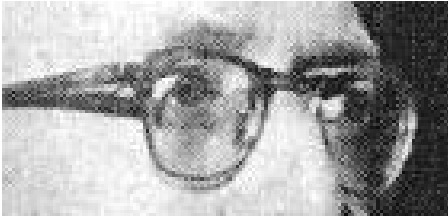


**NFO Comes to
Lowell**
**“Witch City”
Contras Reborn**

NEFFA
NEW ENGLAND FOLK FESTIVAL ASSOCIATION
NEWS
Winter 2003 – Vol. XXIX #4

A poem
Music Review
**Minutes, Call for
Nominees, etc.**

RPDL



What?!?

by Chrissy Fowler

So what’s the big deal?

Why would folks rave about it in evaluation forms, calling it “The best contra dancing in the world!,” gushing about the “Stupendous weekend!,” or boldly asserting “The entire weekend was wonderful. Nothing can improve it!”

There must be some secret... some delicious tidbit of distinction... And there is.

Jeremy Korr, a dancer from the D.C. area now living in California, tells it this way. “The RPDLW has a special feel to it that hasn’t been at any other dance weekend or festival I’ve attended. (*After the 2003 weekend,*) I spent much of the flight home trying to identify why it felt so unique. Some factors I recognized are that the participants at the RPDLW share a strong and conscious respect for tradition and its preservation; a

In last year’s NEFFA News, current NEFFA President Maureen Carey wrote about a well-kept secret: The Ralph Page Dance Legacy Weekend, named in honor of one of NEFFA’s founders, who was a key figure in the history of traditional music and dance. But the event isn’t just about Ralph and his entertaining and inspiring ways. In some ways, this annual event is no different than other dance weekends across the country. It has all of the typically appealing attributes:

- A scenic location (*wintry New Hampshire in January!*)
- Talented performers (*2004 features staff callers Sue Rosen & Fred Breunig, staff musicians the Moving Violations and Bob McQuillen, Bill Tomczak & Pete Sutherland, and Friday night performers David Smukler & George Hodgson with the band Wild Card.*)
- A diverse community of excellent dancers (*from varied locales, backgrounds and generations*)
- On-site meal options
- Workshops and jam sessions
- Convenient hotels and B&Bs, with an option of local hospitality
- Student discounts and work exchange
- Scholarships for aspiring callers and musicians

strong sense of connection during dances (in the spirit of Ted Sannella); ... and respect for the dances themselves.” Other RPDLW participants notice this, as dancers respect each other with considerate and zesty dancing, and graceful and well-timed movements. Also, Jeremy adds, there is “very little booking ahead.” (Really! It’s true!)

This last attribute is probably connected to the weekend’s particular emphasis on community as well as dancing. There are comfortable places to sit and visit between dancing, with tasty treats to enjoy while chatting, and informal jam sessions to share tunes. Bob McQuillen’s commanding presence contributes to the stories and anecdotes that are sprinkled among the dances,

(RPDL What?, Continued on page 2)

(RPDL What?, Continued from page 1)

reminding us in a tangible way that our social activity has a vibrant history.

Indeed, while the RPDLW features some of the best new choreography and newly-composed tunes, a significant portion of the program also celebrates our roots. Each year, the event regularly includes traditional contras and quadrilles, triple minor dances, singing squares, and couple dances as part of the program. Where else would dancers CHEER when Money Musk was announced as the next dance?

The "Retrospective" session is another feature of the weekend that makes an explicit point of looking back. Some years the focus is on a particular caller or musician who contributes a lot to our tradition; in 2004 it will be a look at "chestnuts," those classic contras that formed the mainstay of New England dancing over the past hundred years.

