



# Plugs & Dottles

Official Newsletter of the Nashville Scholars  
of the Three Pipe Problem  
1st Quarter - 2023  
Jim Hawkins & Dean Richardson, Co-editors

- Established 1979
- Meetings on 3rd Saturday of the month
- [Website](#)
- [Facebook page](#)

Jim Hawkins will be one of the conference speakers in Dayton, OH, at the “Holmes, Doyle, and Friends Conference,” March 24–25. He will be speaking on the life of John Bennett Shaw with information drawn from the website built for Shaw in 2018.

[Please visit the site.](#)

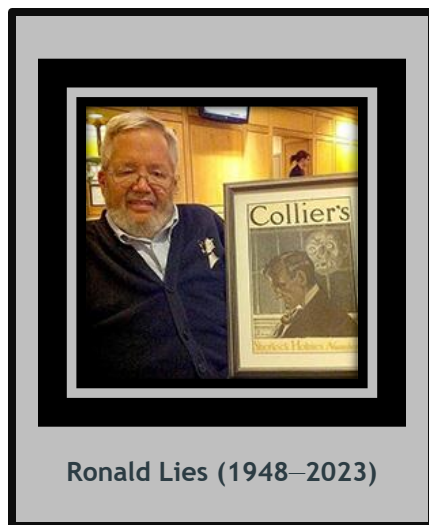
## A Report on the BSI Weekend, January 2023



**The Baker Street Irregulars** met at the Yale Club in New York City to celebrate the 169th birthday of Sherlock Holmes. Attendance at the dinner on January 7th was up from last year. One hundred eighty members were present to hear “Wiggins” Michael Kean preside over the evening’s festivities. One of the standout presenters was Daniel Stashower, who appeared in handcuffs and miraculously escaped from them at the end of his presentation. **Bill Mason** and **Jim Hawkins** represented the Nashville Scholars at the dinner, along with former Nashvillian **Marino Alvarez**.

On Thursday evening we joined Marino and his wife **Victoria Risko Alvarez** for dinner at one of New York’s top Italian restaurants, Bocca di Bacco. Since moving to Florida, Marino and Vicki have begun a new scion society, the **1895 Shillings**.

**David Marcum**, a Nashville Scholar who lives in Maryville, TN, was presented with an award for his excellent story, “The Unintended Offenses,” published in *Steel True, Blade Straight*, the 2022 Annual of *The Belanger Books Journal of Sherlock Holmes and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle Inspired Stories, Poems, and Scholarship*.



Ronald Lies (1948–2023)

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**December 2022 Meeting**  
**A Party at the Home of Dave Price**  
**and a Tour of His “Price-less” Sherlockian Treasures**

The Nashville Scholars rarely meet in December, but when they do, it is always a very special occasion. The meeting at Dave Price’s home this past December 18 was extra special. Dave is a charter member of the Nashville Scholars. After an extended absence, he rejoined the scion and makes all of the meetings at our regular meeting place, Corky’s BBQ in Brentwood.



He and his wife Mary Jane were associated with local circuses in America for many years. (Mary Jane passed away here in Nashville in 2011.) Dave has amassed an enormous collection of circus posters and other ephemera. In addition to his circus treasures, he also has a valuable collection of Sherlock Holmes memorabilia. He opened his home and museum to our Scholars for this Christmas meeting.



Here is our group photo at the Christmas meeting with the Scholars gathered around Dave and all of us surrounded by years of memorabilia from circus life and Sherlock Holmes.

Dave enjoys opening the mail each day. On the day we were there he received a beautiful reprint of a page from the *Philadelphia Public Ledger*

announcing William Gillette’s farewell performances of Sherlock Holmes at the Broad Street Theater. The famous actor began a revival tour of “Sherlock Holmes” at the theater on

January 8, 1923. Six years later he began a “farewell tour” of “Sherlock Holmes” running through May 12, 1930.



