

Soroptimist Across Canada



Eastern and Western Canada Regions - Spring 2024

Soroptimists in both Eastern and Western Canada Regions recognize that we live, work and play on the traditional ancestral lands of many First Nations across our country. We acknowledge the tumultuous history endured by the First Nations, Metis and Inuit peoples, and we commit to moving forward with mutual trust, respect, reciprocity, and collaboration in the spirit of reconciliation.

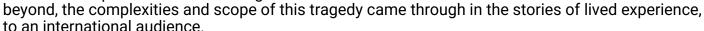
Submitted by WCR Governor Suzanne Heron and ECR Governor Gertrud Hocke

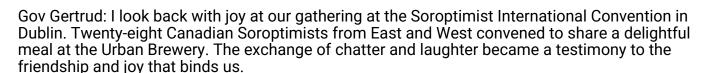
Building Bridges across Canada

Gov Gertrud: It is a source of pride and enjoyment that we have built bridges between Eastern and Western Canada during the last two years.

Gov Suzanne: Yes! We became friends through our shared values and goals, and discovered we complement each other. We have begun a true Canadian sisterhood of Soroptimists.

We started with an ambitious project: a joint webinar on Murdered & Missing Indigenous Women & Girls. With speakers from both Regions and





Gov Suzanne: Then came the idea to produce a Canadian Soroptimist Newsletter. There is so much to say, we're still refining it. Join in - it's a wonderful way to get to know who and what are in our sister Regions.

Gov Gertrud: A standout achievement was the online NGO event "Roads to Overcoming Poverty," to showcase Canadian narratives. The compelling stories shared by LYD award winners, alongside insights from esteemed politicians, shed light on the multifaceted challenges faced by newcomers and highlighted the urgent need for action.

Gov Suzanne: Then we both got word that our top Region LYD winners are Federation winners! Although it's not something we did, we feel very proud.

We look ahead to more Canadian collaborations. Both Region Boards support developing the Soroptimist Leadership institute as a benefit of membership that attracts young women and builds our succession planning, and members are starting work on rolling out a terrific program.

Gov Gertrud: I also look forward to our project to uncover the rich history of Canadian Soroptimist clubs. Exploring our collective heritage, we will uncover valuable insights to celebrate the forthcoming 100-year milestone of Soroptimist in Canada in 2026. These projects hold great promise and excitement for the road ahead.





Two Federation Finalists!

Every year SIA selects three LYD finalists from across the Federation to receive \$10,000 USD each. This year two are from Canadian clubs!



Daryn (SI Guelph) with ECR Gov. Gertrud



Maryam (SI Vancouver) with WCR Gov. Suzanne





ECR and WCR Boards 2024-2026

SIA Director Melanie Kenny installed both Eastern Canada Region and Western Canada Region Boards at our Spring Conferences.



Incoming ECR Board, L to R: Cheryl Ball, Governor; Keshala Fernando-Dissanayake, Governor-Elect; Karen Bortolin, Treasurer; Aline Chan, Secretary. With Melanie Kenny, SIA Director and Jennifer Oliver, Past Governor, Chair Nominations Committee



Incoming ECR Governor Cheryl Ball, SI Thunder Bay



Incoming WCR Governor Chari Grant, SI Tri Cities



Incoming WCR Board, L to R: Lana Deruyter, Board Member; Shelley Della Mattia, Secretary; Pamela Mac-Donald, Treasurer; Shirley Stewart, Governor-Elect; Chari Grant, Governor



Submitted by Dianne Nielsen, Past SFC Board Chair

Eyes to the Future

Over sixty years ago, a small group of courageous women, with eyes on the future, determined that Canadian Soroptimists should have their own Foundation... a Foundation that would fund programs identified, and supported, by Canadian Soroptimists. The Soroptimist Foundation of Canada was formed!

Do you remember why you became a Soroptimist? I do! I was looking to meet like-minded women who believed that they could make a difference in the lives of women and girls in their community. I still believe this is the case. Although I was anxious each time that I accepted the challenge of joining a new committee, serving on my club executive, a region board, or most recently, the Foundation Board of Directors, I have met some truly remarkable women. These women have supported me and given me the confidence to succeed at the job at hand while I learned new skills and applied my existing skills. Their support and encouragement made me believe that I could meet the challenges before me. Along the way, many of these women have become my friends.

