

Vol. 2008, #12
December 2008



NORTHERN KENTUCKY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

The Feedline

NKARC/KD7ARET Christmas Dinner

All NKARC and KD7ARET members and their guests are invited to attend the annual Christmas dinner Monday, December 8 at 6:30. The location will be the Golden Corral at 488 Orphanage Rd. in Fort Wright, just north of I-275 off of Rte. 17.



Gary Johnston Re-elected

Congratulations to Gary Johnston, KI4LA, of Edgewood, who has been re-elected to the position of Vice Director of the ARRL's Great Lakes Division. With 1218 votes, Gary narrowly edged out Daniel Romanchik, KB6NU, of Ann Arbor with 1205 votes and John Meyers, NB4K, of Butler who garnered 1155 votes.

W4OYI, SK

Extracted from the ARRL Letter, Vol. 27, No. 47

George S. Wilson III, W4OYI, of Owensboro, Kentucky, passed away at his home on November 25. He was 76. Wilson served as the ARRL's 11th President from January 1992-July 1995. He resigned from the position after a stroke in 1995. Wilson's tenure in ARRL leadership included positions as Kentucky Section Emergency Coordinator, Kentucky Section Communications Manager, Vice Director and Director of the Great Lakes Division, as well as Vice President and First Vice President, eventually culminating in the position of ARRL President. Upon retirement from the League's top position, Wilson was named President Emeritus based on his lifelong commitment to Amateur Radio and the League — one of only four people granted this honor. He also served as an Assistant Director in the Great Lakes Division.



Inside this issue:

Top of the Tower	3
November Meeting Minutes	4
Mark's Mutterings	5
Antenna Thoughts	6
Weaver's Words	7

Dates to Remember:

- Dec 8 – NKARC/KD7ARET Christmas Dinner
- Dec 13/14 – [ARRL 10 Meter Contest](#)
- Jan 1 – [Straight Key Night](#)
- Jan 3 – [Kids Day](#)
- Jan 14 – NKARC Membership Meeting

NKARC Directory

President:

Dann Fox, KI4AVO

dfox03@fuse.net

Vice President:

Greg Hatton, KG4ZTG

Club Trustee & Historian:

Brian DeYoung, K4BRI

k4bri@arrl.net

Feedline Editor:

Mark Volstad, AI4BJ

mvolstad@insightbb.com

859-689-4234

Webmaster:

Robert Kluck, N4IJS

n4ijs@k4co.org

Director at Large:

Don King, AJ4DK

kingdl19406@msn.com

Secretary:

Bob Burns, AB4BK

b.burns@fuse.net

Net Manager:

Robert Kluck, N4IJS

n4ijs@k4co.org

Repeaters (K4CO): 147.255+ and 444.350+ Edgewood (PL 123.0), 147.375+ Walton, 146.895+ Highland Heights. The 147.255 repeater is a linked Echolink node, accessible via N4IJS-R.

NKARC Net: Tuesdays, 7:30 PM on the 147.255 repeater

VE Testing: Testing sessions are held by appointment only on the 2nd Monday of each month, prior to the NKARC membership meeting. Testing begins at 6:00 pm. To make an appointment, contact Lyle Hamilton at ab8sh@arrl.net or tel. 513-315-4032

NKARC Web Site: <http://www.k4co.org>

NKARC Membership Meetings: 2nd Monday of each month at 7:30 pm at the Hilltop Church of Christ, 5300 Taylor Mill Rd (Ky. 16), Taylor Mill, KY. Visitors are always welcome!

The Feedline is published monthly by and for the members of the Northern Kentucky Amateur Radio Club. It is distributed via direct email to current NKARC members. **If you are a member but are not receiving your copy, please notify the Feedline editor.** Permission is hereby granted to any non-profit amateur radio group to quote or reprint from this publication provided appropriate source credit is given. Submissions for the January

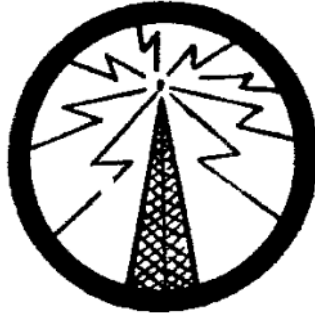
2009 Feedline must be received no later than January 6. Submissions, address or call changes and circulation problems may be sent to the Feedline editor:

Mark Volstad, AI4BJ
6098 Tosha Dr., Burlington, KY 41005
Email: mvolstad@insightbb.com

Top of the Tower

Hello Everyone,

2009 is close at hand, so it is time to do some planning for the New Year. We hope to get a schedule of demonstrations and presentations together for the next year. We will post a sign up sheet in the Feedline and on the web site so that people who are interested in sharing their ham related activities can contact us with what they have to offer. We can take that information and organize it into a schedule for club members and the public to have advance notice on topics that they may be interested in during the year.



