

**A monthly publication of Clayton Valley Village**  
**June 2022 Edition**

A Message from our President. Check out our Events held in May, Upcoming Events, and more. Also in this issue, we present Chapter 15 of the Girl with the Topaz Ring, a story by CVV member Gary Carr. CVV has a new Circle, Mah Jongg.

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**Did You Know?**

**“CVV Lunch and Learn”** programs are periodically scheduled on various topics of interest presented by guest experts. They are scheduled at the noon hour so you can sit and enjoy your lunch while viewing the presentation. If you missed any of them or would like to view them again, they have been recorded so you can view later on YouTube.com; *search* Clayton Valley Village.

The dates and topics of most recent programs were:

Wednesday, May 19, 2021; **“How to Make a Charcuterie Board”**

Wednesday, November 10, 2021; **“Post Covid Travel”**

Friday, December 10, 2021; **“How to Get Up From a Fall”**

Friday, January 14, 2022; **“Aging – The Best is Yet to Come”**

Many other programs of interest are listed on our website calendar and noted in your weekly Sunday email. Check them out!

Scan this code to see the CVV Calendar



## **President's Message**

**Kathy Geddes**

May was certainly a fun month for Clayton Valley Villagers! Our celebration of Clayton Valley Village's 5th Anniversary on May 1 was a great success, with about 35 of our members and volunteers attending. The food catered by New Mecca was delicious, a great music playlist (kindness of Pete) was enjoyed by all, and there was a delicious cake and champagne for our anniversary toast,

along with lots of celebrating and laughter. Many thanks to Sonja Wilkin and Sue Manning for chairing the fun-filled event.

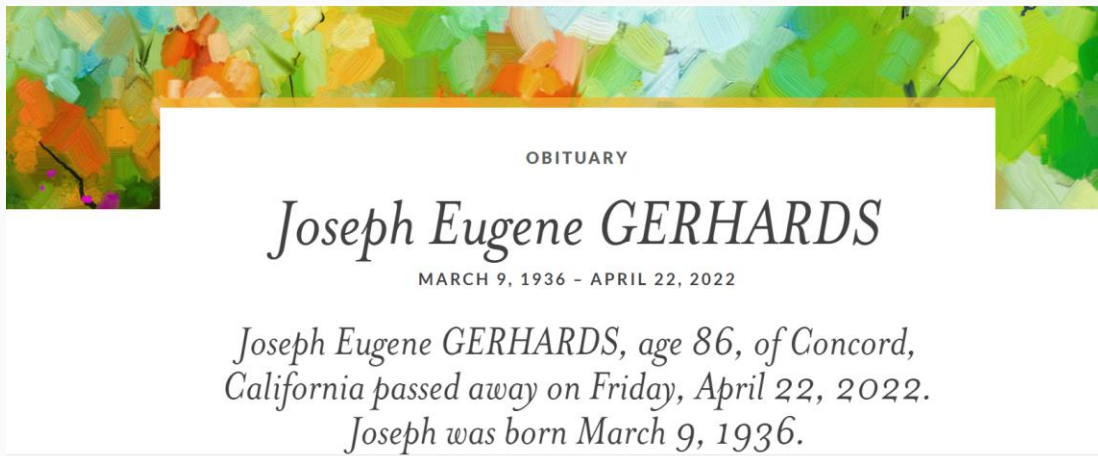
And, just when you would think that we were all “funned” out, we had our monthly Happy Hour, held this time at Moresis’ in Clayton. There were about 27 attendees, and guess what? It was a Taco Tuesday—yum!! Once again, we found that winning combination of good friends, good food, and lots of fun.

When Clayton Valley Village first began, we used the models of other villages to create a lot of our organizational framework and activities. With five years under our belt, we have made our village our own and constantly scrutinize what we do and how we do it—thanks to your feedback and a very talented and generous group of volunteers. And we continue to upgrade and improve Clayton Valley Village. Behind the scenes, the Board and many other volunteers continue to look for better ways to meet your needs, whether it be for services you request and need, or by finding new ways for us to stay engaged with each other and the community. If you have an idea or suggestions, please let me know.

