



2009

# Communication No. 295

The Pleasant Places of Florida

## The 34th Annual Fall Gathering

It was a small group for our 34th Fall Gathering, but, as usual, pleasant. Attendees were Carl Heifetz, Michael Bryan, Dorothy Stix, Peggy Olmazu, Art Walker, Gerry Hynes, Wanda & Jeff Dow, Charles & Marilyn Amick, and David, Connor & Lorna McCallister. Sandy Heifetz joined us for lunch.

Lorna McCallister led us in a recitation of the *Musgrave Ritual* which was followed by toasts, a quiz by David McCallister, show'n'tell with Art Walker, and Lorna wrapped up the program with *221B*. Carl handed out copies of his paper, *The Scientific Detective, Sherlock Holmes, Solves the Case of the Sign of Four*. The edition was limited, but you can contact Carl to see if he has any additional copies he might part with. There were discussions as to whether or not the club should try to meet in a designated place for each meeting, what to do to increase the steadily declining membership, and getting the word out about the upcoming Wessex Weekend in February, 2010.

Toasts:

By Jeff Dow

To him, Mary presented her case  
There ensued the horrible race:  
Pondicherry Lodge to the Thames  
They sped after the gems  
But the Agra sank with no trace.

With Mr. Small, he at length spoke  
He is, after all, no ordinary bloke.  
Though the treasure was lost  
Into marriage - Watson was tossed  
As for Holmes - well, things go better with coke.

To the best and wisest man we have ever known -  
Sherlock Holmes.

By Dorothy Stix

"To Sherlock Holmes she is always **the** Woman. I have seldom heard him mention her under any other name. In his eyes she eclipses and predominates the whole of her sex."

At a time when ladies were supposed to be ladies, she had "the face of the most beautiful of women, and the mind of the most resolute of men." She

had the wit to outdo Holmes and he admired her for it. Her photograph was one of Holmes' most prized possessions.

I chose this toast because back in 1961 the BSI started the tradition of honoring one woman at their annual dinner to represent 'the woman.' This society has two women who have been so honored. Joan Wood in 1991 and myself in 1971.

Please raise your glasses to "the Woman," and "the Women."

Mike Bryan then proposed a toast to Watson.

By Carl Heifetz

We Sherlockians enjoy what we call "playing the game" by pretending, tongue firmly in cheek, that the exploits of Sherlock Holmes were real events and that Dr. John H. Watson was the author of these accounts. Thus, in our learned discourses upon the subject, we relegate Dr. Doyle to the title of Literary Agent whose only claim to fame was receiving a fee for handling the publication of Dr. Watson's writings. However, all of us, in our heart of hearts, pay great tribute to the memory of Dr. Doyle and acknowledge him as the creator of the modern detective story.

Had Dr. Doyle only written one Sherlock Holmes adventure, *The Sign of Four*, the tale that we are discussing today, the genre would have been created for all others to follow. What began as a moderately successful career in *Study in Scarlet* blossomed full bloom in this second novel.

Everything is there: the brilliant scientific detective who uses the method employed by scientists to achieve the solution to his puzzle, spiced with an exciting chase scene, secret treasure from exotic locales, gunplay and poison darts, a nice dog, cute ragamuffins, a very strange client and culminating in romance. What more could we ask?

Thus, we raise our glasses in praise of our true literary hero - the Master of the Feast - Dr. Arthur Conan Doyle.

By Wanda Dow

I was asked to pay homage to our founder, Leslie Marshall. I supposed it's because I'm about the only member left who actually knew Leslie. I would like to relate how that came about.

It was 1971. I was recently interested in Sherlock Holmes through a friend who had introduced me to *Hound of the Baskervilles*. As was the case when we had an interest in anything, my friend and I pursued it wholeheartedly. I remember a phone call from her, asking if I had seen an article in *The St. Petersburg Times* about a man named Leslie Marshall, who was an actual B.S.I. ! Oh my! This entailed tracking the poor man down and arranging a visit. We trekked to St. Petersburg, just south of Central Avenue, to discover a gentle soul who, by the way, was thinking of forming a small club and would we be interested at all?

Initially, the club was strictly what Leslie called a 'corresponding society.' Leslie would put together a sheet or two of papers reporting anything of Sherlockian interest and mail it to one of the people on the list. We would read it, add to it if we had anything, and send it on to the next person on the list. It was a sort of pre-internet blog! By the following year, Leslie felt there were enough people to attempt a physical meeting. The rest, as they say, is history.

Let us raise our glasses to our Founder, Leslie Marshall.

David McCallister then proposed toasts to Ben Wood and the Sholto Brothers

By Charles Amick

Now Jonathan Small, his luck was vile  
He lost his leg to a crocodile.  
For twenty years on an Andaman isle  
The Four were imprisoned - quite a while.  
Millions of treasure, the Four had lost  
By Major John Sholto double-crossed.  
Small traced the traitor and for a bit,  
He had the treasure, but he lost it  
For ill-gotten gains the forecast's poor  
(And Jonathan Small went to Dartmoor.)

By Art Walker

Out of a primitive jungle clan  
From the far away island of Andaman  
There came a little pygmy named Tonga  
Who wore but a woven sarong-a  
His cruel and murderous heart  
Was accompanied by a blowgun and dart.  
Encouraged by his peg-leg master  
He committed a horrible disaster  
While seeking escape on the Thames at dark  
He attempted to loose his poisonous dart  
Alas, the fateful end of his life was due  
To the quick action of Watson and his '32.'