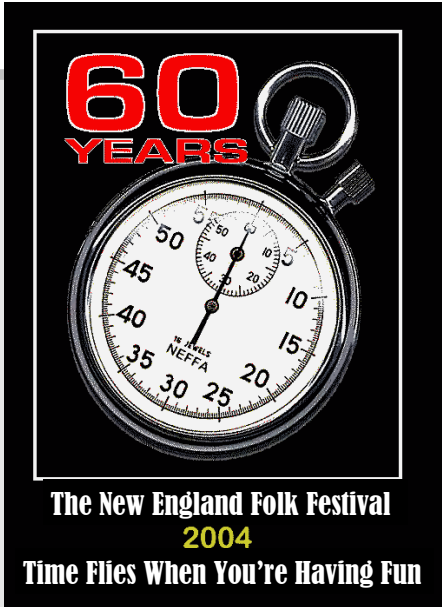
Transcriptions of these chestnuts can be found at the New Hampshire Library of Traditional Music and Dance, which is housed at UNH. RPDLW participants are often treated to an open house at the collection, which includes books, periodicals, recordings, photographs, music and archival materials from sources such as Ralph Page, Ted Sannella, Dudley Laufman, and CDSS. One participant described her visit as "feeling like a family reunion, with folks like Marianne Taylor and George Fogg poring over black and white photographs, identifying unknown faces that belonged to my ancestral forebears, related not by blood, but by the shared spirit of their dancing." Some folks even make a point of visiting the collection after the weekend. When Blythe Knechtel brought a group of Seattle area musicians and dancers to New England on a sort of "contra roots" tour, one of their stops was UNH!

I guess that's what the big deal is. The people. The ones who have played the music, called the figures, and danced the dances in crowded, joyful halls for decades. Connecting our past with our future. As a dancer wrote after the 2003 RPDLW, "I like feeling that I am part of an enduring tradition." The secret is out.


Chrissy Fowler is the Secretary of the Ralph Page Memorial Committee of NEFFA.

For more details on the RPDLW, including a printable brochure and registration form, visit the NEFFA website: www.neffa.org/rplw.html

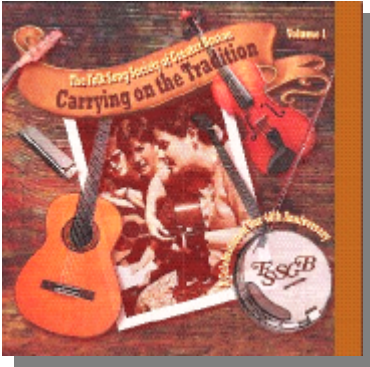
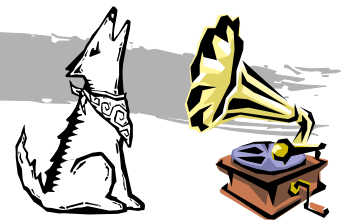
For more info on the NH Library of Traditional Music and Dance, visit their website at www.izaak.unh.edu/nhltmd



2004 will be the 60th year of the NEFFA Festival! Do you have a "who, what, where or when" that you'd like to celebrate? Send your thoughts on our 60th to the "60th Festival Task Force" at lbleib@gis.net.

	Editor: Dan Pearl Mailing: Dayle Watts Editorial Review: Maureen Carey, Shelagh Ellman-Pearl, Lisa Greenleaf, Robert Johnson	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Issue</th> <th>Deadline</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Spring</td> <td>Feb. 15</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Summer</td> <td>May 15</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Fall</td> <td>Aug. 15</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Winter</td> <td>Nov. 15</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Issue	Deadline	Spring	Feb. 15	Summer	May 15	Fall	Aug. 15	Winter	Nov. 15
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<p>The NEFFA News, a publication of the New England Folk Festival Association, Inc., is published four times a year to communicate with its membership and other interested persons. Please send all editorial submissions to Dan Pearl, 15 Buffalo Run, Southborough, MA 01772, or to Daniel_Pearl@yahoo.com. Opinions of individuals are not necessarily the opinion of the NEFFA Executive Board.</p> <p>Publicize your events! Display advertising is available for qualifying folk-related organizations. For more information, contact the editor. Copyright © 2003 by the New England Folk Festival Association, Inc.</p>												

Review



**Carrying on the Tradition, A
Celebration of our 40th Anniversary**
Folk Song Society of Greater Boston
www.fssgb.org

With: The Simones, Deb O'Hanlon and Peter Fischman, Judy Predmore, Merle Roesler, Total Strangers, Nancy Mulrey, Two for the Show, Neal MacMillan, Short Sisters, Mike Holmes, Suzanne Mrozak, Paul Beck, Kate Seeger and Dean Spencer, Karen Korn, Cate Levin, Midweek Singers

