

# Southeast Bus Nuts Newsletter

## Spring 2015

### Ed's Editorial

We are in the final planning stages for the Spring rally at Bryn Mawr Ocean Resort, here on St Augustine Beach. Be sure to bring swim wear, sunglasses, sun screen, beach chairs and umbrellas.

A highlight of Friday will be a day of beach fun. We will be joined by our FMCA Regional VP, Doug and Ann Pearson, for the beach festivities and dinner. We will begin at 2:00PM when I have a Florida State Parks ranger coming for a presentation covering the history and ecology of the St Augustine Beach.

Immediately after the talk, we will start a triathlon of beach contests. There will be Bocci Ball and two toss games, evaluated by an expert panel of judges. Each couple will be scored on their total for all games. First and second place prizes will be awarded.

Included in your rally fee are tickets for a guided St Augustine tour on one of the trolley trains. The tickets are good for Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. You can spend all of the time you like sightseeing at any stop.

We had a great rally at Myakka City! Excellent horse shows, the weather was nice—no rain—and the cool nights were tempered by a roaring campfire and the usual wonderful fellowship of friends. Those attending Myakka are aware of the electrical problems with our coach there, but the trip home made them look small. The plan was to drive straight to the Prevost Service Center in Jacksonville, but the trip took two days, due to a blow-out 15 miles south of Tampa, and suspension problems

caused by the blowout and electrical issues. It will be an interesting story to tell at the St Augustine rally, but too long to go into here.

**Ed Fisher, President**

### Secretary's Report

As of March 24, 2015 the Southeast Bus Nuts chapter has 75 regular members - 62 have paid dues through 2015 or later and 13 who have not. A final dues reminder notice will be sent before March 30. There are 13 honorary members.

Regarding the printed newsletter and other club announcements, we have seven members on the snail mail list. The rest receive everything via e-mail.

A get-well card was sent to **Bryan Bowman**, who injured his leg in a trailer-hitching accident this winter in Arizona. A card of encouragement was also sent to **Mary Harper** who is recovering from knee replacement. A sympathy card was sent to **Tom Mosson** following the sudden passing of his wife, **Nancy**. At Tom's suggestion, and in keeping with our tradition, the chapter has made a \$50.00 contribution in Nancy's name to the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation. Nancy and Tom were long term, enthusiastic members of the SEBN, and Nancy served as our FMCA delegate for several years. She will be greatly missed.

I urge all members to advise me of any illnesses, deaths, or other unfortunate incidences in the families of our members. Hope to see many of you at the St Augustine Rally!

**Anke Fisher, Secretary**



**Winter Rally attendees enjoyed a daily exhibition of the famous Lipizzan stallions.**

**See page nine for details regarding the Spring Rally set for Apr 30-May 1, 2015**

## Winter Rally Report

*Submitted by Linda Karlsson*

The annual 'Valentine's Rally' of the Southeast Bus Nuts was held this year in Myakka City, Florida. There were 15 Bus Nuts member couples who signed up for this boondocking rally (no electric or water hook-ups) and 13 showed. And as the saying goes, "a good time was had by all."

The social gathering part of the rally was centered around wonderful campfires, very sturdily constructed and maintained by our good friend **Howard Best**. Since the evenings were quite nippy, the campfires were essential, and also used for roasting hot dogs and marshmallows... what could be better for camping? Howard also happens to own a number of pie irons for the making of 'hobo pies'. If you've never done this, you are missing out on a treat! Butter the outsides of two slices of bread, place your choice of goodies on the inside, put the buttered bread inside the pie-iron, close it and push the pie-iron into the hot coals. Howard is a master at judging just the right conditions for successful pies! Many of our friends chose from a variety of fruit pie fillings for their hobo pies, but we experimented with peanut butter and marshmallows! Yum, they turned out great, toasty on the outside and gooey on the inside!

Also terrific was the food prepared by our informal host, past-secretary **Judy Bukoski** who spent hours shredding meat by hand for BBQ sandwiches, and slicing up a whole flat of strawberries for strawberries and whipped cream over pound cake! Happy Hours included kielbasa with

dipping mustard sauce, wonderful deviled eggs and other yummy contributions. Our little group was not on a diet that weekend!

