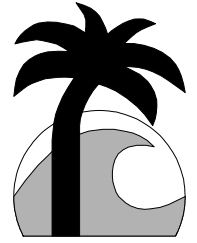


Island Parks Insider



October 2007

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President's Message

By George Skalkeas
President, Friends of the Island Parks

Dear friends, it is the "fourth quarter" of 2007 and it is time to make sure we finish what we started in January and start getting ready for 2008.

Key pieces of unfinished business for 2007 include training for Nature Center docents and general volunteers; the Halloween event at the end of October and a Friends holiday party in early December. On October 6th **Tim Marshall**, our Nature Center Training Coordinator, kicked off a training program designed to train both tour guides and desk volunteers. Since the opening of the Nature Center our volunteers have done a tremendous job of representing the park and promoting our tour program.

Our Halloween event this year promises to be the biggest and best yet if broader volunteer participation and greater local merchant support are any indication. Once again a tremendous team effort between park staff, lead by park services specialist **Karen Malo** and countless volunteers has led to the creation of a fantastic world of make believe and fun for all ages in the park's picnic area.

We are planning a holiday party at a downtown Dunedin restaurant on December 1, to coincide with the Holiday Boat Parade and Tree Lighting Ceremony at the Dunedin Marina. There will be a modest cost to defray some of the expenses but if you came to last year's off-site party I am sure you will agree it is well worth it. The December 1st date was chosen also to try to be early enough for those traveling north for the holidays and late enough for our snowbirds. I Hope everybody can come! There will be a **brief** general membership business meeting segment to the event to take care of some important unfinished business. Look for more particulars on our web site and in future membership announcements. Hope to see you all there!

Looking ahead to 2008, we have begun the process of soliciting interest in board membership for 2-year terms

that begin in 2008. Qualifications are membership in the Friends and strong urge to get actively involved in helping preserve and promote a couple of great state parks. If you are interested, look for the announcement with more particulars elsewhere in this newsletter. Speaking of board members, please join me in welcoming **Bob Meadows** who has been named to fill the unexpired term of **Dave Cesare** who resigned earlier this year. As I am sure you know, Bob is an active and valuable contributor to Friend's activities already and he is a welcome addition to your board.

Our 2008 Earth Day event is planned for April 19th AND 20th. That's right; we are back to two big days this year. **Barry Metcalfe**, our treasurer is again spearheading the event and as of this writing is seeking a co-chair and other leaders. As in past events, our methodology is to set up key committees, chaired by board members and general members alike, to oversee specific aspects of the event preparation and execution. Please read Barry's write –up elsewhere in this issue and get involved!

As you can see, we have a lot more ahead of us in '07 but because this is the last issue of the newsletter for the year, let me take this opportunity to thank all of our members and volunteers for supporting the cause and I want to especially thank my fellow board members for the their hard work and support all year long.

Park Manager's Report

by Pete Krulder, Park Manager

You cannot tell by the temperature outside but signs of the arrival of fall are in the air. The days are getting shorter and the nights are a little cooler. With the arrival of fall we have the arrival of our first snowbirds, both the feathered kind and the ones that drive down from up north. In the last several days I have ran into a couple of volunteers who have headed back down for the winter. I am glad you are back and hope you had a good summer. We have lots for you to do so be sure and see **Tim Marshall** or **Karen Malo** to find out what we have for you. *continued...*

...continued As some of you may have noticed, there is a large section of beach closed off. The beach nourishment project is in full swing and will last till late October to mid- November. We closed those sections of beach for the safety of our visitors. The new sand being pumped onto the beach is beautiful and there will be plenty of shells for those interested. The new jetty is designed to help protect the beach from future erosion. All of the old pilings and large concrete blocks have also been removed from the beach.

Our Halloween event will be taking place on October 26th and 27th. It will provide the children of the area with a safe alternative to going house to house. So come on out and enjoy the fun.

The book "Yesteryear I Lived In Paradise" has been reprinted and copies of it can be purchased at the Nature Center. It is the story of Myrtle Scharrer Betz a young girl raised on Caladesi Island in the early part of the 20th century. It is a fascinating story about life on the islands.

Business at the Nature Center has been humming along. I receive many compliments on the great job the **staff of docents** is doing there. My thanks for all of you for making this program a success.