*“I have had many jobs in life and traveled far and wide, mostly with circuses and magic shows. By the time I was twenty-three, I had played all the lower forty-eight. Have played all the Canadian provinces save British Columbia and Newfoundland.*

*“I attended my first Nashville Scholars meeting in 1979. Like*

*many others, I read Ken Beck's piece in the January 4, 1979, Tennessean, and I called John Shanks about joining. He told me Hap Cavett (who lived near me) had also expressed an interest and suggested we come together. We missed the first meeting but made the second one at the Showboat Lounge in Madison.”*

←—————→

**We mourn the loss of Ronald Lies on January 16, 2023, a Nashville Scholar and a member of Doctor Watson’s Neglected Patients scion society in Denver.**

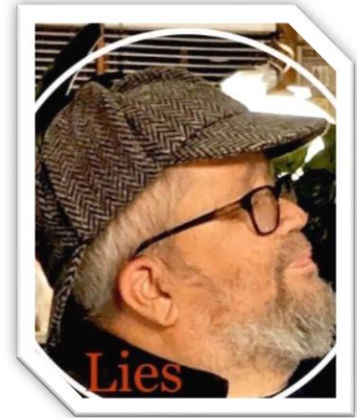
**[The official obituary for Ronald E. Lies](#)**

**Ron Lies** (pronounced Leez) and I met online in WelcomeHolmes, the Nashville Scholars discussion group, in 2003. There we discovered that we both had been visitors at the home of John Bennett Shaw in Santa Fe during the 1980s but had never met. When I had overnights on my trips with Southwest Airlines beginning in 2005, Ron and his wife Mary would come to our crew hotel where I would treat them to dinner, on the crew-reduced rate, of course. Our

conversations always were about **John Bennett Shaw**, our Sherlockian mentor and friend, and the wonderful visits we had with him and his wife Dorothy at their home in Santa Fe.

Ron and I decided to do something extraordinary to keep the memory of Mr. Shaw alive. Over several Denver dinners, we decided the best way to do that was with a Facebook page, just as we keep the memory green of Sherlock Holmes. We sketched out some plans, but it was going to be a long way down the road before those ideas became a reality.

In 2017 Jim retired from Southwest Airlines and began working on the plan that finally came to be our tribute to John Bennett Shaw — **The Friends of John Bennett Shaw** Facebook page. It had been almost twenty-five years since Shaw’s death from a massive heart attack on October 3, 1994. Once the Facebook page was active, several of Shaw’s friends wrote to me saying, “We don’t do Facebook, Hawkins. Build a website we can enjoy!” So, I did!



Ron Lies, Nashville  
Scholar member.

Ron shared many of his memories with me for the website. The story I liked the most was about the weekend he attended one of the *Brothers 3 of Moriarty* shooting matches outside Santa Fe. (The B3M was John Shaw’s scion society he began in 1971.)



holes in it.

A target that had a likeness of Col. Sebastian Moran on it was set inside a metal frame with a metal plate behind it. Each person took a turn shooting at the target. Then the target would be retrieved to see how many bullet holes were near the center. Ron’s eyesight was poor, and he dreaded his turn, knowing he would probably miss the target altogether. Sure enough, after he fired his five shots, the target had no

The other shooters were giving Ron a hard time until Shaw stepped in and said, “You guys don’t know a collector when you see one. Ron Lies purposely missed the target so he could take a clean target home as a souvenir of the weekend.” The ribbing stopped immediately. As Ron and John walked to the house, our Sherlockian mentor winked at Ron, and all was well. Nothing had gone awry, as Vincent Starrett says in his poem, “221B.”

—Jim Hawkins (February 10, 2023)

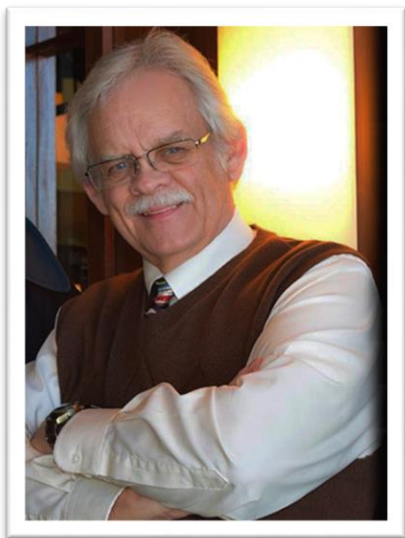


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## News about the BSI Journal Christmas Annual for 2023

At the BSI dinner on January 7, **Michael Kean** surprised us all with a shocking announcement. After twenty-three years, **Steven Rothman**, editor of the *Baker Street Journal*, was moving to the position of Editor Emeritus, making way for the new editor, **Dan Andriacco**. Dan and his wife Ann have attended a Nashville Scholars meeting here at our Brentwood restaurant, Corky's BBQ.

