



# Sherlock Holmes

C O L L E C T I O N S



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"Your merits should be publicly recognized" (STUD)

## Basil of Baker Street

**“W**ho has not heard of Sherlock Holmes? Men hail him as the master detective of all time. Mice proudly hail their own super-sleuth, Basil of Baker Street. No case is too difficult or too dangerous for this daring detective, and criminals cringe at the sound of his name.”  
(*Basil in Mexico*, 1)

And who has not heard of Basil of Baker Street? Since 1977, when John Bennett Shaw compiled his first list of the 100 items for the Basic Holmesian Library, through the latest revision of that list in 1998 by Catherine Cooke, *Basil of Baker Street* by Eve Titus has remained a constant in the category of specialized items on the listing of books and periodicals most important to the cult of Sherlock Holmes. The Sherlock Holmes Collections contains copies of each of the five books that Ms. Titus wrote about Basil, the famous mouse detective who resides in the cellar of 221 Baker Street. Jenny Hanson, Library Assistant in the University of Minnesota’s Children’s Literature Research Collection, noted that “For many children, Basil is an introduction to the character of Sherlock Holmes.”

The Sherlock Holmes Collections has recently acquired through Peter Stern the original type-written manuscripts, complete with Ms. Titus’ hand-written notes, of the five books; *Basil of Baker Street*, 1958, *Basil and the Lost Colony*, 1964, *Basil and the Pygmy Cats*,

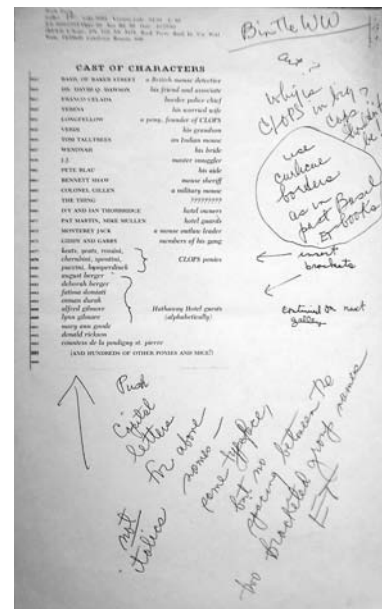


photo by Julie McKurus

Manuscript page from *Basil in the Wild West*, with notes by Eve Titus.

1971, *Basil in Mexico*, 1976, and *Basil in the Wild West*, 1982. These five books were illustrated by Paul Galdone, whose original drawings for *Basil of Baker Street* were previously donated to the Children’s Literature Research Collection. Mr. Galdone also illustrated the French cheese-tasting mouse *Anatole* series that Ms. Titus wrote between 1956 and 1973.

Ms. Titus, a native of New York City, attended New York University. She was originally a professional concert-pianist as well as a free-lance author and lecturer. Her *Anatole* and *Basil* books feature mice as the main characters, she noted, “because children are tiny people in a

Continued on page 6

# 100

YEARS AGO

The December, 1901 issue of *THE STRAND* magazine (#132, Vol. 22, labeled "Grand Christmas Double Number") contains the following letter in the "Curiosities" section titled "Where Sherlock Holmes Died."<sup>1</sup>



'I am sending you herewith a photo of the lower Reichenbach Falls, Switzerland, which I took about three years ago. It was taken not long after the time when Dr. Conan Doyle, in the series of detective tales which appeared in *THE STRAND*, ended the life [sic] of his hero, Sherlock Holmes, at the famous Reichenbach Falls, and the place shown in the photo is that which many of the guides at Meiringen were then pointing out to visitors as the 'identical spot where the body of your great English detective, Mr. Sherlock Holmes, was found.'<sup>2</sup> Sherlock Holmes, having once more come to life,<sup>2</sup> I thought your readers might be interested in seeing a photo of the place where his body is stated to have been recovered.'

– Mr. Herbert J. Mason, Carlton House, George Road, Edgbaston.

Curiosity indeed. All Sherlockians now know that no body was found, and that although Professor Moriarty perished in the struggle, Holmes had escaped the Reichenbach unscathed — as recorded in "The Adventure of the Empty House," first published in *Collier's Weekly* in September, 1903 and in *THE STRAND* in October, 1903. Nonetheless, it is interesting to note that in the late 1890s, Meiringen-area guides were touting Reichenbach Falls as a point of Sherlockian interest.

