



# Ineffable Twaddle

*"It is my business to know what other people don't know."*

The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle

A monthly publication of  
The Sound of the Baskervilles  
A Scion Society of the Baker Street Irregulars • Since March 31, 1980  
Serving the Greater Puget Sound Region of Western Washington, USA



## Answering the question: "Why Sherlock Holmes?"

By *SOB Margie Deck*

I recently found myself sitting at dinner with a friend I'd not seen in more than thirty years—as is wont to happen in our internet connected world these days—and in the process of catching up on the major events of our post high-school lives, I mentioned to this friend my membership in The Sound of the Baskervilles and The John H Watson Society. I explained my minor mania of collecting various print versions of the canon and my love of BBC's Sherlock. My friend listened intently and, honestly puzzled, asked "But why?"

I realized at that moment that the answer to that simple question is far from simple. I stumbled through a mildly incoherent answer, and the conversation moved on to other topics. The question, however, stayed in my head: But why, indeed? Why do we call ourselves Sherlockians (or Holmesians or Watsonians), and why do we return to the same texts over and over? Why do we have a love/hate relationship with all the various appropriations of the characters of Holmes and Watson? Why do we play "the game", and speak of them as if they were long lost historical figures—analyzing their every move and reading the quasi-scholarship of other Sherlockians doing the same thing?

I've often misappropriated this statement made by syndicated columnist George F. Will: "Of all the things that don't matter, Sherlock Holmes is the most important." [Will's actual statement refers to baseball.] Obviously, Sherlock Holmes does matter as a money-making machine—originally to Conan Doyle and later to various others. But money making is not an importance I ever consider. For all that has

been written, said, painted, drawn, published, and sung about Sherlock Holmes, statistically speaking, few people ever made any real money at it. Why, then, do we persist?

A new book, brought to my attention first by SOB Librarian Sheila Holtgrieve, followed by multiple appearances in my Sherlockian-heavy Twitter feed, attempts in a fun but respectful way to answer this very question. *The Great Detective: The Amazing Rise and Immortal Life of Sherlock Holmes* by Zach Dundas is a spirited look at the history of Conan Doyle, the stories he wrote about Sherlock Holmes, and the resulting Sherlockian world in all its variations. Dundas attempts, by going global, a personal answer, to his wording of the question: What is Sherlock Holmes?

After reading an interesting review of the book penned by Leslie Klinger for The Los Angeles Review of Books (you can find the review at [lareviewofbooks.org](http://lareviewofbooks.org)), I decided to read Dundas's text in the hope he might give me the words I need the next time I am asked, "But why?" He doesn't, but the book was still certainly worth my time.

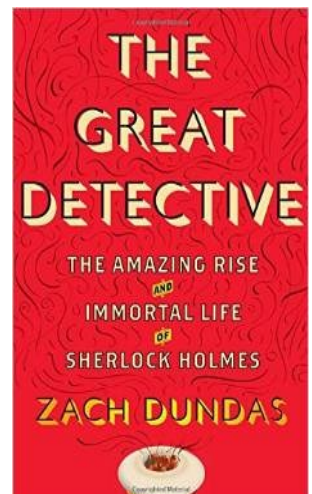
I particularly liked that the book is not academic—Dundas's personal journey in search of the answer makes for an entertaining read. As one reviewer noted, Dundas "embarks on a cheerful romp through the conception, fame, and afterlife of Arthur Conan Doyle's famous sleuth." I personally found the somewhat pawky footnotes to be some of the most interesting parts of the book.

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July 2015

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**The Seattle  
Public Library on  
Queen Anne Hill  
is at 400 West**



**Garfield, Seattle**

*Library opens at 1:00, and closes  
at 5:00. Come early, and catch up  
with your fellow SOBs*

**Getting there:**

From northbound or southbound I-5, exit at Mercer Street and head west. Turn right on Queen Anne Avenue and head up the hill. At the 3-way stop sign at the top, turn left onto West Galer Street. At 4th Avenue, turn right. The library is one (1) block north on the northwest corner, at the cross with Garfield Street.

