

Meeting Notes

June 19, 2021



Reported by Carla Kaessinger Coupe

Our Producer Extraordinaire Alan Rettig began the meeting with the usual reminders of how to make the Zoom experience better (and how not to irk your fellow attendees). Before passing the mic to Peter Blau, Alan mentioned that 122 people had registered to attend, hailing from the US, the UK, Canada, Argentina, Germany, and the Czech Republic.

Peter Blau acknowledged Alan's hard work in producing the online meeting and called for announcements. Specifics are available on the Red Circle website.

The Red Circle is teaming up with the Reichenbach Irregulars of Switzerland to present "Routes from the Reichenbach" on Saturday, July 10th at 1 pm EDT, in conjunction with the publication of their new book of the same name. Three presenters will do their best to persuade attendees that Sherlock Holmes took the route they will describe from the Reichenbach Falls to Florence. Don't miss it!

The next Red Circle meeting will be held in September, and the plan is to hold an outdoor picnic. More information will be posted soon.

Bev Wolov spoke first about *The Platform: Advertising Milestones*. In this fascinating short presentation, Bev outlined the development of advertising, from William Caxton's 1476 print ad for his new book, tacked to church doors, to today's constant barrage of ads, a billion-dollar industry.

She showed how the industrial revolution, which made affordable products available to more people, led to the development of advertising. She gave examples of advertising posters and ads in books and magazines and discussed several firsts: the Montgomery Ward catalog in 1872, a radio ad in 1922, and 1941's television ad for Bulova watches. Bev finished up with the breakthrough 1984 Super Bowl ad for the Apple Mac that sparked the advertising competitions in subsequent Super Bowls.

Peggy Perdue, our featured speaker, is Senior Services Specialist in the Special Collections Department at the Toronto Public Library. In her presentation, *Sherlock Holmes in Advertising*, she discussed the wide variety of products that have used the Great Detective to promote sales.

Savvy businessmen immediately saw the value of using an immediately recognizable figure like Sherlock Holmes in their advertisements. From the first text ad that appeared in 1894 for Beecham's pills up to the present day, Sherlock Holmes and to a lesser degree Dr. Watson, have been advertising staples.

Some of the types of products touted by Holmes and Watson include pipe tobacco, cigars, cigarettes, assorted health items (including enema kits!), cars and car parts, and—naturally enough—alarms and safes. The list continued with hotels, home management tips, and beverages of all types, such as Coke *and* Pepsi, Kool-Aid, scotch and gin, wine and beer, Red Bull, coffee, and tea.

Peggy also found Holmes used in ads for supermarkets, clothing, research papers and reference books, televisions, financial institutions, and finally, ads for advertising agencies.

Why is Holmes such a popular figure? He is a powerful image, recognizable even in silhouette or portrayed as a creature such as a dog and exemplifies traits such as the ability to find bargains and discover a solution to your problems, as well as singular intelligence and trustworthiness.

A thoroughly enjoyable and interesting presentation.

The meeting concluded with another diabolical quiz by Dana Richards, incorporating many details from Peggy's presentation. The highest scorers were Dennis Keiser (15 points), Jerry Margolin (13), Jane Almquist (12), and Tom Fahres and Walter Colby (11 each).

This was one of Dana's most fiendish quizzes and the winners deserve a round of applause and heart-felt congratulations.

Peter concluded the meeting with thanks to the presenters and to Alan and hopes to see people in person in September.