See you around the park!

Pete

Nominations for 2008 Friends of the Island Parks Board of Directors

by Scott Hood,
Vice President, Friends of the Island Parks

At the October 16th Board meeting, the nominating committee for next year's Board members was formed; it is made up of **Scott Hood, Ron Geisheimer, and Barry Metcalfe**. Any "Friends" members wishing to serve on the Board, or nominate another member to do so, please submit nominations accompanied by the nominee's resume prior to November 20, 2007. Nominations can be given to any member of the nominating committee or mailed to: Friends of the Island Parks, Inc., 1 Causeway Blvd., Dunedin, FL 34698 Attn: Board Nominating Committee. Election of new Board members will take place at a special members' meeting to be held on December 1, 2007.

Friends CSO News

Earth Day 2008 "Celebrate With Friends"

Saturday, April 19, 2007 and Sunday April 20, 2007



by Barry Metcalfe,
Treasurer, Friends
of the Island Parks

It is still 6 months away but now is the time we must start thinking about and planning Earth Day 2008. Last year we changed the emphasis from carnival to a more environmental friendly event and feedback suggests we won more friends than we lost. This year therefore we will once again host the event in the picnic area and keep the environmental principals we adopted last year but we will revert back to the 2 day format, Saturday April 19th and Sunday April 20th.

The event is our major fundraiser of the year and it requires a tremendous team effort to plan and organize. Needless to say we are looking for additional team members to either head up or support the various requirements which range from coordinating the nature displays, selecting the food and craft vendors, contacting the musicians, inviting sponsors, creating and overseeing the publicity through to identifying and organizing the 150 volunteers.

This event involves a lot of work, a great deal of fun and laughter and provides the satisfaction at the end of knowing you have made a significant contribution to your Park.



JOIN THE TEAM AND BE PART OF EARTH DAY 2008!
Contact Barry Metcalfe at: 813-925-3442

L.I.F.E. Program Launches

by *Karen Malo, Park Services Specialist*



On October 3, 4 and 5 Honeymoon Island's new Rotary Centennial Nature Center became a field lab for **Kennedy Middle School** science students. The LIFE program stands for Learning In Florida's Environment. The field labs address priority topics that have been identified by the participating teachers using the unique natural resources and ecosystems available at Honeymoon Island State Park as examples to illustrate important concepts and principles in Life and Environmental Science. Approximately 100 students rotated through 3 different lab sessions specifically designed for the needs of the students and teachers. They learned about stomata's and gas exchange in one lab, practiced their measuring skills using equipment that scientists use in another lab and used their observation skills to make inferences about various things along the Nature trail in the last lab. These students will participate in three more field experiences throughout the school year and the labs are considered part of each student's grade.

One volunteer who saw the program in action commented on how it was nice to see the new Nature Center being utilized for educating our local youth about the environment. Special thanks to **Tim Marshall** and the Nature Center volunteers for accommodating the program. We would also like to recognize volunteer Park Host **Jackie Hada** for helping to teach the labs. The next set of labs will be held in the picnic/nature trail area on December 12 through 14th. If you are interested in helping out with this program, please let me know. The more

volunteers we have, the better experience for the students as they have more one on one assistance. We will field test the labs with the teachers on November 15th which is a great opportunity to learn more about the program. For additional information on this program, visit www.dep.state.fl.us

Volunteer Spotlight

By *Karen Malo, Park Services Specialist*



Jean Sibbald is one of those volunteers everyone enjoys being around. Jean is bright with a bubbly personality and her enthusiasm for nature and the outdoors is contagious. She never misses an opportunity to gently educate visitors on the precious natural resources we have here in the park. Jean began volunteering in 2006 and since then she has helped with special events and community outreach at science fairs and festivals. She and another volunteer also set up a display booth on the beach with shells to teach park visitors more about the shells they may find on our beaches. She is currently a volunteer in the Nature Center and has taught fellow volunteers as well as staff many things about Marine Life. I am constantly amazed at Jean's ability to share her knowledge to young and old in a fun way they can understand and relate to! Jean has a true gift and we are very fortunate to have her as a volunteer. Jean is very knowledgeable when it comes to this subject and she has even written her own books for elementary school children that can be viewed in the Nature Center.

