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MESSAGE from Linda Steinberg, President

It has been my honor to be the President of NCJWC and help navigate our Board on this first year of our three year journey together. Thank you for your ongoing support and commitment to NCJWC.

I am very excited to welcome our Section members to our AGM in Toronto. We will review our year focusing on financials, programs, and the future health of our organization.

Supporting Human Trafficking initiatives tabled at Parliament, participating in round table discussions on issues of importance to our MP's, developing relationships with other community leaders; Cheryl Greenberg providing background information on Jewish Genetic Diseases for Ellen Bessner's CJN podcast, and participating as the only Canadian affiliate of the International Council of Jewish Women and the Commonwealth Jewish Network has been both educational and confirming of NCJWC's role.

Our National Committees have provided leadership focused on the development of programs to address Ageism, Antisemitism, Racism, and support for a new initiative to acknowledge Israel's 75th anniversary, by creating a computer centre for children hospitalized in Eilat.

The commitment of all our volunteers on the National Board, Sections, and committees is exemplary. Our Sections are working very diligently to create a vibrant presence in their communities, developing initiatives to address local needs and fostering partnerships with likeminded organizations. Faced with diminishing membership, insufficient funds and multiple responsibilities the journey is not always easy. As we embark on a national strategic plan, we look to opportunities to strengthen our organization and our sections.

The following reports are a testament to the impressive engagement of our Sections with their communities.

SECTION REPORTS



For a small community, Edmonton Section has stayed active and will continue to stay active as you will read in the following report.

In May 2023, the Edmonton Section held a two-day casino under the auspices of the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission (AGLC) and funds were received in late August 2023. In October, the Edmonton Section will partner with the Council of India Societies of Edmonton to commemorate the International Day of the Girl Child. This program will help to inspire young women of all multi-cultural ethnicities to get involved in the community.

During the third week of October, the Edmonton Section will be doing an early Mitzvah Day Community Project by helping the Bissell Centre in downtown Edmonton with socks and other vital items to help the homeless and people in need with winter wear. A lunch will be prepared and provided by volunteers on October 22, 2023. The plan is to help over 200 people who require assistance.

Jewish Family Services depends on the Edmonton Section of NCJWC with funds to help the SMART (Seniors Making Age Related Transitions) Program continue to be provided in the community. A cheque presentation will be made over the next few weeks. This is greatly appreciated by all those in the community who receive help, including counselling and other related services.

In November, the Edmonton Section will work on the Prevention of Family Violence. Plans are still underway for this important month.

On December 3rd, the Edmonton Section will be implementing a "Games Day" to assist the National initiative to help a hospital in Israel with children's art supplies. The fundraiser is called "Brunch and Bingo" and it be held at the Jewish Seniors Citizens' Centre.

NCJWC – Edmonton Section has enjoyed working with the National Executive, and we wish the National Executive all the best over the next two years

Jodi Zabludowski President, Edmonton Section



Simcoe County has now established two regular monthly programs, a book club, the first Monday of the month and drop in lunches held the last Wednesday of the month. For the months of June, July, and August, they were hosted at members' homes. They were brown bag meaning everyone brought their own salad or sandwich and the host provided the coffee and desserts. In the September we will return to meeting in restaurants. These lunches have proven to be a great way to introduce potential members to Council. Book club will remain virtual to be able to accommodate our many members who live outside of Barrie/Innisfil.

In July, we held our second annual Maj/Canasta Day. It grew from 8 to 14 tables this year. We will be contributing a significant portion of the money raised to the National Initiative to support the installation of a computer center in the paediatric ward in Yoseftal Medical Hospital in Eilat.

We will be participating once again in the International Mitzvah Day by collecting purses and toiletries for the Fill A Purse for a Sister Campaign.

NCJWC, SC will be holding a lunch in Hollywood, Florida at the end of January to bring members who winter in Florida together. Those who live on the gulf coast and Boca Raton have expressed a willingness to travel to see their Council friends!

The PJ Library connector for Simcoe County, Allison Sullevay Charland has joined our executive committee with the goal of engaging younger women.

Through the summer we jointly hosted 3 Shabbat music circles, a family day of apple picking and in early September, Leanne Matlow, an author, and CBT practitioner held a mental health workshop aimed at preparing students and parents for a successful school experience.

