

Quarterly Newsletter of the



MURRAY COUNTY
—HISTORICAL SOCIETY—

Slayton, Murray County, Minnesota

Fall 2020

Directors Annual Report

By: Janet Timmerman

"Sometimes the light's shinin' on me. Other times, I can barely see.
Lately, it occurs to me, what a long strange trip it's been."
Truckin' by Jerry Garcia with the Grateful Dead

As 2020 comes into focus in the rearview mirror, Jerry Garcia's song couldn't have said it better. Strange indeed. We couldn't have imagined our world like this at the end of 2019. Back then we were looking forward to a really gangbuster year filled with 1920s celebratory events commemorating the centennial of the start of Prohibition, Women's suffrage, the Slayton Fire department, the county's American Legion Posts and so many more things that happened a century ago. But, what we didn't expect was the start of a pandemic that might come to rival the 1918 Spanish influenza pandemic. We didn't expect an election season that would threaten the foundations of our democracy. We never expected to see a season of 27 named hurricanes and millions of acres of western wildfires, and yet that is what 2020 had in store for our country and our world.

But there has been much to be thankful for locally. The weather has been fair to the region. Crops have grown and produced much. Our county has seen minimal disease compared to the rest of the nation. Despite our political differences and the virtual camps that has placed us in, we still hold a sense of community and we support each other in times of need.

Working in a museum offers a good sense of how things ebb and flow through time. In this ebb tide we have time to regain our sense of place and explore our priorities. Our staff and board have had to do the same. When it became clear the pandemic was a real threat, the county began to make plans for a shut down to protect the staff and public while finding ways to continue the important work it does. The museum was closed and by the first of April we were planning how to provide the county's history to the public via on-line access. Nothing compares to hand-to-hand greetings and in-person gatherings but we have done our best. Rather than give a long-winded director's report (like the introduction!) I have chosen to create a chronology of bullet points. Throughout you will see the work that has gone on behind the scenes to make sure the museums stay accessible and as engaged as possible through this long strange trip we call 2020.

Programming and Exhibits

November - December: 2019-Annual Meeting held at Painted Prairie Winery with our speaker Colleen (Illg) Tollefson. Dinehart Lecture-Life as Small Town Journalist-Kathy Brandt.

Holiday Open House: Holiday Celebrations from Around the World or as we called it "There's No Place Like Gnome!"

January - February:

Dinehart Lecture-Rose Schmit spoke about the battle for women's suffrage. "From Seneca Falls to Slayton."

Pioneer Day with 4-H students- Two hours of total hands-on Pioneer experiences from making string dolls to learning pioneer games.

Spirit Free Cocktail Hour-Kick off to a year dedicated to 1920s events (sort-of). Special event to commemorate the start of Prohibition. No-booze cocktails made to order. Live music provided by Miron and Alex Carney.

DH Lunchbox Lecture- Speaker Janet Timmerman spoke on Temperance and Prohibition in Murray County. "Dry as a Bone." Seems they all weren't the teetotalers we like to think they were.



Scene from the Spirit Free
Cocktail Hour

March:

Dinehart Lunchbox Lecture-One of our favored Speakers, Anita Talsma Gaul talked about the activities of the KKK in the area during the 1920s. "The Not-so Invisible Empire."

Trivia Night at Hadley Community Center- 11 teams slugged it out mentally to see who the brightest bulbs in the knife drawer were. The Gaul Down Team took the honors!

Jakob had an article published in the Chicago & North Western Historical Society's Journal *North Western Lines* about End O Line Park.

...And then the walls came tumbling down. We closed the doors to visitors and moved on-line.

April-May: Planning for a new reality or how does Zoom work again?

Janet moved to her new office aka spare upstairs bedroom with a hollow core door on sawhorses for a desk. Janet researched and produced a newsletter and newspaper article on the Pandemic of 1918.

Jakob moved to End O Line and Karen had to end her position until further notice.

Rose begins work alone at the museum. This hiatus gave her time to work on long-overdue collections project. She began an inventory and catalog project of the hundreds of books in the collection. This meant clearing out the dozens of boxes stored in the attic of the Dinehart House. Thanks to Brian Harmsen and his son and Jon Schmit for helping haul them all down.

