A Time Out To Serve: Across the Pacific and on to Tokyo

by Wey Simpson

(Part Two)

As always, the rumor mill ran wild. We might be shipped to Seattle — and then to Burma or India. We could be headed to a base in California. We might go to Australia. You get the picture.

Now none of it makes sense, but I even created a code that I could put in a letter home — letting the family know where I was headed. In truth, we wouldn’t know when we shipped out what our destination was to be.

I never got a pass to leave base.

There was a rule that one had to swim the length of the pool at the base before you could get a pass. Water and I have never been friends. Despite my best efforts I never made the full length of the pool.

We weren’t lacking anything to do. Training continued. We went on bivouac. Here we got to sample the Army’s famous *K Rations. Later we’d eat **C Rations. A small taste of the future. Our stay at Fort Ord was expected to last 11 days. We were there nearly a month. My last uncensored letter home carried the

*WWII Type K Ration: A boxed, lightweight, short duration (3-day) military survival ration consisting of three individually packaged meals designated breakfast, dinner, and supper. Primarily dry, each meal also had one small can of wet food — eggs, meat, and/or cheese with either fruit or vegetables mixed in. Regardless, all were generally disliked.

**WWII Type C Ration: A primarily canned, pre-cooked, longer duration (5-day) military survival ration. Intended to replace the field kitchens during combat, selections such as “Meat Stew with Beans,” “Meat and Noodles,” and “Ham with Lima Beans,” quickly became so monotonous as to also make C-rations generally disliked.

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following thoughts: “It’s funny! I don’t really mind going too much. I’m almost looking forward to it. It will be an experience to remember … I’m sure I’m coming back … I’ll have grown in many ways … After all no one really knows their fate … I won’t guess at what may happen.”

As it would work out, all of my basic training buddies went different directions so we would never serve together. We were told we would ship out on Friday, March 23rd. We did not do so until Monday the 26th. We went to the port of embarkation in San Francisco where we boarded the SS John Pope and settled into our home away from home for the next month. I won’t dwell too much on this voyage, but a few incidents will serve to sample life aboard a troop transport.

After getting bunked down in the ship, the chow line formed and we went to the galley to eat. Just about then, we crossed under the Golden Gate Bridge and entered the open sea. With the rolling of the ship, the chow line dwindled quite rapidly. I never suffered from sea sickness, so I was able to have dinner. However, what followed was a true test of intestinal fortitude. I was in the bottom of a four bunk configuration, one above the other. Which was fine. What wasn’t fine was that the head of my bunk was against a garbage can, which was visited multiple times by soldiers who were making pretty poor sailors.

Weather permitting, we could go on deck during the day. At night we were required to be below deck. I suppose this was to keep us invisible to any enemy ships or subs. We were all alone on the vast Pacific. And since many soldiers smoked, who knew who might light up and become a light in the dark sea. Sometimes at twilight I would stand at the rail and watch the florescence of the water as the bow of the ship cut through the ocean. That fascinated me. I was also intrigued by the flying fish that would be put to flight as we passed.

We crossed the equator for the first time in early April and then we lost the 6th of April when we crossed the International Date Line. Nineteen forty-five would be a day short.

There was an immense amount of reading material, so I did a lot of reading. We could laze on deck in the sun and do nothing. A group of the soldiers formed a swing band and would entertain us occasionally. Sunday services were well attended; they too were held on deck with the Chaplain speaking from a hatch which gave him some elevation. We would observe Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday on the high seas. In a letter I wrote at the time, I observed: “I wish you could see these fellows standing or sitting on anything available, sweating in the sun and listening to the Chaplin. Funny thing! You don’t have to invite them to attend.”

Where we headed was certainly grist for the rumor mill. When we sailed past Guadalcanal, we knew we weren’t going to Australia. And as I considered the jungles of New Guinea, I understood why we were still there four years after Pearl Harbor.

On the 24th of April we sailed into Manila Bay. With Corregidor in sight and Bataan to our left, I was prompted to observe, “Green and rugged. I thought of the early months of 1943 when our service personnel stood firm on a battlefield never to be forgotten.”

All around us were the rusting remnants of ships, some sunk by the Japanese when they attacked Manila, others sunk by Allied forces as we came back to reclaim freedom for the Philippine people. Manila Bay was a ships’ graveyard.