Sadly, when Dr. Philip Hench of Rochester, Minnesota, visited Meiringen in 1953, he found that area residents knew nothing of the Holmesian connection with Reichenbach Falls. That unfortunate situation was soon remedied through the efforts of Dr. Hench, the Norwegian Explorers of Minnesota, and the Sherlock Holmes Society of London, when a commemorative plaque was erected at the Falls in 1957.<sup>3</sup>

The plaque contributed to a renewed interest in the Sherlockian connection to the area. Civic boosters saw the tourism potential, and today in Meiringen many businesses bear Sherlockian names, and their signs bear Sherlockian images. A statue of Holmes graces Doyle Platz, in the center of the village, and another statue is planned for a location closer to Reichenbach Falls. Meiringen-area residents are now well aware of their Sherlockian heritage, and officials have formally honored their most famous visitor. A certificate found in one of John Bennett Shaw's notebooks in the Collections states:

We hereby publish and declare that the title of honorary citizen has been conferred upon Sherlock Holmes and all extraordinary privileges by the community of Meiringen Reichenbach Falls Re-affirmed this fourth day of May nineteen hundred ninety one

The certificate is signed by the President and Secretary of the organization conferring the honor. On the back is a typed page from the mayor of Meiringen, Peter Pfister, for the Reichenbach Falls Centennial. Acknowledging Holmes's victory over Moriarty at Reichenbach, the mayor declares that "Citizens of Meiringen rejoice at the conquest of good over evil." ❧

John Bergquist

Thanks to Julie McKuras for additional research in the Collections.

1. Peter E. Blau, a noted Sherlockian from Washington, D.C., reprinted the letter in his souvenir pamphlet distributed at the 1998 dinner of the Baker Street Irregulars in New York. Besides the letter in "Curiosities," the December, 1901 issue of *THE STRAND* contains two other items of Sherlockian interest: Chapter 9 of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* and an article entitled "Mr. William Gillette as Sherlock Holmes," by Harold J. Shepstone.
2. The events at Reichenbach Falls, near the village of Meiringen, had been chronicled in "The Final Problem," published in *THE STRAND* in December, 1893. After an absence of almost eight years, Sherlock Holmes had returned to the pages of *THE STRAND* in August, 1901 — in Chapter 1 of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* — although the events of the *Hound* predate those of "The Final Problem."
3. See McKuras, Julie, "The Norwegian Explorers and the Sherlock Holmes Society of London", *The Sherlock Holmes Journal*, Summer 2000.

# 50

## YEARS AGO

In 1951 there appeared a small book in blue wrapper with a silhouette of Sherlock Holmes on the cover. It was titled *THE CROWDED BOX-ROOM, Sherlock Holmes as Poet* by Theodore C. Blegen, Charter Member of the Norwegian Explorers: Minneapolis and Saint Paul Chapter of the Baker Street Irregulars. The colophon states "Of this pamphlet with shelf back 300 copies were printed and bound by the Sumac Press, 613 North 22 Street La Crosse, Wisconsin. The types are Phelps Lino-Comp Granjon and foundry Bulmer hand set. The papers are Linweave text 70 and Early American 80 from John Leslie. Each copy is numbered 221 B and signed by the author." This book was the first of many fine press publications written by the members of the Norwegian Explorers and printed by Emerson G. Wulling and his Sumac Press.

Norwegian Explorer co-founder E.W. McDiarmid originally encouraged Blegen to submit this essay on the imagery of Sherlock Holmes to a national journal or to a university quarterly. In a note to McDiarmid, Vincent Starrett wrote "Please congratulate Blegen on his fine contribution. I read it with delight. In a small way he has attempted to do for the Sherlockian Saga what Livingstone Lowes did for Coleridge in *The Road to Zanadu*." Dean Blegen was quoted in the November 9, 1951 *Minneapolis Star* Newspaper: "It was undertaken as a pleasant bit of relaxation. The curious thing about it is that I have had

more calls and more 'fan' mail about this little booklet than I have ever had about more serious writings".

