

CONTACT US
Lucy Kleiner
lkleiner@dailyastorian.com

WEEKEND BREAK



FOLLOW US
facebook.com/
DailyAstorian

BAKER STREET'S ETERNAL ALLURE

Peninsula resident travels world as part of Sherlock Holmes societies

By PATTY HARDIN

‘E’lementary, my dear Watson.”

Iconic words from an iconic character. Sherlock Holmes lives in the memories of devoted fans and followers, and Sherlockians are passionate about keeping Mr. Holmes relevant.

“The Baker Street Irregulars, the first Sherlock Holmes Society, was named after some characters in the Sherlock Holmes stories,” said Marty Martin. “They formed in 1934.” These characters are street boys employed by Holmes as intelligence agents.

International Holmes societies

Martin, a peninsula resident, belongs to the London Sherlock Holmes Society, The Noble and Most Singular Order of the Blue Carbuncle in Portland, the Knights of Baskerville Hall and the Curious Collectors, both in southern California.

Her enthusiasm for Holmes began when she started watching the old Basil Rathbone movies on television.

“These movies were always on TV when I was a kid,” Martin said, recalling a 1950s, black and white display. “I didn’t particularly care for them as a kid, but my friends did.”

You may be surprised that many people cross continents, international borders and oceans to follow in the footsteps of two fictional characters.

Martin said there are at least 897 Sherlockian societies worldwide.

Fans in diverse locations including Australia, Belgium, Brazil, the Czech Republic, Denmark and India gather to read, watch movies and plays, write essays, argue about the

same and drink. In addition to England and the U.S., two hotbeds of Holmesiana are Russia and Japan.

“The BSI still meet once a year,” Martin said, “around the weekend of January 10 at the Algonquin Hotel,” in New York City during Holmes’ birthday month.

In total, the Sherlock Holmes canon includes 56 short stories and four novels.

Martin is also a retired civil engineer, fixed-wing pilot and a certified scuba diver.

Themed meetings

Sherlock Holmes society meetings are sometimes themed, and many of those attending dress accordingly.

Martin’s husband, Bob Walters, is becoming more enthused about participating. “I put the costumes out on the bed and he puts them on,” Martin said.

In addition to the expected literature teachers and librarians, members include psychologists, lawyers, national security and forensics experts, funeral directors, doctors and mathematicians. (Sherlock’s arch enemy, Moriarty, is a math professor.)

Martin sums up the Sherlockian mania best with the following toast she wrote:

He sits by the fireplace in Baker Street with Watson by his side.

Then they go off pursuing the game that’s afoot, and we go along for the ride.

We’ve read every one of his cases, we dress up in funny old clothes.

We travel to faraway places, we go wherever he goes.

We’ve seen all the Canon’s locations from the top of an old London bus.

Where would we be without Sherlock? Where would he be without us?

Patty Hardin is a freelance writer in Long Beach, Washington.



Sherlockian Marty Martin, right, with her husband Bob Walters.



A Sherlockian dinner at the House of Commons in England.