

“And Then There Were Three....”

I am pleased to report that Joanne Kensinger has joined Ken Kerle and me as a member of the reading and discussion program at the Shawnee County Juvenile Detention Center, sometimes called DODG for Downtown Optimist Discussion Group.

Joanne expressed interest in joining us after hearing the presentation about DODG at Club earlier this year. She began by observing and assisting in the project several months ago and now has completed the required training to be a full-fledged volunteer for the Shawnee County Department of Corrections. Joanne brings a wealth of teaching experience to the program and is a natural in relating to the male and female residents who range in age from 11 to 17.

Not only are Ken and I glad to have an additional volunteer in the program but now we each can have one Friday off a month—something not possible prior to this welcome addition.

For the past several weeks, at the suggestion of Ken Kerle, the residents and volunteers have been reading from the collected cases of Sherlock Holmes by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. We believe our listeners are interested in these cases and are quite ready to discuss issues and questions we raise. A friend has loaned copies of four of the Sherlock Holmes' movies from the 30s and 40s and we and the staff at the Center will consider whether we might show one of these classics starring Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce.

A brief reflection: The DODG program began in August, 1998 when two Bills, Gannaway and Kastens, Marty Viterna, and I started reading and discussing materials with the youth at the Center. As we approach our 14<sup>th</sup> anniversary, I must admit that I have no idea how many kids have been read to and engaged in discussions during this period. We used to limit the groups to ten members but had two groups going at the same time. Now, it is not unusual to have 20 residents in the group. We take Fridays off when they fall on a holiday and we have been canceled a few times because of institutional needs or the necessary absence of volunteers. Someone more gifted at mathematics (perhaps one-time statistician Bill Kastens) may want to do the math but it seems safe to say that a lot of kids have been read to since August, 1998 and more have enjoyed books donated by our Club.