



THE BEACON SOCIETY

*Supporting and recognizing exemplary educational experiences
that introduce young people to the Sherlock Holmes stories*



*A Scion Society of the
Baker Street Irregulars*

MINUTES OF ANNUAL MEETING FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2003

Dear fellow Beacons,

I hope this email finds you well and recovered from various activities of the last month. Please take the time to print out or read this email in its entirety. I would like to thank you for your support of the Beacon Society and our mission: Supporting educational experiences that introduce young people to the Canon and recognizing exemplary efforts to do so.

This year, the Beacon Society made its first public appearance with a great show of support from all around. In 2003, we managed to create our By-Laws, thanks to the diligent efforts of Andy Solberg and his committee; we had our first round of nominations which resulted in our first Beacon Award; and we embarked on our first fundraising drive. I am extremely proud to be associated with people who have gotten so much done in such short order.

We are a virtual society, with members all over the globe. We are organized under the leadership of a Headlight (Scott Monty), Bursar (Richard Olken), and Percy Phelps [Secretary] (Susan Diamond) with Awards, Programming, Communications, and Fundraising task groups. If you would like to read our By-Laws, you can email our Percy Phelps (szdiamond@yahoo.com) for a copy or join our Yahoo Group and look under "Files." [See PDF on BeaconSociety.com]

The Awards Task Group is being organized under the leadership of Andy Solberg (asolberg@earthlink.net). Thus far, we have the following members on the committee: Joe & Elaine Coppola, Carol Cavalluzzi, Betsy Rosenblatt, John Genova, Sue & Ben Vizoskie. Please contact Andy if you would like to participate.

This year, the Awards task group selected Jan Stauber as the first recipient of the Beacon Award. She was the unanimous choice of the Awards task group. For 10 years, she has been going to 7th and 8th grade classrooms to introduce and educate the students on Sherlock Holmes. In the words of one of her

nominators, "I was particularly impressed by Jan's initiative in doing this project completely on her own with no group support - only a sincere desire to spread the Sherlockian word. She is an inspiration to any of us to might wish to start something on our own." For her efforts, Jan receives a year's subscription to the Baker Street Journal, which I understand she is donating to her local library. Kudos! For more information on Jan's exemplary work, please see: [BeaconSociety.com]

Nominations for the next Beacon Award are welcome at any time; be on the lookout for other great Sherlockians, talk to your local scion societies about it. There's always room for more great educators!

The Fundraising Task Group is under my leadership. My loyal and trustworthy team consists of: Richard Olken, Laurie Manifold, Maribeau Briggs, and Chrys & Jerry Kegley. We had a handful of creative fundraising projects arise during the last few months. Your Headlight and Bursar secured a lighthouse lapel pin that was based on the wonderful artwork by Laurie Manifold. Laurie's version of the Eddystone Lighthouse, specially commissioned by the Beacon Society, now graces our official correspondence—a special thank you to Laurie for donating her time and talent to this project. Pins are given as thank-you gifts to our donors. There is no set level of gift required for a pin; "let your conscience be your guide," for gifts to the Society.

We received our first major gift over the summer, c/o STUD and the Watsonians in Illinois. Susan Diamond and Allan Devitt run a wonderful weekend every spring, and they managed to have an auction that raised \$400 for the Beacon Society. We thank Susan and Allan for their enthusiastic support.

Maribeau Briggs thinned out her Sherlockian collection at the Vendors' Room at the Algonquin Hotel during the Birthday Weekend and managed to raise nearly \$500.

Chuck Kovacic donated the "artist's proof" of a truly inspiring portrait of Holmes, Watson, and Moriarty set against the backdrop of the London skyline. We held a silent auction and raised another \$150 for the group.

The Bursar gave his report at the meeting, noting that we have more than \$1,000 in our account now. Thank you to everyone who made this possible!

Next year, the Beacon Society will have its own table at the Vendors' Room; we encourage you to save up extra copies of any items you might have, or to set aside some of your collection that might help us raise money. In-kind gifts are always welcome. Larger gifts may be tax deductible; we are working with the BSI to make this a reality. In the meantime, checks may be sent to: W. Scott Monty, Headlight, 1836 Columbia Road, South Boston, MA 02127.

So now comes the work. The Programming and Communications task groups need to make things happen. This is crucial, because we need to explain what our priorities are, what we're spending our money on, and why we exist.

The Programming Task Group is responsible for how we support those looking to teach children about Holmes. We'll create curricula for different age groups, gather suggestions for working with local school

principals, teachers and school boards, and anything else that experienced Sherlockian educators can think of. Myrtle Robinson (MTR@lindau.net) is ably chairing this group and is joined by Jan Stauber and Mark Favermann. Any other member with expertise in this area is urged to contact Myrtle.

The Communications Task Group needs to let the world know about the Beacon Society. This year, we had items in the dinner packets at the BSI and the Woman dinners, as well as the Baskerville Bash. We need to think about a web site—press kits, classroom curricula, and nominations forms (among other things) can be made available on PDF files on our site. And most especially, we need to use our local scion societies to spread the word. When we think about it, this group really supports local outreach. The introduction of the Canon to the next generation happens on a very personal level. Please—tell your local group about us. If you need materials to share at a meeting, let us know.

Burt Wolder (bwolder@att.net) is a retired PR executive who has graciously volunteered to head the Communications group. He has with him Al Gregory and Marilynne McKay. Please contact Burt to help with this considerable effort.

Thank you again for your interest in the Beacon Society and your support of our important mission. As you know, we need to keep ourselves green as well as the Master's memory. I recognize that we all have some singular talent—a talent that can be shared with others. Individually we are gifted; together we are truly formidable. Won't you consider putting your talent to work for the Beacon Society? It won't take much of your time - perhaps 30 minutes every other week. That's not too much to ask to bring along the next generation of Sherlockians, is it?

Warm Canonical regards,

W. Scott Monty