



The Norwegian Explorers of Minnesota, Inc.
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The Norwegian Explorers of Minnesota December 2024 Notice

Times noted are U.S. Central Time

Study Group

Saturday December 14 at 2:00 p.m.

Mary Loving will lead the group in a discussion of **“The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle.”** Note this represents a change from the previously announced reading of the Adventure of the Mazarin Stone. The group felt that BLUE was too good to not cover during the Christmas season. We’ll pick up again with MAZA in January. See the end of this Notice for discussion questions to ponder. We continue to gather via Zoom, primarily to accommodate participants from around the country and around the world. See the link and other information below and please forward to any interested Sherlockian friends and colleagues who may not be Norwegian Explorers.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8282233034?pwd=RGNFYW9venRacUFYVkhzNnNlV2tPQT09>

Meeting ID: 828 223 3034

Passcode: 878937

One tap mobile

+13126266799,,8282233034#,,,,,0#,,878937# US (Chicago)

+19292056099,,8282233034#,,,,,0#,,878937# US (New York)

Dial by your location

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

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Meeting ID: 828 223 3034

Passcode: 878937

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8282233034?pwd=RGNFYW9venRacUFYVkhzNnNlV2tPQT09>

Upcoming Dates and Stories

The group normally meets on the third Saturday of the month at 2:00 p.m. Except for December, we’re following the Jay Finley Christ four-letter abbreviations of the tales in alphabetic order. Thus, we will take on MAZA January 18 and MISS February 15.

Conferences, Meetings, and Gatherings:

Annual Business Meeting and Dinner Thursday December 5 at 6:30 p.m.

We already have 55 guests registered for this event, so the turnout is very good. **Larry Millett** will be our keynote speaker and will speak about his newly released book **“Mysterious Tales of Old St. Paul”** and about how he first began writing his Sherlock Holmes in Minnesota books. His latest book is a collection of three

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“The Adventure of the Empty House”

mysteries featuring his well-known detective Shadwell Rafferty in the days before Rafferty met and collaborated with Sherlock Holmes. See below for more about the book. Larry is the author of nine other mystery novels, most of which feature Sherlock Holmes, and books about the architecture and history of buildings in St. Paul and Minnesota. Copies of the book will be available for purchase from Subtext Books, and Larry will happily inscribe yours.

We'll celebrate the season, hold a brief business meeting, and enjoy a traditional English dinner. We'll also enjoy Canonical Toasts, poems, limericks, carols, etc. Attendees will receive a limited-edition copy of the much anticipated and coveted Norwegian Explorers Christmas Annual. Join us at the **Minneapolis Golf Club**, 2001 Flag Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55426 (952) 544-4471. The cost is **\$50 per person**. You can pay by check using the form included with this Notice or via PayPal on our web site.

The Baker Street Irregulars and ASH will host their January events New York City events starting Wednesday, January 15, 2025. Many events will be open to all Sherlockians, and there will be special tax-free group rates for hotel lodgings. For more details, including a timeline of BSI and other Sherlockian events, see the information at the following link: <https://bakerstreetirregulars.com/2024/10/15/plans-2025-bsi-weekend/>

Baker Street West, Sunday February 2 at 5:00 p.m.

Save the date. Join us for our traditional celebration of the Master's birthday. We'll enjoy dinner, drinks, and conversation as we hear reports from some of our more intrepid traveling members' trips to the Baker Street Irregulars' New York City extended birthday weekend. Thanks to Melissa Aho for hosting the event again this year. The location has not yet been determined. Stay tuned.

Theater

Nothing on the local Twin Cities scene until local theaters release their 2025 season information.

Norwegian Explorers Book and Other Efforts

Larry Millett

Larry Millett's latest book, **"Mysterious Tales of Old St. Paul: Three Cases Featuring Shadwell Rafferty"** was published October 1. Larry is author of ten mystery novels featuring Sherlock Holmes and St. Paul detective Shadwell Rafferty, including "Rafferty's Last Case: A Minnesota Mystery Featuring Sherlock Holmes," all published by the University of Minnesota Press.

But Shadwell Rafferty is back after all! Or more specifically, in these three novellas, we catch up with Rafferty in the years before he meets the famous detective, Sherlock Holmes, in a series of three mysterious affairs that all take place in the early 1890s in downtown St. Paul, Minnesota.

In "Death in the News", St. Paul citizens wake up one morning to find that the sign on downtown's tallest building that reads PIONEER PRESS has been altered to read LIARS. Of course, suspicion immediately falls on the citizens of Minneapolis, but soon eyes turn towards prominent citizens treated unflatteringly by the paper of late and may have a bone to pick. The sign prank soon takes a back seat, however, when a far worse crime rocks the city.

In "The Birdman of Summit Avenue" it's 1892, and cats are turning up dead in the yards of prominent St. Paulites, including James J. and Mary Hill, and suspicion swiftly falls on the wealthy avian enthusiast Ambrose Harriman, the "Birdman of Summit Avenue" who made no secret his hatred of cats and whose bird, Webster, can recite portions of the Gettysburg Address and Poe's "The Raven." And so, as the news of these odd affairs begins circulating in the Pioneer Press, our good friend Shad Rafferty and his partner George Washington Thomas fly to the (hoped for) rescue when Shad is summoned to a meeting by James J. Hill. But Harriman's mysterious employee, Eli Tuttle, has his own past and the tracks to the heart of the

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mystery may not be so obvious after all, especially when a neighborhood boy is found tragically murdered in Harriman's yard.

In "The Gold King", an enigmatic and big talking stranger arrives in town, calling himself the Gold King, and who soon begins announcing that he's arrived to search for a great treasure hidden in the city. Soon another wealthy person arrives in Arthur Hopewell, whose presence and progressive beliefs inspire many and unsettle many as well.