Rose also started an inventory and re-housing of the hundreds of 35 mm slides in the collections. For each of these projects each item had to be photographed, identified and listed in our Past Perfect museum software. Thanks to a little slide reader that Brian had, that part of the inventory went much more quickly than it might have.

All of these projects have been on-going throughout the summer and fall.

We all attended meetings with a new format. Remember to have pants on and don't sit too close to the monitor or they can look up your nose!

- *Staff and department head meetings *Southern Minnesota Tourism meetings *Casey Jones Trail meetings
- *Minnesota Historical Society pandemic policy meetings *Zoom Historical Society Board meetings
- *Minnesota Alliance of Local History museum roundtable meetings *MNHS Construction grants meeting

End O Line prepared for a self-guided limited-hours opening.

Jakob created new outdoor and indoor signage for self-guided tours. He also re-wrote the entire summer tour script for a self-guided tour of the park buildings, including an updated map of the grounds.

1920s dance cancelled.

Front Porch Music Series postponed to 2021.

June - July:

Janet, Anita Gaul, and Rose dug into creating the 1920s Exhibit through daily e-mails, texts, and phone calls. Throughout the summer each of the 18 wall sized-posters went through several drafts before being approved for printing by Western Printing in Marshall.

Janet began work on the End O Line grant-Research and Bibliography phase. This project continued throughout the summer and early fall.

Janet researched and wrote a newsletter article on the origins and evolutions of local High School sport mascots and team names for the newsletter.

Rose produced the newsletter and sent it out.

End O Line opened with limited hours, staff, and fanfare. Linn Wessels comes on board as the only summer assistant.



Dennis and Brent Miller moved the wind generator in from the Sierk Building for the 1920s exhibit.

Museum opened the end of June by appointment only.

Rose and her dad, Jon Schmit, re-painted the front of the Museum.

New front museum sign created and put in place.

Rose began creating new permanent exhibits on transportation and 1940s auto crash.

Daily and weekly postings on-line by Rose and Jakob are successful!

Jakob began an End O Line alphabet series. T is for Train!

Summer museum assistant Linn Wessels helped mask the bison. Safety first!

Rose began an on-line artifact/historic article series as a virtual gallery.

Rose created and posted children's local history activities on-line including Spanish translation.

Janet and Rose tried a first draft of a Pioneer tour of the Wornson cabin for YouTube. 1st draft-Needs work.

Zooming away- Webinars, Tourism, Casey Jones Trail meetings, and re-opening protocols with MNHS.

August - September:

The silent summer. Murray County Fair cancelled.

End O Line staff chased wayward bison. Somehow (hmm I wonder how?) two of them ended up out at the Slaughter Slough memorial stones. Thanks to the Murray County Sheriff's Deputies for rounding them up and herding them back to their pasture.

Work on 1920s exhibit continues with setting up displays, choosing and preparing exhibit artifacts, artifact interpretive signs and doing final schematic of the exhibit gallery.

Karen returns to her work on Murray County's obituary project.

"Murray County in the 1920s" exhibit opened to Members Only and then the general public.

Janet completed the End O Line Bibliography. Final grant report submitted and accepted as complete.

Rose created and produced a self-guided Cemetery Tour complete with signs and balloons.

Rose hosts the Collection Committee with dozens of artifacts accessioned into the collection.

Jakob completes final grant reports for turntable assessment and End O Line book project grants.

October:

Janet was on family leave all month.

Jakob closed End O Line season on October 17th. Moves his office back to the museum.

Rose helped the MCC 1st Graders enjoy a socially distanced Pioneer Day including a film of volunteer LuAnn Parker teaching how to make butter!

November:

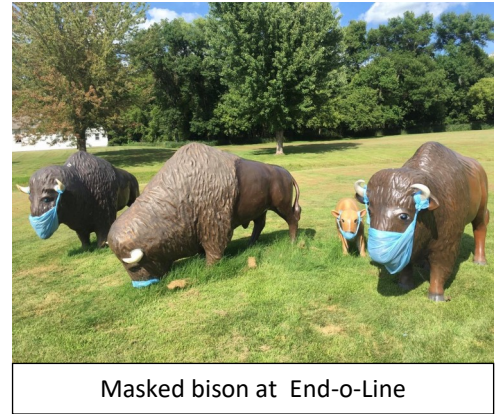
Rose works on the next newsletter (Which you now hold in your hands).

