

The Tweet Sheet



The occasional newsletter of **The Notorious Canary-Trainers** of Madison, Wisconsin
A Scion of the Baker Street Irregulars • communities.madison.com/canary

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HAPPY 38th BIRTHDAY! April 20 officially marks the 38th anniversary of the founding of the Notorious Canary-Trainers in Madison -- although it started out under another name when it was formed in 1969.

We've updated the history of the group on our Web site, adding recent information about **Ira Fistell**, a local radio talk show host who was instrumental in the group's establishment, as well as a link to information about Nicholas Meyer's 1993 book, "The Canary Trainer."

According to the first issue of the organization's then-newsletter issued in 1971: 'The Holmes addicts of Madison...wished to form a group of devotees, led by Fistell, then host of Radio Station WKOW's 'Nightline' program, who became our first president and has since moved on to Milwaukee.'

According to some of the original members, the organization's founding was prompted by Fistell's asking questions on "Nightline" about various elements of the Sherlock Holmes stories. Because of the response those questions generated from callers, there appeared to be enough interest in the Canon to justify an organizational meeting.

Fistell also was the first recipient of the group's main award, **the Mycroft trophy** (a form of recognition no longer presented).

Fistell later left Milwaukee for Los Angeles where he was a radio talk show personality on various stations in the Los Angeles area starting in 1977, most recently being heard on Saturday evenings from 9:00 p.m. - midnight on KABC Talk Radio 790 AM. Since leaving the station a year ago, he has been teaching English at Concord High School in Santa Monica, Calif.

Here's how one group promoted his appearance on their program in 2003: "His call-out for 'anything you want to talk about' (gave) Southland listeners the opportunity to respond with questions regarding the day's news and events, economics, international affairs, philosophy, sports, unsolved mysteries in American history, politics and criminal law.

"Ira Fistell possesses a wealth of knowledge and is often referred to as a 'walking encyclopedia'. He received his bachelor's and law degree at the University of Chicago. He also received his master's degree in History at the University of Wisconsin - Madison." He also was the author of a detailed and popular guide to all Amtrak routes in the U.S., for train riders to carry with them on their trips.

Final notes: The newsletter, as you've no doubt concluded, now is called the "Tweet Sheet" and the call letters WKOW no longer are used by what is now WOLX. Read the rest of our history highlights at our Web site at <http://communities.madison.com/canary> Click "History" on the navigation bar there.



THE HIDDEN SECRETS OF A PALIMPSEST The case history we studied at our March 18 meeting was "The Adventure of the Golden Pince-nez," where Dr. Watson begins the tale with this description: "It was a wild, tempestuous night, towards the close of November. Holmes and I sat together in silence all the evening, he engaged with a powerful lens deciphering the remains of the original inscription upon a palimpsest..."

The March issue of The Smithsonian magazine devotes several pages to efforts to uncover the hidden secrets of a palimpsest, using methods that Holmes probably never even imagined. "Reading Between the Lines" is subtitled "Scientists with high-tech tools are deciphering lost writings of the ancient Greek

mathematician Archimedes." It reports the hidden text "may be the most important ancient scientific document discovered since the Renaissance." If you want to learn more, it begins on page 60. If issues currently aren't available on newsstands, check your local library.



HERE'S OUR UPCOMING CASE STUDY SCHEDULE All meetings will be at Barnes & Noble West starting at 3 p.m. on the dates shown, unless otherwise announced. The November and December meetings likely will be at Booked for Murder.

▫ **May 20**, The Adventure of the Solitary Cyclist ▫ **June 17**, The Adventure of Black Peter ▫ **July 15**, Norwood Builder ▫ **August 19**, Bruce-Partington Plans ▫ **September 16**, Veiled Lodger ▫ **October 21**, Sussex Vampire ▫ **November 18**, The Missing Three-Quarter ▫ **December 16**, The Abbey Grange



LARGEST GROUP YET CELEBRATES SHERLOCK HOLMES' 153RD!

Members of the Notorious Canary-Trainers gathered Jan. 6 to celebrate Sherlock Holmes' 153rd birthday anniversary in our best-attended such event in the seven years since the Madison tradition began. For space reasons, we will include photos in our next issue.

A total of 29 Canary-Trainers and guests made their way to the location where all previous events have been held -- J. T. Whitney's Brewery and Pub on S. Whitney Way.

A 30th seat at the banquet table, in the guest of honor's position, was reserved for Sherlock Holmes. A deerstalker marked the location, suggesting that Mr. Holmes was in attendance, although temporarily out of the room.