Another surprise came when both Rothman and Andriacco asked *me* to produce the *Baker Street Journal Christmas Annual* for 2023. The issue will be completely devoted to John Bennett Shaw. I was chosen for the work I've done on the John Bennett Shaw website. He has been my sole project for the past four years. In the December 1990 issue of the *Baker Street Journal*, Shaw was the topic of the publication. Close friends came together to honor him with praise and stories. John was not in good health, so the idea of writing about him while he was still with us appealed to many. Supposedly, that December journal, edited by Philip Shreffler, was kept as a surprise until it was published.



Jim Hawkins

The new annual, coming thirty-three years after the 1990 issue, will in no way repeat the stories in that edition. Only two of the writers in that first "Shaw Journal" are writing again for the 2023 edition: **Peter Blau** and **Evelyn Herzog**. They were intimate friends of Shaw's and were as close to him as anyone I know.

Other writers on the team are as amazing as Blau and Herzog. **Patrick Shaw**, John's son, and Patrick's wife, **Georgia Shaw**, will write about the John Shaw they knew as father and father-in-law. **Tim Johnson**, curator for The Sherlock Holmes Collections at the University of Minnesota where Shaw's collection is held, will share stories about John's incredible treasures. **Jeff Decker**, one of Shaw's favorite artists, will give us insight into working with "The Sage of Santa Fe." Sherlockian writers **Ray Betzner**, a Morley-Montgomery award winner, and **Steven Doyle**, publisher of the *Baker Street Journal*, came under the spell of John Bennett Shaw as very young men when they attended different Sherlock Holmes Symposiums. **Doyle** was a shy 16-year-old when he sat on the back row of seats at Shaw's first workshop, the 1977 Notre Dame game-changing symposium. **Betzner** met John at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh in 1980. That event was also the first Shaw Symposium "Evy" Herzog was able to attend. It will be a challenge and a delight to weave the stories these people will share into an exciting Christmas Annual for 2023.

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## On the horizon

As we get further and further from the fear of gathering in groups, realizing that even though Covid and other mutations could rear their ugly heads again, our Sherlockian world seems to be coming back to normal. Two significant symposiums are on the calendar in the near future.

### **Holmes, Doyle & Friends, March 24 & 25, Dayton, OH**

Billed as “An annual symposium on Sherlock Holmes and his world presented by the Agra Treasurers of Dayton, OH,” this event has been meeting for many years. Several Nashville Scholars have made the trek to Dayton in previous years. The actual meeting place this year is The Airport Clarion Inn near Dayton.

An excellent line-up of presenters will inform and entertain the gathered faithful.

Guest speakers include:

**Johanna Draper Carlson** – The Sherlockian Visual Canon: Key Sherlock Holmes Comics

**Denny Dobry, BSI** – The Penang Lawyer and the Movies

**Terence Faherty, BSI** - The Top Ten Reasons to Love the Universal Sherlock Holmes

**Jim Hawkins, BSI** – John Bennett Shaw: At the Heart of Holmes

**Ann Kimbrough** – Daring to Adapt Sherlock

**Marc Lehmann** – The Adventure of Cards in Glass

**David MacGregor** – So You Want to Write a Sherlock Holmes Play?

**Lynne Stephens** – Dining Out with Sherlock Holmes

Details and registration are located here: [Holmes, Doyle, & Friends](#)

**Dan Andriacco** is posting a brief story about each presenter on his blog, [Baker Street Beat](#).

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The best place to learn more about the **Nashville Scholars of the Three Pipe Problem** is here:

[The Nashville Scholars Website](#)

Read about our forty-four-year history; our members, and their accomplishments; our written words, in essays or books; our fun times, and the sadness we have experienced when members pass ‘beyond the Reichenbach’; and the future of our society as young students become Sherlockians and begin to develop into young adults doing their part to ‘keep green the memory of Sherlock Holmes.’