The next day we boarded landing craft and were taken ashore. Manila, which had once been a beautiful city, was a mass of ruins because a Japanese commander had disobeyed orders to evacuate the city and not destroy it. What the Japanese didn’t destroy, United States forces did as they fought block by block to clear the city of the enemy.

Why We Came

We were trucked south of Manila to the Fifth Replacement Depot, there to be assigned to our permanent unit. In about two weeks I would join the First Cavalry Division, and be assigned to the 8th Cavalry Regiment.

While at what was referred to in Army lingo as the Repple Depple, we were billeted 12 men to tent. There were several soldiers I remembered from Camp Wolters. When we were free we’d spend time together.

Within a day or two of arrival, I got 16 letters — the most recent postmarked only 15 days earlier.

Mail was a sparking point of complaint. Afterwards, I realized that there must have been heroic efforts devoted to getting the mail to us. I’m sure the Army realized how important word from home was for the moral of the soldiers.)

I’d like to share a couple of early observations made in the Philippines. In one letter I penned, “There is still evidence of Jap occupation here ... There are lots of coconuts, pineapples, watermelon and bananas. A few
monkeys and lots of bamboo.” Another time I wrote, “It’s Saturday morning here and Friday afternoon there. You are eating dinner yesterday and Friday afternoon there. You are eating dinner yesterday and Friday afternoon tomorrow. You are eating dinner today and I’m eating breakfast today.”

Food was always another issue that drew comment. I said the food at the depot was pretty good, certainly more variety and quantity than we had had aboard the ship. We had cooked cereal for breakfast every day. We were served meat. The vegetables were rehydrated and the milk was reconstituted, but all things considered, it seemed a great improvement.

Here are two examples of the menus from a couple of meals. “For dinner today we raced beef, fried potatoes, brown gravy, peas (not a favorite food of mine), bread, plenty of butter, and butterscotch pudding, along with a somewhat warm canteen cup of Coke. For breakfast we had pancakes, syrup, Cream of Wheat with sugar and cream ... we could choose coffee, tea, Coke and tomato juice for beverages.”

Needless to say, we were kept busy. We’d draw guard duty occasionally. Being in a combat zone, alertness was required. There would be movies and live entertainment. There was a band made up of Filipino Scouts about which I commented, “They have a unique style and rhythm. The fellow who sang was good. I’ve never heard a singer quite like him.”

I had two months pay coming, but where would I spend it? We would be paid in Philippine Pesos, worth about 50 cents in US money, so I’d get 100 Pesos a month. Late in May I was assigned to the First Cavalry Division. On the 23rd I was delivered to Division Headquarters, then assigned to G Troop of the 8th Regiment. While not a horse division anymore, the First Cavalry still used the historic organization of the Cavalry. Infantry Divisions had three regiments, the Cavalry had four. The Infantry had Companies, we had Troops. We were also much more mechanized than the Infantry. We were the first ones to ride from one place to another, the Infantry often marched. Our Regiment was headquartered near the town of Santa Maria on Luzon. When I physically joined G Troop, they were stationed at a reservoir.

On the way to our first station, we passed through a village where a funeral was being held. This was one of my first experiences with another culture and what I saw elicited this: “They were marching down both sides of the road with a swing band to help things along. To top it off they were carrying a small casket down the street too ... It seems they celebrate when someone dies. After all is finished they have a party and dance.” The country boy is learning about another part of the world.

A few words about the rural villages. Most of the dwellings were elevated above the ground. (Sort of like houses on stilts). Many were constructed of bamboo, a very plentiful material. I surmise the houses were on stilts for a couple of reasons. Rain in the tropics is an event to remember. Flooding could occur in a few minutes. Being a tropical climate there was a plethora of creatures on the ground that one would not wish to find in bed at night. The Filipino natives were industrious. Many were very clever in using what was available to meet the needs of the moment. Those that I got to know on a personal level were friendly, helpful and grateful to have the Japanese gone.

I recall one little girl, age hard to determine — but I would guess maybe 12 or 13 — she was lively and pretty clever. She would hang around our camp and I suspect she got more than one handout from a G.I. For a time she attached herself to me. She would pop up where I was, unannounced, bubbly and friendly. I always wondered what became of her.