We can only hope Barbara Boe's sentiments were shared by others who attended. "The party was terrific! We had a great time."

A new tradition began with this year's celebration -- name cards, each bearing the name of both the attendees and the name of his or her Canonical character. The selection of names taken from the Sherlock Holmes cases started with an announcement at last year's birthday party, and thus far 15 members have chosen their favorite.

Another feature which also may become a tradition was The Ceremony of the Rose. Roses graced each table as a symbol as a portion of the Adventure of the Naval Treaty was read in which Holmes muses on the deeper meaning of the rose.

"Our highest assurance of the goodness of Providence seems to me to rest in the flowers," said Holmes. *"All other things, our powers, our desires, our food, are all really necessary for our existence in the first instance. But this rose is an extra. Its smell and its color are an embellishment of life, not a condition of it. It is only goodness which gives extras, and so I say again that we have much to hope from the flowers."*

Bar renamed for evening

The restaurant and bar was renamed for the evening -- quietly and without the owner's knowledge -- as The American Bar at the Criterion. That's where Young Stamford encountered a recently-discharged British Army medical doctor named John Watson and within hours introduced him to his new roommate, Sherlock Holmes.

Following the dinner which opened the evening, **Joan Penn** (Irene Adler) agreed to begin the formal program with the traditional reading of Vincent Starrett's atmosphere-setting poem whose title, "221B," was inspired by the Baker Street address of Holmes' and Watson's lodgings.

In it, the author notes *"here dwell, together still, two men of note, who never lived and so can never die...A yellow fog swirls past the window pane as night descends upon this fabled street...The ghostly*

gas lamps fail at twenty feet...Here, though the world explode, these two survive. And it is always eighteen ninety five."

Joan commented afterwards: "I hope the poem reading will be continued as I think of it as part of our ritual and have come to love the poem." (And so it will continue!) She also said that the namecards "of our aliases were a nice touch."

Toasting part of opening

Toasts followed, with the first also a Canary-Trainers tradition -- to Young Stamford for his match-making role. **Richard MacDonald** (Inspector Alec MacDonald) presented that toast, as well as a second. "We're very thankful to the founders of the Notorious Canary Trainers," he said before lifting his glass, "and we're very thankful to all the past and present members of the group; but if the group is going to continue as long as Sherlock Holmes continues, every year we will need new members. So I offer a toast to those people who will be joining us in the future -- some of whom are not even born yet: to the future members of the Notorious Canary Trainers!"

Robert Ristau (Inspector Tobias Gregson of Scotland Yard) offered a toast to **Arthur Conan Doyle** who played a key, and by some accounts, controversial role in bringing the writings of Watson and Holmes to public attention.

Robert focused his remarks on a little-known aspect of Doyle's life -- his fascination with golf. He told the group that Doyle "is said to have stated after playing his first round of golf that golf could not be considered a sport since you hit a ball that does not move. Later, he became quite good at the 'sport of golf'."

Robert found a 1902 publication, "Songs of Action," which contained a Doyle poem on golf. It ends: *"Come youth and come age, from the study or stage, from the Bar or from the Bench -- high and low! A green you must use as a cure for the blues -- you drive them away as you go. We're outward bound on a long, long round, and it's time to be up and away; if worry and sorrow come back with the morrow, at least we'll be happy today."*

Robert adds: "When I mention this book to others they often react, 'Did Conan Doyle do other writings, too?' Little do they know how productive was our ACD!"

Radio program featured

Others present offered their own prepared or spontaneous toasts before we listened to a recording of a Basil Rathbone-Nigel Bruce network radio show which explored the case of a notorious canary-trainer -- and thus the inspiration for our group's name.

"The radio program was enjoyable for Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce's voices," Joan said later, "and the memories many of us have of the days before television when radio programs were the family entertainment of choice. And where did they find that organ (which was heard on the program)?...We should do more of that."

Mike McCoy (Billy the page) concluded the speaking part of the program, first with a short reading by the editor of the Baker Street Journal arguing that Sherlock Holmes remains popular today because he represents "the Spirit of Rationality" in an irrational age. He followed that with the Ceremony of the Rose which he wrote for the occasion.

Thom Boykoff (Godfrey Norton, Esq.) served as the Master of Ceremonies and also provided the traditional birthday cake featuring his own design, each year different from previous years' cakes. Everyone then had an opportunity to inspect various Sherlock Holmes-themed materials from some of our personal collections.

That, and a ceremonial photograph of those present, concluded the evening.