Myakka City is one of those sleepy little Florida towns that nobody ever knows of, or hears about very much. It also happens to be the winter home of Herrmann's Royal Lipizzan Stallion Ranch. It is a relatively small facility for breeding and training horses in the Lipizzan blood-line, and training sessions are open for public viewing three days a week.

This is a very interesting breed of horse, and in addition to fairly usual dressage movements they are also trained for "airs above the ground" -- more difficult, with origins going back to the days when horses were used in battle and were trained to strike out with front and rear hooves. The Southeast Bus Nuts rally was centered around this venue, offering an opportunity for friends to enjoy each others' company and have some entertainment nearby. It was a good rally!

### **Recent Rally Attendance / Coaches**

Valentines 2013 (Kissimmee)	16
Spring Rally 2013 (Stone Mountain, GA)	17
Halloween 2013 (Costley Mill GA)	21
Arcadia (General Meeting) 2014	32
Valentine's 2014 (Lazy Days, FL)	25
Spring Rally 2014 (Charleston)	23
Autumn 2014 (Hoboken)	32
Arcadia (General Meeting) 2015	34
Valentine's 2015 (Myakka City)	13
Spring Rally (St Augustine)	?

## **Myakka City Snapshots**

*Editor's Note: Once again, thanks to Linda Karlsson for the photographs!*



**Cool sunny weather was the norm at the winter rally. We parked in a large circle.**



**There were tales told and lots of smiles each night at the campfire.**

# More Myakka Photos...



In the 'Levade' move, the stallion rises on his haunches and tucks his forelegs under him.



Taking in the afternoon show from the grandstand: Darlene and Manny Montecino of Winter Haven.



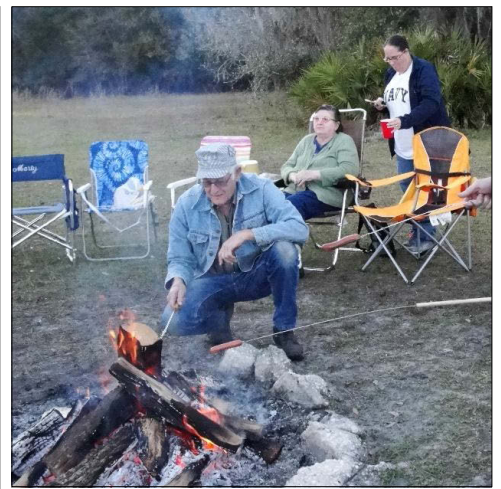
From the left are Rene Kukon, Jackie and Jack Campbell, and our Secretary, Anke Fisher.



Telling bus stories are, from the left, Howard Best, Kirby Karlsson and club Treasurer, Marty Nixon .



The stallion ranch is situated in a bucolic rural area about 21 miles due east of Sarasota, FL



Richard Best roasts a wiener while wife Barb and daughter Laurie await.

# Still More From Myakka



Past Secretary Judy, in pink, and Past President Charlie Bukoski, on her left, in the stands.



In the 'Capriole', the horse jumps from all four feet on the ground and strikes out with hindlegs.



From upper left, Rene Kukon and Herb Bates, Darlene and Manny Montecino and the Campbells.



Your newsletter editor with a 'hobo pie,' along with wife Carol, center, and Ellen Best.



Linda Wright tries to persuade Howard Best to reveal where he bought the 'hobo pie' irons.



Two experienced pilots. Kirby Karlsson, left, explains the principles of drag to Ed Fisher.

### **Detroit Diesel Series 50 on Parade!**

No fewer than seven members of the Southeast Bus Nuts have updated their coach power plant by transplanting the younger, electronic Detroit Diesel Series 50 engine. All but two were coupled to an electronic Allison six-speed transmission. All are extremely happy with their choice.

**Marty Nixon** replaced a tired 8v71 with a four-stroke Series 50 in his MC-8 about seven years ago. He was the first in SEBN to change to the S-50. He found a donor bus, an MC-9 former prison bus. Stewart and Stevenson of Pueblo CO had updated the engines for a fleet of these just a couple of years prior, so they were relatively low miles. Marty coupled the new powerplant with an Allison



3630 electronic transmission. He also had to change the rear end ratio to a lower gear in order to have the new transmission shift into 6th gear. Best features: slightly better fuel economy, a more sophisticated drive with cruise control and jakes, and serviceability most anywhere by today's diesel mechanics. Downside: a bit of vibration at idle. After selling off his old engine and transmission, and the rest of the donor bus, Marty estimated he has about \$5,000 tied up in the conversion, not counting his own labor. (He said the donor bus was only \$4,000.)