**Eateries Near the  
Queen Anne Library:**

- **The 5 Spot**, 1502 Queen Anne Ave. North; American cuisine.
- **Hilltop Ale House**, 2129 Queen Anne Ave. North; pub fare.
- **Orrapin Thai Cuisine**, 10 Boston Street (the intersection of Queen Anne Ave. North and Boston
- **The Paragon**, 2125 Queen Anne Ave. North ; eclectic cuisine.
- **Olympia Pizza and Spaghetti**, 1500 Queen Anne Ave. North; pizza with a Greek slant.
- **Betty**, 1507 Queen Anne Ave. North; Northwest cuisine.
- **Via Tribunali**, 317 West Galer Street good (but pricey) pizza and Italian food.

**Thanks to SOBs Jon Strandberg  
& Sue Reid for this list**

**Membership News—**

*Welcome Home*

**David and Terri  
Haugen**

*You have been  
sorely missed*

***The Great Hiatus is Over!***  
***What does it have to do with Count Negretto Sylvius?***

Calling all SOBs! Come to our August 16th club meeting to welcome the PFL and Terri back from their fabulous trip practically around the world (well, at least a lot of the European and American world). We will give our Vice President Kashena Konecki a stirring round of applause for taking us through the summer in such a gracious and enthusiastic way. We also don't want to forget our four guest speakers and, of course, everyone who brought tea and treats.

PFL David will resume club announcements, things to do, buy, see, and know, and will lead us in discussion of the first story by order of publication in *The Case Book of Sherlock Holmes: The Adventure of the Mazarin Stone*. It's been awhile since we studied a story, so read up and come prepared.

Who is Count Sylvius? Is it possible he, David, and Terri shared a secret meal together somewhere in Europe and the Crown Diamond exchanged hands?

**August *Ineffable Twaddle*: Margie and Sheila's "Last Bow"**

This issue of *Ineffable Twaddle* is the last one written and produced by Sheila and Margie. We hope you have enjoyed our take on the SOB's esteemed monthly newsletter.

We know that you are looking forward to SOB Editor-in-Chief Terri's return to her old haunts at the computer after she and David's Great Hiatus.

We've had bitten pencil erasers, worn out computer keyboards, new reams of computer paper, gratitude for non-lickable stamps, and hours spent trolling the internet for articles,

interviews, news, and things interesting and new in the Sherlockian world.

We happily give many thumbs up to John, Vivika, Lauren, Sonia, and KJK for making our summer meetings so full of interest and learning, and to David and Terri for arranging for the summer programs.

Believe us: we have a great new appreciation for all the work that Terri and David put in to keep our SOB game afoot.

**Annual John H Watson Picnic photos available on line soon**

This issue of *Ineffable Twaddle* went off to the printers just as the annual picnic took place at Sea Hurst Park in Burien. You can find the photos and info soon at the SOB web site:

***soundofthebaskervilles.com***

## “But why Sherlock Holmes” continued from page one

He tells of his conversations with many Sherlockians on both sides of the pond, including names we know well—like Klinger, King, Johnson, and Fetherston. I liked going along for the ride; I think many

of our SOBs may enjoy it as well.

Oddly enough, as I finished the book, the good old Twitter feed led me to a post by Brad Keefauver, blogging at *Sherlock Peoria* about what it means to believe in

Sherlock Holmes. I think he might have given me some of the words I’ve been seeking; he wrote, in part:

*“Sherlock Holmes is a symbol for our hope that a person can find out the truth in a given situation. A symbol for our confidence that our studies, our sciences, and our simply paying close attention can show us the hidden truths of so many mysteries...He’s the symbol for the best of what we can be when faced with seemingly unsolvable problems... Believing in Sherlock Holmes is believing that there is an explanation. Which has always made him the coolest guy ever, wrapped in a Cumberbatch package or otherwise. I believe in Sherlock Holmes...Every now and then, it’s good to think about just what that phrase means to you.”*

## Meeting Zach Dundas and a book for the SOB library

By SOB Librarian Sheila Holtgrieve



Portland-based author  
Zach Dundas

Some time ago I went to a soup supper at Sue Reid and Jon Strandberg’s home in Queen Anne. In addition to eating great food and talking a blue streak, I met an old-time Sherlockian, although one who is not active now.

He told me about his godson who had just published a book about Sherlock Holmes and was due soon in Seattle to give a author talk and reading at *Third Place Books* in Lake Forest Park. SOB members received an email about this event.