The Foundation's assets have continued to grow, reaching over 3 Million in investments this year. While the current board is excited about achieving this strategic financial goal, it is mindful that a strong board is needed to ensure the Foundation continues to meet the needs of Canadian women and girls in the next 60 years.

The Foundation board is made up of Canadian Soroptimists and only Canadian Soroptimists, just like you. The Board of Directors is responsible for steering the organization with sound and ethical governance. They are also responsible for the financial management, legislative compliance, and various other duties related to the operation of a charitable foundation. *Without a strong and committed Board of Directors there is no Foundation*.

I hope that you will put your name forward to serve on the Foundation Board of Directors this year. You will grow, be able to apply your skills, learn skills, and make new friends from across the country. You will not be disappointed. Please contact any member of the Nominating Committee for more information.

Looking to the future! Dianne Nielsen, Chair2024 Nominating Committee

Violet Poruchko WCR violetp@shaw.ca 778-580-6177

Janet Simms-Baldwin ECR emma2b@rogers.com 519-740-3261

Colleen Schmidt WCR colleen.schmidt53@icloud.com 604-613-2334

RoseMary Reid ECR <u>rreidbaca@gmail.com</u> 705-933-8849

Club Profile—SI Courtenay 80 Year Anniversary

Submitted by Margaret Wootton club historian, liaison with Friendship links, member since 1985



Fifteen Charter Members plus guests and dignitaries attended the Charter Banquet of Soroptimist International of Courtenay on 24 March 1944 with Kay LANGE (later JANCOWSKI), a young pharmacist, as Charter President and SI Chilliwack as the 'mother club' where Kay had been a member for two years prior to moving to Vancouver Island. We cherish the first History Album full of congratulatory messages. Although Kay married and raised a family in Alert Bay

before returning to the Valley, she maintained her membership until her death in 2010 at age 92, a 69 year Soroptimist and a recipient of WCR Frances Wagner 'Woman of Achievement Award'. Long membership and friendships were also held by other Charter members or those who joined soon after. These include sisters Cherry and Mamie AITKEN and sisters Maudy and Bev (nee UR-QUHART). The AITKEN sisters' legacy to the club in 2015 enabled us to make major donations to local organizations that the club supported for many years e.g., Transition Society and an Infant and Child Day Care providing parenting support on grounds of a high School.

SI Courtenay was soon contributing to the local community and internationally. They became known for their fundraising teas and formal balls (the first, in January 1945, raised funds to assist in restoration of the city of Coventry, England), Christmas parties for OAPs, participation in 'Skattered skits' competitions with other Service Clubs, floats in Empire Day and Dominion Day parades, and selling TB Christmas Seals for 22 years. Making 1,000 Soroptimist Christmas puddings in November 1973 was the beginning of this major fundraiser for over 30 years. SI Courtenay was one of the last Canadian Soroptimist clubs to continue holding Youth Citizenship Forums and annually presented Violet Richardson Citizenship Awards starting in 1969, high school bursaries in names of deceased members and then from BC Gaming funds and later expanding to North Island College students, and 'Live Your Dream Awards' (formerly 'TAP' and then 'WOA'). Our Mentoring Day "Yes You Can' was a role model for SIA's now Dream It Be It'.

Friendship Links established decades ago with Soroptimist clubs in England (former SI Leamington-Warwick), Wales (SI Bridgend & District) and Japan (SI Osaka-Naniwa) continue to provide a special connection internationally to share about projects and sometimes to contribute to them, learn about different cultures and form long time friendships. We enjoy meeting members at International Conventions, have home hosted and been given hospitality in England and Wales, were treated royally to Expo '90 in Osaka during SIA Convention in Kyoto, email regularly, exchange Christmas cards, zoomed during Covid, and twice attended each other's major anniversary celebrations. Although the English club sadly folded in 2021 after more than 80 years of service, they continue to keep in contact.

SI Courtenay celebrates 80 years with return to popular fundraiser "PJs & Pearls" 1 June 2024: https://www.facebook.com/SICourtenay



Introcuding Soroptimist International of Courtenay's

Tea Sales Fundraiser

Our brilliant President Nordica inspired this fundraiser!

