

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Chris McGovern as Thor

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Tumultuous 2020 Oral History project

Interview # T20-V-L-2021-051

Chris McGovern, a microbiologist, and Thor role-player was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Tumultuous 2020* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: October 19, 2021 Location: Illinois Information Services Central
Management Services

Interview Format: Digital Video

Interviewer: Amanda Riggenbach, ALPLM

Technical Support: Mark Suszko, IL Information Service videographer

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 1:50 / 1.83 hrs.

Transcript being
processed.

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on December 14, 2021.

The interview is archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois.

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Abstract

Chris McGovern, *Tumultuous 2020*, T20-V-L-2021-051

Biographical Information/Overview of Interview: Chris McGovern was born in La Grange, Illinois in 1980. He is a microbiologist at the National Center for Agriculture Utilization Research in Peoria, Illinois. McGovern started roleplaying as Thor Odinson, the god of thunder from Germanic mythology, in 2016 when his young sons saw the movie *The Avengers* and noticed the similarities between McGovern and Chris Hemsworth's portrayal. This marked the beginning of McGovern's community outreach as Thor.

The first portion of the interview includes McGovern portraying Thor, in full costume and manner. He describes his experiences in "Midgard" (earth) as well as the scope of his community outreach in the Peoria area, especially in relation to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The second portion of the interview was from McGovern's point-of-view; he describes the importance of role-playing as Thor for both himself and for those he seeks to help. He was recruited by a local non-profit, Heroes, Inc., which heightened his community engagement. With Heroes, Inc. he attends birthday parties and weddings free of charge. These experiences are different due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but McGovern describes the positive impact of this work. He also describes the ways the pandemic impacted him and his family.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Peoria, IL; Thor Odinson; community outreach; COVID-19 pandemic; Hash House Harriers; Heroes, Inc; superheroes

Notes to the Reader: Readers of the oral history memoir should bear in mind that this is a transcript of the spoken word, and that the interviewer, interviewee and editor sought to preserve the informal, conversational style that is inherent in such historical sources. The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library is not responsible for the factual accuracy of the memoir, nor for the views expressed therein. We leave these for the reader to judge.

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