'BOOKED' FOR MURDER SPOTLIGHTED IN CAPITAL TIMES STORY

The Feb. 5 issue of the Capital Times had as its main front-page story a report on the struggles of local independent book stores to survive against the chains and how the stores are averting a "grim national tide." One of those independents profiled in the analysis is **Booked for Murder**, our gracious host for some of our monthly meetings, especially each November and December.

It's also a store which pays tribute to Sherlock Holmes year-round through several shelves devoted to new and used Holmes books, and sometimes setting up special Holmes displays.

A large photo of **Terri Bischoff, owner of Booked for Murder**, appeared on the front page with the article. The other connection the Notorious Canary-Trainers has with Booked for Murder -- the store originally was established by a small ownership group that included our own Rita Wlodczyk (See the Special Section with this newsletter for more on Rita.)

Here's how the newspaper's main story by Rob Thomas begins, with a link to the rest of the article. It's followed by the full text of a related article focused just on Booked for Murder. Links to profiles of two other Madison independent book stores are provided online when you follow the link below.

"Bookstores fill niches to keep readers; Independents are down, but not out

"At some point, it's a dream that flits across the mind of every book lover. "I should open my own bookstore! Rent some cozy little hole-in-the-wall downtown, surround myself only with good books, and spend my days in a comfortable chair reading and talking books with other book lovers. What could be more ideal?"

"It's a nice dream. But almost any independent bookseller will tell you that you're probably better off keeping it that way. Because the reality can break your heart.

For the rest of the article, check your local library or go online to <http://www.madison.com/archives/read.php?ref=/tct/2007/02/05/0702050288.php>



FROM THE WIRES AND WIRELESS...

...We've posted extensive and updated information at our Web site about the July 6-8 Sherlockian conference in the Twin Cities, with a link to the online brochure and registration form. At least one Canary-Trainer is going. Link: <http://www.communities.madison.com/canary/pages/conference2007>

...The creator of the online **Solar Pons Gazette** (www.SolarPons.com) has produced another on-line newsletter, Baker Street Essays. "Unlike the SP Gazette, this is specifically about Sherlock Holmes and the Canon," says the author. The link: http://www.holmesonscreen.com/BakerStreetEssays_1

...An essay pointing out parallels between the movie "Young Sherlock Holmes" and the Harry Potter books may be found at <http://www.harryholmes.blogspot.com/>



DIFFERENT WAYS TO RECEIVE THE TWEET SHEET. The Tweet Sheet is available by downloading anytime you want it from both our Community Pages Web site at <http://communities.madison.com/canary> (look in the Library there) and in the Files section of our Yahoo Group at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/> For mailed copies, contact Mike McCoy to make arrangements.

To nominate items for publication, send them to Michael H. McCoy at mikemccoy1852@yahoo.com or One Hiawatha Circle, Madison, WI 53711. This and future editions of this publication will be posted in our Web site archives. For information: Thom Boykoff 608/833-3369 □ Mike McCoy 608/274-1638



SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT: RECALLING TWO FOUNDING MEMBERS



Two charter members of the Notorious Canary-Trainers died in February -- **Rita Wlodarczyk** Feb. 3 and **Margaret "Peg" Rosenberg** Feb. 21. Health concerns in recent years much restricted Rita's involvement with us and prohibited Margaret's entirely.

Rita Wlodarczyk

One of Rita's last visits with us was our 2006 celebration of Sherlock Holmes' birthday, when she was our main speaker talking about the early history of our group and showing us some of the materials she had kept from that time.

One of our fondest memories of Rita was her annual reading of the poem, 221 B, at the start of our annual (now in its seventh year) dinner marking the anniversary of the birth of Sherlock Holmes. She attended whenever the weather or her health permitted. The reading of 221B at the start of the first such event quickly became a tradition with us, in part because Rita always added additional impact to the words and helped set the stage for all that followed each of those evenings. Future readings will be dedicated to her memory.

The Capital Times took note of her passing with a Feb. 5 news story that included interviews with some of those who knew her in other settings.

"It didn't matter who or what it was, if she could put out her hand to help, she was there', said Gretchen Lowe, a longtime friend and fellow Democratic activist.

"Gov. Jim Doyle said this morning he was saddened to learn of Wlodarczyk's death. 'Rita was a dear, dear friend. We have been at each other's side through many political battles. She was a deeply caring person whose commitment to politics was always motivated by her desire to help people', Doyle said. 'Wisconsin has lost a great citizen'.

"Wlodarczyk died from a blocked intestine, her daughter, Tekla Wlodarczyk, said today, but she had been ill for some time.