Janet works on an Annual Meeting director's report (which you are now reading).

Decorating the outside and yard of the Dinehart House for Christmas-Giant Christmas card!

2020-21 Dinehart Lecture Series goes on-line with a virtual Cemetery Tour Talk

Visitors both in person, 932 as of the end of October, and on-line, 95,199 people reached on Facebook through 143 posts, engaged with the museum through the year!



Grants and Grant Projects:

Grant applications accepted in 2019 and finished in 2020:

Dinehart House architectural drawings and project plans-Legacy- \$27,621 completed and closed

Grant applications accepted and worked on in 2020:

End O Line Book and Bibliography project-First Phase-\$ 5893 Legacy-complete and closed (county)

End O Line Turntable assessment- \$10,000 Legacy-complete and closed (county)

End O Line depot painting project: 15,000 Schmidt grant-complete and closed (county)

Museum 1920s exhibit grant-\$ 9,104 Legacy- complete- final report to be submitted (historical society)

Collaboration with MC Fair board for permanent signage at Wornson Cabin. App. \$1700

Grant applications accepted and will be worked on in 2021:

End O Line Turntable repair-\$23,700 Legacy (county)

Grant application submitted and under review

Dinehart House Construction and Repair- Legacy \$114,766 Legacy (county)

Second Phase End-O-Line book production-Writing the narrative-\$9930.00 Legacy (county)

Total grant monies for 2020: \$41,997.00

Total grant monies received between 2014-2021:\$300,230.00

With the expected 2021 DHH construction grant= \$444,996.00

Letter from the Chairman Brian Harmsen

It's been an historic year in so many ways. The weather, politics, the COVID-19 pandemic, you name it. Here in Murray County we march on through it all.

Some of our hardest workers, I've got to say, have been the staff at the museum: Janet, Rose, Jakob, Karen, Anita, and Dennis who created the expansive Roaring 1920s display. A must see! Stop in and check it out soon if you have not already done so.

Life was tough in those days and, fortunately, as descendants of those hardy individuals, we can muster through tough times as well. I can't imagine transitioning from horse and buggy to a Model T, figuring out electricity, modern communications, new farm equipment. What was it all like to live when every day brought new marvels to the scene? Riding a horse had to seem much safer than bouncing down the road in a noisy contraption like the Model T but imagine their excitement at the new mode of transportation.

Similar to the fears and uncertainty during the Spanish flu pandemic in 1918-1920, we are now facing challenging times due to a frightening pandemic that has upended our lives in ways we could not imagine, even preventing the simple pleasures of spending time with our friends and families. George Wooten's poem seems relevant today:

Endeavor to Persevere
When best-laid plans have fallen to waste
And frustrations abound in their former place
When failure looms with doubts and fears
We must endeavor to persevere

Though we won't be able to gather for our annual meeting, we are thankful that everyone has agreed to stay on as officers and board members for another year. Thank you for your dedication to the Murray County Historical Museum. Hopefully, we can all get together next year. Be well and God bless.



Annual Treasurer's Report

For the Period October 1, 2019 to September 30, 2020

General Checking

Beginning balance 9/30/19

\$ 30,146.97

Receipts

Grants Received	\$ 9,104.00	
Book Sales	312.28	
Sales tax on books	21.47	
Memberships	3,419.00	
Donations	5,061.94	
Miscellaneous	60.00	
Total receipts		17,978.69

Disbursements

Contract Labor - Professional	\$ 2,629.40	
Equipment	181.68	
Office Supplies	609.59	
Book Purchases	267.27	
General Supplies	11,825.95	
Conference	299.62	
State and Local Memberships	434.00	
Advertising	330.00	
Miscellaneous	180.97	
Total disbursements		(16,758.48)

Ending balance 9/30/20

\$ 31,367.18

-Submitted by MCHS Treasurer Bradley Bergerson

Lunchbox Lectures

We will not be hosting in-person Lunchbox Lectures this season. Instead, what we have planned is a combination of recorded presentations and slideshows that will be posted on our website for you to enjoy at home! One positive about this type of lecture? You don't have to worry about missing a one day event. These videos will be available on our website all season so you can watch them whenever you have time!