We are now offering it to other clubs in our region, country and globally. Would you believe we have already shipped our tea to Wales? We would be pleased to ship to you.

- We have created "wholesale" options for clubs to earn a bit more profit by packaging their own tea, or slightly less by purchasing it packaged.
- These teas make great speaker/participation gifts or for those who own their own businesses, they make perfect customer/vendor appreciation gifts.

Retail Price: \$18./bag

Clubs cannot sell for less, unless to another club member. The recommended price for a member: \$15.

Wholesale Price: \$13./bag (packaged) Minimum order 20 bags, any blend combination. Example profit: 20 bags @ a profit of \$5.=\$100. (buy @ \$13./sell @ \$18.) Pretty easy money for just re-selling our very

Currently, the labels on the teas say "Courtenay" but a new label is in the works to remove this word.

The teas will then be a universal fit for all clubs.

We recommend that each club adds its own re-order label with club information so you don't miss a sale from your contacts.

own branded tea! Some clubs have chosen to purchase teas at \$13. and sell to members within their club for \$18. as a mini fundraiser. So many choices!



Wholesale Price: \$10/bag (loose) You can make more profit by packaging your own bags with a minimum order of 50 bags at only \$10./bag. That's a \$400. profit and a fun club activity. Bags & labels are included of course. Our club packaged 200 bags of tea in two hours.

Weights: Empower-Mint (Herbal)=50g/bag Equali-Tea (Black)=75g/bag

ECR Conference Report

Submitted by Margaret Allin, SI Peterborough

ECR Conference weekend was filled with information, much celebrating and sharing, prizes and awards. Also CAKE. So much cake! The conference was hosted by SI Toronto. It was an extra-special weekend for their members, celebrating the 90 year anniversary of their club.

We heard presentations from two SI Peterborough members. Marylyn White spoke to the fact that everyone has the opportunity to connect with SI members when you travel



internationally, if you do a little advance research. Wendy Templeton gave an enthusiastic presentation on the Soroptimist Foundation of Canada, and its recent milestone of reaching 3 million dollars in donations.

SIA Director Melanie Kenny had a terrific presentation and had much encouragement for members. I liked her statements that "we're our own greatest resource" and "empowered women help empower women"... our power lies in helping to make a difference.

Another highlight was the presentation by Yllka Boyku. Yllka is a Peterborough success story, supported by, and even housed by SI Peterborough members. A Trent University graduate, Yllka spoke about Al and how there can be an "engineered bias" in its development. After her talk there were lots of comments and questions about this newest technology in all our lives.



Saturday night we got to let loose and have fun, as we dressed up and danced to ABBA tunes after dinner and presentations.

Sunday morning we heard from a visitor from SI Africa. She talked about their projects, which include messages against Female Genital Mutilation, holding leadership camps for girls, and the necessity of reusable period products.

Most moving of all, hearing from the two regional LYD award winners, Daryn Brito and Ida Mensah. To say these young women have overcome obstacles in their young lives is an understatement. These two young women are evidently strong, resilient and determined. They were perfect regional LYD winners.

Jean Skillman summarized the weekend by stating that on Friday we learned the "who" in Soroptimist governance, on Saturday we heard the "how, what, where", and on Sunday "WHY". Hearing from our regional award winners was indeed the "why".

I shall never forget Ida's words: "I'll continue writing my story until I find my happy ending".

WCR Conference—some of the fun



For the past several years the WCR Conference has included a hotly-contested lipsync competition among clubs. In 2022 SI Victoria Westshore took the trophy with "Born to be Wild". In 2023 SI Tri Cities took it with "Harper Valley PTA". This year Sherri Smith took it back home to Central Alberta with an outstanding lipsync of "Rich" by Maren Morris.



The other contestants this year: SI Victoria Westshore with "Nine to Five" by Pitbull and Dolly Parton, and SI Tri Cities with "Gitarzan" by Ray Stevens.

What will we do next year?



New Members-2023-2024 club year

SI Central Alberta

Robyn Devine and **Jan Underwood** are our two newest members who both joined at the beginning of this club year.



Robyn is from Blackfalds and works as an Educational Assistant at Lacombe Outreach School. We nominated her for the Volunteer of the Year award, which you can see she won, and why!!!