**Jack Campbell** was the second of the SEBN to complete the transplant. He did his first replacement in 2008. Because of his close friendship to late

member **Wynn Silver**, owner of Central FL Bus Repair, he had access to a heavy equipment garage and pit. Jack has actually done three swaps. The first was in his 05 Eagle, the second in his son Jerry's

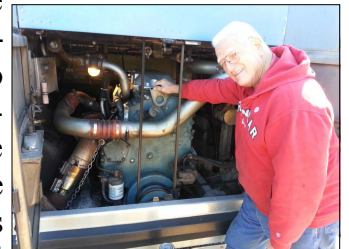


MC102a3, and the third in his newer MC102c3, replacing an 8v92TA. In the first two cases the donor engines were from Metro Atlanta (MARTA) transit buses. The last one was a surplus MC-12 Greyhound from a salvage yard. Jack essentially did the work on all three by himself. The first project took six

weeks, but the last swap only took a month. Like any of those coupling the S-50 to an electronic transmission, Jack had to have his driveshaft shortened and his rear end ratio changed, in his case down to a .410. Jack's advice to anyone thinking of this changeover: buy a whole salvage bus like a Gillig or MC-12 with engine, electronic transmission, wiring harnesses, charge air cooler, etc. Expect to spend maybe \$10,000 if you do your own work. The pluses: the Allison B 500 World Transmission makes the bus much more enjoyable to drive, with its six speeds, cruise control and jakes, etc. With plenty of power, he estimates fuel mileage at 8.5 MPG!

**Howard Best** was the third member to make the swap; his went into his MC-8, replacing an 8v71. Like Jack, he also bought a used MARTA Series 50 out of a transit. He was able to start the engine and listen to it run, etc. right at the salvage yard. Although he didn't buy a whole bus, he was able to pull the engine himself and strip out the pertinent wiring and cables. Since it was a v-drive he did not take the gearbox. Howard has long been partial to manual transmissions, so he coupled the

S-50 to a Road Ranger 8-speed. The swap took two months, but there were interruptions. He figures he has about \$11,000 in the upgrade. Howard keeps meticulous records of fuel



use, and his MPG has risen from 5.8 with the two-stroke, to a solid 7.3 MPG over 57,000 miles since the change. For him one of the biggest positives is the clean set-up in the engine compartment. There are far fewer hoses, belts, electric over air switches, pipes, etc. And no oil leaks! But one big concern is trusting the ECM. If it throws a code and stops him on the road he may be stuck, whereas he knew every facet of his old two stroke and could do many a road fix, etc.

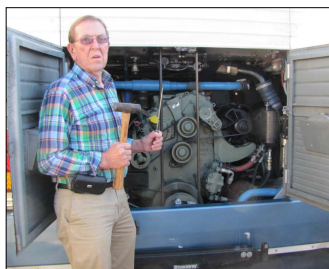
**Jerry Campbell** benefitted from Dad, Jack's, prior success. Jack knew Jerry and wife were about to embark on several years of full-timing in their MC102a3, and he wanted them to have a more dependable and serviceable powerplant. Jerry's donor engine was also from a MARTA bus. He loves all the improvements the new engine offers, but after his inaugural road trip his first observation was that his tow

## Detroit Series 50 (continuation)

car was no longer covered in soot and engine oil - the Series 50 does not seem to leak like his replaced 6v92. Jerry and Rosemary have since been full-timing all over the US, including the mountains of the west, and they love the economy, the power, and the simplicity. 60,000 miles – no trouble.

Former SEBN president **Gerald Ensley** went through the transformation about two years ago after seeing the good results others got from a switch. He bought a salvage MC-12 prison bus with a Series 50 and had a savvy local mechanic do most of the heavy lifting. Letting the technician do the work when time permitted saved some money, and Gerald was able to do a few small things himself. Having a whole bus to pull from was a big plus. The newer engine replaced a good crate 8v71. He credited the mentoring and pioneering of **Jack Campbell** and **Marty Nixon** as keys to his success. The cost of the project was reasonable, and his fuel mileage quite improved.