Tentative Schedule:

November 12: 2020 Cemetery Tour PowerPoint

December 10: Draining the Great Oasis; Narrated PowerPoint by Janet Timmerman

January 14: Murray County in the 1920s PowerPoint

February 11: Railroads of Murray County; Jakob Etrheim

March 11: Baseball Interview with Bill Bolin; Pulled from the MCHS Archive

April 8: Frank Thayer—An Architect's Story; by Rose Schmit

Happenings at the Murray County Museum

By: Rose Schmit Site Coordinator/Collections Manager



It's amazing how time flies between each of the quarterly newsletters! Here at the museum we have stayed fairly steady with in-person visitors and call/email research requests. Along with other visitors coming in to the museum Karen was able to come back to work to continue on the obituary project and Jakob moved back to the museum for the winter. Just like that I have gone from being alone to having a full house!

Since the last newsletter I have been busy with putting together the Self-Guided Cemetery Tour, finishing up last minute details on the 1920s exhibit, helping with the 1920s exhibit opening, reconfiguring the annual MCC Pioneer Day, and collections care.

The Self-Guided Cemetery Tour was so much fun to put together! From what I have heard through feedback, it was enjoyed by many county and non-county residents alike! Don't fret if you were unable to go on the tour! I am converting all of the information on the posters into a slideshow which will be shared on our website for anyone who was not able to make it out to the cemeteries or who would like to read the information again! The slideshow will be posted later this month.

The 1920s Exhibit Opening went really well! We had about 40 people come spread out over three days and multiple time slots to allow for cleaning in between groups. We are so happy to have the exhibit up and available for people to enjoy after two years of hard work getting it ready. Many thanks to the funding provided by the Legacy Amendment which made this exhibit possible and to all the time spent on this by Janet Timmerman and Anita Talsma Gaul!

The first phase of the book project has been completed - all the books that had writing inside of them to indicate where they came from have been inventoried. In the new year I will be starting phase two which will consist of trying to track down documentation on the remainder of the books to properly inventory them. The Muesing Drug Store Project is coming to a close and should be wrapped up before the end of the year. Finally, the 35mm slide project is roughly 50% complete and will get me through the cold months of winter coming up!

With this year coming to a close, I'm looking forward to what the new year will bring to the museum!



Brian and Kate Harmsen and enjoying the 1920s photo booth.

Museum Exterior Refresh Draws to a Close



In early October we finished up the last of the projects relating to the front of the building. The façade and three metal doors have been painted and three new signs were installed — the large museum sign, a small sign for the memorial totem poll, and a very small "Please Use The Other Door" sign was added to the east side door.

Right when we were finishing up, City of Slayton workers came around and repainted our parking lines outside of the building. Many thanks to them! We are feeling like a brand new museum!



Updates from End-O-Line Railroad Park and Museum By Jakob Etrheim, Site Coordinator

It was definitely a different year at End O Line Park. The park opened to the public on June 16. There were several temporary changes put into place due to COVID-19. One major change was that park tours were all self-guided. It was the first year in a long time we didn't hire our full cavalry of tour guides for a summer. But we made it work and had few complaints. While we assumed that the summer would be a quiet one, we were delightfully surprised! Attendance for the month of July was 884 (it was 973 in 2019) and August had 889 visitors (it was 943 in 2019). Another change is that we were open post-Labor Day until MEA Weekend on October 17. With many people looking for things to do after quarantining all summer and many schools distance learning this fall, we had an all-time high for attendance in September and October with 685 visitors (444 in 2019).

In August, painting of the 1901 Currie Depot was completed. Last October, we received a \$15,000 grant from Carl & Verna Schmidt Foundation of Rochester to fund the project. Miesen's Color Center of Springfield did a fabulous job.

In September, work was completed on the city of Currie's new sewer infrastructure project that included hooking up End O Line Park to the city sewer system. The park's septic tanks were damaged during the 2018 flooding and have been a headache for us ever since.

Also in September, work was finalized on the End O Line Park research project. Janet spent the summer going through the park's archival inventory of newspaper clippings and photographs as well as interviewing contributors to the park's development over the years. This was Phase I of a three phase project with an ultimate goal to publish a book for the park's 50th anniversary in 2022. The next phase is writing the manuscript text based of the research from Phase I.