"Rita Wlodarczyk served four terms on the Monona City Council, from 1976 to 1984. She also ran unsuccessfully for a number of state and local offices, including a bid for Monona mayor and Wisconsin secretary of state. But Wlodarczyk was best known for her activism on a host of issues, ranging from opposing the Vietnam and Iraq wars to fighting for civil rights, reproductive rights, and equal rights for women.

"Wlodarczyk was recognized for her lifelong work last December by the Wisconsin Community Fund, which presented her with the ChangeMaker award.

"Tekla recalled this morning how her mother stood out at one protest in the 1960s - clad in a fur coat, hat, and white gloves while National Guard troops in riot gear ringed the state Capitol.

"She just marched right up to one of the guardsmen and said, 'We're citizens. Let us into the Capitol', Tekla said.

"When the guardsman refused, Wlodarczyk then demanded to see her state senator - Fred Risser - who invited her into the building. Both Risser and Sen. Mark Miller, D-Monona, said she was often the first stop for local Democrats considering a bid for office. 'Everybody knew her', Risser said this morning. 'She had a lot of friends'. Miller added, 'If you wanted to do anything on the public policy side in Monona, you had to be sure you let Rita know what was going on'.

"Many remembered that while Wlodarczyk had a regal bearing - and a lifelong love of hats - she had the common touch. She helped build Monona's library and founded several successful Madison businesses, including the Booked for Murder bookstore and Four Star Fiction and Video (now called Four Star Video).

"She was one of the founders of the Wisconsin Women's Political Caucus and a 1980 delegate to the National Democratic Convention, Lowe recalled. Tekla said her mother became active in social causes while growing up in Philadelphia, where her family was involved in both Democratic politics and the local Knights of Columbus. Wlodarczyk first moved to Milwaukee, where she worked on one of Socialist mayor Frank Seidler's campaigns, and then later moved to Monona."

* * * * *

Here's the full text of the obituary published in both of Madison's newspapers. The photo of her was the one included with the Capital Times account quoted above.

Rita Margaret Mary Dorsey Wlodarczyk, age 85, former Monona Council member, activist and longtime Monona resident, passed away peacefully on Saturday, Feb. 3, 2007, (38 years to the date as her mother) after a brief illness.



Born in Philadelphia, Pa., in 1921, where she learned the proper etiquette of wearing gloves and hats, as well as big city politics, and her community and social involvement. Rita worked at the Philadelphia Naval Yard during World War II, where she met her husband, Wencil "Woody" Wlodarczyk, at the launching of the New Jersey (which caused a tidal wave across the shore in New Jersey).

They married in 1946, moved first to Milwaukee, and to Monona in 1952. They were early members of Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church.

Rita was active in the St. Ann's Society (served as president), the Deanery, and was the first lay person to serve on the Priest's Council. She was a founding member of the Community of John the XXIII and involved in many interdenominational social action groups.

Rita's first involvement in Wisconsin politics was on Frank Zielder's mayoral campaign. After moving to Madison and Monona, she was involved in the League of Women Voters, helped establish Monona's first library, a Capital Times stringer reporter covering the Monona City Council Meetings in the late 60s and 70s, candidate for many offices including secretary of state, a founding mother of Wisconsin Women's Political Caucus, a 1980 National Democratic Convention delegate, Dane County democratic chair, and Wisconsin AARP president.

Rita recently received the Verna Hill/ Dorothy Shannon Fund Change Maker Award through the Wisconsin Community Fund for a lifetime of activism. She supported every civil rights cause, welfare rights, civil rights, women's rights, gay rights, and senior rights. Rita participated in many marches, boycotts, rallies, and was very active in the newspaper strike.

Elected to the Monona City Council in 1976 for four terms, she was integral in the development of South Towne Mall, and particularly proud of bringing in a movie theater. Rita championed keeping Monona's post office, establishing a Monona run bartender licensing training program, ceasing the sales of packaged beer after 9 p.m., and establishing the Monona Senior Center.

She was involved in many businesses in town, World Affairs Center, REC Bookstore, Newport Galleries/ Plough Inn Antiques, Four Star Fiction and Video, Booked for Murder, and Community Thrift Store. Most recently Rita had been a member of the East Madison/ Monona Kiwanis, Notorious Canary Trainers (Sherlock Holmes Society, founding member), Polish Heritage Club, and the Oregon Juggling Club.

