

Meeting Notes

June 22, 2024



Reported by Carla Kaessinger Coupe

Summer's heat has descended with a Professor-Moriarty-like vengeance, and attendees of the June meeting of The Red Circle enjoyed a welcome relief from the heat at Bethesda's own Alfio's La Trattoria. As usual, the pre-luncheon crowd spent a convivial hour renewing old friendships and creating new ones and were afforded a real treat when Denny Dobry brought many books to sell, the proceeds of which help fund the BSI Trust.

After attendees assumed their seats, Peter Blau welcomed everyone before luncheon was served. Delicious food and lively table chatter made the next hour pass quickly, and before we knew it, spumoni and coffee signaled the end of lunch.

Peter returned to the lectern to remind attendees to see Alan Rettig about creating their nametags and to talk to Peter if they wanted to be included in the mailing list. He then introduced the meeting's speaker, Burt Wolder.

Burt Wolder (BSI's "Third Pillar from the Left") has been the co-host, along with Scott Monty, of the popular podcast "I Hear of Sherlock Everywhere," for the past 17 years. He and Scott also produce the weekly podcast "Trifles." A former employee of AT&T, he now sits on the board of Frederic Dorr Steele Memorial, Inc., a non-profit organization that promotes public awareness of Steele's life and work.

Burt's talk was entitled "Arthur Conan Doyle: Adventurous Life, Enduring Memories." He began by relating how Conan Doyle suffered a heart attack in 1929, which left him frail and introspective. Not long before he had another fatal attack in July 1930, he drew a cartoon of "The Old Horse," hauling a cart laden with crates full of memories down a long road, under the care of three veterinarians. The question Burt posed was can we learn something from the contents of Conan Doyle's packing cases.



He then provided a tour of Conan Doyle's life: his early acquaintance with death; the ability to tell a compelling story, inherited from his mother; the way Conan Doyle altered the trajectory of his life several times; his loving relations with both his wives; his patriotism; and his intellectual curiosity and drive to improve people's situations through better equipment and machines.

What made Conan Doyle an excellent object lesson in how to live one's life in a way that provided so many rich memories? Burt outlined three elements:

- A knack for elevating sensory appeal,
- The ability to celebrate moments of pride,
- A talent for building moments of connection with others.
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Burt's presentation received a hearty round of applause, and after a Q&A session, Peter returned to the lectern.

The first order of business was Standing Upon the Terrace for long-time Red Circle member Tom O'Day. Condolences were extended to his wife, Marie O'Day, also a member, who attended the meeting.

Sarah Rosenbaum, a docent at the Folger Shakespeare Library, told us that the manuscript of *The Valley of Fear* is on display at the Library through January 5th.

After the announcements, which are included in The Red Circle website, Peter reminded attendees to keep an eye on the website for an announcement about September's meeting and then adjourned the June meeting.