The final project we are hoping to finish before the end of the year is replacing the boardwalk platform between the Currie Depot and Georgia Northern Locomotive. Instead of replacing it with wood decking again, we will be putting a wood-looking brick paver called Barn Plank. It will give the look of an authentic train depot platform without the constant maintenance of wood decking. VIP Landscaping of Slayton will start the project in early November.

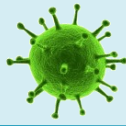
Lastly, we just received word that we were awarded a \$23,000 grant from the MN Historical Society that we applied for in July. The grant will be used to hire LHB Architects of Minneapolis to develop construction documents for future work on the historic manual turntable at the park. This grant is a critical step to helping preserve our iconic turntable.

While the park is closed for the winter, my office is now at the museum in Slayton. If you ever have any questions or comments about End O Line Park, don't hesitate to reach out to me. Thank you to all the local residents who constantly support the park and what we do.

Volunteer Opportunities — We Could Really Use Your Help!

If you are interested in any of the below volunteer tasks, give Rose a call at 507-836-6533.

1. **SHS and MCC Graduates Binders** - This volunteer would look through yearbooks and other documents to type a list of SHS graduates from 1981-1992 and MCC graduates from 1993-2020.
2. **Obituary Filing** - This volunteer would file obituaries alphabetically into filing cabinets.
3. **Biography Sorting** - This volunteer would sort biography newspaper clippings alphabetically.



Covid-19 Self Interview



We are living in a unique era of American history. Future historians, and our own descendants, will want to know how this pandemic affected the lives of rural people. In an effort to collect as many viewpoints, stories, and experiences as possible about how COVID-19 has affected county residents, we are calling on everyone, young and old, to complete this COVID-19 Self Interview. There are no right or wrong responses. Feel free to skip any question you prefer not to answer. Answers can be handwritten, typed, or even recorded. Please sign the release agreement and return it with your answers. Answers can be dropped off at the museum, mailed to PO Box 61; Slayton, MN 56172, or emailed to museum@co.murray.mn.us.

1. Whose experience is being recorded? Please give us your name, age, the place you live, and the place you work/attend school.
2. Who is doing the recording? If someone is helping you, give us their name.
3. Date and location when/where the interview was recorded.
4. When did you first learn about the COVID-19 outbreak?
5. What were your thoughts at that time?
6. What are your thoughts about the COVID-19 pandemic today?
7. How have you adapted to the pandemic so far? Has your daily routine changed? How so?
8. What has changed the most in your life?
9. What scares or worries you about the current situation?
10. What frustrates you or makes you angry about the current situation?
11. What makes you sad? Who or what are you missing?
12. How are you handling the situation? Are you working on certain projects? How are you passing the time?
13. Are you helping others? If so, how?
14. How do you feel about the official response on the local, state, or federal level?
15. Does this pandemic remind you of anything else or another crisis you may have lived through? If so, what?
16. What are you grateful for during this time?
17. What are your plans for moving forward in the future?

Please consider filling out this self interview for the Covid-19 Archive at the museum! We would greatly appreciate it!

I do hereby irrevocably release, assign, give, and convey to the Murray County Historical Society, any and all right, title, and interest including any copyright or intellectual property interest, in the COVID-19 Self Interview attached. I understand that the interviews will be deposited in the Murray County Historical Society archives for use by future scholars and may be used for any lawful purpose in all forms known or unknown in perpetuity.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

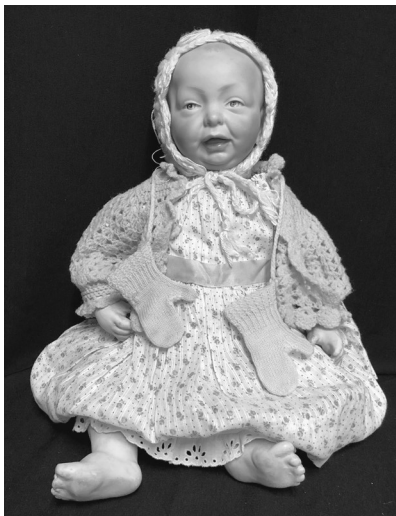
If under the age of 18:

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

A Word.doc copy of this interview can be downloaded from our website (<https://murraycountyhistoricalsociety.org/>).