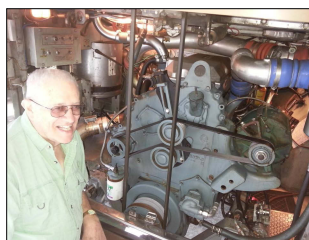
Member **Herb Bates** had the whole swap done by Lakeland's Central Florida Bus Repair (owner and SEBN member **John Silver** would be



happy to discuss the process and rates: 863-665-8155). They replaced his tired old 8v71 in his MC-7 Challenger with the S-50 at a very reasonable price. Herb estimates he gets 7.5 MPG. He is very pleased with the result - cleaner, more sophisticated, more fun to drive, and deeper sense of dependability.

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**Lowell Snyder** was the most recent (this past year) to undertake this effort on his MC-8. He got his engine and 750 transmission from a Gillig shuttle bus. He was able to lift all the controls and cables from the donor bus, and found the whole installation to be more straightforward than he had expected. He replaced an 8v92 turbo which he had transplanted some years before. His decision to take on the process was motivated in part by an on-the-road breakdown with the old engine, and subsequent tow to the closest Detroit Diesel/Allison shop. They refused to take his bus in, saying they had no one familiar with the old two-strokes, and recommended he go elsewhere. Then and there Lowell vowed to get it fixed 6



enough to get back to his shop, then transplant to the more current technology. He did the work himself, and took three months. He is extremely happy with the results. He estimates he

has about \$5,000 tied up in the project, not counting his labor. What he likes best: the whole set-up is simpler than the complicated two-strokes. The engine compartment is sleek and clean. Lowell did experience excessive vibration at first, but then he realized he had not torqued all of his engine mount bolts properly. Since then, it has really smoothed out.

One of the frustrations for the first few pioneers in this upgrading process was reprogramming the DDEC to allow the engine to reach its full potential. Detroit dealers will not do this for you because of Federal smog regulations, liability issues, etc. Eventually Jack Campbell found someone with a computer program who could 'dial up' horsepower and torque and still comply. In the years since, these programs have become more accessible.

An almost universal accompaniment to the new four-stroke replacement engines is the SilverLeaf VMS 350 engine monitoring system. It runs off a small laptop and displays digitally all the gauges and readings one could wish for. Most guys eliminate the old analog gauges in favor of a 'glass dash'. Like some car computers, the SilverLeaf will calculate mileage, remaining fuel range, etc. Not too expensive at about \$300, it's the first accessory most engine swappers buy.

In summary, all of those who have made the change are pleased with the results. Yes, there is a bit more vibration at idle, but that's not felt going down the road. And for some there may be insecurity with a computer controlled engine. So many of us with two-strokes have fixed at the roadside an overheating or fuel problem, etc. Getting a code and a shut-down on the road with a S-50 still scares some, but at least there's a quick diagnosis. But the plusses far outweigh the negatives: better fuel mileage, plenty of power, an engine and transmission that talk to each other, cruise control, jake brakes, cleaner installation, any DD shop can get parts and work on it, the list goes on.

*Something to think about!*

### South East Cruisers Cease Operation

Sadly, as many members may have heard, the venerable South East Cruisers, the other bus conversion group in the south, has decided to go out of business.

The reasons for the decision, to quote a former member, were declining membership along with decreasing member activity, and an apparent unwillingness for any member to assume leadership. Upon closing, their active rolls counted about 25 bus conversion enthusiasts.

Newer members of the Southeast Bus Nuts may not know that our chapter was formed some 25 years ago as a spin-off of the Cruisers. Different attitudes about socializing,

personality conflicts, and other disagreements had been festering. The split was not entirely amicable, but still, about ten members of the Cruisers held joint membership in both clubs. To vacate the treasury the Cruisers went out of business in style: a final rally in St Cloud, FL and a free ticket to Universal Studios for the Blue Man Group show. RIP.

### Chapter Officer News

In light of Treasurer **Marty Nixon's** plans for an extended bus sojourn to Alaska, President **Ed Fisher** has asked Immediate Past President **Chas Bukoski** to assume the role of Acting Treasurer, until Marty returns in the fall.