Membership News

by *Ray Dabkowski, Membership Secretary*

The Friends of the Island Parks is thriving! In the past calendar quarter, we have experienced unprecedented growth. Please take a moment and welcome the following new members to the Friends...

Robert Smith, Oldsmar
Bill & Judy Isaly, Palm Harbor
David White, Dunedin
Victor & Gladys Zapota-Fernandez
Patricia Kraft, Safety Harbor
Sharon Meyer, Dunedin
Pat Gilliland, Dunedin
Gary & Lee Mennitt, Dunedin
Dave Sellis, Palm Harbor
Barb Sellis, Palm Harbor
John Reilly, Dunedin
Dorean Reilly, Dunedin
Harry & Carol Bickford, Dunedin
Brian, Marisa & Aidan Barnes, St. Petersburg
Paul & Carol Ford, Crystal Beach
Bergith Seabrook, Tampa
Mary Sanders, Dunedin
Angely Proctor & John Corsano, Dunedin
Chuck Blowers, Clearwater
Jack & Beverly Hicks, Dunedin
Elizabeth Guilfoyle, Clearwater
Maria Christakos, Palm Harbor
Peter Schweitzer, Tampa
Edith Garner, Dunedin
Joseph Galeno, Brookhaven NY
Kirsten Hanley, Palm Harbor
Julia DeLuca, Safety Harbor
Linda Andrews, Tarpon Springs
Dr. Marshall & Ellyn Kessler, Clearwater
Sue & Joe Caisse, Safety Harbor
Mary Cheever & Michael Sarnowski, Safety Harbor
Peter & Nancy Kolosvary, Safety Harbor

Remember, benefits include voting rights, and a quarterly newsletter. The new membership cards now being distributed allow free admission to Honeymoon and Caladesi Islands on **one day of your choice** each month. Refer a friend! Membership applications are available at www.islandparks.org the toll booth, Nature Center and at the ranger station on Caladesi Island.

Be sure to frequently check the Friends' website at www.islandparks.org for info & upcoming events. As always, thank you for your generous support.

The Friends' Membership Committee,

Ray Dabkowski, Diane Hood, Ron Geisheimer

Friends Host “Yesteryear” Programs



“Yesteryear I Lived in Paradise” was presented by **Terry Fortner**, granddaughter of Myrtle Scharrer-Betz, who was raised on Caladesi Island. Myrtle’s book is newly released in an expanded and updated 3rd edition after being out of print for many years. Terry conducted a presentation at the Friends meeting in October, as well as book signings on Saturday Nov. 3rd at 10 a.m. at the Nature Center, and Sunday November 18th at 10 a.m. at Caladesi Marina. The book is available at the signings, and is on sale at the Nature Center and Café.

Friends Holiday Party & Boat Parade

Mark Saturday December 1st on your calendar! Join us for an evening of revelry and meet some of the newest members and renew old acquaintances at the Friends' Holiday Party. From 5:30 PM to 7:30 p.m. All are invited to gather at Blur (next to Kelly's) in the heart of downtown Dunedin. The Friends will provide hors d'ouvres and a few surprises. There will be a cash bar.

After the festivities, we will trek a short distance to the Dunedin Marina to enjoy the Holiday Boat Parade and tree lighting. A donation of \$10 per person at the door is requested to help defray expenses. Dress is casual. **Contact:** info@islandparks.org

Nature Center News

Hours: Daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Phone: 727-738-2903
Email: info@islandparks.org
Website: www.islandparks.org/naturecenter
Contact: Tim Marshall, Coordinator



Nature Center Volunteer Update

There are 22 new volunteers who recently completed the nature center docent training, and of these 14 have elected to continue their training with the Nature Interpretation modules. This means we have many new faces at the front desk, and many eager volunteers who want to conduct programs, workshops and walks.

So far, nature center volunteers have worked over 5000 hours, and feedback from the public and from park management has been tremendously positive on all accounts. We are offering a world-class experience to our visitors, eagerly engaging with them in an effort to inspire and educate.

