

The Bilge Pump

Vol. 10, No. 03 - March, 2022

*The Irregular Publication of the Crew of the
Barque Lone Star - founded April, 1970*



PLEASE NOTE: **April 02, Meeting** NOTICE

We will be conducting our next monthly meeting virtually on April 03 at 1:00 pm CDT. I will send out the link for the meeting the week before the meeting. The story for the month is *The Hound of the Baskervilles* - Chapters 1-5.

Our Special Guest Speaker will be **Jerry Margolin**, "There's Art in the Collecting"

Bob Katz, BSI, will lead the discussion on the story (The first 5 chapters of) *The Hound of the Baskervilles*.



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For more information concerning our society, visit: <http://www.dfw-sherlock.org/>

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Who dunnit:



Third Mate
Helmsman
Spiritual Advisors

Secretary
Historian
Webmaster

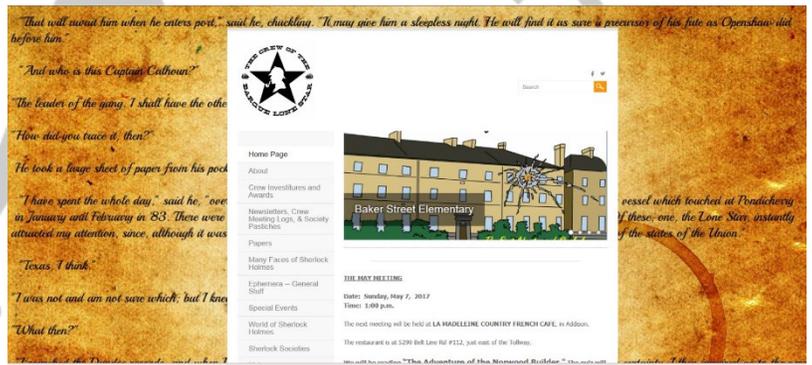
Steve Mason
Walter Pieper
Don Hobbs, BSI
Dr. Jim Webb, BSI
Cindy Brown
Pam Mason
Rusty Mason

mason.steve@epa.gov
waltpieper@att.net
221b@verizon.net
jimrwebb@ix.netcom.com

myrkrid08@yahoo.com

Our Website:

www.dfw-sherlock.org



Our Facebook Page:

<https://www.facebook.com/BarqueLoneStar/>

MARCH 06 SUMMARY

Cindy Brown

There were 68 in attendance at this ZOOM meeting.

The scion meeting was opened by **Beth Gallego** with a toast to "Reichenbach Falls" (see page 5).

Next, we had our first quiz on the story, "The Adventure of the Final Problem". There were several members who shared first prize with the most correct answers.

The next toast was then given by **Donny Zaldin, BSI, ASH, MBt**, and **Barbara Rusch, BSI, ASH, MBt** (who filled in at the last minute for **Nathan Hartley, BSI, MBt**), as a tribute to Michael F. Whelan, BSI. (see page 7).

We then proceeded to the lively story discussion led by our friend **Dr. Robert Katz, BSI, ASH**.

Our guest presenter for this month was **Tim Johnson, BSI**, who gave a very informative presentation on the value of collections and the need to filter what we collect. If material is not accumulated and archived for the future, it cannot be studied, and we have lost a part of our history.

Our Doyle presenter for the month was **Barbara Rusch, BSI, ASH, MBt**, who gave completed our 18-episode series on Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Barbara's discussion on the legacy of Conan Doyle was a perfect way for us to finish the discussions on ACD. Thanks so much for all those gave presentations in the past 18 months.

As always, thanks so much to Cindy Brown for keeping the notes of the meeting.

A TOAST TO THE REICHENBACH FALLS

Beth Gallego

Wanting to lay his detective to rest,
Weary of the source of
his worldwide fame
To the Reichenbach Falls
Sir Arthur came,
A beautiful place for a
final test.

And while I can't doubt
Sir Arthur knew best,
I find myself wondering
all the same,
Doesn't an off-screen
death match cheat the
game?
Might it already a return
suggest?



So I take myself to the scene to ask
Whyever would Sir Arthur
make this choice?
No witness, body,
evidence at all!

