



The Evening

# Hatch

The Newsletter of the Michigan Fly Fishing Club

March 2022

## Packing'em in at the Expo

*The MFFC Event Returns To It's Bustling Glory*



*Tim O'Neill, president and owner of Norvise, demonstrates the versatility of the company's fly tying vises at the 2022 Midwest Fly Fishing Expo.*

Our beloved Expo is back. No ifs, ands or buts.

On a bitterly cold and windy Saturday, that familiar line was at the door, waiting patiently for MFFC member Don Mills to play his bagpipes. When the piper started, a stampede of fly anglers rushed into the Macomb Community College Sports & Expo Center in search of bargain grizzly hackles, new waders and a day full of seminars to gear up for the upcoming trout season.

It was so familiar, felt so good and was so sorely missed in the last two years.

"The attendance was well within

of our average," said MFFC volunteer Chris Hunter, who was in charge of tickets. "But the vendors in particular had a really great show. People were there, people were spending."

The Midwest Fly Fishing Expo, the oldest fly fishing show in the country, was suspended in 2020 and 2021 due to the pandemic but was back in full swing last weekend with more than 80 vendors and an army of tireless MFFC volunteers, crowded bleachers at fly tying seminars and fishing programs and cash registers that never stopped ringing.

Just the way we like it.

*Michigan Fly Fishing Club*

## Calendar

**3/1/22** Michigan Fishing Licenses are available for 2022.

**3/16/22** Chuck Earls, *LakeErieKayakFishing.com* "Kayak Fishing," Election Nominations are open through 4/6/22, Plymouth Cultural Center

**4/2/22** Trout Tune Up, Walled Lake Outdoor Educational Center, Commerce

**4/6/22** MFFC Elections, Speaker, Danno White, 1884 Fly Shop, Plymouth Cultural Center

**4/13/22** Board Meeting, Virtual

**4/20/22** Activity, Mini Member's School continues with a Advanced Fly Tying Session with Chris Hunter. All materials provided, Plymouth Cultural Center

**4/30/22** Michigan Inland Trout Season opener

**5/4/22** Activity, Tie Along Ken Harfoot and Mini Member's School Casting Session. All materials provided. Plymouth Cultural Center

**5/11/22** Board Meeting, Virtual

**5/11-14/22** New Members Outing - WawaSum Lodge, Au Sable River

**5/18/22** Club Banquet, Speaker: Alice Owsley of Riverside Anglers, Montana, Italian American Banquet and Conference Center, 39200 5 Mile Road, Livonia

Beginning in Febuary the MFFC has a new meeting venue at the Plymouth Cultural Center, 525 Farmer St., Plymouth

# Pied Piper

*Don Mills is MFFC's Very Own Fly Fishing Piper*

**By Sybil Hunter**

Five years running, Don Mills, MFFC member, Scotsman, retired teacher, and competitive piper has performed as the opening ceremony of the Midwest Fly Fishing Expo including Saturday's event. Every year he plays a different musical selection.

"Long story short, my mom was going to Scotland to do family research. As mom's always do, she wanted to bring me back a souvenir. I didn't want a t-shirt. I told her I wanted a practice chanter from Scotland, so she went into a piping store in Glasgow and bought a chanter and a book," said Mills.

He started taking lessons in Lake Orion, then in Royal Oak, started playing with the pipe band the Glasgow Rangers. The Glasgow Rangers are a soccer team currently ranked second in Scottish Premiership.

That evolved into the Cabar Feidh pipe band, where Mills was ranked pipe sergeant. "Then when our pipe major left, I was elected pipe major. I was pipe major for around 10 years."

"We started to evolve into a performance group (including parades), but I wanted to compete," said Mills. "Then in 2014, I retired from the band. It was too much trying to accomplish the piping thing and finish up my teaching career and raising kids."



*Sybil Hunter*

In 2018, he picked up the pipes once again, competing at the Alma College Scottish Games in 2019.

He will be up there again this year, although competition was moved to Alma High School as the college is staging major building renovations. Mills' pipe band also has plans to compete in Georgetown, ON, Kincardine, ON, then finish up the season at Detroit's St. Andrew's Games at Greenmeade in Livonia if you wish to see him perform.