I am looking forward to finding out what activities people would like to bring to the club meeting. For organization and scheduling purposes, I have made up a sign up sheet that can be used to send in your ideas. This form will be listed on the web-site and feed-line or can be picked up at a meeting. Please download a copy, fill it out, and return it to us. We hope to have a list of activities started and in our publications at the 1st of the year.

I hope every one has a safe and happy holiday season.

73,
Dann Fox

November Net Report

If you are interested in helping the club out and expanding your Amateur Radio skill set, please take a turn at running one of our weekly nets! This is a great way to hone your radio, net control, and message handling skills in a friendly environment. If you are interested, please contact Robert Kluck, N4IJS, at (859) 426-5588 or n4ijs@k4co.org

DATE	NCS	CHECKINS	TIME (MINS)	TRAFFIC
11/4/08	AJ4DK (Don)	6	33	0
11/11/08	KB4VKS (Mike)	11	28	0
11/18/08	N4IJS (Robert)	7	20	0
11/25/08	KB4VKS (Mike)	7	16	0
TOTALS		31	97	0

November Meeting Minutes

MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 10, 2008 MEETING OF THE NORTHERN KENTUCKY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

The meeting was called to order by Don King at 7:32 p.m. at the Hilltop Church of Christ in Taylor Mill. Don led the group in the pledge to the flag. Self introductions followed.

The minutes of the October meeting were approved as they appeared in the Feedline.

Don reported that we now have one key to our new meeting location. The club was required to pay a \$50 deposit, and if the key is lost, we will have to pay \$750 to cover the cost of replacing the church locks.

Don stated that the .255 repeater seems to be working ok now. Nobody spoke up to contradict this assessment.

Lyle Hamilton reported that the one scheduled candidate for tonight's VE session was a no-show.

Don reported that the VE testing conducted recently at Dixie Heights High School was very successful. 22 out of 26 students passed the Technician exam. Two students earned a perfect score, including Robert Kluck (II), son of NKARC webmaster Robert Kluck. Robert (I) has written an article for QST about the amateur radio course that is taught by Jim

Hicks at Dixie Heights. The article has been accepted, but no publication date has been set yet.

Mark Volstad stated that he is contemplating organizing a study class for anyone interested in earning their General class license. He will put a note in the Feedline to find out how much interest there is in this.

Mark also stated that, due to requests from several members, he would try to compile a printed directory of NKARC members. He will discuss this with Dann Fox before proceeding.

Mark reported that former NKARC member Don Maupin W8NSV was asked to shut down or rename his NKARC Yahoo group, due to concerns by the club leadership team over having two separate NKARC web sites, and that Don had complied with the request. Tony White explained that Don had set up the group as a favor to the club several years ago when our former web site went offline for an extended period of time.

Tony White announced that the slate of candidates for club officers for 2009 consisted of Dann Fox KI4AVO for President, Robert Gulley AK3Q for Vice President, and Don King AJ4DK for Director at Large. The slate was accepted by acclamation, followed by a hearty round of applause in appreciation for the vol-

unteers.

Mark mentioned that it would be helpful if the club were to acquire an LCD projector for use in future presentations during meetings. These have now dropped in price to just a few hundred dollars. No decision was made at this time

The meeting was adjourned at 8:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Volstad (Bob Burns being absent)

ATTENDEES

Don King AJ4DK
Robert Westbrook KJ4FZS
Mark Volstad AI4BJ
Tony White AI4IP
Dave Core K8WDA
Lyle Hamilton AB8SH
Robert Gulley AK3Q
Jonathon Mueller KC8SWH
Mike Works KG4RXS
Joe Stern KI4QG
Dave Schmidt KI4QH
W. Bruce Davis AC8BT
Rob Ziegler KI4YWJ

Mark's Mutterings

Anyone for a General class?