She was the co-host of Madison Channel 12 Senior Beat for several years, previously hosted In the Trenches with Rita, and had shows in the early days of Monona's cable system. Rita's latest endeavor was, together with her daughter, Tekla, a fund raising drive to install a wheelchair accessible automatic door opener at the Bartell Theater.

She is survived by her son, Mark (Beth), and grandson, Nicholas of Glendale, Ariz.; Tekla (Don Vedder) of Madison; sister-in-law, Caroline Wlodarczyk; niece, Judi (Jerry) Hertzfeldt of West Allis; her children, Eric (Lynda) Hertzfeldt of Wauwatosa, and Mark (Janice) Hertzfeldt of Milwaukee; a niece, Sue Nederbrock of Milwaukee; brother-in-law, Andrew Procopio; nephews, Dan Procopio and Don

(Patricia) Procopio, all of Aldan, Pa.; and many special sons, daughters, and grandchildren who adopted her. Her husband, Woody, preceded her in death.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be held at Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church, 5101 Schofield St., Monona, at noon on Saturday, Feb. 10, 2007, with Father John Meinholz presiding. Visitation will be held at Gunderson East Funeral Home, 5203 Monona Drive from 4 p.m. until 8 p.m., with a prayer service at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 9, 2007, and at the church from 11 a.m. until the time of the service on Saturday.

Memorials can be made to Open Sesame Fund (to provide accessible theater) c/o Bartell Community Theater, 113 E Mifflin St., Madison, WI 53713; and the Woody and Rita Wlodarczyk Scholarship Fund, Edgewood High School, 2219 Monroe St., Madison, WI 53711. The Wlodarczyk Family wishes to thank the angels who drove Rita to dialysis, your friendship brought joy to her trips, and also the staff at St. Mary's Dialysis Center, their friendship and caring should serve as a model to all health care professions.

Margaret Rosenberry

Here's the obituary from the Sunday, Feb. 25, 2007, Wisconsin State Journal.

* * * * *

Margaret "Peg" Kenyon Rosenberry, age 89, formerly of Windsor, died Wednesday, Feb. 21, 2007, at Good Samaritan in Lodi.

Mrs. Rosenberry believed in the importance of family. She and her husband, Howard, who died in 1996, enthusiastically shared many interests and adventures with their daughters, Elizabeth (Luther) Lindner of College Station, Texas, Margaret (Jim) Johnston of Ambler, Pa., Sara Rosenberry of Kabul, Afghanistan, Pat (Gene) Schmidt of Clinton, Wash., Lois (Roger) Loff of Dane and Eli Sundby of Oslo, Norway. A sister-in-law, Mary Jean Ferris of Spokane, Wash. also survives her.

Her family includes 11 grandchildren, Stephen, Mary and Martha Lindner, Megan McLean-Ottmer, Mary Neuman, Amy Johnston, Nicholas, Max and JoEllen Schmidt and Ingvild and Ida Sundby; and six great-grandchildren, James and Emily Lindner, Nick, Tommy and Ellie Neuman and Alex McLean-Ottmer.

Born in Minnesota, she graduated from Wells College in New York, with a degree in English, before her marriage in 1940. She and Howard lived in Elmira, N.Y., Little Falls, Minn., Minneapolis and Chicago before moving their growing family to a 100-acre farm on the edge of Windsor in 1952. There they welcomed friends and family from all over the world.

In the 1970s she completed a degree in library science at the University of Wisconsin while directing the fledgling public library in DeForest. Under her direction the library's location moved three times, each time to accommodate a growing collection. In later years she took pleasure in meeting people who remembered attending story hour at the library and receiving help with research and reading suggestions.

With Howard, she belonged to the Opera Buffs, Dickens Society and Sherlock Holmes Society where they made treasured friends. She also served as a Girl Scout leader, 4-H leader, and a Sunday school teacher at the Windsor United Church of Christ. She encouraged her children's interests in reading, outdoors, cooking, music and travel. Homemade bread, doughnuts, cookies, vegetable beef soup and orange marmalade were often shared with friends.

She had lived for 10 years at Good Samaritan in Lodi, where she enjoyed visits from friends and family.

A memorial service will be held at 2:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 27, 2007, at the United Church of Christ, Windsor. Visitation will be from 1:30 p.m. until the time of services. The Rev. David McDonald will officiate. Burial will be at the Windsor Cemetery, Windsor Township, Dane County. Memorials can be made to Lodi Good Samaritan Center or the DeForest Area Library Friends.

*"Stand with me here upon the terrace, for it may be the last quiet talk that we shall ever have."
(Holmes to Watson in "His Last Bow")*