### The Quiz

1. What was Holmes doing when Watson begins the narrative, at the end?
2. What had Watson been up to earlier that first day and how did Holmes know?
3. Finish these quote: "Eliminate all other factors..." and "How often have I said to you, that when you have eliminate the impossible..."
4. On what object does Watson test Holme's powers?
5. Where had Watson gained his experience with women?
6. How old was Mary when she started receiving pearls, how many had she received and for whom does she presently work?
7. Where does the Morstan party go pursuant to her note (3 places)?
8. Who were the Four, what was their sign and on what document was it found?
9. What artwork had Thaddeus Sholto collected?
10. Who were the Sholtos' servants?
11. How did Maj. Sholto, Cpt. Arthur Morstan, Bartholomew Sholto and Tonga die?
12. From whom are Toby and the *Aurora* hired?
13. Where did the Irregulars find the *Aurora*?
14. Where was Jonathan Small incarcerated?
15. Why were Maj. Sholto and Capt. Morstan open to bribery?
16. In whose murder(s) was Small involved?
17. how did Small lose his leg and what did he do after leaving the army?
18. What was in the Agra Treasure; how much was recovered?
19. What policemen were involved in *Sign*?
20. What does Watson get out of the adventure?



MEMBER  
ART  
WALKER  
REPLACES  
NIGEL  
BRUCE !

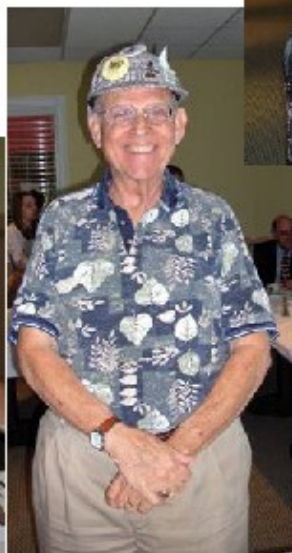
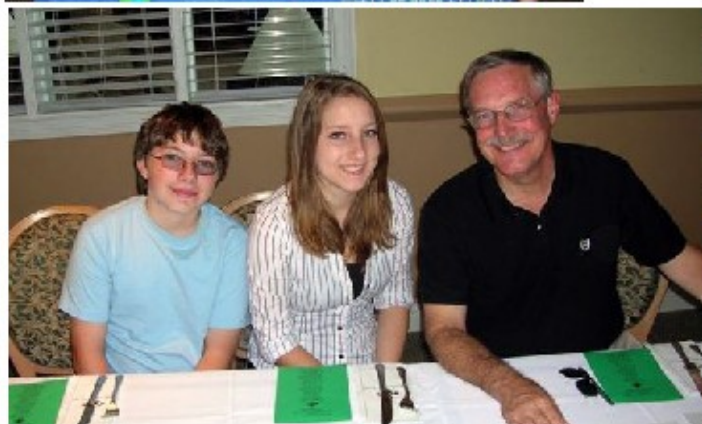
*Discussion was made as to the possibility of the club creating and maintaining a website. This was decided a good idea for the long run, but immediate action would be to check on setting up a My Space or Facebook account to generate more interest and possibly new membership.*



**QUIZ ANSWERS:** 1. Injecting a 7% solution. 2. He had been to the Wigmore post office to dispatch a telegram. Holmes knew by the reddish tint of the mud on Watson's instep and the fact that he knew Watson had not written a letter that morning and that he had a sufficient supply of stamps and postcards to not wait for a trip to the Post Office. He therefore must have sent a wire. 3. Eliminate all other factors and the one which remains must be the truth. How often have I said to you that when you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth. 4. Watson's newly acquired pocket watch from his brother. 5. On three separate continents and many nations. 6. 20 or 21, she received 6 and she works as a governess for Mrs. Cecil Forrester. 7. Lyceum Theater, Surrey, Thaddeus' home then Norwood 8. Jonathan Small, Dost Akbar, Abdullah Khan, Mohamet Singh. +++. On a map. 9. Rosa, Corot, Bouguereau 10. Boxers, Williams & McMurdo, Kit Mitzer, Mrs. Burnstone 11. Sholto died of fright, or his heart, Morstan, - heart attack, B. Sholto - poison dart, Tonga - shot 12. Mordacei Smith, Sherman's 13. Holmes found the Aurora in the repair yard at Jacobson's 14. Boer Island, Andaman's 15. Gambling debts. 16. Achmet, the merchant, & the guard 17. A crocodile bit it off. Was an overseer of an Indigo plantation with Dawson 18. 143 diamonds, 97 emeralds, 170 rubies, 40 carbuncles, 210 sapphires, 61 agates, beryls, onyxes, cat's eyes, tourquoise, and other unidentified jewels, in addition to 300 pearls, 12 of which were in a coronet. Other than what Mary had received and Sholto had spent, the rest of the treasure was unrecovered; it was dumped. 19. Athelney Jones and Sam Brown. 20. A wife.



(Clockwise) Gerry Hynes & Art Walker, Mike Bryan, Jeff & Wanda Dow, Dorothy Stix & Peggy Olmazu, great prizes, Carl Heifetz, David, Lorna & Connor McCallister and Chuck & Marilyn Amick.





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**The Pleasant Place of Florida**

Founded in 1972

Rev. Leslie Marshall, B.S.I. 1972-1977  
Dr. Benton Wood, B.S.I. 1977-1988  
Bill Ward, B.S.I. 1988-1989  
Dr. Benton Wood, B.S.I. 1989-1996  
The Last Court of Appeals 1997-present

For the record, The Last Court of Appeals consists of **David McCallister**, known as Master of the House (Master of Ceremonies, host of annual Wessex Cup),  
**Carl Heifetz**, known as Representative both with the Servants and with the Tradespeople (correspondent),  
**Wanda & Jeff Dow**, know as the Papers on the Sundial (Communications & bookkeeping),

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