So, on June 15 I was in a good, almost-front row seat to hear Zach Dundas talk about his new book, *The Great Detective: The Amazing Rise and Immortal Life of Sherlock Holmes*. Within a few minutes, I was enthralled. Zach talked about his

life-long devotion to the Master and where he is now in the Sherlockian/Holmesian world, interspersed with reading from various chapters in the book.

About 20 people were present. After the talk, Zach entertained questions and comments, some very perceptive and interesting. I would say that about half the group were engaged enough by the talk to purchase the book. We now have a copy in our SOB library, signed, appropriately, to the SOBs. You may check it out in a couple of months.

You can see the full post at [sherlock-peoria.blogspot.com](http://sherlock-peoria.blogspot.com) for Saturday, July 4, 2015. Meanwhile, I hear the BBC Sherlock intro music playing in my TV room—time to go get lost in one version of Holmes’s world for a while. It is a place where the answers are always found.



## The last installment of our vintage Sherlockian fun

*Editor’s Note: This is our last look at the creativity and craziness of our PFL. As he himself titled the “quiz” in the 1995-96 Beaten’s Christmas Annual, “The World’s Greatest Sherlock Holmes Quiz: Unmitigated Bleat.”*

In “*The Adventure of Wisteria Lodge*,” what was Don Murillo once called?

- (a) El Banyo de la Morte (The Bathroom of Death) of Eastbourne;
- (b) The Tiger of San Pedro;
- (c) The Bengal of Cincinnati;
- (d) The Wilhelm /Gottsreich Sigismund von Ortstein of Costa Rica

In “*The Adventure of the Sussex Vampire*,” what is the name of the law firm which recommended Robert Ferguson to Holmes?

- (a) Von Herling, Von Sax-Meinigen, and Van Kramm (“We’re number Von”)
- (b) Barclay, Clay, Carey, Lucas, Windibank,

Stark, Moran, Oldacre, Stapleton, Tregennis, Small, Roylott and Moriarty (“The Biggest Name in the Legal Profession”);

- (c) Morrison, Morrison, and Dodd;
- (d) Croker, Monro, and Black (“We’re Jacks of all Trades”)

In “*The Adventure of the Second Stain*,” who was the actual thief of the document?

- (a) Lady Hilda Trelawney Hope;
- (b) Chlotilde van Saxe-Maniac;
- (c) Lady Frances Car Fax-Modem;
- (d) the Countess of Motorcar (owner of the world-famous Simon N. Carbuncle).

What opera did Holmes have tickets for in *The*

*Hound of the Baskervilles*?

- (a) Less Miserables (This is the heart-rending story of Richard Pinball, a man who is pursued for ten years through the sewers of Baker Street by a determined though dense police inspector — Lestrade by name — for a crime he did not commit. Lestrade suspected that the composer, Watson N. Mycroft, was actually Holmes);
- (b) More Hugenots;
- (c) Les Hugenots;
- (d) El Banyo de la Morte von Die Gotterdamrung y Carmen Aida (This 20 hour visual feast includes the famous scene where Seigfried’s outhouse is trampled by a herd of elephants driven mad by Carmen’s aria “Yes We Have No El Banyos”).



## Things to see, buy, do and know

### From SOB Sheila Holtgrieve *Sherlock Holmes Mystery Dinner With The Stormy Petrels*

I received an interesting email recently concerning a very special event being put on by *The Stormy Petrels* of Vancouver. I think some SOBS might want to attend; what I received, in part:

The Sherlock Holmes Mystery Dinner  
When: Thursday September 17  
Where: The Crescent Beach Bistro in the delightful village of Crescent Beach, 12251 Beecher Street, South Surrey  
Cost: \$55.00 (includes the 3 course meal, tax, gratuity and the show)  
Time: Doors open 6:00 for greeting, seating, beverages, ordering from menu. Play starts 6:30 and lasts about 2 hours.

Tickets: Phone Linda at the Bistro as soon as possible to reserve your seats (and possibly discuss dietary considerations): 604-531-1882.

The food here is excellent and there will be a choice of entrees. The venue is cozy, interaction amongst tables is easy. For our pleasure the event creator, Trevor Jenkins, is writing up a new, special script based on Sherlock Holmes. However, no one needs any prior acquaintance with the stories in order to enjoy the fun. Invite your family and friends. There will be 4 actors. The play will include both scripted lines and participatory interaction with the audience. There will be a box of clues, some singing and playing of games, prizes and surprises! Edwardian costume is encouraged.