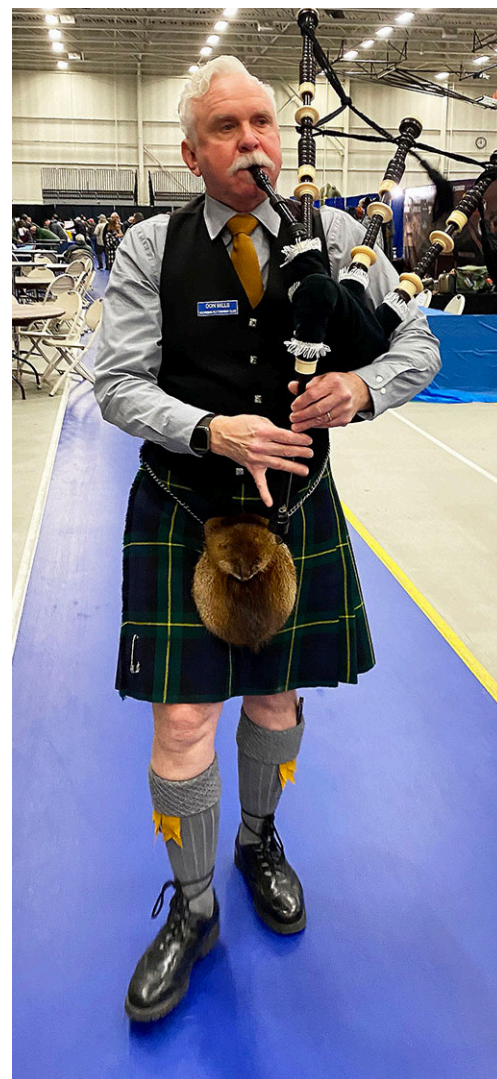
His pipe dream is to participate in the World Championships in August. "It's usually in Glasgow," said Mills. During the pandemic he and his wife live streamed the competition. Mills maternal lineage is the Gordan Clan, and on his paternal side, Scott Clan.

What does this all have to do with fly fishing?

"I met Bill Mangan on the Au Sable's Keystone Landing and started taking lessons from him," said Mills. "He's really good. I've helped him out at club events pre-COVID. It's a lot of fun."

MFFC. Bill Mangan. Casting. You can't go wrong with that combination.

"My brother fly fished for awhile. When I was 18, I fly fished for a couple of years. We actually have a really good friend that tied flies for Rusty Gates of Gates Lodge," said Mills. "He kinda helped me out a little bit. He lives up



*Don Mills opening the 2022 Expo.*

by Marquette in a little town called Harvey. He took me to Frenchman's Pond and Robert Traverse's Camp, where I successfully caught a Brook trout."

"I still worm dunk on occasions. My brother and I canoe and catch trout on spinners. I do eat trout," said Mills. "I'm not a catch and release guy, well mostly I am, but I do keep a few here and there. Other than that, I try to fish on the Au Sable, going to different spots."

"My current goal is to camp streamside and fly fish the Pine River in Petoskey," said Mills. "I put up an EZ Up tent, and a cot and a good serious sleeping bag. It takes about an hour to set up my camp and I'm off to go fishing."

Mills confessed he would also like to fish out west. Recently retired, after five years of teaching second grade, 20 years of teaching fourth grade, and serving as both Union Rep and Union VP, he has more time to both pipe and fish.

Don Mills; our own Fly Fishing Piper.



*MFFC piper Don Mills with trout he caught near Marquette.*



# Michigan Fly Fishing Club

# Business

## Michigan Fly Fishing Club Board of Directors Meeting

February 9, 2022

### Roll Call

Meeting called to order 7:32 p.m.

*Present:* Strachan; Hunter; Oehring; Fischer; Niemi, Sejalon; Green; Doyle; Nowicki; Bada

*Visitors:* Chris Hunter; Peter Albertson; Mike Matuszewski

**Approval of Agenda** - Agenda approved with amendments.

**Approval of Minutes** - Meeting-minutes for 1/12/22 approved with amendments.

### Officer's Report

**President:** Strachan

- Will be absent during upcoming meetings due to spouses scheduled medical procedure. Will be available online only. VP will take over in-person duties.
- Future Planning Committee created. Members: Jim Fischer, chairman; Corey Thelan, Sybil Hunter, Dave Nowicki; Mike Matuszewski

**Vice President:** S. Hunter

- Joe Mondro update, his email has been confirmed, he is very thankful for emails and prayers.
- Library update, Jerry Deputat has stepped down as librarian chairperson, resources are in storage at Clarenceville Middle School.