Review by Laura Leibensperger

As might be expected from the FSSGB (Folk Song Society of Greater Boston), 'professionals' and 'amateurs' stand side by side on this CD, ranging from veterans like The Short Sisters, ("Carrie Bell"), to Cate Levin at 13 years old ("Serving Girl's Holiday"). Selections include a *cappella* and accompanied ballads, instrumental tunes, and eclectic treatments of traditional songs. All cuts include a note on the history of the piece. A few pieces that caught my ear: the country blues treatment of a bloody ballad, "Silver Dagger" (The Simones); a contemplative playing of the Scottish air, "Lass of Peaty's Mill" (The Total Strangers); and "1845" (Neal McMillan), with its unhurried clawhammer banjo accompaniment, and a verse which should appeal to all dancers:

*The fiddler being willing, his arm being strong,
We danced round Laurel Hill, at least four hours long*

Fittingly, the last piece is a group sing of "Amazing Grace."

This CD could make a nice holiday gift for both the dedicated folkie and the dabbler who likes "a little folk music now and then."

The New England Folk Festival Association, Inc. is a non-profit educational and cultural organization, incorporated under the general laws of Massachusetts to preserve folk traditions in New England and elsewhere; to encourage the development of a living folk culture; and to encourage high standards of quality and performance in the folk arts.

Membership entitles one to voting privileges, publications, and to reduced admission to selected NEFFA-sponsored activities. It is open to interested persons who support our objectives.

Annual Dues are \$7/individual, \$11/family (up to 2 people over 18). Contributions are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law. Send check, payable to NEFFA, to the office. Occasionally, NEFFA shares its mailing list for a one-time use by like-minded folk organizations. If you do not want your name and address shared in this way, tell us with your membership. **Please direct all inquiries** to the NEFFA office: PMB 282, 1770 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, MA 02140 or (781) 662-6710, or via email: neffa@neffa.org

Interested persons may get on NEFFA's mailing list for one year at no charge. Send request with full name and address to the office.

After the gig when the hall was empty,
the cords were all coiled
and the PA was stowed in the truck

we hurried to the basement,
through a dark room full of tables
and chairs and watery shadows,

to a lounge where a television flickered
and a handful of old men sat along the bar
watching the ballgame.

It was the 9th inning and the game was tied,
but the old men, nursing bottles of cheap beer
beneath the Veterans of Foreign Wars Hall

didn't seem to care. They didn't join in our sighs
and clipped curses as the fortunes of the season
disappeared into the ether of frantic swings,

and in their silence I recognized them—
old soldiers luxuriating in loss, sitting in this,
their pasture, their ecosystem of resignation,

their neon backwater with its
oak paneled walls and its shadows
dating back to the Great War.

There was a forgetfulness--the kind
you hear in the sound of water dripping from
a leaky spicket, and also a beauty--the kind

found in neglect, like the bursting
of yarrow bloom from the vacant windows
of a car abandoned in the woods.

Only the bartender acknowledged us,
he was a big old guy with a big old smile
and he plied us with beers as our boys

struggled into extra innings.
The neon clock behind the bar pointed
north to midnight, and in an instant

the season was over, and our glory was
stolen from us yet again. I stood up
in disgust and my eyes sought grounding

in the shadows of the hidden lounge.
I saw pictures of sponsored little league teams
hung on the walls next to a framed flag

from the Spanish-American war, as if
the promise of one led inevitably to
decay of the other. We downed our beers

and wandered into the night--it was
just east of midnight, lights
were going out all over the city

and behind us the old warriors
sat like old crabs left in the rockpools
after the tide has gone out.

VEW

by Mark Koyama
of the band "Heathen Creek"

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Call For Nominees

NEFFA is a non-profit organization run by volunteers. In addition to producing an annual Folk Festival, NEFFA runs a weekly contra dance, the Ralph Page Dance Legacy Weekend, and a series of family dances. NEFFA also supports various folk-related activities through its grants program.

Our traditions and bylaws encourage member participation in a number of ways. While, many of you are no doubt familiar with the role of volunteering at the Festival, you may also know that NEFFA's goals of preserving folk traditions are actually overseen by an Executive Board, composed of elected and appointed members. Under NEFFA's bylaws, elected Directors are expected to chair or be a member of a committee or to take on other responsibility.

