

NINE

MILE NEWS

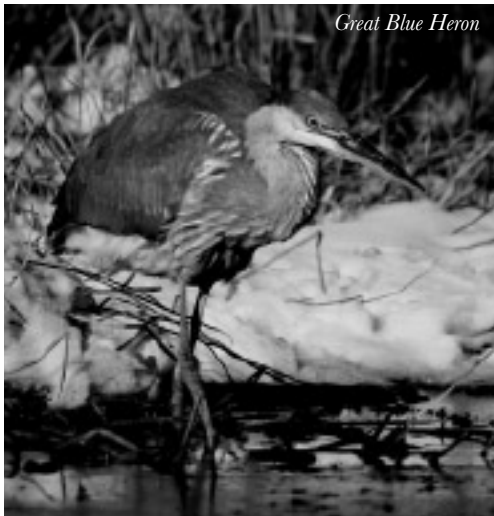
SPRING 2010

Photo by John Moyer

OUR MISSION IS TO ENSURE THE RESTORATION AND PROTECTION OF THE NINE MILE RUN WATERSHED THROUGH CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT, DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS, AND ADVOCACY.



## LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



*Great Blue Heron*

I am happy to report that the major repair work in Nine Mile Run was completed in December. With last June's storms a fading memory, we watched in awe as heavy equipment operators from Ecological Restoration Inc. moved more than 700 tons of rock into place, with consulting assistance from Dave Derrick, the US Army Corps of Engineers' leading stream restoration expert. The damaged structures were made stronger than before, and some innovative new techniques were employed to withstand the force of the runoff from future monster storms. There are still so few restorations of urban streams of this type that there is no tried-and-true design. We learned the hard way what didn't work; restoration specialists will continue to visit Nine Mile Run in the future to study the results of our most recent efforts.

The newly installed riffles and weirs have been resting under a heavy blanket of snow for weeks, but as spring approaches our thoughts turn to all of the wonderful opportunities the park will afford us over the coming year to relax and recharge. NMRWA will be busy both in the park and in the upper watershed with a full slate of activities (see last page for more information). Our Board of Directors and staff have been working through the fall and winter on our next three year strategic plan, which is now complete. We will be unveiling a number of exciting new initiatives, in these pages and on our website, over the coming year.

But to be able to succeed in any of these endeavors, we need to continue to build our membership base. NMRWA has been a membership organization since its inception in 2001. Our members are critical to the organization, not only for their financial support, but because their commitment to the organization demonstrates to elected officials and to funders that there is a core constituency of citizens who care about their urban environment and are willing to participate in its restoration and protection.

This year, for the first time, we are offering some new forms of recognition to make clear to our members just how important they are to our future. If you have not yet become a member, this would be an excellent time to do so. Our basic membership will continue to be only \$20, a level affordable for nearly everyone. For those who are able to make a larger membership gift, we will offer a variety of thank-you gifts, which are detailed on the back page of this newsletter, and at [www.ninemilerun.org](http://www.ninemilerun.org) under Get Involved/Become a Member.

Please note that, as is required of all nonprofits, we will provide you with a statement of the fair market value of your thank-you gift, which reduces the tax-deductibility of your contribution by that amount. And of course, these gifts are optional. We will send you information along with your thank you letter about how to obtain your gift, if you choose to accept it.

In addition, this year for the first time, we are excited to offer three member-only events. Coming up first, in April, is a nature photography workshop with our Board member and photographer-extraordinaire John Moyer. Then, on June 6th, we are adding a breakfast to our popular Bird Walk. Both the breakfast and the walk this year will be for the enjoyment of our members. Finally, in August or September (date TBD), on the family-friendly Mushroom Foray, we will find the hidden fungal treasures of Frick Park, and learn how to identify them. More information about these events is on page 6. Pre-registration will be required for all three events, and numbers will be limited to ensure a high-quality experience for all participants. If the waiting list is long, we will do our best to add additional events to meet the demand.

Please consider joining NMRWA today, or renewing your membership. (If you are not sure when you last renewed, feel free to call or email Judi, our Office Manager, who will be happy to look up that information for you.) We hope to see you on the Nine Mile Run trail this spring and summer, and we will be very grateful for your support and involvement in our work!