**Lone Star Holmes**  
(A look at Sherlock Holmes past, present & future)  
Southern Methodist University, Dallas, TX  
May 26 -27, 2023



**Another major event!**

**May 26–27, 2023**

**The Crew**, with SMU University, DeGolyer Library (in the Fondren Library), is co-hosting this conference to highlight the amazing foreign language collection of one of our most esteemed members, **Don Hobbs, BSI**.

Guest speakers include Peter Blau, Barbara Rusch, Rob Nunn, Russell Merritt, Glen Miranker, Tim Johnson, and Marino Alvarez. [Details about each of these impressive presenters are here.](#)

[Please visit the home page for this event.](#)

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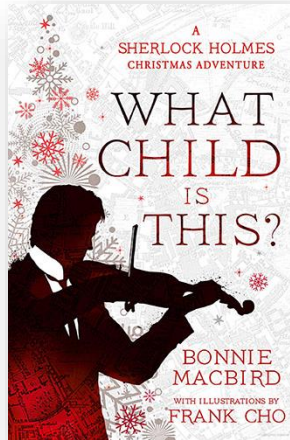
**A Review of Bonnie MacBird’s “What Child Is This?”  
by Shinwell Johnson**

First, a few caveats. I’m not particularly interested in Sherlockian pastiches. I feel they have become a cottage industry for some publishers who will take anything that includes any of the characters, regardless of the given author’s abilities. I’m not opposed to anyone playing the game. I’m just not interested in being a spectator, especially a paying one. I am more drawn to writings about the writings.

That said, I do make exceptions. I have found Nicholas Meyer to be a reliable writer who not only tells a good story and captures the spirit of the canon but also creates a convincing background and well integrates historical events and people into the proceedings. I may make an exception for **Bonnie MacBird** as well. This is her fifth Sherlockian pastiche. I have not read the first four, but on the strength of this one, I’m inclined to check them out.

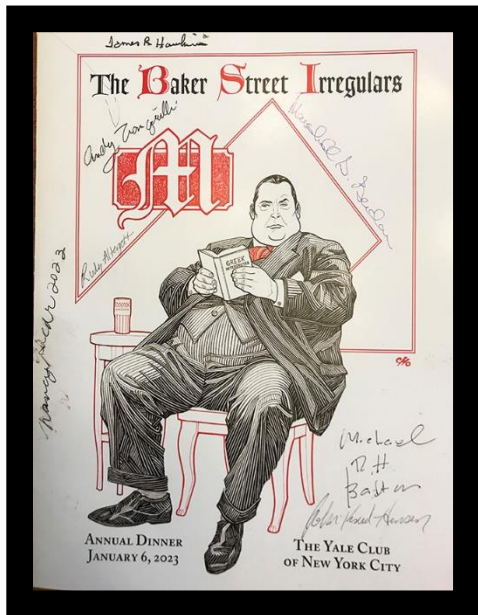
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As you might suspect from the title, this story has a Christmas setting. Holmes is involved in two cases that fit the title (although “What Children Are These?” doesn’t have the same ring) but are otherwise unrelated. In one case, he is hired to locate a missing young adult son. In the other, he happens on and foils an attempted kidnapping and becomes involved with the family. The two are interwoven skillfully by MacBird, with several surprises and a heartwarming conclusion



appropriate to the season. While the pacing is rather leisurely, she is so good at evoking both Victorian England and Conan Doyle’s style that she held my interest throughout. I’ll leave it for others to debate the credibility of certain attitudes and reactions to some of the revelations that seem anachronistic or at least different than ACDs. There are a number of nice spot illustrations in pen and ink by comic book artist **Frank Cho** that enhance the proceedings and make this a nice Christmas gift item for the Sherlockians on your list.

[Editor Hawkins notes: Frank Cho also did the artwork for the BSI Dinner programs for the past two years.]

