

Bootmaker's Diary by Bruce Aikin

The Bootmakers of Toronto – January 28, 2017

The Annual Blue Carbuncle Awards Dinner 2017

Forty-four members and one guest assembled at the York Masonic Temple on the evening of Saturday, January 28, for the 2017 Annual Blue Carbuncle Awards Dinner.

After the social hour, Michael Ranieri, as Meyers 2017, welcomed everyone to this evening's festivities. He began by thanking some people for their help:

- Thelma Beam was thanked for her help in arranging the dinner, but unfortunately became ill and was unable to be here.
- Edith Reese acted as the greeter.
- Donny Zaldin for his help in organizing the awards.
- Vicki Delany for being our guest speaker tonight.
- The staff of the York Masonic Temple.
- James Reese was thanked for a great year in 2016. James then presented Michael with a whistle to help in calling the meetings to order for the year.

As the dinner progressed, a number of toasts were offered.

Barbara Rusch began her toast to "A Certain Gracious Lady," by showing a portrait of Queen Victoria, painted by Laurie Fraser Manifold. The picture took Laurie two years to complete. Barbara then read, "An Ode to Queen Victoria."

Bruce Aikin gave the toast to Sir Arthur Ignatius Conan Doyle. After his toast Bruce announced that in honour of Canada's 150th Birthday, he was going to stop taking quizzes so Canadians could win. But he warned the members that the last time he stopped there was a meeting where nobody took the quiz so he started taking them again. So keep taking the quizzes!

Margot French gave the toast to the Hound of the Baskervilles, which was greeted by a chorus of howling from the attendees.

Dave Sanders gave the toast to Professor James Moriarty, for where would Sherlock Holmes be with no mysteries to solve.

Steven Wintle gave the toast to Mr. Sherlock Holmes. The "Noble Bachelor," was not really Lord Robert St. Simon, for he was in truth not very noble. The title instead belongs to Sherlock Holmes.

Michael Ranieri gave a toast to the Bootmakers of Toronto. For the first time in the history of the organization he gave a singing toast.

After a brief break, we reassemble to take Donny Zaldin's quiz on the Literary Holmes. Donny has found lists of the 100 Greatest Mystery Novels of All time and, also the 100 Greatest Crime

Novels. He gave each table a list numbered 1 to 10. Our task was to compile a list of the best novels written between the years 1800 to 1910. No Sherlock Holmes novels were to be included. The winning table received a bottle of wine.

Our guest speaker is author Vicki Delany. She has written twenty-five books. Her writing is mostly mysteries but she has also written books for adult literacy and other genres. Her twenty-fourth book, which is set for release in March, is entitled, *Elementary, She Read*. It is the first novel in a planned series about the Sherlock Holmes Bookshop. The Sherlock Holmes Bookshop and Emporium is owned by Gemma Doyle, a resident of New London, Massachusetts, near Cape Cod. Mrs. Hudson's Tea Room is next door. With the aid of her friend Jayne Wilson, she investigates who left an original copy of the 1887 Beeton's Christmas Annual in her bookshop. The local police detective is named Astrada.

At the end of her talk, Michael Ranieri thanked her for her excellent presentation and gave her a token of appreciation from the Bootmakers.

Next was the time to present the awards.

The Winner of the True Davidson Award for the best formal paper given at a meeting was announced by Edith Reese. The winner was Cliff Goldfarb, for his paper on "Dogs that Do and Don't Bark," given at the Silver Blaze mini-conference in July.

The Warren Carleton Award for the best informal presentation at a meeting is announced by Doug Paton and Karen Campbell. There are two winners this year. The first is Donny Zaldin for his quiz on Sherlock Holmes Goes to Hollywood. The second is Karen Gold for her song about *The Boscombe Valley Mystery, Black Jack of Ballarat*.

The Derrick Murdoch Award for the best article in Canadian Holmes is presented to David P. Greenfield and Peter Jacoby for the article "M'Naghten, Moriarty and the Insanity Defense."

The status of Master Bootmaker was conferred by Donny Zaldin, Barbara Rusch and Dayna Nuhn on three deserving members. They were James Reese, Edith Reese and Angela Misri.

The Emerald Tie Pin is awarded to members who are Master Bootmakers and have belonged for twenty years or more. This year's recipients are Philip Elliott, Dave Sanders, Doug Wrigglesworth and Peter Calamai.

Chris Redmond read Vincent Starrett's sonnet 221B.

A drawing was held for some door prizes. An advance copy of *Elementary, She Read*, donated by Vicki Delany was won by Stephanie Thomas. George Vanderburgh donated several prizes. The first was a sealed copy of Michael Dirda's book which was won by Karen Gold. The second was a book of poetry by "The Bard of Toronto," Raymond Souster, *10 Elephants on Yonge Street*, which was won by Chris Redmond. The third was a copy of *The Truth about Ludwig II*, which was won by Jean Paton.

Mr. Meyers declared the festivities adjourned at 10:14 PM.

The Bootmakers of Toronto – January 29, 2017

The Marlene Aig Memorial Brunch

The 21st Annual Marlene Aig Memorial Brunch was held at the Café California, 538 Church Street. Nine members were in attendance: Phil Elliott, Dave Sanders, Barbara Rusch, Donny Zaldin, Bruce Aikin, Kathy Burns, James Reese, Ed van der Flaes and Frank Quinlan.

After enjoying their meals, those present listened to Ed van der Flaes talk about Marlene Aig. She studied Journalism at the University of Toronto and joined the Bootmakers in the 1970's. She was also a member of the Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes (ASH) and many other scions. She used to come to Toronto by train for the Annual Awards Dinner every January. She organized a brunch for out-of-town members and local members so waiting for the train home would not be boring. Since her untimely death at the age of 43, the Bootmakers have carried on the brunch in her memory.