*Don't forget to vote by June 7<sup>th</sup>,  
continue to conserve our precious water,  
and give thanks each day for the many ways  
we have been so richly  
blessed.*

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**In Loving Memory of Joseph Eugene Gerhards  
Clayton Valley Village Member and Treasured Friend**





Joe was born in Kansas, one of eight siblings. The family later moved to Portland Oregon where he attended Portland State earning a degree in engineering. He eventually moved to Concord Ca. and worked at the naval weapon station.

He married his first wife Lois in 1961 and they had four children, Anthony Patrick Tim and Teresa. Lois died unexpectedly 1992. Joe retired soon afterwards and attended Holy Names earning a degree in family and marriage counseling.

Joe was a man of many interests, he loved to travel, his favorite destination being England. Gardening was another of his passions and he was in his garden whenever possible. He was a practitioner of 'healing touch' and was part of a group helping veterans in Concord. He also practiced Tia Chi. He met his second wife Alfreda while square dancing. He had two stepchildren Kenny (who preceded him in death) and Teresa.

Joe touched many lives with his kindness and compassion. Joe was simply a good man, a good friend and a wonderful husband and father. He will be missed.

There will be a celebration of Joes life at a later date.

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# Welcome

New Volunteers!



**Valerie McDaniel**



**Dale McCombs**

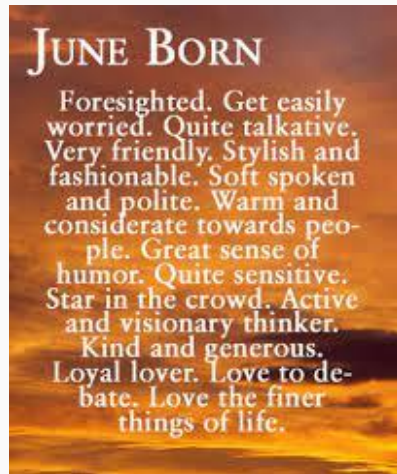


**Members and Volunteers**

**June Birthdays**



June 6th Kim



Brazill

June 11th Nancy Hoffman

June 13th Larry Long

June 28th Arlene Lewandowski

June 28th Mary Esther Loranger

June 28th Ralph Molnar

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## Interesting Stories Around the Bay



## Lake Merritt, Oakland CA - History



Lake Merritt is a tidal slough that is part of the San Francisco Bay. In 1869, Dr. Samuel Merritt donated 155 acres that included the headwaters of "Indian Slough" and money to build a dam at the 12th Street Bridge, across the "neck" of the inlet. This created the present day lake. It became known as "Merritt's Lake" and later as Lake Merritt. The flow of tides was limited to pipes and culverts.

In 1925, Lake Merritt's Necklace of Lights was lit for the first time during the Dons of Peralta Water Festival. The Necklace of Lights has 126 lampposts, each given by an organization or an individual along with 3,400 pearly bulbs. The Necklace of Lights was illuminated every night until 1941 when World War II blackout conditions were enforced. Measure DD projects starting in 2012 freed the Lake Merritt channel, removing culverts that limited the flow of tides into the Lake.

### **America's Oldest Wildlife Refuge**

Lake Merritt comes from a wide, tidal estuary (salt water marsh) that was known as the Laguna Peralta. The Pacific Flyway has remained a sanctuary and stop-over for thousands of migratory birds.

Dr. Merritt declared the lake a National Wildlife Refuge in 1869. On March 18th, 1870, Lake Merritt became the first protected wildlife refuge in America. The dam was built to regulate the tidal water flow and increase the water level.

In 1915, organized feedings of the wild ducks began. 10 years later, the first bird island was built, with an additional four islands added in 1956. These artificial islands house hundreds of egrets, herons, Canada geese and many other species of birds. Two of the islands have fresh water ponds. To ensure that marine sports and boating activities based at Lake Merritt don't disturb the birds, a boom blocks access to the five islands during nesting season.