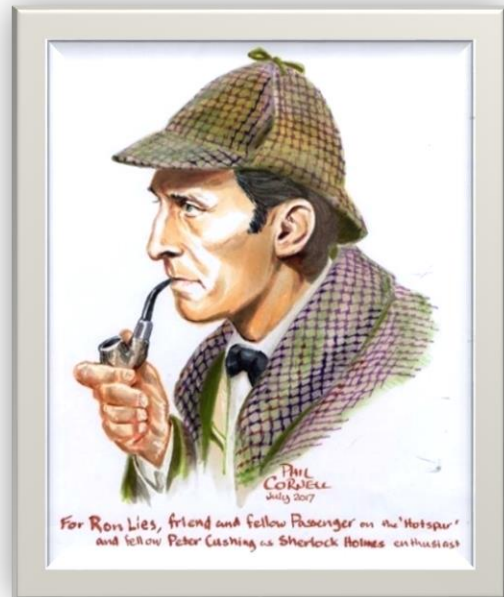


Frank Cho, the artist Bonnie MacBird is so impressed with and with whom she chooses to bring her book covers to life, is obviously a genius. For the past two years, he has been the artist to create the BSI Dinner programs. Here is this year’s program, both front and back covers.





Ron Lies, who now lies in peace, loved Peter Cushing as Sherlock Holmes. Our friend, Australian artist Phil Cornell, created this masterpiece of Cushing just for Ron. We placed it in this *Plugs and Dottles* newsletter in Ron's honor. The inscription reads, "Phil Cornell 2017. For Ron Lies, friend and fellow passenger on the 'Hotspur' and fellow Peter Cushing as Sherlock Holmes enthusiast."



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## HOLMES, DOYLE, FRIENDS: *Eight*

March 24 & 25, 2023

Clarion Airport Inn  
10 Rockridge Road  
DAYTON, OHIO

It's an easy drive to Dayton. You should consider going to this event.  
Click on the poster to go to the registration page.

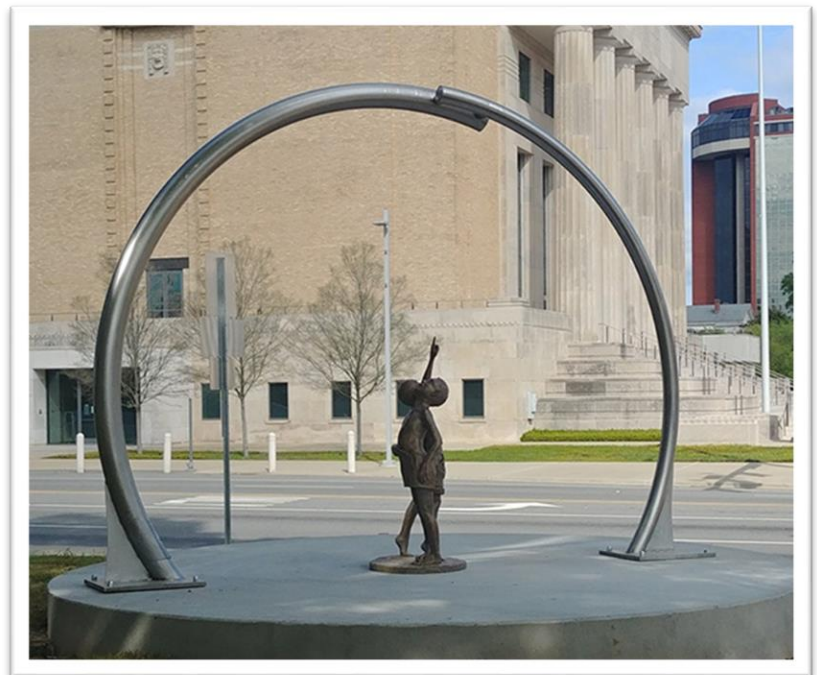
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Our newest Nashville Scholar is Theresa Dyer, a terrific artist and sculptor. I asked her if she would introduce herself by sharing some images of her work. She agreed to do that, and you will be impressed. She has a beautiful piece in front of Congregation Micah in Brentwood titled Children of the Shoah. The other image we are sharing in this newsletter stands at the City Hall in Little Rock, Arkansas. We will have more about Theresa in our Second Quarter *Plugs and Dottles* newsletter.



Children of the Shoah  
Congregation Micah in  
Brentwood, TN.  
Sculptor, Theresa Dyer

Little Rock Project  
City Hall in Little Rock, AR  
Sculptor, Theresa Dyer



Close-up of the Little Rock Project by Theresa Dyer