Each year, the Nominating Committee prepares a ballot listing the nominees for the elected positions on the Board. We welcome all suggestions and volunteers from the NEFFA membership, and our bylaws encourage direct nomination by members: the name of any eligible person suggested by twenty-five or more members is included on the ballot, if he or she consents.

Please send all such suggestions to Nominating Committee Chair, Mari Young, by mail (47 Churchill St., Newton MA 02460) or by email (mariyoung@juno.com). The deadline for such nominations is January 16, 2004. Feel free to contact any board member with an inquiry regarding the roles and responsibilities of the various positions.

The current Elected Board members are listed below. Those positions marked with a dot (•) are to be filled in the April election. Directors and Officers serve terms of two years and may be re-elected for one additional term (the Secretary and the Treasurer are always eligible for re-election). Members of the Nominating Committee serve for a single three-year term.

In recent years, Nominating Committees have recognized that NEFFA is a large organization with a geographically dispersed membership and that most of these members do not know each other or the candidates. Thus, there is little point to a popularity contest, with losers as well as winners. Most ballots, therefore, have presented uncontested slates. Unless a meaningful choice on some issue presents itself, we anticipate continuing this practice.



The Nominating Committee: Mari Young and Sandy Ryan.

Office	Name	Term Expires	Eligible for re-election
President	Maureen Carey	2005	✓
Vice President	• Robert Johnson	2004	✓
Secretary	Laura Leibensperger	2005	✓
Treasurer	• Ralph Jones	2004	✓
Nominating Committee	• Mari Young	2004	
	Sandy Ryan	2005	
	• vacant	2006	
Directors	• Jessica Holland	2004	✓
	• Dan Pearl	2004	✓
	• Arnold Reinhold	2004	✓
	• Dayle Watts	2004	✓
	Harold Henry	2005	✓
	Nancy Horn	2005	✓
	Stephen Moore	2005	✓
	Peter Olszowka	2005	✓

Contras Return to Salem, Mass.

Folks around the North Shore (and from farther shores as well) are enjoying a new contra dance series in Salem, Mass. Held the first Saturday of each month, November through May, the series features Salem residents Sarah Gregory Smith as Caller and Sarah's husband Bill Smith ▶ directing the Salem Country Orchestra. The series brings regular contra dancing back to the North Shore area after a short hiatus.



Many participants have danced with Sarah and Bill in the past and are glad to have them back at the helm of Salem's new dance. A "risk-sharing" grant from NEFFA will help the group cover expenses, if necessary, during its start-up year.

The Salem Country Orchestra, a local community ensemble, consists of 8-10 musicians playing fiddles, piano, banjo, bass, guitar, flute and concertina. Guest musicians join them from time to time. On piano for the band, adding contra tunes to his classical repertoire, is accomplished pianist Victor Troll. At the first dance, one enthusiastic member of the orchestra was overheard to say, "There is no place I'd rather be and nothing I'd rather be doing than this."

Bill Smith, the orchestra director, has been an active musician in the Boston area for more than 20 years. He has led a band at Pinewoods dance camp and also led the Ipswich Country Orchestra for many years. Bill is currently a teacher at the Tower School in Marblehead, where he leads a 25-piece band of mixed ages from 2nd grade to 60-year-olds.

Sarah Gregory Smith began calling dances in the early seventies, and has continued to call for all ages and levels of experience since then. She has taught traditional dance—contra, square, English and Morris dance—to children in Boston-area. She has also been a caller at Pinewoods for many summers. She and Bill have called and played for dances throughout New England for the last thirty years. Sarah's calling is characterized by careful, patient and easy-to-understand teaching, and high energy. She specializes in calling for dancers with a wide range of abilities, from the rankest beginner to the most polished dancer. Together, Bill and Sarah also have hosted Salem's Yuletide Revels since 1991.

Since losing her vision 25 years ago, Sarah has developed an appreciation for contra dancing "from a big picture level, by listening to the level and rhythm of feet and bodies and the band." She says she can gauge from the sounds and voices she hears whether the dance floor is happy or frustrated. The Salem dance, she says, has given her a renewed appreciation for "the joy of the floor," epitomized by dancers who look out for each other and delight in the traditional music the community band plays.