These interlocking stories, all steeped in the mystery and history of nineteenth-century St. Paul, show Rafferty becoming the consummate detective whose exploits have delighted readers again and again.

Jeff Falkingham

Making its debut at the recent Sherlock @ 50 Conference in Minneapolis was the 2nd Edition of Jeff Falkingham's **"Focusing the Lens on Doyle & Holmes"** essay collection. Since a 1st Edition was published in 2021, Jeff's writings have won 3 more Sigerson Awards from the Norwegian Explorers of Minnesota! Those 3 essays join 3 earlier award-winners to form the heart of this 2nd Edition. Also included are several newer entries including Jeff's insightful observations and explorations, book and film reviews, plus his Sherlockian dinner toasts, limericks, and even a Holmes & Doyle trivia quiz. Cover by Amanda Downs Champlin, who also did the two frontispiece drawings in 'Murder in Minnesota! Two Sherlockian Tales' - a 2-in-1 bundling of pastiches set in Minnesota in the late 1800s. Both books are available at Amazon.com. For signed copies, contact Jeff directly via his website at www.cccaper.com.

Jeff is also a well-known Sherlock Holmes educator and, in his John H. Watson persona, has given his "Arthur Conan Doyle Primer" Book Talk to dozens of schools, libraries, historical societies and book or social clubs. An abbreviated six-minute YouTube sample clip as available for viewing at the following link: <https://youtu.be/qnPg8R5frs>

Please send details about any books you're authoring, editing, publishing, etc. to me and I'll include the relevant information in the next Notice.

Movies and Television:

"Watson," premiering January 26 on ABC, takes place six months after the death of the titular character's friend and partner Sherlock Holmes at the hands of Moriarty. The show stars Morris Chestnut as Dr. John Watson, who resumes his medical career as the head of a clinic dedicated to treating rare disorders. Watson's old life isn't done with him, though - Moriarty and Watson are set to write their own chapter of a story that has fascinated audiences for more than a century. Watson is a medical show with a strong investigative spine, featuring a modern version of one of history's greatest detectives as he turns his attention from solving crimes to solving medical mysteries.

Additional movie and television activity continues to percolate in many areas, nearly too many to mention. As some of those items come into focus, I'll attempt to note specific developments as they become available.

Norwegian Explorers Wikipedia Entry

Melissa Aho has bravely agreed to attempt to create a Norwegian Explorers Wikipedia entry, modeled on the format of the Baker Street Irregulars Wikipedia entry. With the help of Gary Thaden and Kerry McCartney, she has begun to make some progress. Stay tuned for a future link to the finished product.

Christmas Annuals

For the collecting completists, extra copies of most out of print Annuals are available for a small fee. Contact Phil Bergem at pgbergem@gmail.com if you want a copy.

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Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections – Membership Opportunity

The University of Minnesota Libraries houses the world's largest collection of Sherlock Holmes related materials and is supported by the Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections. Many Explorers are already members of this organization which, along with the University Libraries and the Norwegian Explorers, hosts our triennial conferences and other events. If you're not already a member, please consider joining to support its ongoing work of collecting, cataloging, and exhibiting the collection's materials for the public and private researchers. A basic annual membership is only \$30. You can learn more and join at the following link: <https://www.lib.umn.edu/collections/special/holmes/become-friend-holmes>.

Lapel Pins

Please let Tom Gottwalt know if you wish to purchase one. **Cost is \$15** in person, \$20 if mailed.

Baker Street Irregulars Updates Available Free

Get News from the Baker Street Irregulars via email! Free for all Sherlockians: Get notified by email when the Irregulars schedule an event, publish a new book, or issue of the *Baker Street Journal*, or have other news. To sign up, go to <https://bakerstreetirregulars.com/bsi-news-via-email/>.

Request for News & Event Information

If you know of upcoming events, publications, or news of interest to Explorers please send it my way and I'll publish it in the next monthly Notice.

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Study Group Discussion Questions:

Mary Loving will lead the group in a discussion of “**The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle**” via a Zoom gathering. See discussion questions below.

1. This is one of the stories in The Canon where Holmes shines in making a series of casual and brilliant deductions from his observation of an object of daily use, revealing profound truths about its owner.
2. Do you think his deductions about Baker seem to lie more in the realm of guesswork than deduction? How?
3. If Holmes understood that "to a poor man, the loss was a heavy one," then why didn't he advertise the discovery of goose and the hat sooner than the second day after Christmas?
4. We learn that the Blue Carbuncle is worth £320,000, which is roughly what Henry Hope paid for the notorious diamond bearing his name. However, a carbuncle is a garnet, and there is no such thing as a blue garnet. So, what, really, was the famed Blue Carbuncle?
5. What could have gotten into the Countess of Morcar to treat a gem for which she would “part with half of her fortune” to leave it in a bureau instead of the hotel safe? Sentiment?
6. When confronted by Holmes, James Ryder was quick to bring up Catherine Cusack's name, as if to share the guilt. Was Cusack truly involved in the crime, or was she merely guilty of talking too freely about her mistress's jewels?
7. Holmes let Ryder go, citing the tragedy of making the pathetic thief a "jailbird for life.” Is the "season of forgiveness" sufficient explanation of Holmes's actions? Or may there have been some other reason for Holmes to let Ryder go unpunished? What other examples are there of cases where Holmes let the guilty party go?
8. Watson ended the story before Holmes returned the jewel to the Countess and before John Horner got out of jail. Did Peterson get his reward as the one who really found the gem? Did Holmes tell the police what really happened? Did Horner have to stand trial? And if Holmes was so sure that Cusack had been involved in the crime, what did he do about her?

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