**Treasurer:** K. Oehring

- Approval of January treasurer's report.
- Deposits are still coming in.
- Expo booth money is coming in
- Don Oehring is rehabbing, thankful for well wishes
- In March BoD will be gathering information for upcoming budget year. Sybil volunteered to

contact chairpersons for budget information.

**Corresponding Sec:** J. Fischer

- Speaker Scheduled no change.
- Email blasts report: quantity 8, 2744 emails, 68% read rate
- Concerns about members not opening their emails, analysis shows that ISPs are not blocking emails; too many emails in inbox prevents some users from opening emails in a timely manner, Apple email system stacks emails and may not show what is read or unread

**Membership:** B. Niemi

- Currently 313 active members, 13 new members in September
- FedEx issues, 71 members have not responded back with check instructions

### Events & Outings

- Banquet updates
- WaWaSum possible Public School even in place of normal summer outing; flyer generated and to be sent to Bruce Strachan for this weekend's Outdoorama and next month's expo.
- Several members expressed interest in helping out.

### New Business

- Future Planning Committee: discussion to provide evaluations and recommendations to Board. Goals and objectives to be created by committee to reflect changes in demographics of Club membership. No budget recommendation at this time. Motion to approve FPC passed.
- Grand Ledge Library meeting: request for future MFFC event in Grand Ledge. Contact Jean Fellas.
- TU Investigation Request: MFFC was not on TU's conservation list. Paul Young TU Chapter

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## 2021 - 2022 Officers

**President:**  
**Bruce Strachan**  
*president@mffc.org*

**Vice President:**  
**Sybil Hunter**  
*sybilsvpemail@gmail.com*

**Coresponding Secretary:**  
**Jim Fischer**  
*coorespondence@mffc.org*

**Recording Secretary:**  
**Jon Bada**  
*recordingsecretary@mffc.org*

**Treasurer**  
**Kathy Oehring**  
*treasurer@mffc.org*

**Membership**  
**Bob Niemi**  
*membership@mffc.org*

**Immediate Past President:**  
**David Nowicki**  
*info@mffc.org*

## At-Large Directors

**Barry Green**  
*greenbar1020@aol.com*

**Tom Doyle**  
*info@mffc.org*

**Fred Sejalonn**  
*sejalon@comcast.net*

### Hatch Editor

**Sybil Hunter**  
*evening.hatch.mffc@gmail.com*

### Webmaster

**Harry Briggs** Expo Webmaster  
*habriggs@gmail.com*

**Sybil Hunter** Club Webmaster  
*sybilsvpemail@gmail.com*



The first of four sessions of the MFFC Mini Member School with Terry Herron leading a seminar on Beginning Fly Tying during an Activities Night in February. First tyer on the right side of the table is Bill Lehman, who has been out recovering from chemo. Welcome back Bill!

The last session of the Mini Member School will cover casting with the class taking place outside weather permitting (Photo by Bruce Strachan).

## Free Fly Tying Saturdays at Gates Au Sable Lodge

Gates Au Sable Lodge in Grayling is again staging Free Fly Tying Saturdays. The fly shop and lodge has instructors, nibbles and free materials for its fly tying sessions from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on March 19 and March 26, April 2 and April 9.

The focus of Free Fly Tying Saturdays, a decades long tradition at the lodge, will be filling spring fly boxes and is open to beginners and advance tyers alike.

Send an email to [josh@gateslodge.com](mailto:josh@gateslodge.com) with the date you're interested in as spaces are limited.

## MFFC Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

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showed no listing about MFFC on conservation list. Peter Albertson would like to pursue this issue. Tom Doyle requested Peter investigate being listed on the State level as well.

- TU Girl Scouts: partner with TU at "Extreme" camp in Port Huron, requesting MFFC involvement. Contact is Paige Lindsagram.

## Old Business

- Banquet Update: Flyer updated, tickets to be printed and checks made out to Michigan Fly Fishing Club. One raffle license covers the entire banquet – one financial report.

