

THE BEACON SOCIETY

MINUTES OF ANNUAL MEETING FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2021

9:00 PM, Saturday, January 05, 2022

The Meeting was called to order by Head-Light Carla Coupe at 9:02 PM EST.

2020 General Meeting Minutes:

The Secretary (Percy Phelps), Deborah Clark, noted that the minutes from the 2020 General Meeting had been posted to the website and were available to the public. These minutes were accepted as posted.

FULL COMMITTEE REPORTS ARE APPENDED TO THESE MINUTES

2021 Treasurers Report:

Dick Kitts, Bursar, reported that there had been \$5,000 more in donations this year than last. There is a balance of \$50,794, after \$6,963 in expenses, and \$12,065 in donations. Prizes and awards totaled \$863.00. There are five outstanding grants of \$2,700 yet to be collected: three from 2020 and two from 2021. The Treasurer's Report was approved unanimously.

Committee Reports:

Awards Committee – Chair Dan Andriacco reported that the R. Joel Senter, Sr. Memorial Essay Contest for 4th-12th grade students has been publicized. Cash prizes of \$300, \$200, and \$100 will be awarded to the first, second, and third place winners. Steve Mason has been promoting this on the website. The deadline for applications to the essay contest is February 1, 2022. (Note: this deadline was later extended to March 1, 2022.)

Of the three nominees, the Awards Committee chose Steve Mason as the 2021 recipient of the **Susan Z. Diamond Beacon Award**. Chair Dan Andriacco will make the presentation to Steve on January 15th at 11:00 in the Vendor's Room of the Westin Hotel in NYC. Steve will receive a Certificate, a check for \$221 and a year's subscription to *The Baker Street Journal* and *The Serpentine Muse*. Dan highlighted Steve's accomplishments: serving seven years on the Beacon Society Communications Committee, running the Beacon Society Website and the database for educators, publishing *Sherlock's Spotlight*, organizing the Library Display Program, providing the Baker Street Elementary cartoon for publications, and giving away 550 copies of HOUN to young readers over the years. Steve expressed his thanks to the committee and said that it had been a privilege to serve the Society and is honored by this award.

Dan thanked the Committee for all their work, especially Shannon Carlisle, who will be retiring from the Committee. Tamar Zeffren has agreed to join the Committee in her place.

Communications Committee – Steve Mason, Chair, reported that their two objectives this year were getting the word out about the Society’s activities via the Beacon Society Website, especially announcements about the Jan Stauber Grants and the R. Joel Senter, Sr. Memorial Essay Contest, and about nominations for the Susan Z. Diamond Award. Multiple emails throughout the year provide information about these programs to each member of the Beacon Society, as well as to schools and societies, educational associations, children’s museums, and library associations across the U.S. They reach over 800 people. The website gets about 100 hits a month and is regularly updated. The winners of the R. Joel Senter, Sr. Memorial Essay Contest have their essays compiled into a booklet, which is sent to the participants and is also available on our website. *Sherlock’s Spotlight* continues to provide interesting content thanks to the efforts of many people, including Shannon Carlisle, Jerry Margolin, and Rich Krisciunas. On a more academic note, 130 people have now taken all three levels of the Fortescue Scholarship exam.

Fundraising Committee – Crystal Noll, Chair, thanked all who donated this year; it was really appreciated. She reported that \$9,000 was received in donations in 2021, despite having fewer in-person meetings. So far, we have received \$1,265.52 this year in donations. Solicitation emails were sent out mid-year to individuals and organizations. Solicitation letters, as well as the Beacon Society trifold, were included in the Swag bags for attendees of the BSI dinner and The Woman dinner. 221B Con will be held in person this year and the Board of Directors has chosen the Beacon Society as their charity. It will be promoted on their website. Fundraising will be done by silent auction and a ticketed event, too. An Amazon Smile account is in the process of being set up. The Fundraising Committee set a fundraising goal of \$10,000 for 2022.

Grants Committee – Cindy Brown, Chair, reported that the Committee approved all eight Jan Stauber Grant applications that were received, for total amount to be awarded of \$5,600. There has been some difficulty getting recipients to submit their summary reports to show the grant has been completed. The Committee is working on ways to engage more with the recipients, possibly by checking in with them monthly or bi-monthly. The application period for the 2022 Grants Program opens on January 31st and applications are due by May 1st. Cindy expressed her thanks to the Committee for all their work.

Junior Sherlockian Committee – Chair Shannon Carlisle reported that the Junior Sherlockian Society (JSS) celebrated their 4th birthday on August 9, 2021 (the 221st day of the year.) The Society invites online study of Sherlock Holmes’s character traits as well as deduction and inductive thinking, among other things. Additional tasks are periodically added. Most recently two groups of students interviewed writers. One group interviewed Nancy Springer about the Enola Holmes series. Another group interviewed Elizabeth Eulberg, the author of the Shelby Holmes books, and created a club for those students who had read all four of her Shelby Holmes books. Bookmarks promoting the JSS (“Bee an Ambassador!”) were sent to attendees at the BSI dinner and The Woman dinner. The Facebook page has 416 followers: up 115 since last year. It gets 1,700 visits each month. This year’s expenses were \$210.51 for hosting and renewing the domain name.

Programming Committee – Carla announced that Rob Nunn, Chair, is stepping down, but will continue to assist Steve with *Sherlock’s Spotlight*. The Head-Light welcomed the new Chair, Derrick Belanger, and also thanked the Committee for their work. The Library Display kits have

been on hiatus because of the CoVid pandemic but hopefully now that more school and library buildings are open, they can get on with the program. Members are encouraged to donate items that would increase interest in a library display on Sherlock Holmes: t-shirts, toys, comics, etc.

Old Business:

R. Joel Senter, Sr. Memorial Essay Contest – Denny Dobry reported to Dan Andriacco that so far there is only one application. Everyone is asked to encourage students to apply, so we can spend money!

Jan Stauber Grants Revision – The Board has been asked to increase the grant award to \$800. More than that requires too much oversight. The Board agreed to the increase.

Library Display Program – The program is moving forward, and we hope to launch it this winter or spring. More information on that process is to come. The goal is to make a basic display box. A scion must ask for it and commit to using it in a local library. Steve is looking for more tchotchkes: Sherlockian Christmas cards, duplicate comics, copies of *The Serpentine Muse*. Any 3-D type of thing, including t-shirts. John Gehan said he would send copies of *Canadian Holmes* and back issues of *The Watsonian*.

Closing remarks:

Head-Light Carla Coupe noted that 2021 had been a difficult year and thanked the Board, the Committees, and all the members. The Beacon Society is happy to include supporters who enjoy Sherlock Holmes in all his incarnations. We hope to strengthen and extend that vision. Thank you for your support!

The meeting was adjourned at 9:41 PM, EST.

These minutes prepared and respectfully submitted by Deborah Clark, Percy Phelps, Secretary