## WHO WE ARE

### Our Board

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Margaret Zak, secretary

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Scott Rosenblum  
Allison Sanders  
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Matthew Wholey  
Paige Wiegman  
Lois Winslow

### Staff

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**Lisa Brown**  
Director of Operations  
and Outreach

**Judith Jungling**  
Office Manager

**Luke Stamper**  
Program Coordinator

**Justin Hynicka**  
Program Coordinator

### Program Assistants

Sara Madden  
Liana Maneese

### Interns

Molly Freedman  
Jordan Flynn

### Contact Us

Tel 412.371.8779  
Fax 412.371.1157  
[info@ninemilerun.org](mailto:info@ninemilerun.org)  
[www.ninemilerun.org](http://www.ninemilerun.org)

*All photos in this newsletter, with the exception of page 4 are by John Moyer.*

## 2009 STATE OF THE WATERSHED



*Tom Biebighauser explains the finer points of wetland construction*

The last State of the Watershed took place in 2007. Much has happened since then and the Nine Mile Run Watershed Association (NMRWA) was eager to share recent projects, progress, and findings with watershed residents and interested citizens. Following the completion of the restoration, monitoring has been conducted on a continual basis to assess improvements in the stream and riparian habitat. Comprised of volunteers from academia and the professions, the NMRWA's Monitoring Committee collects data on key water quality indicators. Not only does this monitoring provide valuable data on the health of the stream, but it also drives NMRWA's programming, allowing us to critically evaluate our work.

The Second State of the Watershed was held on Saturday November 7th. This all-day public event took place at the Environmental Charter School in Regent

Square, where over 50 attendees participated in presentations, panel discussions, and workshops. Lisa Brown, NMRWA's Director of Operations and Outreach, began the day with a summary of the Monitoring Committee's findings for the past two years, Lisa spoke to the current state of the stream's water quality, aquatic organisms, and the health of the wetland and riparian areas. She also addressed the progress of NMRWA's demonstration projects, announcing a total of 1,280 rain barrels installed within the watershed since the Rain Barrel Initiative began in 2004, and over 240 shade trees planted within the watershed through the GreenLinks program. Members of the Monitoring Committee were called to the stage for a panel discussion, addressing audience questions regarding their research.

Keynote speaker Tom Biebighauser, Wildlife Biologist for the US Forest Service Center for Wetlands, followed with an exciting

presentation of his work and projects. The audience was treated to a slide show of beautifully constructed and natural wetlands as Tom spoke about his vast experience with wetland ecology and construction. The participants broke for a lunch by Catered Elegance in Wilkinsburg. After lunch, Tom hosted outdoor workshops on constructing wetlands and building rain gardens to mitigate the negative effects of urban stormwater runoff. The day concluded with attendees getting their hands dirty; delineating space for wetlands, testing and compacting soils to determine site feasibility.

NMRWA was excited to share this day of information with the community, and very thankful for such a successful event! If you are interested in receiving a copy of the 2009 State of the Watershed Report contact Lisa at 412.371.8779 x115 or email [lisa@ninemilerun.org](mailto:lisa@ninemilerun.org).

### Our programs are made possible through the generous support of our funders:

The Heinz Endowments  
 The Laurel Foundation  
 The Richard King Mellon Foundation  
 The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's  
 Growing Greener II Fund  
 The Pittsburgh Foundation  
 Coca Cola North America  
 The Wilkinsburg Community Development Corporation,  
 and Our Members

### We wish to acknowledge the donation of professional services for our monitoring efforts from:

Betty Kindle and ALCOSAN  
 Christina Kovitch and TestAmerica

A special thanks to the Environmental Charter School at Frick, the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf, and the Wilkins School Community Center for allowing us the use of their wonderful facilities throughout the year.

## PERMEABLE PAVING – THE SMART OPTION



^ *Macon Avenue permeable sidewalk*

How much did you spend on salt and ice-melt for your property this winter? How much time did you spend shoveling just to get down your front steps or walkway?

For homeowners with permeable pavement, like Regent Square resident Jeff Schwartz, salting and shoveling were much less of a hassle than for the rest of us. “The positives outweigh the negatives by far,” he says. On a freezing day in January, Jeff’s front walk is completely clear, even though the ground and neighborhood sidewalks are covered with at least two inches of snow and ice.

