



The Norwegian Explorers of Minnesota, Inc.
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The Norwegian Explorers of Minnesota January 2025 Notice

Times noted are U.S. Central Time

Membership Renewal

If you've not already done so, please renew your annual membership. You can renew online with PayPal or a credit card or use the attached form available on the website. Dues are **\$25 per household** but additional contributions are always welcome. The Norwegian Explorers of Minnesota, Inc. is a valid Section 501(c)(3) organization. Any contributions beyond your membership dues should be deductible as charitable contributions.

Study Group

Saturday January 18 at 2:00 p.m.

Steve Miller will lead the group in a discussion of **"The Adventure of the Mazarin Stone."** 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=RGNFYW9venRacUFYVkhzNnNJV2tPQT09>

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)

+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

+1 301 715 8592 US (Germantown)

+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

Meeting ID: 828 223 3034

Passcode: 878937

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/kEQn1t05j>

Upcoming Dates and Stories

The group normally meets on the third Saturday of the month at 2:00 p.m. 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.

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"The Adventure of the Empty House"

Conferences, Meetings, and Gatherings:

Annual Business Meeting and Dinner Update

Over 55 Norwegian Explorers attended our December 5 Annual Dinner and Business Meeting at the Minneapolis Golf Club. Larry Millet was our keynote speaker and spoke 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 mysteries featuring his well-known detective Shadwell Rafferty in the days before Rafferty met and collaborated with Sherlock Holmes. 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 were available for purchase and Larry happily inscribed them for all.

We enjoyed a traditional English dinner, celebrated the season, heard excellent Canonical toasts, held a brief business meeting, elected 2025 officers and board members, presented a donation to the Libraries' Special Collections, distributed copies of the celebrated Christmas Annual with accompanying Sigerson Awards, Stood Upon the Terrace, heard an excellent Holmesian take on the traditional "Twas the Night Before Christmas" theme, held door-prize drawings, and concluded with a reading of "When I Spend a Long Evening with Holmes." Thanks to all whose efforts made it possible.

Attendees at the Annual Dinner received a limited-edition copy of the much anticipated and coveted Norwegian Explorers Christmas Annual. Extra copies are still available for a small fee. Contact Phil Bergem at pgbergem@gmail.com if you want a copy.

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.

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. The event will take place at **Brit's Pub**, 1110 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis, MN 55403, (612) 332-3908, <https://britspub.com/>. Please plan to attend. To get a headcount estimate, please **RSVP to Melissa Aho**, at aho@umn.edu (preferred) or leave a voice message at (612) 789-1812. The only cost is your own food and beverages.

The Midwest BSI Canonical Conclave of Scion Societies April 26 in Indianapolis, IN

The BSI Canonical Conclave is an event made up of multiple BSI Scion Societies – a scion society meeting of scion societies – brought together under the official recognition of The Baker Street Irregulars. This event is meant to connect scion societies and their members. Attendees will also share ideas and best practices with other scions to increase their engagement and effectiveness. Any Sherlockian who is a member of a Sherlockian scion society may attend. A full schedule of activities (talks, presentations, music, scion reports, and other activities) are being planned. Additional information and registration are available at the following link: <https://tinyurl.com/BSIMWConclave25>.

Theater

Agatha Christie's "**The Mousetrap**" premieres March 15 at the Guthrie Theatre and runs through May 18. Though non-Canonical, this iconic murder mystery should enjoy great success and I'm sure many Explorers will attend.

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Norwegian Explorers Book and Other Efforts

Erica Fair has been asked to co-write an essay about E.W. McDiarmid for a collection Rob Nunn is sponsoring. She has plenty of biographical information, but very little about Mac's personality. If anyone knew him well enough to share a story or a memory of him, please reach out to Erica at elmadore@gmail.com.

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 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.

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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/qnPgG8R5frs>

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:

Sherlock & Daughter was to air on the CW network January 1, 2025 but I've been unable to find it. It is also supposedly streaming on Disney+ in the U.K. If anyone knows how to watch it or where to find it, please let me know.

"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.

Podcasts & Other

Produced by Addison Nugent, the new Sherlock Holmes podcast, **"Sherlock Holmes Short Stories"** is now live on all podcast platforms. It's hosted by Hugh Bonneville (Downton Abbey, Paddington). Throughout the series, iconic capers like 'The Adventure of the Speckled Band,' 'The Red-Headed League,' and 'The Man with the Twisted Lip' are told across multiple installments and brought to life with immersive sound design and bespoke music from award-winning podcasters, Noiser.

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.

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.

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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:

Steve Miller will lead the group in a discussion of “The Adventure of the Mazarin Stone” via a Zoom gathering. See discussion questions below.

1. Like His Last Bow, the story is told or at least started as a third person narrative. How effective is this as a narrative device compared to Watson or Holmes telling the tale?
2. The original version of the story is a one act play, The Crown Diamond: or an Evening with Sherlock Holmes. The chief villain was Colonel Sebastian Moran of The Empty House fame. Are the theatrical origins of the story evident as we read it? Does it work better as a play?
3. Billy the page plays a significant part in the beginning of the story. How much do we like this character? Is Watson given much to do in this story?
4. Holmes' love of disguise is notable in the off-stage portions of the story. Do we believe he was that good and could fool an experienced crook like Count Negretto Silvius?
5. The story seems to borrow quite a bit from The Final Problem, The Empty House, and perhaps other parts of the Canon. Is Doyle slipping?
6. Does it make any sense for Count Silvius to visit Sherlock Holmes? Why, like Moriarty, would he do it? What other villains have indulged in a trip to Baker Street? Has it ended well for them?
7. Do we think Silvius and Sam Merton are bright enough to have stolen a crown jewel? Has Holmes dealt with more clever villains than these?
8. How much deduction do we see in the story? Is this Holmes at his best?
9. Is Holmes' treatment of his critic, Lord Cantlemere, anything to be proud of? Can we think of other humiliations of clients, especially rich ones, by the great detective?
10. How does this story compare with other tales in the Canon? Should it have been left to exist as a one act play?

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