## Birds of Lake Merritt

Lake Merritt, home to large breeding populations of herons, egrets, geese and ducks, is the oldest wildlife refuge on North America. Countless migratory birds make the lake their home during the winter months. Lake Merritt is a great place for beginning birders to get up-close views of many species, including the incredibly tame black-crowned night herons, snowy egrets and hundreds of scaups! From time to time, brown pelicans and great blue herons make an appearance on the lake. Occasionally, strange and exotic birds such as Egyptian geese and Mandarin ducks make an appearance in the nature center as well. There are sightings of less obvious winter visitors too. A single female tufted duck lived near the lake throughout the winter of 2002. Other winter visitors include gadwalls, common and red-throated loons, Eurasian and American wigeons, pintail ducks, wood ducks, ring-necked ducks, white-eyed scoters and surf scoters.

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***The Girl with the Topaz Ring, a story by CVV member Gary Carr. Watch for more in succeeding issues!***



### **The Girl with the Topaz Ring** by Gary Carr

#### **Chapter Fifteen**

***The Story so far:***

***Josh and Sarah go to the soccer match to watch Krissy and Tommy play. In a tight struggle, Krissy's team, The Barbies, pull out a win, but not before Tommy is hit in the face and suffers a broken nose. Josh and Sarah pick up Krissy and Tommy, and the four drive to meet Josh's grandparents.***

When the four of them pulled into the driveway, Josh's grandparents were waiting on the porch. Lois ran to the car before anyone could get out, while Ben followed slowly, nervously, preparing himself for the

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shock of meeting his granddaughter.

Lois singled out her daughter's red-haired child, locked her a maternal embrace and wouldn't let go. Ben stood frozen before he joined Lois in an all-enveloping hug. Tears dripped from six pairs of eyes like icicles melting in a spring thaw.

After the hug slowly relaxed, Krissy took Tommy's hand and through her sobs announced,

"This is Tommy, my best friend."

She pointed to Josh and declared, "This is my new brother who found me for you."

"And this is Sarah who I told you about," Josh said, squeezing her to him.

Lois let go of Krissy and transferred her hug to Sarah,

"You are more beautiful than I imagined," she said and blotted her eyes with a tissue that always appears magically in a grandmother's hand.

"Krissy, how did you get that shiner?" Ben asked. "And, Tommy, what about your nose?"

"Tommy blocked a shot with her face," said Krissy. "And I took an elbow to the eye."

"Soccer gets rough sometimes." Said Tommy.

Ben's chest swelled with indignity. "Did you get a penalty kick out of it?"

"Ben, we can talk sports inside. Come on, everyone, dinner is just about ready.

I hope you all like pot-roast."

Josh started to say that Sarah was a vegetarian, but she gave him an elbow to the ribs.

"I'll be fine," she hissed. "I don't want to get a black mark in your grandmother's book."

Ben directed the seating around the table – Josh and Sarah on one side, Krissy and Tommy on the other, with Ben and Lois at either end. Lois could be heard in the kitchen clanking some utensil against a pot.

"Can we help you?" Sarah called out.

"No, I'm fine. It'll be ready in a minute," Lois replied.

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Ben sighed, “that’s Lois’s way of saying ‘stay out of my kitchen.’ You’ll learn.”

“I’ll learn,” Sarah thought as she felt a wave of excitement flow over her. She hoped those two words signaled Ben’s acceptance of her. Now she was further motivated to toss aside her vegetarian rules and eat the pot roast.

Josh pointed to the green, pear-infused jello sitting to the side of each plate.

“See, that’s the jello salad I told you about,” he explained to the girls.

“I love jello.” Krissy exclaimed.

From across the table, Sarah flashed her a thumbs-up.

The mood at dinner was joyous. Lois and Ben peppered Krissy with questions about her life over the past decades while Tommy ate with relish and Sarah fought her way through the slice of pot roast.

Before dessert, Ben brought out a box of photographs highlighting the life of Krissy’s mother.

Lois, Krissy and Sarah sobbed. Tommy and Ben blotted their eyes with their napkins. Even though Josh had seen them many times before, he teared up as well. He fetched a box of tissues from the sideboard and set it in the middle of the table.