“Creepy” Dolls from the Collection

Inspired by the History Center of Olmsted County’s Creepy Doll Contest, we have highlighted 9 unsettling dolls from the Murray County Historical Society collection! Photos of the dolls were posted on our Facebook page over the month of October. Which do you think is most creepy?



Bright Green
Eyes



Real Human
Hair



Eyes Closed



Many Thanks for Donations

Life Member Donations:

Lyle and Kay Onken Almie Carlson Donald Buldhaupt Tom and Loretta Pryor

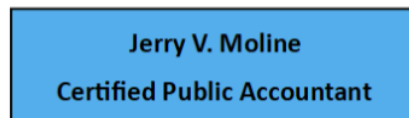
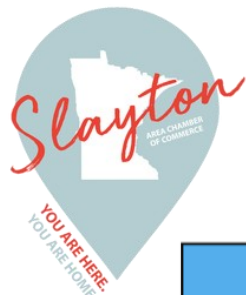
General Fund Donation:

Mary Koskie Joan and Rondal Schimbeno

If we missed your name as a donor, please contact Janet to make sure we have your donation on our list. We are deeply grateful for every donation and memorial. The Murray County Historical Society, is a non-profit, 501(c)(3). Donors may deduct their contributions as directed in the US Income Tax Code.

The society's tax number can be given upon request.

We Thank Our 2020 MCHS Business Members!



Business	Members Since
Almich's Market	2020
Chandler Co-Op	2020
Hoffmann Construction	2020
Jerry V. Moline CPA	2020
Left Bank Roasterie and Cafe	2020
Rooster's On/Off Sale Liquor	2020
Slayton Area Chamber of Commerce	2011
Slayton Building Materials, Inc.	2019
Spartz Plumbing & Heating, Inc.	2020
State Bank of Chandler	2003
Summer Cottage	2020
VIP Floral and Garden Center	2020

The MCHS Board of Directors have added a new "Business Members" category to the types of memberships available. If you or someone you know would like more information about business memberships, contact the museum by phone or email.

Upcoming Program News

Because of the ongoing situation with Covid-19 we are having to rethink some of our annual programs. We know it is sad to miss these yearly events but the health of the community is our number one priority!

Holiday Open House

There will be no Holiday Open House this year at the Dinehart Holt House. We did not want to risk having decorators coming in and out of the house and then having a large gathering for the open house. We hope to be able to pick up where we left off next year! The front porch will be decorated for drivers to enjoy during the holiday season.



Tree Decorated by the Cameron 4-H Club. 2019.

Trivia Night

Because Trivia Night is still a few months away we have not made a decision as to whether it will be held in person or not. If we are unable to safely hold Trivia Night in-person at the Hadley Community Center, we will find an online alternative. Stay tuned for updates on this event!



Trivia Night. 2019.

2021 Membership Renewal

Membership support allows us to develop new exhibits, host in person and socially distanced programs, and care for all the artifacts and archives in the Murray County Historical Society collection. We truly appreciate all renewing and new members. It is that time of year again where we like to encourage all current members to consider renewing their membership for the upcoming year. Are you a lifetime member or have you already renewed for 2021?

Consider purchasing a membership for a family member or friend. Memberships make great gifts!

Thank you again for all the support you show us here at the Murray County Historical Society!



2021 Murray County Historical Society Membership



Murray County Historical Society
2848 29th Street
PO Box 61
Slayton, MN 56172
(507) 836-6533

Name

Address

Phone

Email

Check One

☐ Annual Membership \$15.00

☐ Family Membership \$25.00

Life Member—Donation \$_____

Method of Payment

☐ Cash ☐ Check

☐ Membership Card received

Member Signature



Help us Return the Bears!

We are still working on raising funds to return the iconic hand-carved Black Forest bears to the Dinehart Holt House. As of now, we have raised \$3,000 out of the total \$10,000 needed. If you are interested in donating towards this cause, please contact Janet at (507) 836-6533 or jtimmerman@co.murray.mn.us or send donations to: PO Box 61, Slayton, MN 56172. The Murray County Historical Society is a non-profit, 501(c)(3). Donors may deduct their contributions as directed in the US Income Tax Code.

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Karen Finne

Visit the Museum & Dinehart House!
Open by Appointment

(507) 836-6533

www.murraycountyhistoricalsociety.org



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