Our goal is to position ourselves to welcome these moms into our council family once their volunteer and social experiences no longer revolve exclusively around their young families.

We have become more realistic about the timeline for forming a younger branch, but we are confident it will happen, especially with Alli on board.

Once again, we are grateful to Linda Steinberg for her leadership and to her committees that continue to develop such excellent programming that make being part of NCJWC so worthwhile.

Respectfully submitted by: Helen Silverstein,



The past year at NCJWC Toronto has been characterized by movement and change. Our leadership and volunteers continue to be inspired by our mission: community service through education, social action and social impact. We are now focusing upon the future growth and sustainability of our organization and engaging a new generation of volunteers and leaders to ensure our ongoing success. Some of the highlights of the past year include:

- A wonderful AGM in November, 2022 featuring screenwriter and author Delia Ephron in conversation with Heather Reisman, Executive Chair, Indigo.
- Introducing a quarterly meeting with our Branch Chairs to encourage collaboration and sharing of resources. The result has been an annual program guide for all branches and members to use in planning their programs.
- The launch of a pilot telephone buddies program in partnership with the Bernard Betel Centre, pairing isolated seniors with NCJWC Toronto volunteers for a weekly touch base by telephone. We received great feedback after the first phase was complete and we are planning to expand the program this year.
- The implementation of a new social media strategy which has resulted in significant growth in our online presence and followers on Instagram and Facebook.
- The ongoing growth of the L'Chaim /Wellspring Cancer Support Program in the GTA. This valued program provides Jewish women and their caregivers a Jewish connection, the personal touch and outreach of a NCJWC Toronto volunteer and delivery of a gift bag and a handmade quilt produced by 25 dedicated volunteers from the NCJWC Toronto Jewish Quilting Project.
- The launch of the NCJWC Toronto Leadership Circle as part of a gala event at the Harold Green Jewish Theater Company featuring the play Gloria: A Life. The audience talk back enabled NCJWC to be featured as hosts and funds were used to fund a video documenting the history of NCJWC.
- The continued growth of the online gallery of Great Canadian Jewish Women initiative celebrating their accomplishments during Jewish Heritage Month in May.
- The successful completion of the 40th annual Passover Food Drive which provided 2950 Passover food boxes to the neediest people in Toronto referred by our network of Jewish social service organizations in the GTA.
- The launch of the second Kids Summer Essentials Fund campaign which provided gift cards for the purchase of summer essentials for 300 children referred by Jewish Family and Child Service and the Catholic Children's Aid Society.
- The upcoming publication of the guide for faith leaders on the front line which provides strategies and information about responding to domestic violence in faith communities.
- The receipt of two government grants: a \$10,000 provincial security grant which has allowed us to upgrade our security system and a \$100,000 capacity building grant from

the federal government's Community Support Fund for the development of a fundraising strategy to ensure the future sustainability of the organization.

- We are thrilled to be forging a deeper collaboration with NCJWC
- We are looking forward to a great year of programs including our AGM featuring Dr. Robyn Waxman, Geriatric Psychiatrist who will be focusing on women's mental health; and educational forums on food insecurity and children's mental health.

Sheila Neuburger, Toronto President



Vancouver has been busy trying to rebuild and re-energize. As many of our long standing members step away from leadership positions, we are working on recruiting new involvement and leadership.

We have had a few exciting events including a cocktail party for International Women's Day, participating in Vancouver's annual march for awareness of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, and an intergenerational L'Dor V'Dor Tea. We have raised money and dispersed funds to many different organizations focusing on food security, homelessness, literacy, sexual health and reproductive rights.

As fall has arrived, we are looking forward to building on last year's efforts to introduce new folks to NCJWC and opportunities to get involved in our community in a meaningful way. We are looking forward to hosting the games day event that's been initiated by National. We think this will be a fun event for all ages. We have Marsha Lederman booked to speak at our AGM about her book *Kiss the Red Stairs: The Holocaust, Once Removed: A Memoir and* "Coming out" as a Jewish journalist.