Wildlife and Nature Observations

The observation deck affords an outstanding panoramic view of the island, and proves to be an excellent vantage for wildlife observation. Visitors have witnessed dozens of shorebirds, wading birds, swimmers and divers, including the **Roseate Spoonbill**, **Reddish Egret**, **Black Bellied Plover** and **Magnificent Frigatebird**. Other birds include the stunning **Loggerhead Shrike**, with its habit of catching live prey such as insects and lizards and impaling them on thorns for use as a cached food source. **Osprey** and **Eagles** soar overhead, the **Eastern Towhee** calls from the **Florida Privets** along the Nature Center trail. St. Joseph Sound attracts not only birds, but several species of shark such as **Bon-**

nethead, and **Nurse Sharks**, often viewable from the deck. **Dolphins** herd **Mullet** which are seen jumping high as the sky every day. Many reptiles are commonly sighted, with several **Gopher Tortoise** burrows, these providing homes for others such as the **Eastern Diamondback Rattlesnake**. The **Florida Kingsnake**, **Coachwhip Snake** and other reptiles such as **Geckos**, **Six-Lined Racerunners**, **Five-Lined Skinks** and **Cuban and Green Anoles** abound. Even though Florida does not book a year in advance for fall color, we do have seasonal subtleties. These include the brilliant display of late blooming wildflowers and showy grasses such as **Muhly Grass** and **Seaside Goldenrod** in bright magenta a stunning yellow.

Nature Center Programs

We have presented many walks and presentations, and hosted many groups including schools and civic groups. Both **Palm Harbor and Dunedin Libraries** conducted literacy programs in September. Home schoolers engaged in a half-day shorebird workshop, **Karen Malo** coordinated the **LIFE** program, providing day long workshops for dozens of students. Senior groups enjoyed a presentation along with cider and donuts. A major highlight was the “**Yesteryear I Lived in Paradise**” presentations given by **Terry Fortner**, granddaughter of **Myrtle Scharrer-Betz**, which consisted of a slide presentation of the Scharrer family history on Caladesi Island and book signings at the nature center, at the Friends CSO meeting, and at Caladesi Island. A meteor shower party was held in August. Visitors gathered for an “Island at Night” presentation, a night hike, and star gazing hosted by the “**MARS**” Astronomy Club.

Ongoing programs include the Saturday Ranger-Led Osprey Trail Walks, and the “Shell Show” held on the 2nd Saturday of each month. Shorebird observation is conducted each Saturday and Sunday, with optimum viewing at low tide.

Watch for our next scheduled programs, which include Wildflower ID, Butterflies, Shelling and Beachcombing. Learn about nature by examining the nature objects our volunteers are collecting...discover how truly lightweight a pelican can be, learn about the wonders of the many mollusks which live inside the shells they create, and identify unusual natural objects. Stay tuned as we plan a boat building workshop, Birding 101 workshops and more. Stop by any time and engage in our fun scavenger hunt and win a prize! When extra volunteers are on hand, we can gladly offer an impromptu trail walk, introducing you to something different each and every day on this dynamic and ever changing barrier island.

The Osprey

by Jerry Allen, FPS Volunteer

Migration

The estimated nesting population of the Osprey in the U.S in 1994 was determined by researcher Larry Houghton to be approximately 14,000 nesting pairs. Even with modern population inventory techniques, it is still difficult to make accurate nest site counts, and involves an extremely large task with researchers having to contend with budgeting and staffing limits.

Twenty percent of the U.S. Osprey are located in New England, 20% in the Chesapeake Bay area, and 20% in Florida. The remainder are located in N. Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota and west of the Mississippi.

Osprey nesting in the New England and Chesapeake Bay areas migrate to the Caribbean, Central America and Northern S. America. The others east of the Mississippi migrate to Florida. Populations west of the Mississippi migrate to Mexico. Most Osprey along the Gulf Coast, S. California, and S. Florida are year-round residents of those areas and do not migrate. This includes those here on Honeymoon Island, the reason being the excellent habitat, nesting sites and food sources found here.

Fall migration begins in late August and September and ends in mid October. Stop off points used by northern populations before migrating south include Hawk Mountain in PA, and Cape May in New Jersey, which extends south into the ocean. Many species of migratory birds congregate in these locations, and so many ornithologists, birders and casual observers gather during peak migration in order to witness the spectacle first-hand.