But what is permeable pavement? Permeable, or “pervious,” pavement is a low-maintenance green option that anyone can take advantage of. There are a number of choices available, but the materials and fitting techniques differ slightly from traditional asphalt or concrete, so professional installation is recommended. All pervious pavement includes three courses, which act as a filtration system: a sub-grade, or non-compacted, level soil; a base made up of uniformly sized aggregate; and the surface, which is the mixed asphalt, concrete or even open-jointed blocks. Pittsburgh Mobile Concrete has a Certified Pervious Concrete Technician offering expertise on the best procedures and options for area residents.

Although permeable pavement is low-maintenance, it is important for homeowners to inspect and vacuum the surface seasonally

to keep the pores free from buildup. Nancy Martin of the Pennsylvania Resources Council recommends that homeowners check out an exhibit of permeable pavement at the Westmoreland Conservation District education center in Greensburg.

So why don’t more people have permeable pavement? One of the problems is that many people are simply unaware of this alternative. Many municipal managers and commercial property owners concerned with sustainability and costly drainage systems already look to permeable options for paved surfaces. But homeowners can benefit as well. The built-in drainage prevents icy spots from forming and the surface provides traction, certainly helpful in the winter.

Many people also assume that permeable pavement is much more expensive than traditional options. Although the cost per square foot is slightly higher than typical asphalt, the permeable pavement that Jeff used actually required less labor than traditional choices because it did not require a finishing process. “The costs aren’t completely dissimilar,” once you factor in labor, maintenance and durability, says Jeff, who is thinking of adding more permeable surfaces around his house and to act as a buffer to prevent flooding in his garage.

“It drains unbelievably well,” says Jeff. “I haven’t treated it or shoveled at all.” And, it’s helping Nine Mile Run by managing runoff. Water is filtered through a layer of gravel

### IF YOU SEE SOMEONE...

disposing unknown substances down a storm sewer or directly into the stream, or if you notice unusual colors or odors in the stream, contact the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection at the following:  
PA Department of Environmental Protection  
Southwest Regional Office  
400 Waterfront Dr Pittsburgh, PA  
15222-4745  
Contact: Complaint Service Representative,  
(412) 442-4184.

or a grid beneath the surface, recharging the groundwater and preventing pollutants from reaching the stream. Reducing the amount of runoff entering our strained drainage system also benefits the Watershed by mitigating the problems of overflow and erosion. Knowing what he knows now about the benefits, Jeff asks, “Why would you use standard concrete?”

If repairing or resurfacing your home’s walkway or driveway is on your home improvement list, consider permeable pavement. Help the Nine Mile Run Watershed and save yourself from all that snow shoveling next winter.

Please see Pittsburgh Mobile Concrete’s ad in this newsletter for more information.

Contact Art Gazdick at (412) 931-7055 for technical advice and Infinity Construction’s Matt Bowie at (412) 951-2756 with contracting questions.

## TREES FOR WILKINSBURG AND SWISSVALE

The fall proved to be another successful season for street tree plantings in the Nine Mile Run Watershed. Fifty-seven trees and eight shrubs received a new home at one of six planting sites in Swissvale and Wilkinsburg.

In addition to cold, rain, and mud, community volunteers from Swissvale and the Word of God School contended with geo-textile fabric, compacted soil, and transporting MASSIVE trees, some as high as 12 feet. Swissvale now has 10 beautiful new Honey Locust and Hackberry trees.

The rain continued, and so did we! Wilkinsburg community volunteers worked

through an evening downpour to plant 14 trees along South Trenton Avenue. A special thanks to students from City Charter High School for adding the finishing touches at this site.

Although NMRWA usually plants trees within the public right-of-way, our largest single planting of the season was on private property. We partnered with Action Housing to plant 22 trees surrounding 5 newly constructed homes in Wilkinsburg. We hope this project increases new homeowner awareness of the many benefits trees provide to the urban environment. Significant volunteer support for this event was provided by the Student Conservation Association, and the Wilkinsburg Shade Tree Committee. Wilkinsburg Mayor John Thompson and State Representative Joe Preston made a special appearance to help

plant trees. In addition, each homesite has a suite of native shrubs and features two NMRWA rain barrels!

Our final event of the season was headed by the Wilkinsburg Citizens Advisory Committee on Shade Trees. Volunteers planted trees and shrubs around the Welcome to Wilkinsburg sign on Ardmore Boulevard.