After being assigned to our unit, we set up a bivouac area. First we had to cut down grass 6 to 7 feet tall — not an easy job. The Filipino machete proved to be invaluable. Then, with the help of locals, we would create a water storage berm to catch water from the heavy rains 20 to 30 feet above the ground. We could then pitch our tents over these platforms. A lot more comfortable, and I felt safer than sleeping on the ground. We had set up camp on high ground overlooking a nearby road. We had a good view of the surrounding territory.

Keep in mind, this is the tropics. One perspires. We had to take a couple of showers a day. The Filipino summer clothes were better suited to a tropical climate, not a horseback riding climate. The disease carried by the anopheles mosquito. Early in the war many soldiers were sidelined and sent home because of malaria. By the time I arrived we were required to take a pill called Atabrine. It turned one’s skin yellow, but it prevented malaria. I’d take yellow any time.

Since our camp was on a reservoir, we were able to bath, swim and wash our clothes. In the tropical climate it felt good to be able to get clean.

Most Filipinos welcomed us. The Japanese were nearing the end of their tether on Luzon. Still, as in any war, some Filipinos were pro-Japanese. Thus we were advised to be careful what we said around the local people.

In the area we set up, there were a lot of small farms on the hilltops. It was a relatively rugged countryside. One time we went on patrol in native canoes, paddled by Filipinos. We also went on foot patrols, but we did not encounter any enemy. We seemed to have drawn a good assignment because other First Cavalry units were facing heavy fighting.

In time we went into a rear echelon camp. Near the middle of June some of us filled our packs, got into a truck and were
had never given an inch without a fight to the death, it didn’t make sense that they would give up, even now. Surrender didn’t happen and our training continued. We were going through landing exercises when the news finally came. On the 18th of August, I qualified for my Combat Infantry Badge and my PFC stripes. The additional pay would bring my monthly stipend to the huge sum of $74.80 a month. There was time to relax. We had a radio in the mess hall, and I spent some of my free time listening to the Armed Forces Radio Service broadcasting from Manila. As a morale booster AFRS radio services were available almost everywhere we had military personnel. Many of the radio programs we remembered from home were rebroadcast for our entertainment, sans commercials. We also could listen to Radio Tokyo. Some of their propaganda was surprising. They apparently thought any bad news from home would be demoralizing. I recall a lengthy story about a huge forest fire in Oregon. During our time in this camp I often spent time with the guys in the medical unit. I learned some of their tricks of the trade. In fact they tried to get me transferred to their unit. It didn’t happen. Had we invaded Japan, I’m not sure that I would have wanted that job. The military seems to functions on rumors and gripes. In late July we heard talk that the Japanese might surrender. On the 22nd of August we boarded a troop transport and on the 25th pulled away from the port of Batangas. Within 24 hours we were forced back to Subic Bay because of a typhoon. After 48 hours we resumed our trip. The weather was heavy but we made it into Tokyo Bay and landed at Yokohama on the 2nd of September, the day the surrender was being signed on the USS Missouri.


Garrisoned near the town of Lucena. Our group arrived before the rest of the Troop. It was heaven to be able to sleep on a cot. We were served chow by another Troop’s kitchen as we waited for our own. I had high praise for our own kitchen crew, claiming we had the best food in the regiment and that our cooks would feed us no matter when we came in from the field, even in the middle of the night.

Ahead — Japan

We were now in a situation the Army termed “Garrison.” And, the word was we would begin preparing for the invasion of Japan. We were told it would happen in late October or early November. So we hiked a lot, spent time on the rifle range, and went through amphibious landing exercises. On the 10th of July, I qualified for my Combat Infantry Badge and my PFC stripes. The additional pay would bring my monthly stipend to the huge sum of $74.80 a month. There was time to relax. We had a radio in the mess hall, and I spent some of my free time listening to the Armed Forces Radio Service broadcasting from Manila. As a morale booster AFRS radio services were available almost everywhere we had military personnel. Many of the radio programs we remembered from home were rebroadcast for our entertainment, sans commercials. We also could listen to Radio Tokyo. Some of their propaganda was surprising. They apparently thought any bad news from home would be demoralizing. I recall a lengthy story about a huge forest fire in Oregon. During our time in this camp I often spent time with the guys in the medical unit. I learned some of their tricks of the trade. In fact they tried to get me transferred to their unit. It didn’t happen. Had we invaded Japan, I’m not sure that I would have wanted that job. The military seems to functions on rumors and gripes. In late July we heard talk that the Japanese might surrender. Since they had never given an inch without a fight to the death, it didn’t make sense that they would give up, even now. Surrender was about the most dishonorable act imaginable to them. We expected the invasion to be bloody and hellacious. Then came reports of a new American weapon of unimaginable destructive power. The news stories said we had leveled the city of Hiroshima with one bomb. Most thought the story unbelievable, but I remembered enough of my high school science to know that if we cracked the atom there could be an incredible amount of energy available.