I shout my questions into
the crevasse
And in answer, I hear a
booming voice:
How should I know? I'm
just a waterfall!

Please raise your glass to
the Reichenbach Falls!.

TOAST TO THE MEMORY OF MICHAEL F. WHELAN

Donny Zaldin, BSI, ASH, MBt, Hartley Nathan, BSI, MBt, and Barbara Rusch, BSI, ASH, MBt

Bootmaker of Toronto, Chris Redmond, in his *"Sherlock Holmes Handbook,"* states that "Toasts are proposed chiefly to the health and memory of characters in the Canon."



My toast today is to the memory of Michel Whelan who passed away on October 25, 2021. He was "Wiggins," the head of the Baker Street Irregulars for 23 years. It is an honor for me to toast his memory today.

I first met Mike when I was serving as "Meyers" in 1974. He was living in Cleveland and came to Toronto to attend some of our Bootmaker meetings. In January 1975, I attended my first BSI dinner in New York and met up with Mike in *his* territory.

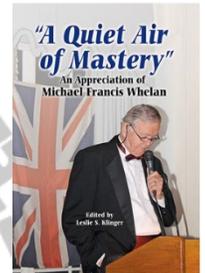
When I received my induction into the BSI in January 1980 from Julian Wolff as "The Penang Lawyer," Mike was on hand to congratulate me. When my wife, Marilyn was named "The Woman" in 2016, Mike presented her with that honor.

Mike's contributions are legion:

1. He turned the BSI Archival Series into the BSI Press, with over 60 volumes of scholarship, extending to the BSI Manuscript Series, BSI International Series, BSI Biography Series and BSI Professional Series, among others – to which, I am proud to say all of our presenters today: Steve Mason, Donny Zaldin, Bob Katz, Tim Johnson, Barbara Rusch and I have contributed;
2. Mike expanded the BSI Weekend in New York City to commemorate Sherlock Holmes's birthday in January each year;
3. He established the BSI Distinguished Speaker Lecture Series, held annually at the BSI Weekend; and
4. He created the BSI Trust to collect archival material relating to the BSI.

Wiggins is described by Watson in *A Study in Scarlet* as "an urchin, of no fixed abode," "leader of the Baker Street Irregulars," "the spokesman of the street arabs," "young Wiggins," and an "insignificant and unsavoury person."

Mike overcame these flaws in the Wiggins character. Here is what Michael Kean, the current "Wiggins" said in his tribute to Mike in the he BSI volume, *Quiet Air of Mystery*:



The Baker Street Irregulars has been fortunate to have had the kind of devoted leadership necessary first to survive, then to grow, and now to thrive. And it was Michael Whelan, the leader of the BSI for 23 years, who is responsible for our organization's emergence as the world's pre-eminent Sherlockian society.

TOAST

Let us raise a glass to the memory of Michael Whelan. He will truly be missed!

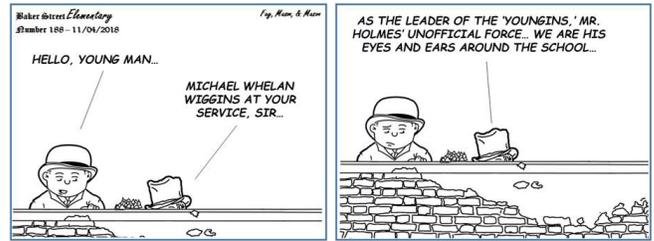
And I now turn to Donny Zaldin to detail the BSI-CBLS connection forged by Mike.

As Hartley stated in his tribute to Mike Whelan, over his 23 years at the helm, he grew the Baker Street Irregulars into an important and influential literary society – via its press and publishing, scholarly conferences, establishment of its archives at two prestigious American universities, and so much more. Mike's tenure as "Wiggins" was faithfully supported, shared and facilitated by his beloved and indispensable wife and partner, Mary Ann Bradley.



Mike extended BSI investitures to some local members of **The Crew of the Barque Lone Star**, including Don Hobbs in 2012, Daniel Moss in 2013, Dean Clark in 2018, and Jim Webb in 2020; in addition to several remote members of the society over the years.