Theodore C. Blegen at that time was the Dean of the Graduate School at the University of Minnesota and a noted historian who had already written sixteen scholarly books, including the definitive history of Minnesota and the Norwegian Immigration to America. He was born in Minneapolis in 1891, received his master's and doctoral degrees from the University of Minnesota, and became a member of the faculty in 1927. He was a Guggenheim Fellow to Norway the following year. In 1943, he served as the Chair of the Library Committee that named E. W. McDiarmid as the Librarian. He was associated with the Minnesota Historical Society, and was a member of the Torske Klubben, the Norwegian Men's Club. Blegen passed away in 1969.

*THE CROWDED BOX-ROOM* sold for one dollar in 1951 and now is hard to find at any price. The Sherlock Holmes Collections contains several copies of *THE CROWDED BOX-ROOM*, along

with the clippings and correspondence surrounding its publication. Last year Gaylord Schanilec and Robert Rulon-Miller published *Emerson G. Wulling, Printer for Pleasure*. Wulling, who still lives in La Crosse, Wisconsin, has published 216 items since 1916. Blegen's book was number 65. Wulling also published Walter Klinefelter's biblio-list and *The Case of the Conan Doyle Crime Library* as well as the other Norwegian Explorer books: *Sherlock Holmes: Master Detective*, *Exploring Sherlock Holmes* and *Cultivating Sherlock Holmes*.

Blegen Hall on the West Bank Campus of the University of Minnesota is named in honor of Dean Theodore C. Blegen. It is located between the Wilson and Andersen Libraries. Last year Blegen was named as one of the 150 most Influential Minnesotans by the *Saint Paul Pioneer Press* Newspaper. In naming Blegen, the newspaper cited his advocacy of continuing education and his 20 books about Minnesota and the Norwegian history of the state. We remember him as the author of this neat little monograph. ♡

Richard J. Sveum, M. D.



Photo courtesy of University of Minnesota

Professor and historian Theodore Blegen, Harry Truman, and Hubert H. Humphrey. 1956

## From the President

**T**he Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections Annual Meeting is scheduled for Friday, June 29, 2001, at the Elmer L. Andersen Library. The Membership Meeting will be held in conjunction with the Norwegian Explorers conference -- 2001: A Sherlockian Odyssey, A Journey Among the Shaw 100, scheduled for June 29 to July 1, 2001. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend.

2001 is also the University of Minnesota's Sesquicentennial year. We are working diligently on Campaign

Minnesota in an effort to raise money to support the work of the University Library. We hope that you will continue to show your support of our mission to become the World Center for the study of Sherlock Holmes, and that you will consider a donation to the Sherlock Holmes Collections or the E. W. McDiarmid Curator Endowment.

This issue of the Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections Newsletter marks the start of our fifth volume. Since March of 1997 we have tried to communicate to our members the activities of the library and the contents of the

collections. The newsletter has expanded from the initial four pages to eight, our subscribing membership has grown, and we have been fortunate to feature many respected guest writers. The 2001 Baker Street Irregular's Birthday Honours List included our very own Newsletter Editor Julie McKuras, who was invested as "The Duchess of Devonshire". Congratulations to Julie McKuras, ASH, BSI.

I hope to see you this summer at our membership meeting. ♥

*Richard J. Sveum, M. D.*

## Musings

**I** consider myself lucky to have been in Tim Johnson's office the day he opened the boxes containing the original manuscripts of the Basil of Baker Street books. It was a bit like opening a gift, complete with the delight of lifting one group of papers after another from the box and seeing the notes that Eve Titus wrote. It is a wonderful series of books, and as Jenny Hanson noted in our lead article, Basil of Baker Street has been an introduction for many to Sherlock Holmes. I know that was true for my daughter Megan, who learned of Basil (and Sherlock Holmes) from the Disney film "The Great Mouse Detective." But the books have far more to offer, with the many references to the Great Detective and the fun in recognizing the names of the characters.

Eve Titus is currently recovering from Guillian-Barre Syndrome. It has been a difficult illness and recovery. I would like to thank Peter E. Blau for

putting me in contact with Ms. Titus' niece, Ginny Saltzman. Ginny generously offered to interview Ms. Titus, who is still unable to talk by phone. Ginny took a list of questions that were submitted by email, and responded with replies from her aunt. These replies are quoted in the article. I'm sure we all extend our wishes for a continued recovery for Ms. Titus, and appreciate the effort involved in contributing to this article.