The surrender didn’t happen and our training continued. We were going through landing exercises when the news finally arrived. I was half way down the side of a troop ship, climbing down a landing net when a loudspeaker announcement declared Japan has offered to surrender. Our invasion training came to a sudden halt.

On the 18th of August, I wrote home, “We were on the boat when the news came over the loudspeaker. Somehow, we just couldn’t grasp that it was over. It was hard to realize. Most took the news quietly. But, many still didn’t believe it. There had been so many rumors.” Many expected treachery even when we landed in Japan.

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There is ample historical evidence that a number of military leaders attempted to take power from the Emperor in order to fight on. The Japanese military had figured out where we would first invade, and knowing the reputation of the First Cavalry Division, I’m certain we would have been in the first wave. Hundreds of suicide pilots were ready to fly into our ships and landing craft. Civilians, even children, were being trained in ways to kill the enemy. Had the invasion happened, the death toll of military personnel and civilians would have been beyond comprehension.

The loss of life would have exceeded Hiroshima and Nagasaki many times over. Documents released from the Japanese archives years later spoke of a plan called ‘Keito-Go,’ which meant ‘Final Operation.’ It was designed to make the invasion so costly that the Allies would not seek unconditional surrender. The militarists were pledged to fight to the last man. I make no excuse for saying I’m glad it ended the way it did. The chances are high that I would not be writing these words had the invasion taken place. Enough said!

——— to be continued ———

The Railroad Comes To Deer Park

by Peter Coffin

A Railroad Organized

The title of this paper is inaccurate in that the railroad passed through Deer Park’s location nearly 19 years before the town was incorporated — that happening in 1908. Deer Park got its name, according to one story, when the railroad’s surveyors made note of the plentiful deer seen in the area’s forest.

By the late 1880s the northwestern United States had become an area where men could become wealthy in either the mining or lumber industry. One of those men was Daniel Chase Corbin. He had come west from New Hampshire in 1852, first to Iowa and Nebraska where he homesteaded and formed a land and insurance agency. From there he moved further west, first to Denver and then Montana — following the mineral interests that happening in 1908. Corbin had come west from New Hampshire in 1852, first to Iowa and Nebraska where he homesteaded and formed a land and insurance agency. From there he moved further west, first to Denver and then Montana — following the mineral interests.

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Building a Railroad in Short Order

Interest in building a railroad north from Spokane to Canada had been building for several years prior to the 1888 incorporation. Surveyor A. F. E. Habershon had located a route for a railroad for the James Monaghan group prior to 1888. The existence of this survey allowed the railroad to be built in a relatively short time. Corbin was persuaded to take over active direction of railroad construction in February of 1889. He promptly hired James M. Buckley as construction superintendent. Buckley had recently retired from the Northern Pacific Railroad. In addition Edward J. Roberts was hired as chief engineer. Roberts had worked for Buckley in the past and had been chief engineer for a portion of J.J. Hill’s Great Northern Railroad construction in eastern Montana in 1888.

Construction bids for the Spokane to Colville section were opened on March 4, 1889. The firm of Burns and Chapman won the contract for clearing and cleaning the right-of-way, and Monaghan and King won the contract to provide ties and timbers. Construction money was raised, and construction was ready to begin.