They came to a photo of Jeanette at her sixteenth birthday party. She was smiling as she extended her hand to display her gift - the topaz ring. Lois wiped her eyes again and fixed her eyes on Krissy.

“Sweetheart, do you have that topaz ring. Jeanette threaded it on a shoelace and hung it around your neck before...” She broke into sobs.

“Before she gave you up? It was the last thing she did for you.”

Krissy looked at Tommy before replying. Her throat was tight.

“Well, in a way, yes,” she answered.

“In a way? What do you mean?” Lois asked.

“Tommy wears it now,” Krissy replied.

Tommy leaned forward and stretched her left hand toward Lois. On her third finger, glowing in the light from the dining room chandelier, was the topaz ring.

“Tommy and I are a couple, we’re married” Krissy said.

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Sarah poked Josh with an elbow. "Told you," she whispered.  
Krissy held her left hand out to Lois. "And this is the ring Tommy gave to me."

Krissy wore a gold ring set with a round ruby.

"It was my mother's," Tommy said.

The room went silent. Josh's gaze alternated between his grandmother's face and the framed photo of his mother on the mantle.

"Good for you - both of you," Lois said. "No better way to keep your rings in the family"

"I agree," Ben said. "Now we have two granddaughters."

He looked over at Sarah and added, "Maybe three."

Sarah lowered her head, but Josh could see she was blushing.

"Well, time for dessert," Lois announced and trotted off to the kitchen.

It was dark when the newly united four drove back to the hotel where the Barbies were staying. The team would fly out in the morning for their match in Phoenix. Krissy and Tommy were asleep in the back seat, thanks to the extra-strength Tylenol Ben had given them for their injuries.

The Barbies' hotel was less than first class. The Mont d'Or was a motel with exterior corridors and ice machines at the base of each stairwell. As she got out of the car, Tommy called it "the typical Barbie-Dump."

"You always stay in places like this?" Josh asked.

"This is one of the better ones," Tommy said. "Hopefully there won't be any drug deals going down outside our window."

The four of them exchanged hugs. Krissy told Josh she would call him when they got to Phoenix.

"The season ends in a month," Krissy said. "We'll fly out from Baltimore so we can spend some quality time with you and exchange family histories."

"Great, you can stay with us," Sarah said.

After a last round of hugs, Krissy and Tommy trudged over to the Mont d'Or.

"Stay with us," Josh thought. "I like the sound of that."

On the way back to San Francisco, Josh and Sarah remained lost in their thoughts until he broke the silence.

“A lot of news to lay on Ben and Lois, right Babe?”

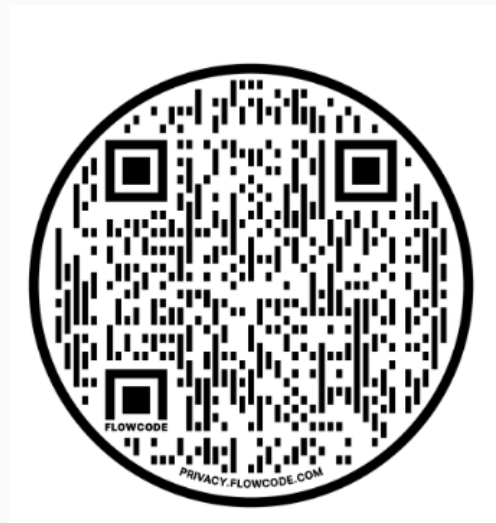
“Breaking news, Sweetie, breaking news. That’s what you do best.” Sarah replied.

***Next time: The Final Chapter (Epilogue)***

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**QR Code**



You’re going to see QR codes in our CVV Communications. Here is What a QR code is

### **What is a QR Code?**

A QR Code is a two-dimensional barcode. QR Codes may be used to display text to the user, to open a website.



### **What Would I Use A QR code for?**

You can use a QR Code to direct people right to your CVV Event, Web Page or social media.

### **How do you Scan a QR Code?**

Open the Camera app on your phone.

Hold your phone so that the QR code appears in view.

Tap the notification to open the link associated with the QR code.