Our 50 Year Article by Richard Sveum features a book that was small in size but noteworthy in its place in the history of the Norwegian Explorers. Theodore C. Blegen was a scholar, historian and author, and is generally accepted as the man who suggested The Norwegian Explorers as the name for a new scion society in 1948. It was Blegen who travelled to Meiringen to dedicate the plaque that commemorated not only the epic struggle between Holmes and Moriarty at the Reichenbach Falls, but the work of the

Norwegian Explorers and the Sherlock Holmes Society of London as well. Our 100 Year Article by John Bergquist also refers to this plaque and the place that Sherlock Holmes holds in the history of Meiringen.

As you can see by reading Tim Johnson's update, he has been quite busy publicizing the Collections. As Tim mentioned in his article, we all note with sorrow the passing of Wayne Swift, who was a good friend to the Sherlock Holmes Collections and to the world of Sherlockians. It is through the good wishes of Francine Swift that many memorials were sent to the Collections in his memory. Sandy Kozinn noted in a letter accompanying her donation, "Wayne was a well known and well loved Sherlockian ; there can be no better tribute to him than to enable others to study that which he loved himself." ♥

*Julie McKuras, ASH, BSI*

## An Update From the Collections

**W**e find ourselves on the eve of the arrival of yet another "Alberta Clipper," with forecasters predicting lows in the minus 20 degree Fahrenheit range, and wonder if Holmes, in his guise as a Norwegian Explorer, experienced a similar bone-numbing cold. We're certain that Holmes endured such chills by means of both mental and physical activity, and we take some comfort in the fact that we've been similarly employed in warding off the snow and ice and gray skies of the later winter months.

As to our own activities, we're pleased to report a number of items of interest to our readers. Besides our annual trek to the Birthday festivities in New York, we've had the opportunity to work with and present the Collections in a number of ways. A few of the highlights include: presenting the Collections to a class of teachers from Hamline University, providing tours and conversations with potential donors, assisting in planning the summer 2001 Holmes conference and beginning preparations for the summer 2001 exhibit and catalog on the Shaw 100, working with the staff of the Weisman Museum on Holmes items for the "Cabinet of Curiosities" exhibit, meeting with students from Minnehaha Academy for a tour and discussion of their class projects on mysteries and detective fiction, providing information

and a tour for Ecolab's community relations personnel that resulted in an article in Ecolab's corporate newsletter, providing information and a tour for Richard Chin of the St. Paul *Pioneer Press* that resulted in a front-page article in the Sunday entertainment section, presenting the collection to an undergraduate English class from Hamline University, conducting tours of the Collections for out-of-town visitors, and continuing the development campaign for the McDiarmid Curatorship.

We are pleased with the initial progress made with the campaign for the McDiarmid Curatorship. Since our last report, we launched the campaign at the August 2nd Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections annual meeting, received a letter of intent from our first "lead" donor for an estate planning gift of \$30,000, secured our second "lead" gift from Mary McDiarmid for \$10,000, raised \$26,130 (as of December 31, 2000) in unrestricted funds, and raised \$15,282 in restricted funds for the McDiarmid Curator. Thus, in this second opening phase of the campaign we have raised about \$71,412 (28.6%) towards our minimum goal of \$250,000. Our maximum goal for the McDiarmid Chair - one that would allow us to staff this position at the Curatorial/Assistant Librarian level—is \$1,000,000. Over the next nine months we will be engaged in a number of additional activ-

ities that we hope will move us to this higher goal. If you have questions or are interested in becoming a donor to the McDiarmid Curatorship please feel free to contact me directly.

Recently, we've also had discussions with the staff of the University Law Library in connection with the Shaw 100 exhibit to be held in conjunction with the Norwegian Explorers conference. The Law Library will be hosting a reception as part of the American Association of Law Libraries annual meeting here in July. Our legal partners are very interested in a "tie-in" with the Holmes exhibit. Initial ideas include incorporating a Sherlockian design into the reception invitations, having law library staff dressed in deerstalkers and capes (or as Victorian judges or policemen), and providing musical entertainment on the violin (with tunes appropriate to Holmes).