To my knowledge, NKARC has not offered any FCC licensing classes in the 4+ years that I have been a member. Other clubs have stepped in to fill this void. Just last month, OH-KY-IN offered a Technician class in Burlington. I've been giving serious consideration to organizing a General class some time after the New Year. Many Techs have already taken advantage of the elimination of the code requirement to upgrade to General, but I suspect that there may still be some who would like to upgrade but who need a helping hand to master the test material. This might even include a few of the 40 or so students who passed their Tech exam as part of Jim Hicks' Radio Technology class at Dixie Heights High School during the past year.

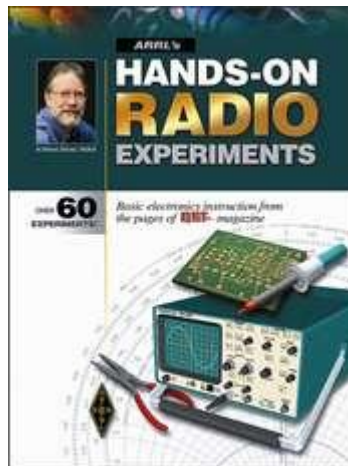
Since I've never been involved in any kind of ham radio class, I'm looking for advice and some volunteers to help me out. Among the many decisions to be made include whether the course should be scheduled for one night a week over many weeks, or crammed into two consecutive Saturdays (I'm leaning towards the latter). If you are interested in participating, either as a student or as an instructor, please contact me.

Hands-on Radio

It's no big secret that most people who are entering the Amateur Radio hobby today do not have the engineering backgrounds that were so common decades ago. My experience has been that many of these newcomers are keen to improve their technical skills, and the ARRL has been doing a lot to meet this demand. In the February 2003 Issue of QST Magazine, Ward Silver N0AX (author of "Ham Radio for Dummies") began writing a monthly column titled Hands-on Radio. Each article covers a specific aspect of electronic theory and includes one or more simple experiments that help to reinforce the lesson. Lesson 1 introduces the common-emitter amplifier, probably the most common building block in electron-

ics.

Every article that has been published to date is available in PDF format at <http://www.arrl.org/tis/info/HTML/Hands-On-Radio/>. This web page also contains links to many other valuable resources for hams who are interested in expanding their understanding of electronics, including sources of components and test equipment.



The ARRL has also published the first 61 experiments in [book form](#). They also sell a [parts kit](#) which contains all of the parts needed to complete these experiments.

This is a terrific resource for hams who want to expand their skills beyond the ba-

sics of electricity and electronics.

And what about those who want to start with the very basics? Well, every edition of the ARRL Handbook that has been published in the last 50 years contains at least one chapter that does a good job of covering the fundamentals DC and AC theory. An excellent on-line tutorial can also be found at <http://www.allaboutcircuits.com/>.

The important thing to remember is that, as with most things in life, mastery of electronics does not happen by magic. It requires patience and dedication — qualities that seem to be in short supply in our age of instant gratification.

Well, that wraps up another year of inflicting my random thoughts and ideas on my fellow NKARC members. I am grateful to those of you have offered suggestions and words of encouragement. I wish you all a peaceful holiday season and happiness and good health in the New Year!

73, Mark AI4BJ

Antenna Thoughts

by Dave Core, K8WDA

I received a nice email from Dave after he read my article on my new sloper antenna in last month's Feedline. I thought that his excellent comments would be of interest to club members, and he agreed to let me publish them. — Ed.

Mark,

As usual, I enjoyed your “Mutterings” in the Feedline. This month is of particular interest because you talked about one of my favorite aspects of Ham Radio, antennas. Over the years, I've used mostly wire antennas, and from study and experience, have formed a few opinions.

First, the most important consideration is getting power into the antenna system. That means having a good power transfer between the transmitter and feedline. Most often, this requires an efficient antenna tuner. All tuners introduce some loss, but some are much worse than others.

Second, especially on the lower frequencies where the directional characteristics of the typical Ham antenna are nebulous at best, I don't care if the radiation occurs from the antenna, feedline, or both, just so it radiates out and not into the shack. Truth is that most wire antenna feedlines radiate somewhat anyway, so the trick is to try to avoid a voltage loop near the shack.