We are collaborating with JQT (<u>https://www.jqtvancouver.ca/</u>) to hold a community wide forum on LGTBQIA+ inclusivity in the Vancouver Jewish community in early 2024. We have other collaborations underway to offer accessible programs and events on food security, political engagement (<u>www.beyondaballot.com</u>), Repro Shabbat (<u>https://www.jewsforabortionaccess.org/actions/repro-shabbat-2023</u>), MMIWG2+ and *Stop Child Sexual Exploitation* awareness month.

It should be a busy year!

Jordana Corenblum, Vancouver President



The Winnipeg Section has a number of exciting initiatives coming up:

On April 21st, we are hoping to launch a new branch, Women Working! This is a lunchtime event at a local library, when women newcomers to Winnipeg will be able to share job searching and career advancement tips!

On April 23rd, our new sewing circle is planned. All needlecrafts are welcome. Those who have their own projects are welcome to bring them, or we will sew gloves for winter distribution by a local street patrol.

Date TBA, we hope to run another spring cleanup. Last year, there was snow until May 15th! This is a taste of Mitzvah Day event.

It will be so nice to have an indoor AGM this year! Our AGM event will be a knish making lesson.

Our annual backpack project, which packs backpacks full of school supplies for children whose families are working with JCFS, begins in the summer.

Mitzvah Day also gets started in June, when we send out emails to Jewish and non-Jewish organizations, to remind them to start thinking about mitzvahs!

And we are looking forward to the National Council AGM in October!

Sharon Graham, Winnipeg President



RE – CREATION of MONTREAL SECTION

NCJWC Montreal Section Committee Members: Myriam Babin Monica Bialski Cheryl Everett Marcia Goldberg Judith Henkewick Maggie Jacobs Marcy Kastner Stephanie Moll Vivian Silver Monika Simon Sophia Wolkowicz Inta Zvagulis

Two meetings have taken place since May; the third is scheduled for October 16.

We are in the process of planning the re-start of the Montreal Section. Everyone is excited to build on the legacy left by the former Section. The Canadian Jewish Heritage Network (CJHN) houses many documents of the Montreal Section (1926-1999) in its archives, which we hope to access to pay tribute to the members of years past.

Dorothy Reitman met with the Committee on July 24 and painted the picture of a very successful Montreal Section during her years of involvement. She urged us to appeal to young women who will ensure succession, growth and survival for our Montreal Section.

Fee structure, by-laws, member recruitment strategies and programs for 2024 are being reviewed at the next meeting.

We appreciate the valuable guidance provided by Helen Silverstein (Simcoe County), Debbie Wasserman, Linda Steinberg, Rochelle Garfinkel (Vancouver) and Jodi Zabludowski (Edmonton).

Monika Simon, Vice President

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Now in our 127th year, NCJWC is embarking on a strategic planning process to ensure our viability in a changing world. Michael Miloff a professional facilitator who is very familiar with the Canadian Jewish community and has worked with many national organizations, will guide us through this process at our AGM.

Our Primary Goal is to develop strategic directions and next steps to help frame a plan that will form the basis for a more detailed subsequent plan. A secondary goal is to create a shared understanding of the landscape and strategy across the regional and national representatives.

In advance of our AGM discussion, Michael facilitated meetings with an advisory group and two focus groups comprised of stakeholders, using an agreed upon questionnaire to guide the discussions. Following the half day facilitation at the AGM, Michael and the initial advisory group will discuss emerging directions and next steps for project management.

Recognizing that there is much work still to be done, this will be a very exciting and confirming year ahead as we navigate NCJWC's footprint on Canada's Jewish landscape.

NCJWC COMMITTEES

WOMEN TO WOMEN AGAINST RACISM (W 2 W Against Racism)

February 2023, the NCJWC Board and Canadian Council of Muslim Women (CCMW) Board approved the Vision, Mission Statement and Goal of W2W Against Racism

Vision Statement: To eradicate all forms of racism.

Mission Statement: W2W Against Racism is a group of women representing women's organizations whose communities may be targets of discrimination and/or prejudice. Our mission is to stand in solidarity as partners to show the power of respect, acceptance and understanding to pave the way towards peace and harmony among all. Our belief is that women have the capacity to demonstrate true cooperation and collaboration through comradery.

Our Goal:

To create programs and projects to bring to life our mission statement.