## North, to Alaska!



Long-time SEBN Treasurer Marty Nixon and his partner Debbie Spear (holding balloons) are taking leave of work, setting aside six months, and fulfilling that most elusive of Bus Nut bucket list items—a trip to the last frontier. A surprise Bon Voyage party was sprung on the couple this past March 28, and was attended by about 60 family members, friends, and co-workers. Several members of the SEBN who had worked with Marty over the years were able to join the festivities. From the left, Suzanne Bowman, Beverly Bowman, Mike Heron, Ellen Best, Howard Best, Carol Heron, Jack Campbell, Jackie Campbell, Lowell Snyder and Betty Snyder. Marty and Debbie plan to shove off in mid-April and tour the southern states out to New Mexico, then north to Idaho. After that it's 2,500 miles of Canada, and then our 49th state for the summer!

## Member Spotlight

A recurring feature of this newsletter is a brief profile of a newer member couple and a more long-term coach couple - an effort to get us better acquainted with each other!

### Newer Couple



**Barbara and Richard Best** aren't actually newer members—they first joined SEBN in the early 1990s, but became inactive for 10 years while they lived in Washington State, helping their son's family while Mom and Dad served in the US Army. But in 2013 they returned to the east, and resumed their activity with our group.

RVing started with the Bests in a Fleetwood and then they graduated to a beautiful Beaver diesel pusher when they went full-time in 1998. They sold their house in Poughkeepsie NY and alternated their time between the east coast and the west.

If their last name sounds familiar, he is **Howard Best's** brother. Howard may have planted the full-timing seed with Richard. One of their highlights of RVing together was a spectacular 18 day motorhome/berge trip down the Mississippi to New Orleans. About 45 coaches took part. The center barge housed a rec room/dining hall where they had their meals and socialized. Otherwise, they were all plugged in just like at a campground.

After their grandkids in Washington grew up, the Bests relocated to the east, buying a place in Navarre, on Florida's Panhandle. They look forward to attending many SEBN rallies in the future.

### Longer-term couple

**Linda and Blake Wright** are in their second bus conversion, and both had been done by now-defunct Custom Coach of Columbus, OH. Their current bus is an MC-7 with a muscular DD 8v92TA.

The Wrights are Canadian, from Brechin, about 100 miles north of Toronto, and have wintered in Florida for years— at first for a month, then after retirement a few years ago, for the entire winter. It was after attending as a guest a SEBN New Years' Rally at Lazy Days near Tampa that they joined our group, and have been members for over a decade. They are also members of the Great Lakes Converted Coach Group, the Converted Coach Association, and until recently, the South East Cruisers.

Blake and Linda are eyeing a big summer trip this summer or next to the northeast coast, perhaps starting on Prince Edward Island and migrating southward to Maine, taking advantage of the sights and the seafood.

As for their coach, they have a short list of improvements to tackle, starting with a better floor treatment than the old carpet. Blake is also toying with the idea of upgrading to a DD Series 50 engine if the right donor bus comes along!



# Last Chance to Squeeze in!

*Five camping sites remain until April 15th*

**April 30-May 2, 2015**

**Bryn Mawr Ocean Resort**

**[www.brynmawroceanresort.com](http://www.brynmawroceanresort.com)**

**In historic St Augustine, FL**

*Trip Advisor* just listed St Augustine as 9th best beach in the US. Bryn Mawr has direct oceanfront there!



**Those members who have registered and paid, to date, are:**

**Howard & Ellen Best**

**Charlie & Judy Bukoski**

**Ed & Anke Fisher**

**Lou & Renea Kirk**

**Ken Siems & Pam Maichuk**

**Bryan & Suzanne Bowman**

**Ron & Pam Daniels**

**Mike & Carol Heron**

**Norm & Maureen Scanapico**

**Steve Siems & Harriet Chaires**

**Jim & Cynthia Threatt**

*Two steps to register:*

**First**, contact the park and reserve and pay for your choice of camp site. See the park website (above) for the park map. The “mid-park” sites are less expensive at \$66 for Thursday and \$87 each for Friday and Saturday. There are a smaller number of premium sites that are beachfront. These rent for \$73 on Thursday and \$96 each for Friday and Saturday. All sites have paved motor home parking and patio. Most have a raised, elevated and covered deck. All sites are different, because they are individually owned. Bryn Mawr phone numbers are 904-471-8730 and 888-768-9638. The park address is 4850 A1A South, St Augustine FL 32080. Added up, three nights on an interior site—\$264.00 Three on a beachfront is \$291.50