Jan is from Red Deer and works at Care for Newcomers as a Settlement Practitioner Public Awareness. We have also nominated her for a Mayors Recognition Award from the City of Red Deer, and will find out in May if she has won. She recently also won a

Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Medal for Alberta.

SI Chilliwack



L to R Debbie, Holly, Karen

Debbie Davidson, Volunteer Manager, Project Eve; former Registered Nurse—Debbie came to our club to do a presentation on her volunteer group, Project Eve. She joined because our service club supports women and is aligned with the work that project Eve stands for (Ending Violence against women with Education)

Holly Toupin, Regional Vice President @ RBC (Financial Services) — Holly moved to BC from Winnipeg to be with family, she heard about our club on social media and came to a business meeting. She joined as she really liked our values and the work that Soroptimist

does and our mission, what we stand for (supporting women and girls to economic empowerment)

Karen Robey, retired Professional Fundraiser, originally from Ontario—Karen joined because of Heather's Hope Chest. She came to a donation day and loved the project, she immediately sponsored two shelves and became a member shortly after!

Marilynn Kendall, Executive Leadership Coach—She partners with women in leadership roles to support their leadership potential. Marilynn came to check out a meeting after hearing about us on social media. The values of our club and the people were a big draw for her. She wants to get more involved in the community and excited to be part of Dream It Be it!





Hailey Burkett, Social Media/Public Relation —Hailey did her practicum with us when she was completing her certificate in Public Relations @ University College of the Fraser Valley. She felt very connected to our club and the people and has since become a member. She said "I've never been part of such an all women's club like this!"

New Members-2023-2024 club year



SI Thunder Bay

Linda Bachmaier — a Personal Support Worker by profession. Linda joined after stopping by our booth at the Home and Garden Show for information about our club. We were selling raffle tickets at the time and promoting our Two-Bit Auction. She is looking forward to learn about more opportunities that the club has to offer her in the areas where we assist women and girls in the community.

SI Tri Cities

The quotes are responses to "What attracts you to Soroptimist?" on our member enrollment form. Photos from our club roster.



Angela Cullen, Family Physician — "The opportunity to support women and families in my community."



Colleen Macy, Former Recreation Therapist at a Long Term Care Home — "The idea of helping woman and children in my community. I have time and a willingness to help others."



Connie Small, retired from BC Health Services Authority — "I am wanting to make a positive difference in this world and have a great time while doing it."



Karen Laforet, Home Business — "Helping women and their children."



Noemi Victorino, Director, Fund Development, The Low Entropy Foundation - "I am passionate about helping women not just to survive but thrive."



Michelle Spring

Memorials Eastern Canada Region

Maxine Tenander

The ECR Board is saddened to announce the passing of Maxine Tenander on the afternoon of Saturday, March 23, 2024 with her family by her side.

Maxine is a graduate of the Faculty of Pharmacy at the University of Toronto. The members of SI Thunder Bay were pleased to welcome Maxine as a new member when she joined on December 1, 1987. She was an active board member who chaired many committees and fundraisers. She attended ECR Spring Conferences as well as SIA Conventions. Maxine was President of SI Thunder Bay in 1993-95. She was instrumental in establishing the addition of the Soroptimist Memorial Garden in recognition of past Soroptimist members. This garden was dedicated at the SI Thunder Bay's Garden party celebrating SIA's 100th anniversary.



Over the years, Maxine was the recipient of awards in recognition for her service to her profession, her clients, and many organizations she took leadership roles in. In 1995, she was recognized with the Canadian Pharmacist of the Year award.



Corrine Rivers

Corinne Margaret Rivers was born on November 26, 1950, and started her next great adventure on Monday, January 29, 2024, after a long battle with cancer.

Corinne was a founding member of clubs in Cambridge and York Region and was a member of clubs in Toronto and Hong Kong. She served in many capacities locally, regionally, and nationally, including serving on the Board of Directors of the Soroptimist Foundation of Canada. Corinne was so proud of the network of Soroptimist sisters around the world and was responsible for bringing many of us into the world of SI.

In true Corinne fashion, her Celebration of Life on March 24th included a fundraising table for SI of York Region and the Soroptimist Foundation of Canada. As of the end of March, SI York Region had received more than \$1,200 and SFC almost \$1,500 in donations in Corinne's memory.

