific titles. With the interest generated by the film, it was clear there would be even more requests than usual for a focused guide to *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. Mead and Ryken found that readers often miss the enjoyment of the story in their zeal to figure out what everything “means.” Therefore, their objec-

tive was to help readers approach the book in the way Lewis would have advised: read the story, enjoy the story, let the meaning arise from the story itself, *then* enrich your understanding by examining the literary context and significance. One reviewer says, “Judging from that goal, I would have to count this *Reader’s Guide* a stunning success.” He goes on to write, “It is informed and thoughtful without being overly academic and dry. It rightly insists on the importance



*“Aslan is on the move!”*

—Mr. Beaver in

*“The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe”*



EDITING & DESIGN: Rachel Mink

**The Marion E. Wade Center**  
Wheaton College  
Wheaton, Illinois 60187

Phone: 630-752-5908

Fax: 630-752-5459

E-mail: [wade@wheaton.edu](mailto:wade@wheaton.edu)

[www.wheaton.edu/learnes/wade/](http://www.wheaton.edu/learnes/wade/)

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This year, the summer months found me traveling far more than in any of the previous ten. On June 28, Associate Director Marj Mead and I boarded a plane from Chicago to London to lead a Study Tour that would include visits to Oxford, Cambridge, the Fens, London, and Canterbury. I returned to England two weeks later to Hammersmith (London) for a conference in honor of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of George MacDonald. Two weeks following, after much other Wade Center business, I spent four days at Aston University in Birmingham at a Tolkien conference celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the publication of *The Lord of the Rings*. Then it was off to India to visit a Wheaton college student on a humanitarian aid internship. Home finally came into view on August 25<sup>th</sup>. Although I do not expect to have another summer like this past one anytime soon, much good came of it. For example, in addition to renewing old contacts, several important new ones were forged. But looking back, what stands out most to me is the clear evidence that the Wade authors continue to speak to people's hearts, not only in the English-speaking world, but even in such a distant and culturally diverse place as India. With so much fear and destruction around us, I am thankful to have a small part in pushing back against this tyranny through the message of hope our authors bring. Thank you, friends, for partnering with us.

WITH ALL GOOD WISHES,

*Clyde Mitchell*

### Did You Know?

In February 1965, Dr. Clyde S. Kilby's proposal to start a special collection was accepted by the Wheaton College Library Committee, making 2005 the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Wade Center. In those years, the collection has grown from a set of fifteen letters by C.S. Lewis into a research facility holding tens of thousands of items related to seven British authors. The Wade's worldwide reputation for accessibility and comprehensiveness now draws about 10,000 visitors annually to the Center, and our various speaking engagements and publications reach another 3500 people yearly. **W**



(In photo above: Dr. Clyde S. Kilby receives papers of Charles Williams)

### Narnia Mania

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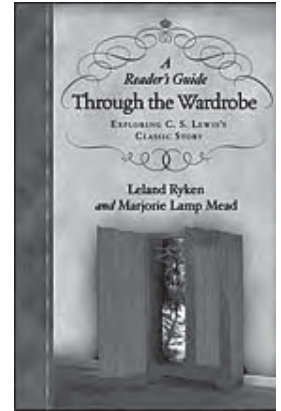
of approaching this wonderful story with a child's heart.

[Yet] I probably learned more from this book about the art of literature and how to read fiction well than I did from numerous literature classes in school."<sup>1</sup> After finishing *A Reader's Guide Through the Wardrobe*, Marj has kept busy with radio and print interviews regarding both her book and the movie.

As the film release approaches, our staff has helped plan and host special events. In September, the Wade Center collaborated with the Wheaton College English Department to co-host the 50<sup>th</sup> Annual Writing and Literature Conference entitled "C.S. Lewis and his Chronicles of Narnia." The conference was well attended by a broad variety of people, particularly during a "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe" movie question and answer session hosted by Chris Mitchell. (See page 4 for a further report on the conference.) Soon thereafter, the Wade Center, alongside Wheaton Bible Church and Wheaton College's Billy Graham Center, hosted a "Narnia 'Sneak Peek' Event." Douglas Gresham (Lewis's stepson) and others related

to the movie production answered questions about the film, the Narnian books, and C.S. Lewis. Gresham, as co-producer of the film, worked closely with the production team to maintain the integrity of Lewis's story and has traveled world-wide promoting the movie to churches and schools.

Naturally, as movie publicity has drawn widespread attention to The Chronicles of Narnia and C.S. Lewis, the public's demand for related material has risen considerably. In 2005 so far, we have approved the use of dozens of images, primarily from the Lewis family photo



## Spotlight on *SEVEN*

### Volumes 21 and 22

While many Friends of the Wade have likely read Volume 21 of *SEVEN: An Anglo-American Literary Review*, published last year, those of you who haven't yet ordered a copy may be interested to learn that this volume was dedicated to Dr. Barbara Reynolds and Martha Harris Kilby. These two talented and gifted women have contributed much to nurture the rich heritage of faith and the imagination upon which the Wade Center and *SEVEN* are founded.

