



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

Times noted are U.S. Central Time

Study Group

Saturday November 16 at 2:00 p.m.

Steve Miller will lead the group in a discussion of **“The Adventure of the Lion’s Mane.”** 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=RGNFYW9venRacUFYVkhzNnNlJV2tPQT09>

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 December 14 and MISS January 18.

Conferences, Meetings, and Gatherings:

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

Larry Millett will be our keynote speaker and will speak about his newly released book **“Mysterious Tales of Old St. Paul.”** The 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. 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.

You may have read of the remarkable explorations of a Norwegian named Sigerson...

“The Adventure of the Empty House”

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 will hold its January 2025 events in New York City starting Thursday, January 16, 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. The location of this year's event has not yet been determined.

Theater

Nearly 30 Explorers enjoyed the November 3 final performance of **"Holmes/Poirot"** at the **Park Square Theatre**. Thanks to the generosity of **Artistic Director, Steven DiMenna**, we enjoyed a price discount and complimentary beverage with the show. Thanks also go to playwrights **Jeffery Hatcher and Steven Hendrickson** for spending time with our group after the show to share their thoughts about the play's genesis and other aspects of its production. We also learned, to our delight, that the Park Square Theatre has commissioned Jeffery Hatcher to write five more mystery plays over the next five years. Thus, we'll have a supply of high-quality mystery plays to enjoy for many more years.

ACD Society Doylean Honors

Norwegian Explorers have submitted previous nominations of various works for recognition by the ACD Society Doylean Honors. If you'd like to submit a nomination form for the "Scholarly Writing" for 2025 the deadline is November 15, 2024. More information is available at the following link:

<http://acdsociety.com/Honors/Honors.html>

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.

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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.

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.

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Norwegian Explorers Wikipedia Entry

Melissa Aho has bravely agreed to attempt to create a Norwegian Explorers Wikipedia Entry. If anyone has experience and wants to assist Melissa, please let her know.

Christmas Annuals

Extra copies of most out of print Annuals are still 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.

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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"The Adventure of the Empty House"

Study Group Discussion Questions:

Steve Miller will lead the group in a discussion of **“The Adventure of the Lion’s Mane”** via a Zoom gathering. See discussion questions below.

1. This story, along with "The Blanched Soldier" is one of two stories narrated by Sherlock Holmes. Holmes hints at how different the tale might have been if Watson had told it. What are the benefits and drawbacks of Holmes as first-person narrator in the story?
2. How has retirement affected Holmes? Is he happier or does he seem to want the game to still be afoot?
3. This story relies on CSI elements more heavily than some other entries in the Canon. How well does Holmes handle the crime scenes and analysis of the clues presented?
4. Should the wounds on McPherson and his dying words have resulted in a quicker solution?
5. Are any of the "red herring" suspects convincing as a perpetrator of the crime? How much suspense is there in the story?
6. Holmes seems more emotional in this adventure than the detective portrayed by Watson. He seems infatuated by Maude Bellamy. He describes racing thoughts and feeling like being in a nightmare at the crime scene. He refers to his encyclopedic knowledge as a lumber room of miscellaneous information. Has Holmes changed or did Watson miss something about his friend?
7. What do we think of law enforcement in this narrative? Is Holmes kind to them in his assessment? Is there a rush to arrest without real evidence?
8. The third victim survives after drinking a bottle of brandy. Could Watson have saved everyone if he had been on the scene?
9. Are we satisfied with the final solution to the mystery? Does it seem like a gimmick?
10. The original manuscript shows signs of heavy editing. The character of Dr. Mordhouse, a well-known naturalist, is completely eliminated. It appears that he and Holmes may have been competing to solve the case. Was Doyle correct in deleting Mordhouse from the story?

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