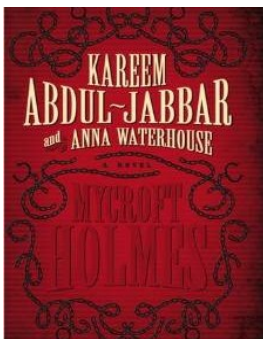
The Fine Print: Actors have to eat too, so the event will be staged only when the numbers are sufficient to pay them – we need about 30 attendees, commitments not maybes. So reserve seats early. When the numbers are in you will be asked for payment – about mid-August.

**Phone 604-531-1882 to reserve.**

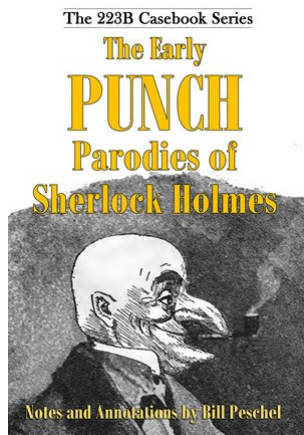
[Editor's Note: you can reach the Petrels via email: stormypetrels@gmail.com]

### From Peter Blau's *Scuttlebut from the Spermaceti Press*

MYCROFT HOLMES, by Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and Anna Waterhouse (New York: Titan Books, 2015; 323 pp., \$25.99), is set in 1870, when Mycroft, 23 years old, a secretary to the Secretary of State for War, and in love with a beautiful blonde, finds himself involved in a bizarre intrigue that takes him to the Caribbean, where he finds perilous adventure and an interesting assortment of friends and foes.



Bill Peschel's anthology THE EARLY PUNCH PARODIES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES (Hershey: Peschel Press, 2014; 281 pp., \$15.99) is the result of a wide-ranging search through a magazine that was full of Sherlockiana and Doyleana; the contents include not only parodies but also commentary, reviews, and a story by Conan Doyle himself, all annotated by the editor, who has included an amusing excerpt from the autobiography of Mark Twain: an account of Twain's encounter with Dr. Watson.



### From SOB Lauren Messenger *SOBS at Anglicon*

In the May and June issues of Ineffable Twaddle, SOB member Judy Lyen posted a call for panelists for the Anglicon convention. Since I already had a membership to the convention, as a Kickstarter backer, I volunteered to help on the Saturday and Sunday of the convention. (The other day—Friday, June 12—coincided with my commencement ceremony!)

SOB member Judy Lyen organized the three Sherlock Holmes panels, which included “Sherlock Holmes and the Media,” “Holmes: More Than You Wanted to Know,” and “Sherlock Now.” Topics covered ranged from Sherlock Holmes in movies, television, theater and radio, pastiches, the history of Sherlock Holmes fandom, local fan events and groups, and the most recent adaptations of Holmes on screen.

Judy moderated these panels superbly, and the conversation between her, myself, and other panelists, including Berlynn Wohl and Hats, was lively. The panels were very well-attended, and the amount of audience participation was thrilling! I was pleased to see both familiar and new faces amongst the audience, and hope that the panels will bring new members to local Sherlockian events. Some favorite moments included a discussion of female Watson figures in media—I was so pleased when a young member of the audience brought up Joanne Woodward's character in *They Might Be Giants!*—and the discussion of favorite pastiches. Judy and I had brought copies of some of our favorites, and I came away with many great recommendations from the audience and the panel members.

Judy was able to share information with the audience about the *Noble and Most Singular Order of the Blue Carbuncle*, Portland's Scion Society, and I was able to share information about the *Sound of the Baskervilles* and our events! We also held a raffle (as is only fitting!), and one lucky audience member received a copy of *The Best of the Sound of the Baskerville's 'Beaten's Christmas Annual'*.

Anglicon's successful relaunch means that a 2016 Convention has already been announced for August 5-7, 2016. I hope you are all looking forward to *Anglicon 2016: Bigger on the Inside* as much as I am!



## Creating *BRASS*: an interview with John Longenbaugh

[Editor's Note: SOB Airy Maher ("Carla Buttons" at The John H Watson Society) recently interviewed SOB John Longenbaugh about his new project, *BRASS*, for the JHWS web site. Their conversation is reproduced in part below for SOBs to enjoy.]