On May 23, 1889, Corbin hammered the first spike — probably near the present day site of the Red Lion Inn east of Division and north of the Spokane River. From there the tracts were built north on Pearl Street to near the intersection of Pearl and Carlile (now the lot of the Camp automobile dealer- ship) where the right of way trended northeast towards the intersection of Market and Gordon in the Hillyard area. From that place the rails went directly north to present day Mead, and by June 9, 1889, the tracts extend- ed to where Dragoon Creek enters the Little Spokane River. Construction of this 21 mile section of track was completed by a construction crew that may have numbered a thousand men. These men lived in a tent camp that moved north with the end of the rail. The route of the railroad north of Mead received the nickname “Snake” because of the large number of curves in the track. Corbin directed his chief engineer, E. J. Rob- erts, to construct the railroad as quickly and economically as possible. Roberts did this in part by having the right-of-way avoid trees larger than three feet in diameter — sidestepping the expense of cutting them down, dyna-
Sometime between June 9, 1889, and August 4, 1889, (when the tracks reached Loon Lake) the tracks passed through the future site of Deer Park. At that time the area contained only the portable sawmill of William Short and George Crawford, and a small store selling liquor and other supplies to the railroad construction crews. That later became the Kelly store.

After Construction

Early pictures of the railroad station show it to be located on Railroad Avenue to the west of the main downtown business buildings (Image #1). The complex contained a large water tank (a 25,000 gallon capacity tank built in 1903, which was replaced with a 50,000 gallon tank in 1942). This early station was moved south to a location southeast of the Main Avenue railroad crossing where an addition to it was constructed.

The building of sidings, spurs and stations proceeded after the main track had been finished. Spurs are tracks leading away from the main line that come to a dead end, whereas sidings have turnouts (switches) on both ends of the siding which lead back to the main tracks.

Deer Park’s first station may have been established in June of 1890, when the station was named. During the 1940s and 1950s there was a long siding from the old fairground on the south to north of the Congregational church. There were two spurs from that siding. One ended behind the Chevron bulk oil plant and served the fair building (and the apple packing plant of previous years), and another ended just south of Fourth Street and served Lasswell’s grain elevator and the Shell bulk oil plant.

Other sidings and spurs in the Deer Park area have long since disappeared. One and three tenths mile north of Denison was the spur named Hueters. Another one and six tenths north was a station named Hairs. There is little information about these two places.

North of Deer Park, before the track got to Clayton, there were two more spurs — Olsons and Christianson. According to Carl Justice the Olsons Spur led west into the forested area north of present day Dail Road and served as a cord wood loading track. Clayton’s early name was Allen’s Siding. When Clayton came to be is still a question, perhaps after 1893 when the clay pits began to be mined.

North of Clayton, the Pine siding (also called Summit siding) marked one of the highest points on the Spokane Falls and Northern Railroad. As a final note, the Spokane Falls and Northern was officially merged into the Great Northern Railroad on July 1, 1907.

References and Suggested Further Reading

1. “Inland Northwest Rail Museum Calendar; 2015” — Reardan, WA, Inland Northwest Rail Museum. (Has chronological dates of SF&N construction as well as many other area railroad related dates.)
2. Fahey, John, 1965, “Inland Empire, D. C. Corbin and Spokane” — Seattle, University of Washington Press. 279 p. (A researched biography which contains much of the source material for this manuscript.)
6. Reavis, John, 1889, “Quick Work, How the Spokane and Northern Has Sprung into Being” — Spokane Falls Review, May 23, 1889, page 5. (This newspaper article is a firsthand, contemporary, report on the building of the Spokane Falls and Northern Railroad north of Spokane towards Deer Park. This is the only firsthand description that I am aware of at present.)
1) The Heritage Network meeting will be on April 20th at the Colville Library.
Society Treasurer Mark Wagner reported: The ending balance for the main checking account as of March 31st was $7,166.80. A check was written to Grace Hubal for $20.00 for flowers and $8.90 for stamps. Deposits were a total of $428.00. The web hosting account stands at $978.72.

Impressed with the WACO logo — indicating a product of Washington Brick & Lime — this is the brick Chuck Cupp donated.

The terra cotta medallion pictured below is on display at Bob and Loretta Greiff’s North Spokane Farm Museum. The tile is approximately five inches in diameter, and without a design on the reverse. No indication is given as to the identity of the individual modeled in relief — however, it is tempting to wonder whether it might be one of Washington Brick & Lime’s founders — either Joseph Spear or Henry Brook.

Images used by permission of the Thomas family and the Prestini estate.
On the 8th of April last, the society received the above images and following note from Lynn (Fackenthall) Wells. "I have been in the process of corralling bits of paper from file boxes and this was in the personal papers of my mother, Elizabeth (Carter) Fackenthall. The paper is wrinkled, and it is her handwriting on the back." The message reads, "In pocket when sailboat sunk with Rollo and I, July 5, 1931." Lynn continued, "I do not know any of the details."