Following the tribute to these remarkable friends of the Wade, five articles illuminate various aspects of our authors' lives and works. One of these articles, co-authored by Diana Pavlac Glyer and Laura K. Simmons, compares and contrasts the views held by Dorothy L. Sayers and C.S. Lewis on creativity and vocation, referencing Sayers's and Lewis's lively discussions via letters as well as their books and essays on this subject. Other articles consider topics relating to Owen Barfield, J.R.R. Tolkien and Charles Williams.

In commemoration of the one-hundredth year since George MacDonald's death, Volume 22 opens with a fascinating piece by Colin Manlove that highlights threads of commonality among MacDonald's short fairy tales. Subsequent articles shed light on Dorothy L. Sayers's attraction to Orthodox Christianity, C.S. Lewis's interaction with T.S. Eliot in revising the Anglican Psalter, Lewis's approach to apologetic reasoning, and finally, his relationships to Joy Davidman and Ruth Pitter as reflected in both women's poetry. This volume also contains a special remembrance on the life of George Sayer, biographer of Lewis, and friend of the Wade Center.

To learn more about *SEVEN*'s current or back issues or to order, write [wade@wheaton.edu](mailto:wade@wheaton.edu) **W**

collection, to more than 50 clients. Comparatively, in all of 2004, we loaned to only 25 clients; prior to that, we averaged about 15 loan requests per year. This year, we have received at least 28 review copies of recently published books relating directly to *The Chronicles of Narnia*, and have ordered many more for our collection. Our archivists prepare these, as well as news articles, audio and visual materials, event records, and even merchandise, for display and for use by researchers, the media, and visitors. While staying on top of this archival processing, they also host researchers from around the world, many of whom are contributing to scholarship on C.S. Lewis's works.

The front-desk staff has the role of hospitality as they greet visitors, answer questions by phone and email, and give presentations and tours. During the school year, teachers bring their classrooms on field trips to the Wade Center. We have 11 school group visits scheduled for this fall semester, the largest number in our history. Many schools have placed *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* on their reading lists in anticipation of the film, so students arrive with a love of the characters and story, and eagerly ask about comparisons to the movie. Students from public, private or home schools hear a presentation about C.S. Lewis's life, then tour the museum. Many people who have visited in the past return bringing a child who has just begun reading the Narnian Chronicles. Of course, the Lewis family wardrobe is a highlight for many guests, children and adults alike, and they enjoy comparing it to the movie's promotional display in our lobby, an eight-foot-tall replica of the wardrobe as imagined by the filmmakers.

As we do this work in response to the renewed interest in *The Chronicles of Narnia*, we hope to help those who love reading *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* discover a new perspective on it through the art of film. We also hope to encourage those who will meet Narnia for the first time through the movie to discover even more of its beauty and power by reading Lewis's classic stories for themselves. **W**

<sup>1</sup>Taylor, Justin. "A Reader's Guide Through the Wardrobe (or Writing Book Reviews During Times of National Tragedy)." Blog posting, 4 Sept. 2005. *Reformation* 21. 28 Oct. 2005. [http://www.reformation21.org/Reformation\\_21\\_Blog/Reformation\\_21\\_Blog/58/?vobId=831&pm=114](http://www.reformation21.org/Reformation_21_Blog/Reformation_21_Blog/58/?vobId=831&pm=114).



**The Marion E. Wade Center**

Wheaton College  
Wheaton, Illinois 60187

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## Highlights

### Wheaton College's 50th Annual Writing and Literature Conference: "C.S. Lewis and his Chronicles of Narnia"

*Right:* Guests browse the booktable; some sessions drew nearly 500 attendees.



*Above:* Jerry Root, Wade Center Steering Committee member, visits with fellow Lewis scholar Andrew Cuneo.

*Lower Left:* Assoc. Director Marj Mead hosts Drs. David and Crystal Downing by the Kilby Reading Room fireside. In addition to David Downing, academic presenters included Walter Hooper, Peter Schakel, and Michael Ward. *Lower Center:* Children's author Katherine Paterson, after her evening talk on the ability of fiction to convey truth amidst human tragedy, signs a guest's book. The next evening, Tom Key performed his play "C.S. Lewis on Stage." *Top Center:* Walter Hooper presents Director Chris Mitchell with C.S. Lewis's academic regalia, a surprise gift to the Wade. *Lower Right:* Dr. Lee Ryken (conference organizer and co-author of *A Reader's Guide Through the Wardrobe*) and a guest discuss Narnia during one of the receptions hosted by InterVarsity Press and Touchstone Magazine.