Third, the preferred shape or height of a wire antenna should not stand in the way of getting an antenna up. It's amazing what will work and work well. A rain gutter is better than no antenna at all.

My fourth “opinion” does not apply to end fed antennas shorter than a quarter wavelength. All bets are off on short antennas with a low (< 25 ohms) radiation impedance. Ground losses become much more significant in that situation.

That said, standing waves on the feedline, even coax, are not necessarily a big deal. The SWR as measured at the transmitter is probably not a good indicator of the actual match between the feedline and the antenna. So, let's assume the SWR at the transmitter is 1:1 (probably because a tuner is used), but the match at the antenna is really bad, say 5:1. Sure, some of the power is burned up by ohmic and dielectric losses in a coax feedline. With RG-58, at 5:1 SWR on 7 MHz the power loss is approx. 2 dB/100 ft (assuming no radiation from the feedline). But that 2 dB loss makes less than 1 S unit difference on the receiving end. Actually, the loss is probably lower because of radiation. (Admittedly, coax losses due to SWR become significant above 10 meters, but most VHF/UHF antenna systems are well engineered for a good match between the antenna and the feedline.)

Back in Ohio, I used to have a full wavelength wire loop antenna cut for 75 meters. It was fed with 100 ft. of RG-8. The SWR at the shack was less than 1.5:1 on 75, but out of sight on the other bands. I ran the coax through a tuner and loaded that antenna on any band I wanted with respectable success.

Sorry I got long winded, but the point is that your new antenna may work fine on 40 even if the SWR is 3:1. Changing the length of the antenna may help the SWR, but changing the length of the coax, or the ground wire that you're feeding the antenna against may also change the SWR that you're reading. The real proof of the pudding, as they say, is in how well it works.

Good luck and thanks for another great article in the Feedline.

73, Dave K8WDA

Weaver's Words

Jim Weaver, K8JE
Great Lakes Division Director, ARRL
E-mail: k8je@arrl.org; Tel.: 513-459-0142

Balloting remains open for Vice Director

Balloting for Vice Director for the Great Lakes Division remains open until November 21. Ballots must be received by the accounting firm used by ARRL by noon on this day. If you have not yet voted, please review the candidates and vote.

If you have not received a ballot by now, I encourage you to telephone CEO Dave Sumner, K1ZZ at 1-860-594-0303 or e-mail him at k1zz@arrl.org to request a replacement ballot be sent to you by First Class mail.

IBM enters BPL picture

As you may know, IBM has signed on to help International Broadband Electric Communications (IBEC) spread BPL throughout rural areas in several states. Admittedly, this came as somewhat of a surprise; however, it is not necessarily a bad surprise. Keep in mind that Amateur Radio's fight is not with BPL, per se. Our fight is against interference caused by poorly designed and operated forms of BPL. So far, the BPL systems used by IBEC do not operate on frequencies used by Amateur Radio.

IBM's arrival on the BPL scene has emphasized one thing. This is the potential value of ARRL's recent court victory over FCC and its ill-conceived rules for BPL. These rules would have given unlicensed devices supremacy over licensed operations in many instances.

As to the economic viability of BPL in truly rural America we can only wait and see. It would be great if IBM can come up with a commercially-useful system. What happens on the business side of the project is IBM's and IBEC's problem.

Your ARRL dues at work for you

Recently, ARRL staff noticed the FCC had granted an experimental license to Digital Aurora Radio Technologies (DART) to operate experimental station WE2XRH in three ranges in the HF frequency spectrum. Transmissions from WE2XRH were to be as powerful as 100 kW and to result in an effective radiated power (ERP) of 660 kW. The station location would be in Delta Junction, Alaska.

Testing in the HF spectrum would not necessarily cause problems for Amateur Radio. However, when it was realized that DART had been granted the right to transmit in the upper 100 kHz (7.2-7.3 kHz) of the ham 40M band, the planned activity took on a different tone. The 7.0 kHz-7.3 kHz band is clearly assigned in the US to the Amateur Radio service as sole user. Something was terribly wrong.

ARRL swung into action and petitioned FCC to correct its error by revoking DART's privileges on 40. Happily, FCC quickly corrected the error and moved the DART operations out of the band. No amateur frequencies are threatened by Dart's planned tests.