In February and May, special events are planned for the Salem Contra Dance. One of these will be family-oriented and both will offer special performances such as Morris dancing and poetry readings.

The dance is sponsored by the Salem Contra Dance Committee, a non-profit group of a dozen or so volunteers who get together monthly to eat good food and plan dance activities. More volunteers are welcomed for such tasks as flyer production and posting, publicity, computer input, website design, and dance setup and cleanup.

Dances are held at the Tabernacle Congregational Church, 50 Washington Street, in Salem, MA, at 8:00 PM. Admission is \$8. Beginners and singles are welcome. A smoke- and alcohol-free, wheelchair-accessible environment, suitable for children over 12, is provided. Dancers should bring clean, soft-soled shoes. For more information, call 978-745-9391 or e-mail lew134@lycos.com.

CONTRA DANCE FOR ALL: @ MIT now in its 6th year and going strong!

by Ann Cowan

Contra Dance for All meets at MIT is now in its 6th year and attendance is up 47% over the same period last year! That's not bad, I think. We have fun with fine live music and excellent calling each time. Many have the opportunity to dance, play or call at our dance and all these are most welcome especially people new to these activities! Travelers often join us as well as well as students from several schools. We are encouraged that young people have dominated our recent dances. You too can help this very accessible dance continue and grow! Goodies every time! We may soon be able to offer PE credit to MIT students. Some dances coming up are:

- 1/13: Warm-Up Beginner Special I: Caller: Tony Saletan, Music: Cal Howard & Friends, Sit-Ins Welcome, in Lobby Bldg. 13.
- 1/27: Warm-Up Beginner Special II: Caller: Lisa Sieverts, in Morss Hall, Walker Memorial
- 2/10: Valentine's Day Party: Caller: Laura Johannes, in Lobdell
- 2/24: Mardi Gras Party: Caller: Lisa Sieverts, in Lobdell
- 3/9: Mid-Semester Fiesta, in Lobby Bldg. 13
- 3/23: Equinox Party, in Student Center 407
- 3/30: Spring Fling Gala: In Sala de Puerto Rico



National Folk Organization Conference coming to Lowell Massachusetts in March 2004

by Jo Crawford

The National Folk Organization, a US-based group of recreational folk dance leaders, folk dance ensembles and folk festival coordinators, will be having their annual conference in Lowell, Mass., March 5, 6, and 7, 2004. Besides meetings and elections for members, the conference will feature presentations and workshops with Glenn Bannerman, a nationally recognized dance caller, teacher and leader. A former Professor of Recreation and Outdoor education, Glenn teaches Appalachian clogging and Big Circle Mountain dancing. [www.bannermanfamily.com]

At last year's successful conference, it was decided to allocate some of the profits to encourage our teen and college-aged members to attend this upcoming conference. To that end, NFO is pleased to announce that scholarship money is available to assist a limited number of youth dancers. To apply, send an email with your name, age, address, and school attending to NFO President Greg Lund at glund@wwdb.org. Or send by mail to: Greg Lund, 15221 N. CR 400 E, Eaton, IN 47338. Please include a letter of recommendation from your folk dance leader along with your application and let us know what you've done in folk dance, and what you plan to do in the future. Special youth events will be arranged if there is enough interest.



NFO is also a sponsor of Pourparler, an annual get-together of folk dance educators. Part of this year's conference will be a "Pourparler Sampler," a chance for educators to share tried and true dances and network with others in the field. Other activities include a visit to international folk dancing in Arlington Friday night, and the annual Awards banquet on Saturday.

Registration forms will be available shortly. For those that want to attend only parts of the conference, an *a la carte* price list will also be available. Check the website, www.nfo-usa.org, for more information. Or contact jo.crawford@verizon.net, 978-692-6217, to be sent information by mail.

The purpose of the NFO is to advance and preserve folk arts representing national and local ethnic customs as they exist throughout the United States; to promote and encourage the exchange of folk dance and dance related folklore in the United States of America and abroad, and to effectively network with those who support these objectives.