Hurricanes and Predators

Osprey migrating from these areas then proceed either directly over open water, or over land. Young Osprey often select the open water route, crossing long stretches of open ocean. Nearly 2/3 of the young will perish due to storms.

While many birds build up stores of fat to live on during migration, the Osprey does not.. They hunt actively along the way, fishing as they go, sometimes carrying a "fish snack" with them. They tend to be solitary in migration, but mated pairs travel together, riding the wind currents and soaring on updrafts and thermals. The mature birds migrate by instinct and navigate by eye, always aware of landmarks, returning to the same wintering grounds year after year. The fledglings too, will be driven by instinct, navigating by the ancestral "map"

embedded within. The young that successfully manage the migration fly thousands of miles until they somehow recognize a place they have never been to before, and something within them will say "home". Then they will settle into this ancient wintering ground, and partake in the abundance of fish as they regain their strength after the strenuous migration. The ability to recognize a place they have never been to before is surely a fact stranger than fiction.

Winter Quarters

The return trip south takes about 1/3 the time it took to migrate north, as they seem anxious to return to the nest and ready it for a new family. Once settled in, returning mated pairs tend their nests, and those without mates engage in courtship. Older pairs will rebuild their nest and newlyweds will work to build a new nest. Occasionally, established nests are damaged by storms, and the couple will select a new sight. There is always the chance that the Great Horned Owl will select an Osprey nest and call it its own. The Owls leave the nest in ill repair, and badly soiled, being the "good renters" that they are.

By mid march, most wintering sites used by the Osprey that do migrate are ghost towns, barren of all but the yearling birds who continue to hone their hunting skills and gain experience. The cycle of life begins anew!

To experience the Osprey first hand, and learn more about their life history, join in on one of the Ranger-Led Osprey Trail walks, held each Saturday at the Picnic area at 11am, November through April.

Resources: Alan Poole, Biologist Larry Raymond and Stephen D. Capenter, "The Fish Hawk Osprey".

Photo courtesy of Ray Marro Jr.



My Trip to Hog Island Audubon Camp in Maine

by Nancy Dunne, FPS Volunteer



I was proud to be chosen as one of two people by the Clearwater Audubon to attend the educator's camp week this past July. This nature conservation area and retreat for 60 plus years was a gift to the National Audubon from the Todd Family of Maine; and as of year 2000 was taken over by the Maine Audubon. The goal of this special place is to protect wildlife; and the educator's week goal is to rekindle

the true sensitive environmental component into everyday teachings of Nature history in schools and nature centers. Besides the one week sessions for educators there are camps for youth, teens and families; which are listed on their web page: www.maineaudubon.org.

They also have two open houses for the general public each summer, at which time they transport people from the mainland base site in Breten ME, to their Island only one half mile off shore in Muscongus Bay, (mid- Atlantic coast Maine). This small island has easy to moderate skill hiking trails, complete with the original historic buildings of its' previous owners . Not to mention the awesome wild views of the marine world around it. Even better they welcome boaters to moor at the various sandy beaches and get out and explore the island, with appropriate signage on the shore.

What really 'puts them on the map' is The Puffin Project, started by a former director of the Hog Island Audubon Camp, and professor of the Ornithology at Cornell Univ. Dr. Stephen Kress. Maine puffins were missing along its coast for nearly 100 years. In 1973 Kress, then the director of the National Seabird Restoration Program began efforts to restore the bird to the USA by bringing them back to Eastern Egg Rock, a scant 5 miles off shore , previously a breeding spot of the bird. He and a Newfoundland fisherman named John Riddick petitioned the Canadian Government to allow the them to extract the eggs from earthen nests at Gull Island off Newfoundland and place them in the cracks of the rocks of Eastern Egg Rock (EER). The eggs made it safely to this rocky spot; but the hatching of the eggs and the birds returning the next breeding season hinged upon a creative decoy system. Models were made of Puffins to welcome the hatchlings and to attract returning/migrating Puffins for the following year; and it worked! Today more of the breeding birds are on EER, but they are also on other islands of the ME coast some of which are also stewarded by the Audubon. People from all over the

world have used this Decoy System in other bird habitat crisis situations.