Given the global geopolitical situation with respect to Israel and Palestine, it was important for W2W to come to an agreement on how the group will engage with each other. These significant Ground Rules were established:

- 1. Let's listen actively and respectfully.
- 2. Let's acknowledge multiple viewpoints and opinions.
- 3. Let's avoid political discussions and debates.
- Let's adhere to the vision, mission and goals agreed upon by W2W.
- 5. Let's recognize our own privileges and honour the differences we bring into our work together.
- 6. Let's be kind and empathetic and never abandon our humanity.

Eva Karpati, Vice President and Committee Chair

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

NCJWC pioneered education and awareness in 2013 and since then we have become known for providing very important information regarding the existence of Human Trafficking within our communities, through various programmes, both in person and virtually.

Since the federal government declared Feb 22 in 2021 as Human Trafficking Awareness Day, many governments and agencies already involved in hands-on help for survivors have now taken on awareness, education, and prevention as part of their programming. Social media, newspapers, and magazines are filled with much information. A key achievement for our efforts was an invitation to speak at the International Conference on Human Trafficking in September 2022 about the power of community organizations in effecting change. The session was well attended with many inquiries about our advocacy work and how to effect change.

Most recently our committee has noticed a decline in responsiveness and interest in our outreach for ongoing public programs. While this has been frustrating, we believe that this may be largely attributed to many other organizations and agencies currently focusing in this area. Our committee has spoken of a change in direction and so at our next meeting our future will be discussed.

We have done a respectful job of bringing our efforts to the attention of all 3 levels of government, Municipal, provincial, and federal. We have received accolades from many, nationally, and internationally. It might be time to celebrate our success and allow those whose focus is Human Trafficking to carry on!

Ena Cord, Committee Chair

ANTISEMITISM

Committee Members: Eva Karpati Toronto Linda Steinberg Toronto

Debbie Wasserman. Toronto Monika Simon Montreal

NCJWC's Board was privileged to receive an expert introduction to IHRA at the beginning of the year by Daniel Panneton, Director of Allyship and Community Engagement, Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center of Holocaust Studies, and approved the IHRA Definition of Antisemitism. Hence, the **IHRA Definition of Antisemitism** was chosen by our Committee to be the most credible, because

- a) it is a non-legally binding working definition of antisemitism, and
- b) it had already been adopted by NCJWC, NCJW and ICJW

On May 26 2016, the IHRA Plenary in Bucharest decided to adopt the following non-legally binding working definition of antisemitism:

"Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities."

To guide IHRA in its work, the following examples may serve as illustrations: Manifestations might include the targeting of the state of Israel, conceived as a Jewish collectivity. However, criticism of Israel similar to that levelled against any other country cannot be regarded as antisemitic. Antisemitism frequently charges Jews with conspiring to harm humanity, and it is often used to blame Jews for "why things go wrong." It is expressed in speech, writing, visual forms and action, and employs sinister stereotypes and negative character traits.

NCJWC Antisemitism Programs:

The Committee has met twice this year and recommends these programs, as well as additional ones to originate from the "Antisemitism, Face It, Fight It," Conference to be presented by CIJA & Canada's Jewish Federations in Ottawa, October 16-17. A member of our Committee will summarize the best ideas at the AGM.

At a later time, discussions will follow before we ask the Board to approve specific programs.

Antisemitism Presentation: Each Section to reach out to non-Jewish communities; this has been tried successfully, when the W2W Against Racism Committee was invited to present to the Bangladeshi community last March (see video on <u>ncjwc.org</u> website) NCJWC would help create a template for Sections that consists of three components: short history of antisemitism, story of a Holocaust survivor or descendent, experienced antisemitism of Section members.

Municipal Antisemitism Guidelines: Check if your cities have antisemitism guidelines! If yes, help distribute them widely in your communities, school boards, teachers, friends and relatives, etc. If not, let us know and we will share with you the City of Toronto's Antisemitism guidelines to review, after we receive its permission to pass them on to other municipalities. Then contact your mayor and council members to adopt these antisemitism guidelines.

Fighting Online Antisemitism (FOA): This idea was first introduced to the Board last December. There was a positive response but no commitment to mount a program. This may be an opportunity to appeal to online-savvy young women to identify, stop, block and report antisemitic comments on the web. Would your Section be interested in us organizing a training webinar how to Fight Online Antisemitism?

