

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

January 2008

Issue 2008-1



Happy 154th, Mr. Sherlock Holmes! Members and friends of the Notorious Canary-Trainers gather today, Jan. 6, in Madison to join in the worldwide observance of the 154th birthday anniversary of Mr. Sherlock Holmes. Daytime weather conditions - low-hanging fog with temperatures in the mid-40s - provided a London-like setting.



For the eighth year in a row in the current series (and we are unsure whether, when and where there have been others in the past in Wisconsin's capital city), we meet at J. T. Whitney's Brewpub and Eatery at 674 S. Whitney Way on Madison's west side. The main U.S. celebration, meanwhile, begins Wednesday in New York and continues through Sunday, Jan. 13, under the auspices of the Baker Street Irregulars, of which we are a scion.

Our program this year will be similar to that of the other seven years. After a 5 p.m. informal social period and dinner (in some years lunch), we will begin the program with a reading of the mood-setting poem by Vincent Starrett, "221B." ("Here dwell, together still, two men of note who never lived and so can never die. How very near they seem, yet how remote that age before the world went all awry....")

This will be the first such anniversary gathering since the death of founding member Rita Wlodarczyk last February. Whenever her health and weather permitted her attendance, she always gave a memorable reading of the entire poem. This year, and in future years as long as we continue to gather, the annual reading will be dedicated to our "founding mother."

A time for toasting then follows, beginning with "A Toast at the Criterion Bar," written by John McDonnell and first made at the 2006 gathering. The toast is to Young Stamford, an acquaintance of Dr. John Watson whose chance meeting at the American bar of the Criterion restaurant led within a few hours to Watson's introduction to Sherlock Holmes as Watson searched for a roommate.

We only know of the circumstances of the meeting in the account, "A Study in Scarlet," which was published 120 years ago this Christmastide season in Beeton's Christmas Annual. (Christmastide -- the Twelve Days of Christmas - began the evening of Dec. 25 and concluded this morning, as the sun arose following Twelfth Night.) It also was with that publication that the world first learned of Sherlock Holmes, so another segment of our program will offer a few reflections on that signal event.

Entertainment will be provided through a recording from a Dec. 24, 1945, radio broadcast of "The New Adventures of Sherlock Holmes" radio program, "Night Before Christmas." The series starred Basil Rathbone as Sherlock Holmes and Nigel Bruce as Dr. Watson.

Other features include the Ceremony of the Rose, created for our 2007 program based on comments of Sherlock Holmes recorded in "The Adventure of the Naval Treaty" about "what a lovely thing a rose is," and the unveiling and consumption of this year's Sherlock Holmes birthday cake, designed by our case study facilitator Thom Boykoff (Godfrey Norton, Esq.). There also will be time for other toasts, New Years resolutions by those present for themselves or Canonical characters, a display of items from our personal collections, and a group photograph.



SENDING REGRETS that they are not able to be present Jan. 6 were Richard MacDonald (Inspector Alec McDonald), Tom Drucker (Windigate) who is attending a math meeting in San Diego and sends "best wishes for 2008," Janet and Ted Reinke "who will be able to attend this year's birthday party only in spirit," and Al Smith who reports he is in California for the week and asks, "Please pass my best wishes to the group and wish them a Happy New Year."



SPEAKING OF BIRTHDAYS, the Notorious Canary-Trainers itself will be 39 years old April 20, having been founded in Madison (starting under another name) in 1969. Most conveniently, April 20 also happens to be the date of our monthly case study (list follows below). For more on our history, visit our Web site at this link: <http://www.madison.com/communities/canary/pages/history>



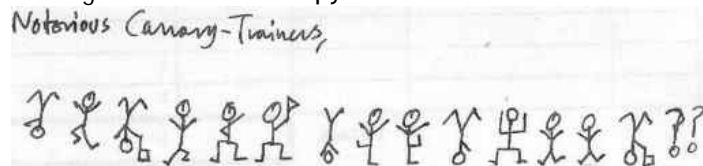
HERE'S THE REST OF OUR MEETING SCHEDULE THROUGH 2008. All meetings are at Barnes & Noble West unless otherwise noted.

February 17: Devils Foot
March 16: Dancing Men
April 20 Retired Colourman
May 18: Charles Augustus Milverton
June 15: Six Napoleans
July 20: Thor Bridge
August 17: Priory School
September 21: Shoscombe Old Place
October 19: Three Garridebs
November 16: Lady Francis Carfax (Booked for Murder)
December 14: Illustrious Client (second Monday)(Booked for Murder)

There's no charge to attend our monthly case study meetings which are open to the public. (You also don't have to be a Sherlock Holmes expert.) Arrive early or remain afterward to browse our host's selections for sale. Barnes & Noble Booksellers is located at 7433 Mineral Point Rd., Madison (behind West Towne Shopping Center). We normally meet on the third Sunday of each month from 3-4:30 p.m., unless otherwise announced.



SOLVING OUR OWN MYSTERY. Early this past summer, Thom Boykoff of our group received an envelope whose contents were limited to a brief handwritten message in the code found in The Adventure of the Dancing Men. Here's an copy of the entire communication:



One of our members, Swati Dhingra, was the first to decode the message, although the message sender remains unknown. You can read the full story about this mystery at our Web site at <http://communities.madison.com/canary> (Spoiler: the message reads, "Got any birdseed?")

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