Minutes of the NEFFA Executive Board

14 September 2003

President's Remarks (Maureen Carey)

Several Committee Chairs have left, and new Committees need chairs. Some jobs can be divided. Dayle will take over the "label making" part of membership. Bob Solosko and Jean Krogh will supervise the Festival membership table, if nothing else works out. Arnold may take pre-Festival tickets; a committee member could be in charge at the Festival. Steve Boylan will take a Festival job. No leads for Parking yet. **Peter:** I need a Sound Volunteer Coordinator. This doesn't need sound experience, it's a "before-Festival" job. **Linda:** We need to approach volunteers in a broader way, for example a special mailing. **Dayle:** We could have an article in the NEFFA News, also

explain that not all jobs require work at the Festival.

Secretary's Report (Laura Leibensperger)

Motion to accept minutes of May and June as corrected passed by voice vote.

Treasurer's Report (Ralph Jones)

Referring to Treasurer's Report: Our (2001) \$54,000 balance went down to \$27,000 last year. Part was the \$10,000 donation to Springstep. Additional \$2000 loss this year leaves current balance of \$25,000. Peter's question is "does that include getting the \$10,000 back?" Yes, it does. Adding up membership losses, expenses etc., we lost \$9000, offsetting the \$10,000 received back from Springstep. The Festival had a net loss of \$2000; the Family Dance series lost \$2500. **Shelagh:** The Committee should prepare a

(Continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 7)

motion for the next meeting so we can vote on membership fees. Membership income has dropped dramatically, why is that? **Ralph:** I'd guess fewer members. **Maureen:** Maybe the special mailing should include a membership drive.

Larry Jennings Publication Review (Shelagh Ellman-Pearl)

Larry is working on a sequel to "Zesty Contras" (ZC), called "Give and Take." It includes dances written since ZC; also dance theory, essays on dance leadership and administration, summaries of workshops Larry has led, and a glossary. Larry would like NEFFA to publish and distribute it. It could be priced somewhere around \$15 or \$20. As precedent, NEFFA published ZC; Larry's views on dance administration and leadership are very connected to the NEFFA philosophy. The Review Committee consists of Dan Pearl, Lisa Greenleaf, Sue Rosen and Shelagh Ellman-Pearl. The Committee recommends that the Board publish the book.

Linda: Should we consider Grants Committee funding? **Shelagh:** The Grants Committee has provided risk-sharing loans in the past.

Dayle: How close is it to being done - can it be tied in with the 60th NEFFA? **Shelagh:** We'd like to have it at the Festival. **Dayle:**

How was ZC sold? **Dan:** Wholesale to dealers. **Shelagh:** We could sell it at Performer Sales, advertise it through CDSS. **Dan:** We'd make more money selling directly. The first batch could be sold through Performer Sales with a large share of proceeds going to NEFFA. **Maureen:** Are you comfortable not having professional editing? **Linda:** Dances have been checked with their choreographers.

Safety Committee Report (John Wojtowicz; presented by Maureen Carey)

John is resigning from Parking. He says that there is a need for

changes in the system, and perhaps there should be a dedicated "Parking Czar." Alan Finkelstein will become Safety co-chair.

Thursday Night Dance Report (Dan Pearl)

Steve Boylan has moved to VT and has stepped down from the TNDC. New members are Victor Troll and Nell Wright. The Zoning Board granted a live entertainment variance to the VFW. If variance had been denied, weekly licenses would probably have been denied also, and we'd be looking for a new site. VFW then had to go through the entertainment licensing process. This was less contentious. Three dance groups now contribute to the VFW entertainment license, *ca.* \$500/yr. each. Thanks go to our dancers, who are good neighbors. We'll get improved sound equipment for the hall. Attendance is right where we want it at about 200; the hall feels comfortable. The dance has a good reputation across the country. We're getting a mini-boom of teenagers, this could be a good pool of volunteers.

Other Business (Maureen Carey)

Shelagh: Ticket prices will be on the Agenda next month. We have a formula from Dave, and some budget numbers. **Peter:** I don't know how Dave used the proposed budget to come up with ticket prices. **Dayle:** I don't think it's a direct match to the budget, I think he figures out how much prices can be comfortably raised. **Ralph:** A consideration is that we've lost \$5000, even with raising ticket prices.

Respectfully Submitted,

Laura Leibensperger, Secretary



N·E·F·F·A

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