

The Beacon Society

Minutes of Annual Meeting for Calendar Year 2023

8:00 PM EST January 2, 2024

- I. Head Light Robb Nunn called meeting to order at 8:01 PM EST.
- II. 2022 General Meeting Minutes available on the Beacon Society website were approved.

III. Committee Reports

A. Treasurer's report - Dick Kitts, Bursar

4th quarter report - 12-31-23 Balance \$45,758.99

Annual report 2023 – 12-31-22 Starting Balance \$51,275.10 (During COVID, donations kept coming in but no money going out, hence the surplus)

Income Donations General Fund 7,260.95

J. Senter Prize Fund 175.00

Amazon Smile credit 24.09

Pin Sale 10.00

Total Income \$7,470.04

Expense Jan Stauber Grants (13) 10,162.82

J. Senter Prizes (9) 2,000.00

J. Senter Plaques & Postage 451.56

Postage 206.33

Printing & Shipping 110.23

Bank fee - new checks 20.00

PayPal Fees 35.21

Total Expense \$12,986.15

12-31-23 balance \$45,758.99

B. Grants Committee – Cindy Brown

Financial Report for the Jan Stauber Grant-2023 (reported by Rob Nunn from Cindy's report in her absence). This year was a very successful year for the grant program. We awarded 14 grants, totally \$10,771. This amount was more than the allotted \$10,000 for grants each year, but because of the terrific response to the grant award program we received permission from the Beacon Society to increase the award amount for the year 2023. We have an additional 10 grant applications that have been put on hold until 2024, and more requests coming in, to date. The influx of grant applications was mainly due to the effort of one Sherlockian who made an announcement at the American Library Association meeting about the award availability. This effort shows what a huge difference a small effort can make when you have the proper avenue. Our grants covered areas from a virtual academy, to middle schools, and a Christmas House putting books in the hands of children who would otherwise not own a new book.

C. Awards Committee – Ann Andriacco

The Susan Diamond Award will be presented to Rusty Mason for his work introducing Sherlock Holmes to younger Sherlockians. The committee voted him as the winner. A certificate will be brought to New York for Rob Nunn to sign and make the presentation.

We had one entry for the new Nancy Springer Pastiche writing contest this year. It arrived before the December 15 deadline and was submitted by Emily Piatt, a former winner in the R. Joel Senter Writing Contest. Nancy Springer will send a letter of commendation to the winner. The entry was shared with readers.

We have added two new judges for the R. Joel Senter Contest: Ann Kimbrough and David MacGregor have graciously volunteered. From the Ohio Writing Project, we are limiting entries to 10 per class.

D. Communications Committee – Steve Mason

The committee focused on two main objectives during 2022: getting the word out about the various activities of the Beacon Society, including the Jan Stauber Grant, the Joel Senter Essay Contest, the Nancy Springer Writing Contest, the Fortescue Scholarship, the Sherlockian Spotlight Gazette for younger Sherlockians, and the Beacon Award, and the website, www.beaconsociety.com. For the first objective, approximately a dozen separate e-mailings concerning the Society were distributed. The mailout went to all members of the Society, as well as the email list of all Sherlockian Societies in the U.S. and Canada. In addition, the announcements were posted on our Facebook site, the Stranger's Room Facebook page, as well as our beaconsociety.com website. The website continued to be explored and used by hundreds of Sherlockians each week.