When approached for his permission to be depicted in the humorous comic strip, "Baker Street Elementary," by creator Joe Fay, editor Steve Mason and artist Rusty Mason, Mike hesitantly but graciously accepted, and appeared in two strips, in November 2017 and September 2019 as the "Wiggins" of the Young'uns – to the amusement of Sherlockian readers and both Mike and Mary Ann.



**The Crew of the
Barque Lone Star
Society is producing
our 6th book as part of
our 51st Anniversary**



For 2022, we will be putting a together entitled *The Canon: The Rest of the Story*

Members may submit an essay or pastiche which “continues” or “fills in the blanks” of one of the 60 stories. In other words, what happened after Watson stopped writing, or were items to the story that Watson accidentally or deliberately left out.

- **Your pastiche / essay should be 3,000-5,000 words. Obviously, a shorter piece is fine.**
- **Your pastiche / essay will be edited by one or two editors, but only for grammar, typos, etc... we will not edit the content of your piece.**
- **This project is not limited to those members in the DFW area. Any member is welcome to submit a piece.**
- **We plan to finalize the compilation by the end of the calendar year, so we ask members to submit their entry by August 31.**
- **As in previous years, all submitters will receive a complimentary copy of the book as our thanks.**



THE EDITOR'S DESK: THE JOY OF SECOND CHANCES

Barbara Roden, BSI, MBt

[The Ashcroft -Cache Creek Journal](#), March 9, 2022

The sounds of spring are in the air: the dawn chorus of birds outside the window, the buzz of branch trimming as gardeners begin their clean-up, the hum of the street sweeper as it picks up the astounding amount of grit on the roads. It's a time of rebirth, of shaking out the cobwebs, of getting back to things that have been put aside over the last few months.

Or years, in my case. I was asked, way back in January, if I would be interested in taking part in an online Sherlock Holmes conference, and making a presentation on a subject of my choice. I was rather surprised to be asked, as I haven't done anything meaningful in the Sherlockian line for more than a decade, and thought that world had moved on without me as other things occupied my time and attention.

My first inclination was to graciously but regretfully decline: I'm woefully out of touch with current Sherlockian scholarship (yes, this is a real thing). I had also never done a Zoom presentation with accompanying PowerPoint, and didn't immediately feel that this was water I wanted to wade into.

However, as I thought about it I felt the tug of a much-loved hobby too long put aside, so agreed to take part.

I was then faced with the not-inconsiderable matter of what on Earth to talk about. I wanted to keep it light, and fun, and do something that loaned itself to

a PowerPoint, so finally settled on a look at the character of Dr. Watson, specifically as played by dear old Nigel Bruce in a series of films (with Basil Rathbone as Holmes) between 1939 and 1946. They were the first Holmes films I ever saw, back when I was not yet in my teens, and while Bruce's blustery

old buffer of a Watson isn't to the taste of present-day audiences, I wanted to have a go at perhaps rehabilitating him a bit.

This led to re-watching several of those old films, which was a delight in itself, in order to find some clips to use in my PowerPoint. My son

trimmed them down to the correct snippets for me, and helped assemble everything into a package, and a few days before the big event the presenters got together virtually for a trial run.

I had forgotten how purely fun it is to be with a group of Sherlockians, and we stayed chatting for long after the test was done. Everything went well on the day, and my presentation was received with kind words and thanks. I thought that would be the end of it, but in the three weeks since I've been asked if I'd care to do another presentation — this time on the films of Basil Rathbone, focusing on his time as the great detective — and have also been invited to write an article for a new book of Sherlockian scholarship (I told you that was a real thing).

It made me realize how important it is to hang on to things we enjoy. That isn't always possible — life has



a habit of getting in the way — but I got another chance with that wonderful world where, as the great Sherlockian Vincent Starrett wrote, it is always 1895.