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## **Favorite Movie/TV and Books from Members and Volunteers**

### **On Beyond Zinnia**

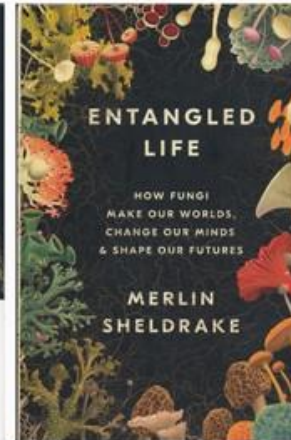
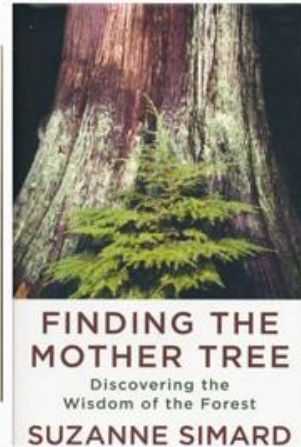
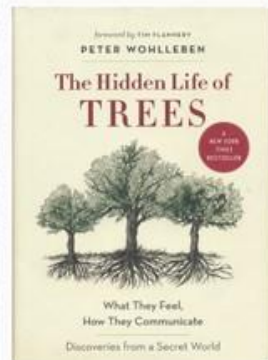
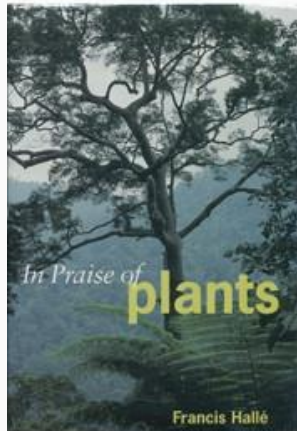
by Ralph Molnar

The recent hike at Mt Diablo - on the 9th - featured a wide variety of local plants and their delightful flowers. But of course, there is much more to a plant than its blossoms, after all half (at least) of the plant is underground: the systems of roots. Roots are rarely thought of as delightful, especially when digging up a water or sewer line. But plants are a whole different world and widen our horizons in unexpected ways: there is so more to appreciate than just the colorful blossoms.

If you wish to learn more about plants, there are several accessible books that can introduce you to the fascinating, and - because plants are responsible for making so much of our lives enjoyable - the very relevant secret lives of plants. Francis Hallé's 2002 *In Praise of Plants* is an accessible and illuminating introduction to what life is like for a plant (just in case you ever wanted to be one). Peter Wohlleben's 2016 *The Hidden Life of Trees* is a game-changer in showing that trees aren't merely the giant umbrellas that they appear. Suzanne Simard's 2021 *Finding the Mother Tree* is a more detailed, and very personal, account of the roles of trees - and fungi - in forests. Hallé and Wohlleben discuss what has been learned, Simard tells the vicissitudes of just how it was learned.

Then there is Merlin Sheldrake's 2020 *Entangled Life* to show that there's more to mushrooms than garden ornaments or additions to cuisine. Fungi don't just break down dead plant material, important as that is, or rot overripe fruit, but also link together the plants of the forest (and probably the meadow, though that has been less studied). They actually support and facilitate the growth of young trees. I'll not go into further detail but leave to you the enchantment of learning about them.

You'll never look at plants (or mushrooms) in the same way again - 'consciousness-raising' is a tired, over-worked, broken-down phrase, but through these books it actually happens.



## Upcoming Events

**Tuesday, June 7th - Final day to VOTE!**  
**Wednesday, June 8th - Board Meeting**  
**Friday, June 10th - Apr-May-Jun Birthday Celebration**  
**Tuesday, June 14th - Flag Day**  
**Sunday, June 19th - Father's Day**  
**Tuesday, June 21st - CVV Happy Hour**  
**Friday, June 24th - Events Committee Meeting**

Scan the QR Code to View Calendar





**CVV 5th Anniversary Celebration - May 1**





CVV celebrated their 5th Year Anniversary on May 1st. Thirty Seven members and volunteers attended for a fun celebration with great Mexican food, a Champagne toast and a cake.