Finally, we wish to note our own sorrow at the passing of Wayne Swift following the BSI weekend in New York. My acquaintance with Wayne was brief, but memorable. I was moved by the thoughtfulness of his wife, Francine, in the inclusion of the Holmes Collections as a location for memorials to Wayne, and I will do my best as curator of the Collections to keep green the memory of Wayne as he so much enjoyed keeping green the memory of the Master. ♥

*Tim Johnson*

## Basil of Baker Street Continued from Page 1

world of giants." She selected a Sherlock Holmes theme for her Basil books because of her own admiration for the Canon, and selected the name Basil "because of Basil Rathbone". The notes about the author in the 1977 paperback edition of *Basil in Mexico*, state that Ms. Titus was the president of the Sherlock Holmes Society of Los Angeles. In an October 22, 1959 letter to Vincent Starrett, which is held by the Sherlock Holmes Collections, she writes she is "an honorary member of the Mousgrave Ritualists." Her acquaintances with and awareness of Sherlockians become very evident when reading the stories.

Adrian Conan Doyle praised the Basil books, referring to *Basil of Baker Street* as "delicious", according to Ms. Titus' Oct. 22, 1959 letter to Starrett. Basil of Baker Street is dedicated "To Adrian Conan Doyle in the humble hope that this book for boys and girls will be a bridge to Mr. Sherlock Holmes himself". Throughout the four books beginning with *Basil and the Lost Colony*, Ms. Titus began naming her characters after Sherlockians, friends, and relatives. Some of the references are direct, while others take a bit of unraveling to discover the origin of the name. We see Lord Adrian the world explorer, complete with carnation in buttonhole; The Maharajah of Bengistan, named after Nathan Bengis; Big Tuppy and later the "wise as a judge" Superintendent Bigelow, (*Basil in Mexico*, 10) after S. Tupper Bigelow; Vincenzo Starretti, after Vincent Starrett, (*Basil and the Lost Colony* is dedicated "For Mr. Vincent Starrett, Dean of Sherlockian Scholars", who declared himself "Enchanted by your 'mousterpiece' and enormously pleased by your generous dedication", in a Jan. 25, 1964 note to Ms. Titus); Young Richard of Davenport, Iowa, after her own son; Dickson and Carr, after John Dickson Carr; and Inspector Hollyer, after Cameron Hollyer. Some of her

characters bear the same names of those she admired, such as Pete Blau ("Blau's brainier than the rest" remarked Basil in *The Wild West*, 41), Bennett Shaw, Luther Norris, Bob Hahn and Dr. Julian Wolff, while others such as King Elyod, Queen Nairda and the Poet Prince Semloh can be reversed to the names Doyle, Adrian and Holmes. In *Basil and the Wild West*, the couple who manage the hotel are named the Thorbridges. As Ms. Titus stated, "I have fun with the names".

Basil of Baker Street shares many characteristics with Sherlock Holmes. Basil is a master of disguise, an expert at Baritsu and codes, plays the violin, looks for and observes all clues, and doesn't always share his plans or discoveries with his partner Dr. Dawson. He often gives the credit for crime solving to the police, and battles the evil Professor Ratigan as Holmes battled Professor Moriarty. He doesn't have a brother, but does have a sister Bryna. Dr. Dawson chronicles the adventures they share, and occasionally references an untold story. Throughout the series, whenever he is told he is the greatest detective, however, it is Basil who insists that Holmes is the greatest.

In 1986, Disney Studios released "The Great Mouse Detective." Leonard Maltin notes it was "based on Eve Titus' book, *Basil of Baker Street*" and "was the story of a Sherlock Holmesian mouse who's charged with solving a mystery and besting the beastly villain known as Ratigan." (286). The film had "the studio's most ambitious use of computer imaging to date in the climactic sequence which takes place inside London's Big Ben." (287) A book by the same title was published in 1987. The film was reissued in 1992 as "The Adventures of the Great Mouse Detective."

The Basil of Baker Street books have

proved to be, as Ms. Titus hopefully wrote in the dedication to her first book, "...a bridge to Mr. Sherlock Holmes himself." The manuscripts will now reside along with her books, among the other books, periodicals, films and artifacts that comprise The Sherlock Holmes Collections. ♡

Julie McKuras



Original illustration by Paul Galdone for *Basil of Baker Street*.

