

Meeting Notes

December 7, 2018



Reported by Carla Coupe

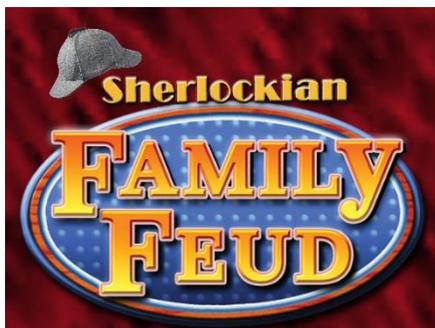
The Red Circle assembled at our usual gathering place—the Bethesda Hyatt Regency—for an evening of seasonal fun and canonical frolicking. Holiday cheer started early, as attendees found gifts at their places: a back issue of the *Baker Street Journal* from Peter Blau, as well as a raffle ticket and a festive rubber duckie, the latter courtesy of Tom Fahres.

Our usual Name Tag Fairy took the evening off and provided a perfect opportunity for an ice breaker, a fun way for the attendees to get to know each other. After Bev Wolov slapped a name tag on everyone’s back, with the names of an animal and the canonical story from which it came, we had to guess our animal (not too difficult) and story (very challenging!) by asking others yes or no questions.



A raffle started the evening proper, and four lucky attendees held the winning tickets. The prizes were two Laurie King books, a signed copy of Tom Mann’s *A Christmas Carol at 221B*, and Graham Moore’s *The Sherlockian*.

Then Alan Rettig hosted a Sherlockian data quiz created by the *Guardian* newspaper, which was interesting but very difficult. An occasional heartfelt groan could be heard as we mulled the questions and scribbled our answers. Although no one covered themselves with glory, quiz maven Dana Richards turned in the top score.



The next game was “Sherlockian Family Feud.” “Volunteers” were divided into two teams: Sherlock and Moriarty. Peter and Bev emceed the feud, asking questions and giving correct answers. After a heated battle, the Moriartys came out on top, at 147-145. A tip of the hat for the “Sherlockian Family Feud” goes to the Sherlockian society The Three Garridebs, who came up with the idea and kindly provided guidance.

Dana Richards was up next with an imaginative “Boxing Day” quiz. Denny Dobry and Ann Marlowe stepped up to the plate as winners of this brain-teaser. Anyone interested in pitting their canonical knowledge against Dana’s mastery can [find the quiz here](#) and in Writings.

Peter then explained the Sherlockian aspects of Pearl Harbor Day, and paid tribute to Katherine McMahon. After graduating from high school, she worked at a bookshop in Elgin, Illinois, and was one of those who solved the crossword puzzle published in the *Saturday Review of Literature*, and thus won membership in The Baker Street Irregulars. However, Christopher Morley did not invite her to any of his stag annual dinners. McMahon wound up managing a book store in Honolulu, and one Sunday was sitting on her veranda overlooking the harbor and saw Army Air Force planes performing a drill. . .but they weren't Army Air Force planes, and it wasn't a drill. In 1991, when McMahon was living in New Mexico, John Bennett Shaw and Saul Cohen presented her with her Irregular Shilling and her Investiture ("Lucy Ferrier") as, at long last, a full member of the BSI.

Peter also played the first few minutes of the Basil Rathbone/Nigel Bruce radio program that aired the evening of December 7, 1941. The show was "Mrs. Warren's Key" (written by Edith Meiser and based on "The Red Circle"). The program was interrupted with an announcement that there would be a special session of Congress the next day, when FDR would first describe December 7 as "a day which will live in infamy." Although the quality of the Holmes recording leaves much to be desired, the program is available [here](#). The announcement comes at 9:02 of the recording.

Farewells and holiday greetings rang throughout the Hyatt at the evening's end, and attendees carried the Red Circle's warmth and fellowship into the December cold. We all look forward to the spring, and the next gathering of the Red Circle.