Results of poll on SOU and RC background checking

In the last issue of Words, I outlined the current status of the expired Red Cross-ARRL Statement of Understanding (SOU; formerly MOU). I also briefly reviewed the situation regarding the background checking demands being made by Red Cross. Finally, I asked you to go to the Great Lakes Division web site and participate in a single question opinion poll on the topic.

The question asked in the poll was: "Do you favor ARRL signing a new Statement of Understanding with American Red Cross (RC) before RC drops its demand that amateurs agree to submit to credit checks and manner of living checks? Criminal checks will remain."

The results of the 273 responses to the poll are:

Yes = 13 or 5% of respondents (pursue a new SOU without regard to the status of RC background checking



demands).

No = 260 of 95% or respondents (do not pursue a new SOU before the background checking demands are changed).

Thanks to the members who participated. You provided me with useful information.

SW Ohio Digital Symposium

The annual Southwest Ohio Digital & Technical Symposia provide considerable information into operating digital modes in a manner that is useful to the digi-enlightened as well as those of us who are less knowledgeable in these modes. It is essentially inevitable that digital operation will become increasingly used in Amateur Radio, just as it was inevitable that SSB would come to be the principal form of voice communications vs. AM on HF.

Whether one enjoys phone, RTTY or CW, the use of digital modes will become increasingly popular in the future. This could be in the form of digital phone, PSK 31, Winlink 2K, D-link or other successful modes.

The 23rd annual symposium will be held in Thesken Hall on the Miami University Middletown Campus, Middletown, OH on January 10, 2009. Papers to be presented at the symposium are solicited. Topics are wide ranging, from "how-to" articles concerning digital modes, to construction projects for transceivers. A sampling of what was presented last year is on the web at <http://www.swohdigi.org>. Please contact Jay Slough, K4ZLE (gungho@embarqmail.com) with topics you would like to present or to see presented, as well as general comments.

String of dits QRM solved

In a perfect example of inter- and intra-organization cooperation, the source of a continuous string of dits transmitted on the 40 meter band was located and resolved. The offending signal was reported to HQ by an amateur in North Carolina one recent morning. This brought the crew into action.

The folks at HQ contacted the FCC's HFDFing station

and requested the general location of the transmission if the staff there could spare the time. The report came back that it was coming from a suburb of Columbus, OH.

Ohio Official Observer Coordinator Rick Swaim, KK8O, was notified of the problem and volunteered to tackle the task of locating the source and getting it turned off. Unfortunately, no one in the vicinity of the transmitting site was able to hear the dits the rest of this first day. The next morning the signal was readily heard throughout the area.

Rick contacted Ohio Assistant Section Manager, Bill Carpenter, AA8EY for assistance. Bill lives in the area from which the signal was coming. Together, Bill and Rick in their respective cars found the source of the dits and were able to turn the transmitter off.

No one knows for certain what caused the transmissions. However, the owner of the station had left the transmitter on when he left for work. He operated CW and uses a set of paddles with a keyer. No one -- except the pet cat -- was at home when the long series of dits were transmitted. This leaves everyone involved believing the cat somehow pushed against the paddle to activate the transmitter.

With the only suspect in this case being the cat, does this make it a possible feline felon? Will we soon have FE1INE join K9DOG on the bands?

QSL Bureau web site changed

Our 8th Area Incoming QSL Bureau Manager, Jay Slough, K4ZLE, has been doing a tremendous job since he accepted appointment to this position. Not only has he been managing the Bureau, but he took over care and feeding of its web site. Being Manager is a big job, itself. Doing both tasks is . . . well . . . too much. A change was appropriate.

Effective immediately, Great Lakes Division Webmeister Gary Osborne, W8XS has accepted responsibility for maintaining the Bureau's web site. The site has been moved to <http://www.greatlakes.arrl.org/gldburo.html>. If you do not store this link, simply go to the Great

Lakes Division web site (<http://www.greatlakes.arrl.org/index.htm>), click on Links in the header bar and click on 8th Call QSL Bureau on the link page. Gary and Jay will work together to keep the site as up-to-date as practical.

If you have questions concerning DX cards that come in through the Bureau you will find a list of Letter Managers and their contact information on the site. You will also find hints and rules concerning use of the Bureau there as well.