With the companion "Ecotourism Program", starting up in 1987, a budget was established for an ongoing Puffin Project. Yes, they got the bird back, but it is not a done deal because predators- man made pollution and weather catastrophes are ever looming. It takes 18 young interns mostly Ecology and Ornithology majors to man the island. To monitor and safeguard these birds they are willing to withstand the climate extremes of the island. 5000 Eco-tourists every summer do the roundtrip excursion to EER, traveling on either the ME Audubon boat or with one other private boat company. The puffin work is part of the Seabird Restoration Project, which also tries to help out other birds in jeopardy like the Storm Petrel, Terns, and the Razor Bill Auk. The story of the puffins return to ME is unfinished; open ended. A tough undeclared victory for all the groups involved.

Dr. Kress, an alumni of Hog Island came to see us at the retreat and shared his slide presentation about the project. It is amazing that this is such a multifaceted story; the story intertwines not only man, but other birds and animals in the area. There is now a Visitor Center for the project in Rockland Maine., which has been fairly recent opening.

The predators that keep the Audubon involved with the seabirds are owls, mink, various gulls, black crowned night heron, and raccoons who will feed on eggs and chicks and occasionally go after adult puffins and terns.

Maine is also a major breeding area for the tern. In 1988 a mink swam several miles from the mainland and 'took out' common terns and federally endangered roseate terns. In 2004 after the peregrine falcon made a come back from DDT they preyed on and killed terns, puffins, auks on some of the Audubon controlled islands. There will be more challenges and tests for us to come; endangered species are picking on threatened birds. Today's big problem is the Gull; in the 1900's the National Audubon worked hard to protect the Gull population in Maine. Gull feathers were sought after for ladies hats. To stop the slaughter of the birds, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act came about, promoted by the Audubon Society. Since then the gull's population has exploded. People's bad habits of dumping refuse and garbage at sea and on land have created a free and easy food source for that bird. Now we have a bumper crop of predators for other birds. One particular species, the Herring Gull is known as the 'Tiger of the Seabird World'.

Finally I'd like to say that I learned that the existence of the Puffin in Maine is a great indicator of a clean ocean and a healthy ecosystem. It was amazing to learn that the star of this story, the Puffin, lives on the water, soars in the air and breeds on the land. I had a wonderful week and I met a lot of nice people to network with.

Island Amenities

Be sure to visit *Cafe Honeymoon* and *Cafe Caladesi* when on the islands for food, gifts and beach supplies. Try out the **pancake breakfasts** on Sunday at *Cafe Honeymoon*. In addition, check with them about special occasions on the islands.

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727•736•2132
1 Causeway Blvd.
Dunedin, FL

Friends Scheduled Meetings

The Board of Directors meets at 6:30 p.m. on the third Tuesday of each month for approximately 1 ½ hours.

The general membership meeting is on the fourth Tuesday of the month and begins at 7:00 p.m. and usually features a presentation of local interest. Unless otherwise posted, both meetings are held at the *Rotary Centennial Nature Center at Honeymoon Island*. You are welcome to attend the board meeting and highly encouraged to come to the membership meetings!

Meeting Schedule:

November 2007 meeting will be held at the Dec. 1 Holiday party. There will be no December 2007 meeting dues to holidays.

	Board Meetings:	General Meetings:
Jan. 2008	Tuesday 15 th	Tuesday 22 nd
Feb. 2008	Tuesday 19 th	Tuesday 26 th
Mar. 2008	Tuesday 18 th	Tuesday 25 th
Apr. 2008	Tuesday 15 th	Tuesday 22 nd
May. 2008	Tuesday 20 th	Tuesday 27 th
Jun. 2008	Tuesday 17 th	Tuesday 24 th
Jul. 2008	Tuesday 15 th	Tuesday 22 nd
Aug. 2008	Tuesday 19 th	Tuesday 26 th
Sep. 2008	Tuesday 16 th	Tuesday 23 rd
Oct. 2008	Tuesday 21 st	Tuesday 28 th



Friends of the
Island Parks

Members of the Board

Executive Committee

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Vice President: Scott Hood
Treasurer: Barry Metcalfe
Secretary: Ron Geisheimer

Directors:

Shane Bittaker Mike Moran
Wayne Case Linda Taylor
Jacques Marion Gabriella Mullins
Diane Hood Marianne Davis
Skip Meadows Bob Meadows
Barry Metcalfe Ray Dabkowski

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