Corinne's legacy will live on through her Soroptimist sisters. She has left our lives but not our hearts.

Memorials Western Canada Region

Doreen Janko

Doreen Janko was a very memorable character to all Soroptimists she met. We lost Doreen July 2, 2023 very peacefully and on her own terms, which was the only way she would have had it!

Doreen was a force unto her own. She started her career as a writer in radio, television and print, at a time when women stayed home and kept a nice home. Her professional career continued until Doreen and husband Stanley moved to Osoyoos in the mid 70s where they became very caring and involved citizens in their new community.



In the 1980s Doreen was introduced to Soroptimist. The Soroptimist vision was ideal to her and with many of her like-minded friends they chartered SI Osoyoos in 1984. Among the many hats Doreen wore, I am sure many of you will remember her alter ego, the Queen. If you attended Conference in Osoyoos in 2015 then you met the Queen. She is a former Frances Wagner winner; this was a very proud moment for her and actually left her with nothing to say (a rare moment, indeed). Soroptimists and the incredible work we do was always at her heart.

In April 2023 Doreen attended SI Canada West Online club's Pink Tea. Doreen had never experienced Zoom and she could not understand how a club could actually work without meeting in person. The Pink Tea opened her eyes to a whole new world and she was sold! The experience was so impressive she felt the need to write about it. Her article was published in the Western Canada newsletter a couple of months before she passed, her final Soroptimist contribution.



Marie Noon

Marie Noon was born in 1932 on a homestead near Roasvear, Alberta. Mary was her real name, but there were so many girls named Mary in the one-room school that she went by Marie and used that name ever since.

Marie moved to Edmonton as a teenager, and in 1950 married Elmer Noon. They raised three children and had five grandchildren. She worked in a bakery when the kids were young, and then studied to become a nurse's aide and resident companion to seniors. She had many talents as a photographer, handicrafter and artist, winning prizes in local exhibitions and selling her work in several stores.

Marie was active in sports and belonged to many organizations. She sewed with Days for Girls and knitted baby outfits for an Edmonton hospital. With her daughter Jaynne, a member of SI Edmonton, she attended club events and helped with projects. In 2016 Marie became a Soroptimist, and as a member attended leadership retreats and several Region Conferences.

Marie loved being a "Chippie" (chip runner) for SI Edmonton casinos and working registration tables at club events. Marie and Jaynne traveled to Stoyaniv in Western Ukraine in 2017 to visit the Maple Leaf House for girls, a project of the NASHI group—a volunteer organization fighting human trafficking. SI Edmonton had donated \$5000, and Marie and Jaynne saw the Maple Leaf in the girls' dining room acknowledging that donation.

Memorials Western Canada Region

Donna Bradley

Donna Bradley passed away on October 20, 2023. When her cancer became untreatable she went to her church and spoke with the Pastor to make sure that the service for her would be the way she wanted it to be. She jokingly said we better say something nice about her!!! She had a real sense of humour even in these dire circumstances.

Donna was a member of SI Surrey Delta for 15 years. She didn't have a high education but early on she became an avid advocate for women's rights. Donna had aboriginal blood and therefore was passionate about the rights of that culture. Donna had a lifetime of selfless dedication to service for women and their families. In addition to her extensive work on Resolutions for the Provincial Council of Women, she was active for many years in the Business and Professional Women's Association. And a founding Board Member of



Servants Anonymous Society in Surrey that was established in the year 2000. Taking women off the streets and giving them a chance for a new productive life, was close to her heart.

Donna had a superpower. When a social issue arose, either locally, provincially or federally, Donna was right there to call a poitician who was connected to that issue. I'm certain she was on a first name basis with all of them. She was relentless in her quest to make our world a better place, especially for women and children.

Dream It, Be It—Youth Report

Submitted by Lori Jackson, SI Chilliwack

This is the script of a speech by two young women who have participated in SI Chilliwack's Dream It, Be It.



Hi I'm Alexis and I'm Alexa.

We were so excited to be given this opportunity to share our experience with Dream It, Be It. We both went to this event in our first year in high school and we liked it so much that we went to it the next year as well.