Photo courtesy of Children's Literature Research Collections, Kerlan Collection

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# Acquisitions

**D**avid Hammer, B.S.I. forwarded two more large boxes from his own Sherlock Holmes Library. These materials will be catalogued and filed with his previous donation, which includes his Holmes books and memorabilia, Gasogene Press records and correspondence, and personal Sherlockian correspondence. Mr. Hammer is a member of the Heritage Society of the University of Minnesota.

Ted Friedman, B.S.I. recently met with Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections President Richard Sveum in New York. Mr. Friedman donated the Tauchnitz edition of *Through the Magic Door*, Vol. 4008. He also donated a number of his stamp moulages, which utilize postal stamps in his Sherlockian designs.

J. Randolph Cox, B.S.I. donated a copy

of the periodical *Dime Novel Round-Up*. The October 2000 issue contains the article "Sherlock Holmes in the Claws of the Confidence Men; or, The Misadventures of a World Detective" by Nils Nordberg, B.S.I.

John and Inez Bergquist purchased and donated a CD-ROM that contains a database of photographs as well as genealogical and biographical information about Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. The CD-ROM was developed at the Bibliotheque et Universitaire at Lausanne, Switzerland. Michael Meer, B.S.I. delivered the disc to the Bergquists at the recent New York Birthday Weekend.

Hugo Koch contributed a copy of 'The Martyrdom of Man' and 'The Sign of the Four': *Edward Horace Mann, Richard Temple, Augustus H. Keane and Edwin W. Streeter – A prolegomenon to previously suppressed facts behind SIGN and the quest for the Great Mogul Diamond.* ♡



The *Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections* is a quarterly newsletter published by the Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections which seek to promote the activities, interests and needs of the Special Collections and Rare Books Department, University of Minnesota Libraries.

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L to R: Ted Friedman, B.S.I. and Richard J. Sveum, M.D.

photo by Julie McKuras



L to R: Tim Johnson, Michael Meer, B.S.I., and John Bergquist

photo by Julie McKuras



photo by Julie McKuras

Sherlock Holmes Stamp Moulage,  
by Ted Friedman, B.S.I.

# Using the Sherlock Holmes Collections

**T**exan Luci Zahray recently visited the Twin Cities area. Luci took the opportunity to tour the Sherlock Holmes

Collections and was accompanied by her good friend who writes under the name Mary Monica Pulver. Mary Monica also has a current mystery series written under the name of Monica Ferris, which includes *Crewel World*, *Framed in Lace*, and *A Stitch in Time*, and features her character Betsy Devonshire. While touring the Collections, Mary Monica was inspired, and has planned a future book

featuring the Elmer L. Andersen Library and Betsy Devonshire.

Randall Stock of Mountain View, California made a return visit in December to the Sherlock Holmes Collections in order to continue his research. His initial visit was highlighted in the December 2000 issue of this newsletter. ♡



photo by Julie McKuras

Mary Monica Pulver, Tim Johnson, and Luci Zahray, holding Lord Donegall's copy of *Beeton's Christmas Annual*.

## Remembrances

In supporting the Sherlock Holmes Collections, many donors have made contributions either in honor or in memory of special persons.

### IN HONOR OF

Scott Bond and Sherry Rose Bond  
Steve Clarkson  
Bryce L. Crawford, Jr.  
Gravesend Books  
Sherlock Holmes  
Nathan Patterson  
David Rush  
The Chicago Gang

### FROM

Andrew L. Solberg  
Rosemary Michaud  
Phil and Karen Bergem  
Philip Swiggum  
Shosaku Mashimo  
Howard B. Burchell  
Brian W. Pugh  
Peter Scalise

### IN MEMORY OF

Marlene Aig  
Henry Enberg  
Dennis France  
Cameron Hollyer  
Inspector Lestrade  
E. W. McDiarmid  
E. W. McDiarmid  
E. W. McDiarmid  
Captain W. R. Michell  
John and Dorothy Shaw  
Dr. Richard Sturtz  
Wayne Swift  
Wayne Swift  
Wayne Swift  
Wayne Swift  
Wayne Swift  
Wayne Swift  
Wayne Swift  
Wayne Swift  
Wayne Swift  
Wayne Swift  
E. W. Ziebarth

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Paula Perry  
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Richard A. Wein  
Thomas and Marie O'Day  
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Phil and Karen Bergem

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Because of the high cost of returned newsletters, we would appreciate being informed of changes of address or other corrections.