



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 2005

3 p.m., Friday, January 13, 2006 at the Algonquin Hotel in New York City. Approximately 25 members attended.

Bursar Richard Olken reported that the Society had \$2,720.14 in the treasury at the beginning of 2005. Receipts during the year were \$535.41 and expenditures (for the web site) were \$138.99, leaving an ending balance of \$3,116.83.

Since Myrtle Robinson, Programming Task Group chair, was ill and unable to attend, Secretary Susan Diamond presented Myrtle's report to the group. During the past year, the committee conducted a survey on ways the Society could best promote educational activities on its website. The primary suggestions were providing source materials for teachers to download, developing program guides and lesson plans, organizing book drives and donating copies of the Canon to schools, and providing a directory to assist teachers in finding local scions.

Additions to the Beacon website included:

- A set of guidelines prepared by Chuck Kovacic on organizing and participating in book fairs, fundraising for books for school libraries, etc.
- A report on the essay writing contest for seventh grades sponsored by Watson's Tin Box. (The contest was conducted by Beacon member Andy Solberg and Cathy Shorreck of the Howard County school system with some funding provided by Barnes & Noble.)
- A study outline prepared by one of the eighth grade teachers who had been participating in the Hansom Wheels of South Carolina HOUN reading project.

The committee is also working on several other projects and needs additional members who are willing to participate actively in its various endeavors. If you are interested in becoming involved in this vital aspect of the Society's work, contact Myrtle at mtr@lindau.net

Burt Wolder, Communications Task Group Chair, reported that the website has been improved significantly but a process is needed to generate additional content and to ensure the website's updating. He suggests that material be added on (1) ways to use Holmes in the classroom less traditionally—creative writing, scientific applications, etc., and (2) ways to connect better with our members—possibly checklists that scions could follow to provide outreach in their communities.

Andy Solberg, Awards Task Group Chair, reported that there had been much discussion as to the best way to honor Jan Stauber, the first Beacon Award winner who recently died after a long and valiant battle with cancer. The Society has decided to establish a Jan Stauber Fund which would provide grants to schools and other organizations to establish outreach programs. Donations may be given to the Beacon Society with the specification that they should go to the Jan Stauber Fund.

The Third Annual Beacon Award was given to Lynn Beaulieu and Kim Bartolo, advanced curriculum teachers at the Fayetteville/Manlius school district in upstate New York. A few years ago Lynn and Kim introduced a Sherlock Holmes Mysteries unit in the fifth grade advanced reading class. In addition to reading a selection of the stories, the students explore deductive logic, forensic science, and the Victorian age. The unit has proven to be so popular with the students and such an effective multidisciplinary educational vehicle that it has become a permanent part of the curriculum. The Mycroft Holmes Society of Syracuse provides research material and visits the class each year. Joseph Coppola of the Mycroft Holmes Society accepted the award on behalf of Lynn and Kim.

Scott Monty reported that the latest fundraising activity is the 221B bumper stickers which have been advertised in the BSJ.

Members made the following suggestions:

Chuck Kovacic—recommended buying the Canon in bulk for schools to distribute; since Holmes is on the approved reading list at most schools, this simplifies matters and allows the school systems to give the books out where they are most needed.

Ted Friedman—will provide copies of his presentation to schools and encourages others to do the same.

Allan Devitt—consider venues other than schools such as park districts or libraries; also the importance of scion society donations.

Delia Vargas—described the programs she has established in schools in New York and Maryland.

Bob Coghill—described how active Peggy Perdue, the new head of the Arthur Conan Doyle Collection in Toronto, has been in outreach.

Carol Cavaluzzi—donating books either to schools or to the society so they can be resold.

Marilyn MacGregor—World Wide Pro-Literacy organization—another possible venue for the Society to use as an outreach vehicle.

Head Light Scott Monty concluded the meeting by recognizing and thanking all of the committees and their chairs for their efforts, as well as Maribeau Briggs, the Society's founder and by pointing out that while much progress has been made, more needs to be done.

Respectfully submitted

Susan Z Diamond, a.k.a. Percy Phelps