**Adjournment:** 9:21 p.m.

## Let the Fishing Begin!

### MFFC Members Gear Up for Annual Trout Tune-Up

Dust off those fly rods, seal the wader leaks and join MFFC for a day of angling at the club's Trout Tune-Up from 8am to 6pm on Saturday, April 2 at the "Yurt" located in the Walled Lake Outdoor Recreation Center, 3577 Sleeth Court, Commerce Township.

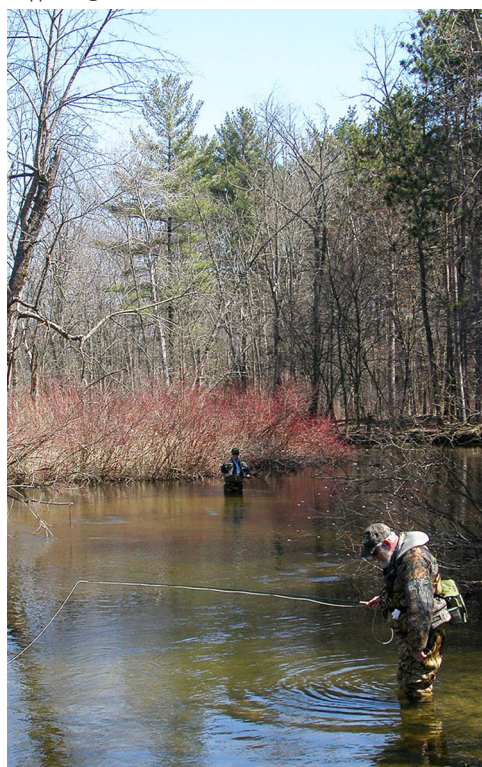
The annual event includes early season trout angling on the upper reaches of the Huron River. MFFC will provide early morning beverages, including coffee, cups, cream and sugar. Walled Lake Outdoor Center will graciously provide a large pot of hot water at no additional charge.

Interested club members should bring warm weather clothing and possibly rain gear because the yurt is not heated or air conditioned. Also, a 2022 MI Fishing License as a DNR conservation officer has been known to show up!

For directions to from Clarenceville Middle School to the Walled Lake Outdoor Recreation Center scan the QR code on your smartphone for a Google Map.



For more information contact Bruce Strachan at 248-346-6391 or [president@mffc.org](mailto:president@mffc.org).



*A fly angler studies the water during the early season opener on the Huron River.*



# The Fly Fishing Maddness That Is The MFFC Expo

*The Quiet Before The Storm*

*Opening Day Bustle of the Expo*



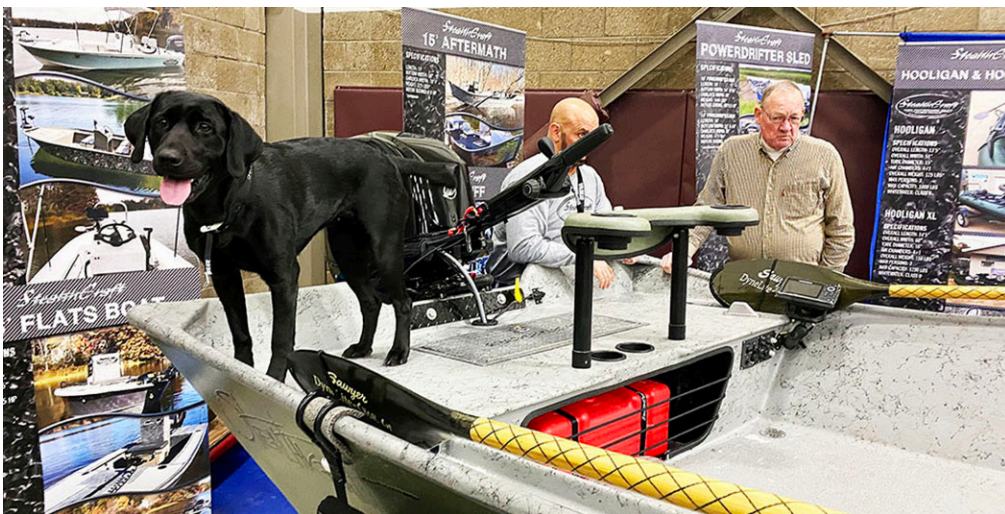
Left: MFFC volunteers hustle the day before the Expo to set up booths at the Macomb Community College Sports & Expo Center. Right: The Midwest Fly Fishing Expo minutes after the doors opened on Saturday.



