



COURANT PHOTO BY JOSEPH CANNATA

Sherlock Holmes' aficionados, Teddy and Harold Niver show an 8th grade developmental reading class a Holmes' book translated into Navajo

that shows Holmes smoking a peace pipe. The two appeared before the class, which has been studying Holmes.

## 'Sherlock' Visits School

### WETHERSFIELD

By JAN TARR

WETHERSFIELD — Sherlock Holmes, complete with the familiar cape, deerstalker's hat and the pipe that are his trademarks, paid a visit to Silas Deane Junior High School Wednesday.

Harold Niver of Rocky Hill appeared before Mary Jane Pazda's developmental reading classes to bring Holmes alive to the students, who have been reading books by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Holmes' creator.

Although the outfit is well known even to those who are not Holmes' fans — and has been worn by such characters as Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck and Snoopy — Niver said it never was described in any of Doyle's 60 stories. It was an artist's rendition based on various descriptions in the stories, he said.

"The curved pipe is interesting because the curved briar pipe was not in England at the time," Niver said.

It really became one of the detective's trademarks because William Gillette, who frequently portrayed Holmes, said he could talk easier with a curved pipe, Niver said.

The stories primarily are set in the 1890s.

Another thing associated with Holmes is the phrase "Elementary, my dear Watson," but Niver's wife

Teddy said Holmes never said it to his friend, Dr. John Watson. It may have come from a Gillette play, Niver said.

Niver's fascination with Holmes began about 10 years ago when he was ill and looking for something to read — now he owns about 2,500 pieces of memorabilia. The students gasped when he told them he had paid a couple of hundred dollars for a book, but Niver assured them that there are some collector items worth thousands of dollars.

The Nivers even have furnished their home in the style of the period, complete with a portrait of Queen Victoria. When they have visitors, they often greet them in costume and give them an English meal.

However, the Nivers are quick to add, "We're not fanatical ... we don't live as Holmes, but it is fun" and they said they like the formality of the period.

"Once you start collecting, it's like eating peanuts, you can't stop," Mrs. Niver said.

Even Doyle found out that once you get involved with Holmes, it isn't easy to get away, the couple said.

In one story, it seemed that Holmes had been killed, much to the dismay of many fans who missed the fictional Baker Street resident.

After about three years, pressure coupled with financial need found Doyle returning to Holmes once again, Niver said.