In grade nine, we were introduced to this program by our work experience teacher who thought this program would be perfect for us. And it was. We had no idea what to expect when we first got invited other than it was for women and young girls like ourselves. We were met by a lovely group

of women who planned an entire day of things to do to learn about ourselves and explore our futures.

We did many activities to explore our personalities to align us with a career fitting to our interests,



hobbies, and personality. We also did things like yoga, breathing exercises, and games. We got to hear from guest speakers who talked about their struggles that they went through as women to get where they are in their lives and careers. We were able ask them questions about why they chose that career path and how it had changed so many

times. This was comforting to know about because it is hard to decide what we want to do, and to know that we can try so many things is relieving.

Our favourite part of the day was when we had the chance to talk to all of the women running the event. We set up our chair and desks in a circle and went around to do individual Q&As with each Dream It, Be It mentor. We got to ask them questions about their life experiences like if they had ever experienced work place harassment, how they dealt with wavering self confidence, and how they balanced their home lives and work lives. These are all tough situations that women go through and it was eye opening to hear how some of the women had gone through these things and how it affected them.

Getting to hear about some of the experiences that shaped these women was so special because this opened my eyes to be able to see women not as unrelatable adults, but as girls who have been through the same things I'm going through and who have shown me that I am not going through these experiences alone and that I'm on the right path.

In my personality test, I learned that I value financial reward, stability, and intellectual stimulation. This aligned to jobs like doctors, CEOs, and managers. Although I'm still unsure of what I want to pursue, and I change my mind every week, it still helped me realize careers that I know I don't want to do and don't think would be a good fit at all like a counselor, social worker or anything in trades.

We've interacted with the Soroptimist club a few times over our high school years so this January when Lori reached out and asked us to speak to you all we jumped at the opportunity! But since we just started a new semester at school, we definitely procrastinated writing this speech, but when we finally did we sat down in my room and reflected about our time at the Dream It, Be It event and how much it has impacted us in our lives and the way we make decisions for our future.

Overall, we are so grateful to he here telling you about this event that has impacted not only us, but so many other girls worldwide. We are both looking forward to continuing our involvement with the Soroptimist club. Thanks for listening!

Region Teams

Western Canada Board 2023-2024

Governor:

Suzanne Heron

(SI Victoria Westshore)

Governor-Elect:

Chari Grant

(SI Tri Cities)

Treasurer:

Susan Barber

(SI Chilliwack)

Secretary:

Shirley Stewart

(SI Langleys)

Member-at-Large:

Shellev DellaMattia

(SI Langleys)

Parliamentarian:

Joan Jackson

(SI Victoria Westshore)

2023-2024 Committee Chairs

Membership:

Donna Duvall (SI Abbotsford-Mission)

Public Awareness:

Feezah Jaffer (SI Surrey Delta)

Fundraising:

Anna Der (ŠI Edmonton)

Program:

Colleen Schmidt (SI Abbotsford-Mission)

Melanie Kenny (SÌ Saskatoon)

Celebrating Success:

Megan Eastwood (SI Tri Cities)

Advocacy:

Janneke Lewis (SI N&W Vancouver)

Carrell Wingrave (SI Canada West Ónline)

Friendship:

Darlene Jamieson (SI Surrey Delta)

Conference 2024:

Dana Martin (SI Chilliwack)

Website: wcsoroptimist.org

Facebook: facebook.com/

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Eastern Canada Board 2023-2024

Governor:

Gertrud Hocke

(SI Cambridge)

Governor-Elect:

Cheryl Ball

(SI Thunder Bay)

Treasurer:

Karen Bortolin

(SI Thunder Bay)

Secretary:

Susan Rivers

(SI Cambridge)

Director:

Raheleh Barkhordari

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Keshala Dissanayake

(SI Cambridge)

Past Governor:

Jennifer Oliver

(SI Guelph)

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Jean Skillman (SI Toronto)

Public Awareness:

Tanna Edwards (SI Peterborough)

Fundraising:

Cheryl Ball (SI Thunder Bay)

Program:

LYD Raheleh Barkhordari (SI Toronto)

DIBI Keshala Dissanayake (SI Cambridge)

Celebrating Success:

Serena Reynolds (SI Grand Erie)

Website:

Susan Pierce (SI Kawartha Lakes)

Website: ecsoroptimist.org/

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