

Meeting Notes

September 8 2018



Reported by Carla Coupe

Our regular meeting room at the Hyatt Regency in Bethesda bustled with new and old members at a rare Saturday luncheon. Highlights of the pre-lunch mingle were Denny Dobry's tempting collection of Holmes-related books for sale, the proceeds of which go to the BSI Trust, and the much-coveted Red Circle pins that Tom Fahres was selling for only \$10. There are only a few left, so buy yours soon and don't be left out.



After a tasty lunch, Peter introduced Monica Schmidt, our guest speaker, whose topic was "You Have Been on eBay, I Perceive: The Pathology of Sherlockian Collecting."

Peter and Monica first met several years ago at the Norwegian Explorers' conference. Peter was charmed by her enthusiasm and intelligence, and Monica only later discovered exactly who this pleasant man was! Monica wore a light blue blazer and explained that at the BSI cocktail party held during the Birthday Weekend, Peter always wears a light blue blazer to host the auction. This was her nod to this tradition; Monica was cosplaying Peter.

Monica noted that when she first chose the subject, she wanted to ensure she handled the topic respectfully, because many Sherlockians are known for their collections. She defined the differences between collecting and hoarding. Briefly, collecting consists of seeking, locating, acquiring, engraving, cataloging, displaying, storing, and maintaining items of interest to the collector. Hoarding is anxiety producing, resulting in disarray and embarrassment about entertaining or even just having people visit. Unfortunately, the capitalism and consumerism of our culture can encourage hoarding. Some anti-anxiety drugs can help hoarders, along with therapy and learned coping skills.

The audience members were fascinated by Monica's talk, and after she finished, asked many questions. Bev Wolov noted that one way to differentiate between collecting and hoarding is to ask: "Who is in control: you or the stuff?" Monica agreed, and explained that collecting follows a theme or rules of logic, while hoarding is indiscriminate, and often spills over to other areas of the person's life.

We all agreed that we and the Sherlockians we knew were collectors, not hoarders—much to several participants' thinly veiled relief. Monica received kudos and a hearty round of applause for her interesting talk.

Peter then took the podium and reminded members about upcoming activities [see the website listings for details], and after yet more questions for Monica, we wrapped up the September meeting. Our next meeting on December 7th will return to our usual Friday evening time-slot at the Bethesda Hyatt Regency. Join us in some Holmesian holiday fun!