In 1933 Elizabeth Carter and Rollo Fackenthall were married. Rollo passed away in 1979, Elizabeth in 1987. Both are interred — side by side — at the Wild Rose Cemetery.

So far only one mention of the above noted Loshbaugh’s Park has been found; that in the May 12th, 1932, issue of the Deer Park Union. Under the heading “Summer Resort News,” the paper states, “The Loshbaugh floating pavilion at Deer Lake has been rented for the season by Richard Calvert of Spokane. He opened it last Saturday evening.”

The Next Meeting will be on May 6th, 1932, at 6PM at the Airport Holiday Inn, 1616 South Windsor Drive Spokane, Washington 99224. Contact Pat Holien at (509) 466-2439, if you have questions. Her phone number is pathollen@comcast.net. Wally has volunteered to code out email addresses between the Website and CDPHS. Penny Hutten emailed the following about the Westerners meeting for April: Westéns Spokane Corral meeting, April 16, 2015, Dale Ryan will speak about “The Pony Express & Trail.” Bonnie Ryan will speak about the organization of the Pony Express. And Ed Lynch will talk about being a rider for sixteen years with the Pony Express. The *National Association, which was established in 1978, is actively involved in the preservation of the historical trail. The meeting is at the Airport Holiday Inn, 1616 South Windsor Drive Spokane, Washington 99224. Contact Pat Holien by April 13th, for reservations. Pat’s email is pathollen@comcast.net. Her phone number is (509) 466-2439. Call Penny Hutten at 276-5454, if you have questions.

File sizes and types for scanning documents was discussed. JPEG files are easiest to work with. TIFF files are best saving pictures. The size of the files are as follows: 300 dpi (dots per inch) is plenty for printed material, 600 dpi is enough for most pictures, 800 to 1200 dpi works for many sites. Donald Ball found a picture of his dad, Ray Ball, when he was in WWI, and a picture of his dad, Ray Ball, when he was in WWI, and a picture of his dad, Ray Ball, when he was in WWI, and a picture of his dad, Ray Ball, when he was in WWI, and a picture of his dad, Ray Ball, when he was in WWI, and a picture of his dad, Ray Ball, when he was in WWI, and a picture of his dad, Ray Ball, when he was in WWI.
Letters, Email, Bouquets & Brickbats
—or—
Bits of Chatter, Trivia & Notices All Strung Together

It's always a joy to see something new by Clayton artist Leno Prestini — such as the several pieces presented on page 1077 of this issue. They're not newly created of course, since Leno's been gone for just over half a century. But they are new in the sense of being heretofore uncatologued.

I once had the pleasure of being the first "local" to see a previously uncatologued Prestini — that a rather scandalous piece with some highly autobiographical undertones. The wife and I had driven to a bookstore in Eugene, Oregon, to authenticate then buy the painting for the society. I came around a corner, saw it hanging on the wall, and knew almost instantly that it was the real thing.

As for how such recognition works, it's similar to smelling burning coal and finding myself back in Clayton's brick plant, following my dad on his rounds stoking the kilns. It's similar to hearing the screech of chalk on blackboard and finding myself in the southeast corner of Clayton's old school, circa 1951, watching Mrs. Gardner scribing the cursive alphabet. It's the kind of recognition that has managed to melt itself into a person's being.

My generation — the last to have actually spoken to Leno — is winnowing away at an ever greater rate. I'm hoping that before we're gone we'll have captured enough of Leno's history, and preserved enough of his works, that future generations can look at his artistry and see something more than just lines and colors and attitude. My hope is that they'll recognize Leno's spirit, and enjoy the sensation that such recognition brings.

—— Wally Lee Parker ———

Society Contacts
We encourage anyone with observations, concerns, corrections, or divergent opinions regarding the contents of these newsletters to write the society or contact one or more of the individuals listed below. Resultant conversations can remain confidential if so desired.

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—— C/DPHS ———

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A print copy of this issue is or soon will be available in booklet format.

Ask about “Collected Newsletters: Volume Twenty-Three.”

Society contact information can be found on the facing page..