Monika Simon, Vice President and Committee Chair

AGEISM

Committee Members:

Rochelle Garfinkel - Vancouver Penny Yellen - Winnipeg Lori Sandler – Simcoe County Lily Goodman - Toronto Linda Steinberg – Toronto Debbie Wasserman – Toronto Naomi Kingston – Toronto Monika Simon – Montreal

Definition of Ageism: Ageism affects how we think, feel and act towards others and ourselves based on age. It imposes powerful barriers to the development of good policies and programmes for older and younger people, and has profound negative consequences on older adults' health and well-being.

WHO is working together with key partners on a Global Campaign to Combat Ageism — an initiative supported by WHO's 194 Member States. The Campaign aims to change the narrative around age and ageing and help create a world for all ages. Source: The World Health Organization (WHO)

NCJWC Ageism Program: The Committee was very creative and effective, met 6 times on Zoom, conducted one survey with Section Presidents to focus on most favoured topic, produced an excellent webinar with Dr. Samir Sinha on "Ageism in Medicine," for which 116 people registered, nearly 100 attended.

To continue to increase awareness of Ageism, the Committee plans to feature bite-size facts in our newsletters from the evidence briefs assembled by the National Seniors Strategy provided by Dr. Sinha.

The next meeting will take place on October 10 to select the topic for a May/June 2024 event.

Monika Simon, Vice President and Committee Chair

ALUMA UPDATE

From Orly Rubin, Director ALUMA, September 2023:

We are in a period of generational change – veteran therapists are leaving after many years, the team is undergoing change and we have decided to review our modus operandi.

In recent years, we have relied mainly on veteran therapists at Aluma who also trained and certified a relatively small number of interns. As time passes, it has become clear that this model has failed to guarantee positive cash flow and to maintain the motivation of the team.

The reasons for this are varied, but the bottom line is that we revisit our work model. We decided to lead a change in the mix of therapists at Aluma and to significantly increase the number of interns we hire and train (from 4 to over 10). The senior and experienced staff are now mainly directed to training and certifying the interns and less for actual therapy processes.

This is a complex process that requires us to increase our efforts and both our time and financial investments.

We believe that this transition will lead Aluma to prosperity and growth. In the short term we are investing much more training resources that will enable in the medium and long term to reach economic stabilization and to increase the scope of our services.

We will use the donation we received from you this past year to finance the described process, above. As always, we are grateful for your generous support and in the future, as well.

JEWISH GENETIC DISEASES

In the world of Genetics and Rare Genetic Disorders this past year has been very busy and very eventful. This report updates you on genetic issues directly related to NCJWC. For any questions or concerns, please email me at crgreenberg2@gmail.com.

A group of Metabolic specialists from across Canada led by Dr. Sandra Sirrs of Vancouver submitted in August 2023 a very detailed proposal to the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada called Inherited Metabolic Diseases Medicine (IMDMED). I am honoured to be a member of this group who contributed to this proposal. This proposal aims to create a new subspecialty training programme for pediatric and adult metabolic medicine in Canada. The Royal College is the national professional association that oversees and regulates postgraduate medical education in Canada and assures that all medical and surgical specialist and subspecialists receive the highest standards of training. NCJWC provided a very strong letter supporting this proposal which was based on a critical need to increase the workforce of physicians specializing in hereditary metabolic disorders. NCJWC's letter (see attached) was submitted to the Royal College along with the proposal and is very much appreciated. We will not hear for at least several months if our proposal is favourably reviewed.

Much research on hereditary metabolic disorders that are overrepresented in people of Ashkenazi Jewish and Sephardic descent is ongoing. NCJWC has strongly supported research on the subgroup of metabolic disorders known as Lysosomal Storage Disorders (LSDs) such as GM2 Gangliosidosis (Tay Sachs disease). NCJWC last year provided seed money to support the research of Dr. Barbara Triggs-Raine of the University of Manitoba. At the NCJWC Annual General Meeting on October 17, 2021, I outlined Dr. Triggs-Raine's research proposal and the NCJWC Board of Directors voted to grant \$8000 as seed money for this project directly aimed at the research. I attach her report of the very encouraging progress to date on Gene Therapy for GM2 Gangliosidosis (Tay Sachs disease). Similar progress is being made in many other LSDs by researchers worldwide.