**Second**, register for the rally, by clicking on the rally button on our club website ([sebusnuts.org](http://sebusnuts.org)) and choosing to pay via PayPal or a credit card. As an option you may make out a personal check to ‘Southeast Bus Buts’ and mail it to our *acting treasurer at 5084 Southshore Drive, Polk City, FL 33868*. **The separate rally fee of \$60 is additional.** The fee, which is being subsidized by the chapter to offset camping costs, will include three breakfasts, Friday dinner to which the members bring their own meat to grill with the other food, drinks, and desert, and the Saturday covered dish dinner, which includes the meat and drinks. There will be an exciting Bingo game on Friday with prizes, hosted by Bryan Bowman, and a fast paced TV game show with prizes on Saturday, hosted by Mike Heron.

In addition to fun beach games and a nature talk by a Ranger, included in the rally fee is a **guided train tour** of historic St Augustine. This tour includes 23 points of interest, and it lasts as long as you like, because you can stay on the train, or get off as long as you care to. The tickets are good for three days, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.

- Save the dates! -



## Halloween Rally

**October 27-November 1, 2015**  
**Coastal Georgia RV Resort**  
**Brunswick, GA (I-95, exit 29)**  
[www.coastalgarvresort.com](http://www.coastalgarvresort.com)

Close to Jekyll, Cumberland and St. Simon's Islands! Large, paved, full hook-up sites with fabulous waterfront clubhouse. Free cable TV and Wi-Fi. This is the newest RV park in the region. This rally immediately precedes the annual Friends of Twin Oaks bluegrass rally just 40 miles west on US Rte 82 in Hoboken, GA. Join the caravan!

**For questions: [mikeheron@bellsouth.net](mailto:mikeheron@bellsouth.net)**



## Arcadia Rally

**Dates for Arcadia 2016: this December 29-31**  
The location once again is the  
Turner Agri Center, 2250 NE Roan Street  
Arcadia, FL 34266

The Southeast Bus Nuts have traditionally comprised about one-third of the 100 or so coaches who migrate to this large rally from around the US and Canada, which is entering its 15th year. SEBN members Bill and Brenda Phelan are hosts of this independent rally.

**Check their website for periodic updates, agenda, etc.:**

[www.arcadiarally.com](http://www.arcadiarally.com)



## Late Winter Rally

**Masonic Park, Wimauma, FL—about eight miles east of Ruskin on U.S. Rte. 301**

[www.masonicparkflorida.com](http://www.masonicparkflorida.com)

-Dates to be determined-

Your host, Jack Campbell. Co-Host, Herb Bates

This rally, usually held around Valentine's Day, will be scheduled later in February 2016 in an effort to enjoy warmer weather.

## Southeast Bus Nuts Leadership

### Chapter Officers:

President— Ed Fisher [aandedfisher@gmail.com](mailto:aandedfisher@gmail.com)  
VP—Bryan Bowman [bbowmanga@gmail.com](mailto:bbowmanga@gmail.com)  
Treasurer— Marty Nixon [nixonmarty@aol.com](mailto:nixonmarty@aol.com)  
Secretary/FMCA Nat'l Dir—Anke Fisher

## Advisory Committee:

*(in addition to Chapter Officers)*

Charlie Bukoski  
Judy Bukoski  
Pam Daniels  
Mike Heron  
Beverly Bowman, Chaplain

Past Chapter Presidents: Art Hempen, Gene Brotherton\*, Russ Drummond\*, Howard Best, Mike Jackson\*, Lewie Hinman\*, Bill Zibell, Andy Metro, Ray Stiltner, Gerald Ensley, Jack Campbell, Mike Heron, Duane Britt, and Charlie Bukoski. (\* denotes deceased)

Visit our website:

[www.sebusnuts.org](http://www.sebusnuts.org)

This newsletter is now posted on the above website, FYI.

Newsletter Editor: Mike Heron

Please send stories, updates and photos to:

[mikeheron@bellsouth.net](mailto:mikeheron@bellsouth.net)

Southeast Bus Nuts  
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