### To start us off, John, may you give us an idea of what *BRASS* is about?

*BRASS* is the story of a family of science geniuses living in a Victorian England that's significantly different from our own. Each member of the Brass family is extraordinary in a different way. Lord Brass is an inventor and master tactician, his wife a Sherlock-level detective, his daughter Gwendolyn a mistress of disguise, and his son Cyril a formidable martial artist. Due to changes in history, the 1885 that they inhabit is filled with all sorts of strange technology, including airships, Babbage engines (mechanical computers), aetherial batteries and other unlikely innovations. It's an adventurous and extremely optimistic world, and they are the chief agents of the Crown, leading them to be known as "The First Family of the Realm."

### In what ways do you feel this series shall strongly appeal to Watsonians?

...Every good Victorian adventure, I believe, needs a Great Detective, because no matter how much value you might place in your trusty service revolver ultimately you need more than pluck and derring-do to uncover your villain's plots. I thought it'd be fun to have a Sherlockian character who was not only a woman, but whose natural anti-social tendencies are balanced by an entire family of Watsons, as it were. Given the absence of her children and husband, Lady Madelyn Brass might indeed have become a "high functioning sociopath," and as it is her intellect often frightens her family. But her powers of ratiocination and deduction are channeled to complement the formidable yet different intellects around her. There's also the matter of a certain other "Great Detective," who Lady Brass never mentions by name but has been known to call a "hawk nosed poseur." I think it's fun to imagine the frustration of the various "rivals of Sherlock Holmes" in a London where due to the writings of John H. Watson there's one sleuth who has a supreme reputation.

### Can you tell us a bit about the cast and crew behind *BRASS*?

*BRASS* is being produced by Battleground Productions. My two co-producers are Kather-

ine Grant-Suttie and Ron Richardson, who like me wear many creative hats. Because they're also both actors and because I'm wily, they're also playing the parts of Gwendolyn and Lord Brass. The actors who fill out the parts of the Brass family are Kate Kraay as Lady Brass and Jeremy Adams as Cyril, both experienced Seattle actors who have already turned in great performances for the audio series. Other actors featured on the audio series include Phillip Keiman, Tadd Morgan, Nancy Frye, Margaret Bicknell and Matt Middleton. Seattle audiences who saw my play "Sherlock Holmes and the Case of the Christmas Carol" will be gleeful to hear that Terry Edward Moore, who played Sherlock in that play, is also featured in the cast of *BRASS*. *BRASS* is happening not only as an audio series, but on stage at Seattle's Theater Schmeater and as a short film that might evolve into a web series. This is partly because I love a good challenge (why not start your own franchise, right?) but also because I'm intrigued by the different ways that different mediums can be used to tell a story. Each of the mediums will also feature different but interlocking stories of the Family Brass. The audio series, for example, picks up just after they've returned to London following several years off in different parts of the Empire, and their battle against a shadowy organization of London crime bosses. The plays show us a couple of different "side quests" that the parents and children get up to, mysteries involving mysterious bodies falling from the sky, gurkhas and an ill-fated production of Oscar Wilde's first play. (These are being co-written with Seattle playwright Louis Broome.) And the film "The Lair of the Red Widow" tells of their encounter with a villainous white-slaver who may hold the key that finally uncovers their arch-nemesis.

### Is there a site where we can learn more about this series?

Yes! [Battlegroundproductions.org](http://Battlegroundproductions.org) is your place to find links (when we've got them posted) to listen to the audio series, updates on the stage show and details on our crowdsourcing campaign to film "Red Wid-

ow," among other things.

### Aside from the launch of *BRASS* itself, what other events for the series is planned for the near future?

I'll be appearing at Portland's Gear-Con Steampunk Convention on July 4th and 5th to read one of my original stories and also give a "BRASS Teaser," which will include a live reading from the scripts with Katherine Grant-Suttie and several local actors. *BRASS* also fits into several other works of fiction that I've been writing for the last few years, so you can expect to see several ancillary characters (such as Ponder Wright, the "Mechanical Detective") show up in other mediums.

### *BRASS* will branch out into different mediums, but the audio series will kick off the franchise. What made the idea of performing an audio drama so appealing to your creative team? What do you feel makes it unique to other mediums?