CVV has come a long way in the past 8 years thanks to its members

and volunteers.... it is a hard working group of people who have enjoyed being together and have supported each other with pride in what they have built. The future indeed looks bright!.

### **Wildflower Hike in Mt. Diablo - May 9th**

Eleven Village Explorers enjoyed a 2-mile Wildflower hike in Mt. Diablo State Park. We entered the Park at Mitchell Canyon and took the Globe Lily Trail. The day was perfect for hiking with temperature in the 60s, blue sky and puffy white clouds. To my surprise, we saw many flowers. Ithuriel's Spear were everywhere, as were Bush Monkey Flower. Mariposa Lily was plentiful. We also saw Yarrow, Morning Glory, Wild Cucumber, California Buckeye, Yerba Santa, Chamise, Blackberry, Wild rose, Mt. Diablo Globe Lily, Woolly Sunflower, Blue Elderberry, tiny California Poppy, Elegant Clarkia, Indian Paintbrush, Blue-eyed Grass and last but not least, Chinese Houses.

This is a great hike with mild ups and downs right in our back yards. You can start walking this trail in March and do it every 2 or 3 weeks and see different flowers.





**CVV monthly Happy Hour at Moresi's!**



Twenty-seven attended and enjoyed the outdoor patio area. It was well managed by Moresi's, as usual, with good food, beverages and service.

## **Cancer Community Hope Walk**

### **CVV's Strong Show of Support for Hope Walk 2022!**

By Fiona Hughes

As a community partner, CVV was proud to support the Cancer Support Community (CSC) at their most successful Hope Walk fundraising event yet, on Saturday, May 21 at Heather Farm Park, Walnut Creek. 750 walkers participated, and over \$226,000 was raised at this inspiring event. A big 'thank you' to our members who donated, as well as those who walked in support of the event, in order to raise money. Sonja Wilkin, as CVV team leader, presented CVV's donation of \$535, which exceeded our goal.





The outreach team of Jim Whitfield and Fiona Hughes set up and ran a CVV booth at the Hope Walk event and had the opportunity to share info about our Village to the community, and with event partners. Fiona created a CVV gift basket of BBQ goodies donated for the event's raffle.



The supportive, positive energy of the Hope Walk event was a pleasure to witness and everyone involved had a great time. Some of the community partners we learned more about included:

- [Diablo Valley Foundation for the Aging](#). Much like CVV (and a prior partner of ours!), this non-profit offers programs for seniors including friendly visits, financial services advice and help, and other fiduciary services.



- [Connected Horse](#) Brings dementia patients and their caregivers together in the healing presence of horses.
  - [Best Ever Home Care](#) Offering in-home care, aide and companion care.
  - [White Pony Express](#) – Volunteer-driven, providing a 'circle of giving' in the donation and distribution of the abundance of food, clothing and supplies to those in need.
- 



## **CVV Mah Jongg Circle Members/Volunteers**



The Mah Jongg CVV Circle started up on May 11th.  
Members and Volunteers can join by emailing Joanne Vanis  
at [joannevanis@comcast.net](mailto:joannevanis@comcast.net)





Joanne Vanis teaching Mah Jongg to  
Sonja Wilkin, Sue Manning and Diane Berger. Great fun!

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## QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"If you have good thoughts they will shine out of your face like  
sunbeams and you will always look lovely."

- Roald Dahl

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## 2022 CVV Board of Directors

Executive Committee:

Kathy Geddes (President), Sue Manning & Sonja Wilkin (President Elect),  
Marilyn Wollenweber (Past-President), Arlene Lewandowski (Secretary),  
Joanne Wasak (Treasurer)

**Members-at-Large**

Diane Berger, Joanne Vanis, Candy Negrete

**Volunteer Representative Members**

Pete Bardea, Linda Pinder, Kim Brazill, Margaret Bachman

***Our Village Voice*** is a free, electronic publication of  
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The editors welcome all submissions and reserve the right  
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<https://www.claytonvalleyvillage.org>

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