Above: Tim Flagler, best known for his YouTube channel, *practicalpatterns.com*, packs the bleachers for a session at the Midwest Fly Fishing Expo.



Above: Katie Thurman, a MFFC member and casting instructor, helps a young angler with her forward loop at the casting pond.



Left: One vendor let his black lab take a crack at selling a Stealth Craft fishing boat. Arii sealed the deal without a bark.

# Authors, Fly Tyers, Net Makers and a Whole Lot of Vendors

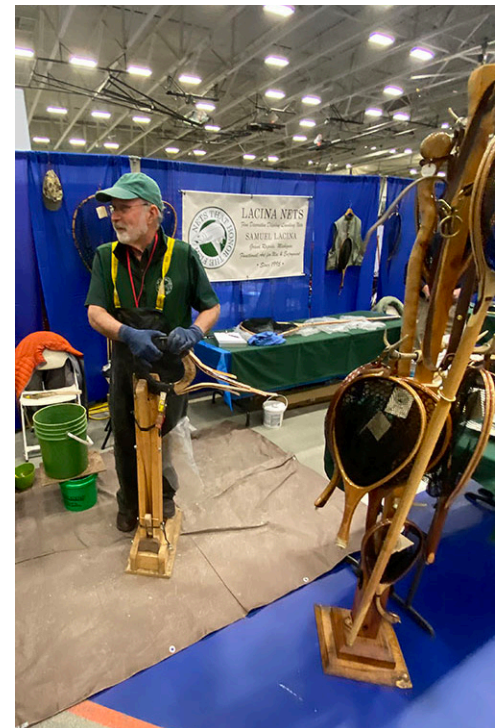


Above left: Josh Greenberg thanks a customer at the Gates Au Sable Lodge booth on Saturday during the Midwest Fly Fishing Expo. Above right: Headliners Jason Randall, Whitney Gould, Devin Olsen and Ed Engle at the author's table.



Right: Samuel Lacina of Lacina Nets spent the weekend building handcrafted fishing nets at his booth.

Left: Mike and Holly Widdes of Cubalaya Outfitters spent the first night in their van with their baby boy in the Expo parking lot. Holly insisted on a motel room the second night



Left: John Niemann, the rod maker at the Razing Kane Rod Co. in Grayling, and his wife, Mary, set up the company portrait of Vivian in their booth.

Below: MFFC volunteer John Eriksson and a new fly tyer holds up the woolly bugger they tied at the Expo children's table.





# All the Lakes & Streams I Need to Fish

By Al Haxton

I was lucky enough to receive a copy of Jerry Dennis' latest book *Up North in Michigan* for Christmas and must admit I read a lot of it in one day. The book is written in four segments about our four seasons. The first, "Spring," really spoke to me and made me think about that season.

All of us enjoy time on the water. Whether we fish from a boat, the bank, or wade in the water, we all enjoy the sights and sounds of the waters we love. We can motorboat, sail, kayak, canoe or just wade.

We are so very fortunate to live in a place where no one owns the bottom of a river. We can wade rivers flowing through fields, yards, towns and cities.

Indeed a Google search returned the information that our State of Michigan has over 11,000 lakes and more than 51,438 miles of rivers and streams. Of these rivers and streams more than 656 miles are considered "wild and scenic."

We have more than 20,000 miles of trout streams, with about 850 miles being rated "quality" trout streams, based

on hatch quality, wade ability, wild trout population and history of quality fly fishing.

I have many wonderful memories of lakes fished in my float tube. One lake was designated as a "trout lake," but all the others had bass in many sizes along with happy bluegills, sunfish and other panfish. A couple of pike responded well to my flies and a couple of carp fell victim to them too. All in all, the fishing for warm-water species was superb.



Al Haxton

Years ago, a group of us fished several summer evenings in Brighton and shared great times with much laughter and many, I mean *MANY*, wonderful catches.