Thanks to Jay and Gary for making this change. Thanks to Jay for iron-manning the two tasks up to this time.

While I'm at it, I would like to give a big thank you to each of the Letter Managers who work so hard with Jay to make the 8th Area buro a huge success.

One of the biggest issues I see from my contact with amateurs who express dissatisfaction with the Bureau is that they generally have no understanding how the Bureau works and what they need to do to use it effectively. I encourage all amateurs who DX, whether new or seasoned, to review the rules and guidelines of Bureau operation that are found on or linked to the 8th Area QSL Bureau site. These discussions provide a good summary of what us individual DXers need to do to receive cards through the Bureau, and what the Bureau workers can be expected to do to make your cards available for you to obtain.

The Bureau operates in much the same way as most phases of life. You need to put something into it to get something out of it. In this instance, each DXer needs to provide self-addressed envelopes and postage to the correct person at the Bureau to receive QSLs from the Bureau.

Is ARRL worth the dues?

I occasionally hear complaints that the annual dues for ARRL are simply too high. Obviously, as much as I'd like to be able to vote in favor of reducing them to \$10 or \$15 per year, I don't agree with the complaint. When one considers what each member receives for the \$39 typical dues, the price is fairly low. Let's take a look at this.

I've subscribed (i.e. paid for the magazine) to CQ Magazine for many years. It's a nice magazine. The guys and gals associated with it put on a few on-air activities and publish a few items to help make Amateur Radio more interesting. I generally support what is done by the CQ gang; however, when I compare what the CQ \$36 annual subscription rate with the annual ARRL dues of \$39, it is like comparing a small piece of mint candy with Forrest Gump's box of chocolates. There is no comparison.

With ARRL, one does not subscribe to QST. Instead we receive it as one of the benefits of membership. What we do is join ARRL, the organization -- an organization that represents Amateur Radio in the legislative and regulatory processes at the state, federal and international levels; an organization that fights against attacks on Amateur Radio frequencies and rights by non-government organizations, and fights for the rights and success of our great service; an organization that provides technical consultation and evaluation of amateur and non-amateur equipment; and organization that helps us learn to develop the skills to build certain of our own equipment; an organization that developed and supports the most effective, nationwide Amateur Radio emergency communications service available; an organization that developed and sponsors the most coveted Amateur Radio on-air awards in existence; and an organization that publishes some of the best electronics manuals and handbooks, and how-to books in the field today.

In my opinion, membership in ARRL is a steal at a mere \$39 per year.

Tentative Schedule:

22 Nov: Administration & Finance Committee, Newington, CT - Jim

2009

Jan: (Noon) New terms of Director and Vice Director begin

10 Jan: SW Ohio Digital & Technical Symposium, Miamisburg, OH - Jim

73, Jim





Northern Kentucky Amateur Radio Club
P.O. Box 1062, Covington, Ky. 41012

NKARC Presentation/Demonstration

Sign up sheet for 2009 & 2010

This scheduling sheet is used to give hams an opportunity to share their Amateur Radio-related knowledge with the club. This will allow NKARC to pre-schedule activities and get the word out in its publications to hams who are interested in attending a specific activity.

Please list the Presentation/Demonstration that you would like to give. Keep in mind that our time slot for presentations is usually 1 hour per meeting. If additional time is needed for the presentation an exception for more time can be requested. These details can be discussed with NKARC prior to the activity date.

1. List Activities or Presentations that you would be interested in sharing with the club, as well as the date you would like to make the presentation.
2. E-mail sheet to Robert Gulley, ak3q@arrl.net, or mail in to The Northern Kentucky Amateur Radio Club, P.O. Box 1062, Covington KY 41012
3. A representative from the club will contact you by email or phone depending on your preference, to go over details of the activity and possible dates for the activity. If you are not contacted please contact an officer of the club; contact lists are on our web-site www.k4co.org

List activities and the dates you prefer the most desirable listed first.

Note: Meetings are the second Monday of each month; there are no meetings in December.

ACTIVITIES	DATE
1. _____	1. _____
2. _____	2. _____
3. _____	3. _____

Your Contact Information.

Name _____ E-Mail Address _____
Phone # _____

Return to:
Northern Ky. Amateur Radio Club
P.O. Box 1062
Covington, Ky. 41012

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