The audio series made sense for two reasons. The first is that thanks to the huge popularity of such non-fiction serial drama as "Serial" as well as new radio dramas like "We're Alive" and "Leviathan," there's a new interest in radio drama of various genres and forms. Podcasts and audio books are changing the way people listen to radio, and we've already had interest from both public radio stations and commercial radio stations for broadcast. And what's more, radio's a wonderful medium for being able to tell big stories with a modest budget, while drawing the listener into an intimate involvement.

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Find the full interview at [johnhwatsonociety.com](http://johnhwatsonociety.com)





The Sound  
of the  
Baskervilles

By appointment  
of Her Majesty,  
Queen Victoria

## Ineffable Twaddle

A monthly publication of  
The Sound of the Baskervilles  
A Scion Society of the Baker Street Irregulars since March 31, 1980  
Serving the Greater Puget Sound Region of Western Washington

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*The Sound of the Baskervilles is a scion society of the Baker Street Irregulars, serving the greater Puget Sound Region of Western Washington, U.S.A., and has met monthly since March 31, 1980.*

*\$20 per year brings Members the monthly newsletter "Ineffable Twaddle", a copy of Beaten's Christmas Annual, and the incalculable benefits of association with a group of certifiable Holmes aficionados.*

*Meetings are held the 3rd Sunday of each month. Location of the meetings may vary. Regularly scheduled additional events throughout the year include: "The Master's Dinner" celebrating the meeting of Holmes and Watson (March), "The Annual Wreath Throw" commemorating Holmes' loss at Reichenbach Falls (May), "The Dr. John H. Watson Picnic" (July), and "The Will Crakes Memorial Jollification" (December). Other activities—book crawls, teas, plays and gaming events—are as announced.*

*To join, send your check for dues—\$20 for individuals, \$30 for families (U.S. funds only)—to the address shown at left.*



### Save The Date

• **SUNDAY,**

**August 16**  
Regular Monthly Meeting  
1:30 to 4:30 p.m.  
Queen Anne Library, 400 West Garfield, Seattle

• **SUNDAY**

**September 20**  
Regular Monthly Meeting  
1:30 to 4:30 p.m.  
Queen Anne Library, 400 West Garfield, Seattle

• **SUNDAY**

**October 18**  
Regular Monthly Meeting  
1:30 to 4:30 p.m.  
Queen Anne Library, 400 West Garfield, Seattle

## Fetherston explains the restoration history of Gillette's *Sherlock Holmes*

Sonia Fetherston, BSI and SOB, and her stalwart companion John Watson—oops, husband Ben—were greeted with enthusiastic applause before and after her presentation at our July 19th club meeting. Sonia and Ben came from Vancouver, BC, after visiting *The Stormy Petrels*, a BSI scion, and presenting her fascinating talk on the William Gillette silent movie, *Sherlock Holmes*. As arranged by David and Terri, Sonia came to our scion with the same presentation. And there was cake!

SOB VP Kashena provided a lovely birthday cake, in honor of the 39<sup>th</sup> birthday of Benedict Cumberbatch, for the SOBs to enjoy during Sonia's fascinating presentation. Sonia began by reading several reviews from the time the movie was released which, interestingly, highlighted how the movie would ensure that Sherlock Holmes as played by Gillette would be carried to new audiences into the next century. "Did they have crystal balls by their typewriters?", Sonia commented.

Alas, disaster struck. The film was believed lost or destroyed by Sherlockian and film buffs just until this past year 2014. Sonia then described the finding of a negative of the film in an archive in France, remarkably well preserved. The archivist of this French repository realized the greatness of this find and called two well-known US film experts and restorers. These men got on the next flight to Paris. What ensued was months of detailed, painstaking



*Sonia Fetherston + birthday cake for Benedict = a sweet SOB meeting*

work to get the film, which was in pieces, back into order (without a film script which has not been found) and the defects corrected, including a very poor French translation on the intertitles. At that time, the find was announced to the Sherlockian and silent film worlds. The response was one of stunned and elated rejoicing.

The SOBs present to hear Sonia's presentation were: John Longenbaugh, Luran Stevens, Shannon Wallace, Airy Maher, Hank and Margie Deck, Al and Margaret Nelson, Paula Price, and Sheila Holtgrieve. Some of these SOBs went to the SIFF showing of the film in early June. The excellence and interest in Sonia's presentation elicited several questions and more discussion.