In the area of carrier testing please note that information can be obtained from the Jewish Genetic Diseases Consortium (JGDC) (www.jewishgeneticdiseases.org). JGDC represents an alliance of 8 non- profit organizations that share a common goal of providing general information about many Jewish Genetic diseases and specifically about carrier testing. There are genetic disorders common to all Jewish Groups (eg Cystic fibrosis) as well as specific Ashkenazi Jewish Diseases and specific Sephardic-Mizrachi Jewish Diseases. Carrier testing is generally available in all centres in Canada for a panel of disorders specifically seen in individuals of Ashkenazi descent although there is momentum increasing for expanded carrier screening for all Jewish individuals of child-bearing age.

Genetic testing for cancer susceptibility (eg hereditary breast and ovarian cancer) using cancer gene panels remains an important area and testing is available in most centres across Canada but protocols differ from centre to centre. Cancer gene testing depends if the individual is affected with breast/ovarian/prostate/pancreatic cancer or if there is a family history in a first or second degree relative with breast or ovarian history. Please check with your health provider and your local genetic centre to get accurate information specific to your area.

Submitted by Cheryl Rockman-Greenberg OC, OM, MDCM, RCPC, FCCMG

Progress on the Development of a therapy for the GM2 Gangliosidoses (Tay Sachs Disease)

Our laboratories (Dr. Barbara Triggs-Raine and Dr. Brian Mark) are continuing to work toward the development of a treatment for Tay-Sachs disease. This year we

- 1. Demonstrated that two forms of an enzyme treatment (HexM and PhosHexM) reduced the level of GM2 ganglioside accumulation in the brain of a mouse model of Tay-Sachs disease. The PhosHexM form of the enzyme was more effective at removing GM2 ganglioside than the HexM form.
- 2. We have now injected mice with Tay-Sachs disease (and controls without Tay-Sachs) with a gene therapy vector expressing either HexM or PhosHexM. The full cohort of mice in the study have been injected and we are now testing them regularly for signs of neurological impairment. If the treatment is successful we expect the mice treated with HexM or PhosHexM to survive without symptoms for a longer period of time than the untreated controls. We expect PhosHexM to allow better survival than HexM.
- 3. If the therapy is successful the next step is to determine if less gene therapy vector can be successful and to find the gene therapy vector giving the best expression of the enzyme treatment.
- 4. This would then need to move onto a larger animal model and/or clinical trials if successful.

We very much appreciate the support of the National Council of Jewish Women of Canada which is assisting in these studies.

Submitted by Barbara Triggs-Raine, August 16, 2023

GREETINGS



It is an honor to address you on this occasion when you are about to present your annual activities report.

Your dedication and commitment have been instrumental in achieving your goals and making a difference in the community. I am sure that your report will reflect the hard work and positive

impact you have generated throughout the year.

Your selfless work and the time you have invested are inspiring and exemplary for all.

Thank you for being a fundamental pillar in our mission to create positive change.

I look forward to hearing the details of your accomplishments and how they have contributed to the well-being of those we serve.

I encourage you to continue with that same passion and determination in future challenges.

Together, we will continue to build a better and more supportive world.

Thank you very much for your invaluable work! Lilian Grinberg. President.



PRIME MINISTER PREMIER MINISTRE

October 21-23, 2023

Dear Friends:

I am pleased to extend my warmest greetings to everyone attending the 2023 Annual General Meeting of the National Council of Jewish Women of Canada (NCJWC).



Since it was established in 1897, the NCJWC has acted as a collective voice for Jewish women in the country. This event offers a wonderful opportunity to reflect upon the history of the organization, to celebrate its many accomplishments and to set goals for the future.

I would like to commend everyone involved with the NCJWC for their valuable work. You can take pride in knowing that your efforts are helping to build a better world for us all.

Please accept my best wishes for a productive meeting and continued success.

Sincerely,

The Rt. Hon. Justin P. J. Trudeau, P.C., M.P. Prime Minister of Canada



Dedicated to furthering human welfare in the community.

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