I enjoyed sharing numerous lakes in the northern half of the Lower Peninsula with other club members. Between the laughter of hooked fish and the shared awe of the lovely scenery, I know I came away with memories that will last a lifetime.

One thing we learned is always to leave a light on the lakeshore to make it

easier to find where to return if we have so much fun we forget to leave before sunset.

A wonderful group of us used to fish the Huron River, out near Ann Arbor. Back then you could use a park on Tuesday evening without a park pass. We fished at different parks each week, then started over. The fishing was fun but the fishing stories, flies and laughter were the best part. The smallmouth bass fishing was so much fun we did it for quite a few years. The river is very wadable, the fish were friendly, and very happy to get back into their home river when released. Fishing there taught me to try many different flies, it also taught me that a 5-weight rod, no matter what it is made of, is a 5-weight rod. (Thank you John Long for that clarification.)

Every one of us can fly fish all over our state. We are fortunate to have many trout streams open all year long, with no closed season, allowing us to fish any time we want — and many of us have done just that.

Joyce and I had a pact we would fish at least once each month for the entire year. We have not fulfilled our pact for every month of last year, but we are talking about starting this month, to fish every month of 2022.

We calculated we fished about 50 miles of trout stream here in Michigan a while ago. Frankly, that number seemed small when we first came up with it. After all, I have been fly fishing for more than 35 years and Joyce about the same. In 35 years of wading and fly fishing, I would think I would have covered far more than 50 miles.

With some help from Google Earth and some Michigan county maps, we figured out the distances we waded on our fishing excursions. We found out most of the wades we do are truly much shorter than we thought. An old saying is that a fisherman never fishes the same river twice.

I agree and embrace the different things that make each wading trip different, but still, only 50 miles? If I included each trip as a new river, then the



Jeff McGowan, a Michigan Fly Fishing Club fly tyer, spent his time at the Expo whipping out dry flies from his booth. That included tying a few dozen of Bob Smock's sulfur duns (above).

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## Before and After The Midwest Fly Fishing Expo

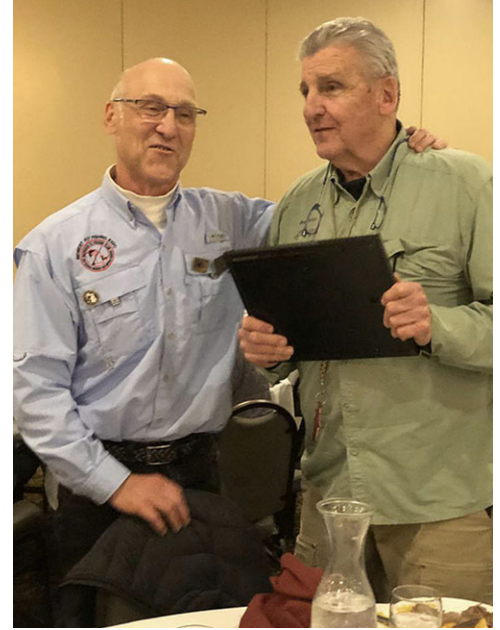


### Before

Left: Larry Webb (on the right), in charge of the casting pool set-up, patiently waits the day before the Expo for one of the two pools to fill. The two pools required 1,435 gallons of water and several hours to fill.

### After

Right: At the post Expo banquet on Saturday Dan Finstad presented a Michigan Fly Fishing Club certificate of recognition to Jerry Regan of Grayling, a third generation fly tier and a living connection to the fly tying history of Michigan.



### Al Haxton

*Continued from page 7*

mileage would multiply, but our figure was based on actual different river sections and wade lengths, not counting each specific encounter as another river. So maybe 50 miles is reasonable.

We discussed all of these notes and thoughts about our fishing numbers. It

seems we fish a lot; at other times, we are slackers. We probably fished about eight different lakes out of 11,000. Not very impressive. We fished about 50 miles of river out of 51,438 miles available. Again, not very impressive.

We patted ourselves on the back for 50 miles of quality trout stream out of 850 miles, but we both admit it's not

quite as much as we felt we needed to enjoy.

So, for this year, we plan to use our float tubes and kayaks more. We plan to fish more lakes for warm and cold-water species, and we sure plan to enjoy our bounty of quality trout streams more, with new wades for some exploration.

Anyone else up for some exploring?



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