Having dipped my toe back in the world of Sherlock Holmes, I'm hoping that it won't be too much longer

It's not the first time I've had a second chance: exactly 10 years ago I saw a poster inviting people to audition for roles in an upcoming Winding Rivers Arts & Performance Society play, *Swamp Pirate Zombies*. I remembered how much I had enjoyed acting in high school, and on a whim decided to audition, and ... well, the rest, as they say, is history.



before WRAPS is able to start moving ahead with another play. It's been two long years since the last one, and I know a lot of us are itching to get back on (or behind) the stage. In the meantime, I appear to have another PowerPoint presentation to prepare and an article to write. Come, Watson; the game is afoot!



BARQUETTE LONE STAR

TAKE YOUR BREATH AWAY

Liese Sherwood-Fabre, PhD, Lone Star Deck-Mate

In “The Adventure of the Sussex Vampire,” Sherlock Holmes determined a mother, the accused vampire, was actually sucking a toxin from her child’s neck. The boy had been wounded with a poisoned (most likely curare) arrow. His half-brother had stolen the weapon from their father’s collection of South American artifacts. Curare had a long history in the Americas, and knowledge of the poison traveled back to Europe almost from its discovery. Its secrets, however, took centuries to uncover, and its medical uses appeared only within the last one hundred years.



European explorers learned of indigenous use of curare soon after discovering the New World. Warriors attacked Christopher Columbus’ crew during a land excursion, and two died very quickly after what appeared to be minor arrow wounds. A brown paste was found on the tips, indicating the weapons carried poison.

Conflicts between the English, Spanish, and Portuguese, however, limited additional examinations of the substance until the 1700s when samples were brought to Europe and used in various experiments, including one that found using a bellows to inflate the lungs kept the victim alive until the toxin dissipated. (5)

Curare, or *Chondrodendron tomentosum*, is a woody vine that grows in the South American jungles. In addition to the primary metabolites produced to make the plant grow, it also creates secondary metabolites, the alkaloid D-tubocurarine, that serves as a defense mechanism. D-tubocurarine is a neurotoxin that causes paralysis when it enters the bloodstream. (1)

At the end of the 18th century, Alexander von Humboldt spent five years in South America and studied curare preparation with an indigenous healer. Among the wisdom learned was that curare had no effect when ingested, only becoming effective when it penetrated the skin. (6)

The paralysis occurs from an interference with the contraction of the muscle cells, beginning with extremities such as the toes, ears, and eyes with a progression to the neck and limbs, and finally, those controlling respiration. Without intervention, death will occur. (2)



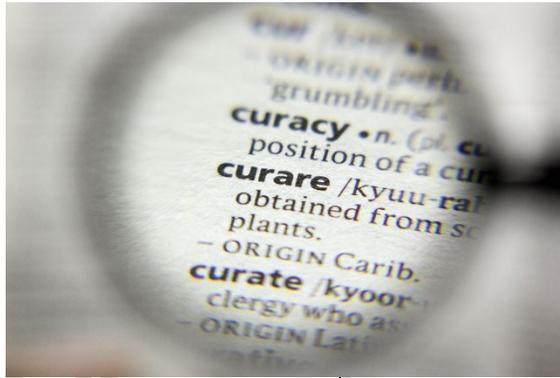
The rate of fatality depends upon the size of the animal. Birds perish within one to two minutes, small mammals up to ten minutes, and large mammals up to 20 minutes. (3)

As a result curare could be handled without incident if the skin was unbroken. The meat of poisoned animals could even be eaten without harm. Additionally, paralysis could be avoided if the poison was sucked from the wound. The one removing the toxin, however, needed to be free of sores or cuts in the mouth to avoid their own paralysis. (7)

All the while, the victim is conscious and feeling all that is occurring, but unable to move. (4)

Experimentation into the uses of curare continued into the 19th and 20th centuries. Of particular note was Richard Gill who brought back 25 pounds of curare and botanical samples in the hopes of finding a cure for his own infirmity (possibly multiple sclerosis).

He provided them to E.R. Squib and Sons for research. While never finding the answer to Gill's medical issues, researchers did identify its usefulness as a muscle relaxant during surgery. In WWII, a combination of a curare derivative and anesthesia were found to facilitate operations. (8)



and how those indigenous to the area sucked the toxin from a victim to save their life. As Holmes noted, this wife imitated yet another woman of Spanish descent.