The Communication Committee continued to maintain the site, adding new information on a regular basis. The Facebook site is maintained by the Committee as another means to distribute meeting announcements, solicitations for submittals, and general information concerning the Society. The Committee continued posting weekly a set of puzzles based on the Canonical stories for the entertainment and enjoyment of Beacon Society members. This year we continued to add to one of our most productive pages, "The Comprehensive Look at the Stories" webpage, which includes over 20 elements for each of the 60 stories of the Canon, which Sherlockians, young and seasoned, can use as a reference source. With thanks to Deborah Clark, we were given permission to add the evidence boxes from Watson's Tin Box and Paul Churchill, which gives newer Sherlockians a visual reference to items mentioned in the stories. We continue to use the website, which gets 800 visits per month, as our primary source of information, backed up by our Facebook page. We are looking for people to submit articles for younger Sherlockians. The Communications Committee was able to compile the winning essays of the Joel Senter Essay Contest into a booklet that we published and sent to all essay winners for 2023. The booklet can be found on our website as a free .pdf. The Communications Committee continues to administer the Fortescue Scholarship. Over 50 Sherlockian students participated in the exam process this year, and 127 Sherlockians have completed all the required exams, reaching the level of ShD. In 2023, an optional Re-Certification exam was developed and administered for those wanting to continue the Fortescue experience. This was the 4th re-certification exam we have provided. In 2024, there will be two re-certification exams. In 2023, The Communications Committee issued 4 editions of the "Sherlock's Spotlight", a gazette for younger Sherlockians. The Program Committee is supporting the effort, which will be continued in 2024. The gazette, which is issued quarterly to over 700 recipients, contains Sherlockian articles, mysteries to solve, puzzles to unravel, and general information relevant to younger Sherlockians. The gazette is distributed to all scion societies, Beacon Society members, posted to our website and announced on our Facebook page.

E. Fundraising Committee – David McCallister

(Reported by Rob Nunn from David's report in David's absence) I do not have any formal report other than what is being shown on Richard's financial reports. The fund-raising aspect has been pretty much on hold except for the grateful reception of the donations from our regular donors. I am welcome to ideas for actually pushing this aspect forward in the next year.

F. Programming Committee – Derrick Belanger

The program committee concluded our work on the new creative writing contest this year and developed rubrics for the Nancy Springer writing contest. I am just starting to help out a librarian and theatre teacher at my school with the creation of a Sherlock Holmes improvised mystery dinner theatre. The program committee is looking for a new

project to take under our wing. If you know of any, please let me know, and I can spread the word to my team.

G. Junior Sherlockian Committee – Beth Gallego

We celebrated Our 6th Birthday - On August 9th, the 221st day of the year, the Junior Sherlockian Society celebrated its sixth birthday. The program continues to invite children and youth to complete Junior Sherlockian Training- an in-depth study of Sherlock Holmes's character traits, observational skills, capacity for critical thought, and inductive and deductive reasoning.

Website Move - The Junior Sherlockian Society website is now part of the Beacon Society website (with enormous thanks to the Mason team). JuniorSherlockian.com now takes visitors to www.beaconsociety.com/junior-sherlockian-society.html. The JSS page averages around 35 visits per month.

Personalized Certificates - Due to the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act, the Junior Sherlockian Society has avoided the collection of children's names, ages, birthdays, and addresses. (If collected, this data could pose significant liability issues for the Beacon Society.) A completion certificate was available to print from the site. These completion certificates can now be personalized with the Junior Sherlockian's name. The form under "JSS 'B' Recognized" can be completed by a parent/guardian, who will receive the certificate by email. Again, big thanks to Steve Mason, who sends out the certificates and found a way to accommodate a school group of 400 students!

Promoting the Junior Sherlockian Society (JSS) - Wooden promotional coins were distributed at several events during the summer: Lone Star Holmes (Dallas, TX) in May, the American Library Association Annual Conference (Chicago, IL) in June, and Holmes in the Heartland (St. Louis, MO) in July. Beth currently has fewer than 200 coins. 220 JSS stickers and cards were submitted for the 2024 BSI packets. Since the cards still reference the coins, Beth will be ordering new cards this year, as well as more stickers.

2024 Budget - JSS anticipates expenses in 2024 of approximately \$150 to replenish promotional materials.

Ideas are needed to promote the Junior Sherlockian Society.

IV. Old Business - none

V. New Business - none

VI. Closing Remarks – Made by Headlight Robb Nunn

Thank you to Carla Coupe, the former Head Light for all of your hard work Thanks to those who have made monetary and/or time commitments to the Beacon Society.

This is the 20th anniversary of the Beacon Society and Michael Kean will acknowledge this at the BSI weekend dinner. Library-related podcasts will begin to advertise the Beacon Society.

VII. Adjournment - 9:11 PM EST

Minutes submitted by Anna Behrens, Secretary Percy Phelps 1/9/24