Queen Eleanor sucked venom from the arm of Edward I when he was wounded with a poisoned knife. In the case of Mrs. Ferguson, Holmes' recognized both her knowledge and courage.

As a native of South America, Mrs. Ferguson—the Sussex Vampire—would have been familiar with curare

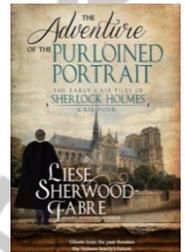
She preferred to put herself in jeopardy not only by drawing out the poison from her son, but also accepting the title of “vampire” rather than upset her husband by exposing the true culprit—the older brother.

- 1) <https://sites.evergreen.edu/plantchemeco/curare-a-cure-all-kill-all-plant/>
- 2) <https://www.britannica.com/science/curare>
- 3) http://web.pdx.edu/~fischerw/proj_pub/humboldt_project/docs/0101-0125/0123c_Gibson_curare.pdf
- 4) Lawrence Altman, *Who Goes First?* Berkeley: University of California Press. 1986, page 75.
- 5) Thandia Ragnavendra, "Neuromuscular blocking drugs: discovery and development," *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, 95: July 2002, page 363.
- 6) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4237325/#pone.0112026-Gomsu1>
- 7) Lawrence Altman, *Who Goes First?* Berkeley: University of California Press. 1986, page 75.
- 8) Ragnavendra, page 364.

Liese Sherwood-Fabre is pleased to announce that Case Four of The Early Case Files of Sherlock Holmes is now available for order from these booksellers, here:

<https://books2read.com/u/mZZjzD>.

In *The Adventure of the Purloined Portrait*, the Holmes family travels to Paris where ghosts from Violette's past threaten the family's future.



LITOTES IN THE CANON

Karen Murdock, ASH – 2009

Published in *The Serpentine Muse*, Volume 26, number 1, Winter 2009

Litotes is not an uncommon figure of speech; in fact, many people use it without knowing they are doing so. A speaker who says, “He’s no rocket scientist” or “That’s not a bad idea” or “It was no big deal” is using the figure of litotes. Litotes (pronounced “lie TOE tees” or “lie TOE tiz,” according to most dictionaries, though some put the emphasis on the first syllable) is a form of rhetorical understatement in which something is affirmed by stating the negative of its opposite. When Paul (Acts 21:39) says

I am a Jew, of Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city

he means, in fact, that he is a citizen of a distinguished city indeed. “No mean city” is an example of litotes—Paul is bragging about his city but doing so in a seemingly modest manner.

Litotes is common in the Bible, in both the Old and New Testaments, especially in the King James and Revised Standard translations.

Out of them shall come songs of thanksgiving
and the voices of those who make merry
I will multiply them, and they shall not be few
I will make them honored, and they shall not be small.

(Jeremiah 30:19)

And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, art not
the least among the princes of Judah;
for out of thee shall come a Governor that shall
rule my people Israel.

(Matthew 2: 6)

so shall my word be that goes forth from my
mouth;
it shall not return to me empty,
but it shall accomplish that which I purpose,
and prosper in the thing for which I sent it.

(Isaiah 55: 11)

For consider your call, brethren; not many of you
were wise according
to worldly standards, not many were powerful,
not many were of noble
birth

(1 Corinthians 1:26)

Litotes is found commonly in English literature.
Understatement seems typically English.

You all did love him once, not without cause
(William Shakespeare, “Julius Caesar,” Act
3, sc. 2)

Sidonian virgins paid their vows and songs
In Sion also not unsung
(John Milton, “Paradise Lost,” 1, 441-2)

Not seldom from the uproar I retired
Into a silent bay
(William Wordsworth, “The Prelude,”
Book 1, ll. 47-48)

We are not amused.
(attributed to Queen Victoria)

Figures of classical rhetoric are very common in the Sherlock Holmes stories. Figures of repetition include repetition of letters, syllables, sounds (alliteration, the repetition of initial sounds, is the most common figure in the Canon, usually occurring at least once per page) and words. Similes and metaphors (two of the only figures of speech modern students are asked to learn in school) are also common in the Canon.

Litotes is not uncommon. I have found no fewer than 359 examples of it so far in the Canon, or about one example every three pages. Rhetorically speaking, the opposite of litotes is hyperbole— exaggeration or overstatement. Litotes is common in the Canon, but hyperbole is very rare. So far, in combing through the Canon, I have found only five examples of hyperbole.

Litotes, stating the negative of the opposite, often takes the form of the “not un-” construction, as in these Canonical examples:

“it is not unfair to suppose that for some reason the treaty has not reached them”(NAVA)

“Well, that is not unknown among stepmothers.” (SUSS)

His face in repose was not an unpleasing one (SIGN)

“Leprosy is not uncommon in South Africa.” (BLAN)

“you shall not find me ungrateful” (BERY)

However, any construction in which a negation is used to express a positive attribute can be called litotes:

I had not come upon a false scent (HOUN)

“my suspicions, which had never been entirely absent, rose instantly to a certainty” (PRIO)

Audley Court was not an attractive locality (STUD)

“They were not too sweet upon Mr. McPherson.” (LION)

Male costume is nothing new to me (SCAN)

“It won’t be entirely unexpected.” (3GAR)

But our client seemed by no means eager to start (RETI)

It was no very unusual thing for Mr. Lestrade, of Scotland Yard, to look in upon us of an evening (SIXN)

Collecting all the examples of litotes in the Canon has been no easy matter. But, having collected them, putting together a litotes quiz is a snap! Here are a dozen examples of litotes in the Sherlockian Canon. See if you can name the stories in which these lines appear:

QUIZ: LITOTES IN THE CANON

1. “It happens not infrequently that I am sent for at strange hours”
2. it was no common vintage which the murderers had enjoyed.

3. my companion’s reputation as a miser was not undeserved
4. “I think, Watson, a brandy and soda would do him no harm”
5. In shape and size it was not unlike a cigarette-case.
6. I glared at the intrusive vicar with no very friendly eyes
7. “Your pictures are not unlike you”
8. “Powdered opium is by no means tasteless. The flavour is not disagreeable, but it is perceptible.”
9. “A burly Sussex policeman and I had found it no light job.”
10. “The attack may not have been entirely unexpected.”
11. “something nutritious at Simpson’s would not be out of place.”
12. “A death which has caused my brother to alter his habits can be no ordinary one.”

KEY TO LITOTES QUIZ

(page numbers from Doubleday Canon)

- | | | | |
|---------|----------|----------|----------|
| 1. GREE | 2. ABBE | 3. RETI | 4. WIST |
| 5. SIGN | 6. DEVI | 7. 3GAR | 8. SILV |
| 9. MUSG | 10. VALL | 11. DYIN | 12. BRUC |

Baker Street Elementary

Created by: Joe Fay, Rusty & Steve Mason



Baker Street Elementary
Number 386 – 03/13/2022

Fay, Mason & Mason

WHAT DID YOU DO AT YOUR PARENT'S
HOUSE THIS WEEKEND ?

I TRIED A NEW MIND TRICK ON
THEM...



THE FIRST ADVENTURES OF HOLMES AND WATSON

WHAT DID YOU DO ?

MY MOTHER WOULD NOT
LET ME PLAY OUTSIDE
UNTIL I CLEANED MY
ROOM...



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SUCH TORTURE !!

IT TOOK ME ALL
WEEKEND, SO I NEVER
WAS ABLE TO GO
OUTSIDE...



I TOLD MY PARENTS THAT THOUGH I WAS DEPRIVED OF ONE OF THE BASIC RIGHTS OF A CHILD, THE IMPORTANT THING WAS THEY WERE HAPPY...



MOM RESPONDED, 'OF COURSE WE ARE HAPPY. WE WANTED YOUR ROOM CLEAN, WHICH IT NOW IS.'



OBVIOUSLY MY 'GUILT TRIP' TECHNIQUE NEEDS SOME IMPROVEMENT...

ACTUALLY, MOMS INVENTED THE TECHNIQUE... YOU WERE UP AGAINST A MASTER...