Thanks again to our many volunteers and to the **Wilkinsburg Department of Public Works** for their hard work and assistance. *Please stay tuned for announcements about our 2010 Street Tree Inventories and Planting Days.*

## NINE MILE RUN PARTNERS WITH WILKINSBURG 8TH GRADERS

The Nine Mile Run Watershed Association (NMRWA) began the New Year with an educational outreach opportunity to over 60 Wilkinsburg Middle School 8th graders.

Program Coordinators, Luke Stamper and Justin Hynicka, and Program Assistant, Lianna Maneese taught the students about non-point source pollution and the importance of stormwater management for water quality. The class focused on the causes and effects of pollutants in our waters and how the actions of individuals can directly impact the health of Nine Mile Run. After an engaging presentation, students participated in a hands-on science

experiment that demonstrated how different urban stormwater pollutants affect drinking water and how that water is purified. NMRWA will return to the classroom in the spring with a follow-up lesson and a field trip to the Nine Mile Run restoration area. Special thanks to the 8th grade students and their teacher, Regan Cupps, for inviting NMRWA to their classroom and allowing us to share our watershed knowledge!



### Pervious/Porous Concrete Pavements

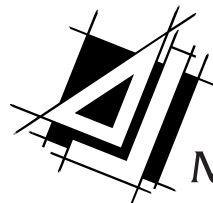
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## NMRWA MEMBER ONLY EVENTS

You must be a current NMRWA member and pre-register for these events.

### Breakfast and Bird Walk

Sunday, June 6<sup>th</sup>

7:30am

Lower Frick Park parking lot, off Lancaster Avenue

Join us as we bird the 9 Mile Run Valley, and learn about the ecological restoration efforts in the southern end of the park. In the past, we have been delighted to see some unusual winged visitors-

come see if we get any pleasant surprises this year. Chuck Tague and Jack Solomon lead this outing. Breeding birds should be active. An Orchard Oriole nested in the valley last June, so we may see either it, or its more common cousin, the Baltimore Oriole. Carolina Chickadees, Carolina Wrens, Yellow Warbler, Scarlet Tanager, and Indigo Bunting – they're all possible in the watershed on an early June morning. Breakfast will be provided. Please register by calling 412.371.8779 x115, or email [lisa@ninemilerun.org](mailto:lisa@ninemilerun.org).

### Photography Walk with John Moyer

Saturday April 10<sup>th</sup>

10:30am—1pm

Lower Frick Park parking lot, off Lancaster Avenue

You've seen his work, now grab your camera and join John Moyer in this child and dog friendly event! John will take us on a tour of his favorite spots along Nine Mile Run and offer helpful hints and tips for improving your nature shots. John's photography not only graces the Nine Mile Run newsletters, email blasts and calendars, but his photographic documentation of the Nine Mile Run Restoration Project has been published in Civil Engineering Magazine, Western

Pennsylvania History Magazine, Landscape Architecture, and appeared in the PBS documentary Liquid Assets as well as at the New York Times on line. Please register by calling 412.371.8779 x115, or email [lisa@ninemilerun.org](mailto:lisa@ninemilerun.org).

### Mushroom Foray

Frick Park

Date to be Determined

Feel the excitement of discovering something new about our local environment! Join Nine Mile Run and mycologists from the Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club for this informative walk in Frick Park. Details will be published in our summer newsletter.

## EVENTS

Please check our website at [www.ninemilerun.org](http://www.ninemilerun.org) under Get Involved for a complete list of upcoming events and any schedule changes. All events are free and open to the public, unless otherwise specified.

### NMRWA and PPC Frick Park Work Day

Saturday, March 27<sup>th</sup>

9am—1pm

Meet in the Lower Frick Park soccer field, use the Lancaster Avenue entrance.

Join the Nine Mile Run Watershed Association and the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy for this day of collaborative field work in lower Frick Park and the Restoration Area. We will be tackling a range of tasks, including planting and seeding, rogue trail closures and, of course, the always exciting-invasive species removal! Please dress for the weather, and be sure to wear long pants and sturdy boots or shoes. Lunch will be provided. Register by contacting Lisa at 412.371.8779 x115 or email [lisa@ninemilerun.org](mailto:lisa@ninemilerun.org).

### Join the NMRWA Team for the Amizade Water Walk for Women's Rights

Saturday April 11<sup>th</sup>

1pm for gathering and activities

Walk begins at 2pm

University of Pittsburgh Cathedral of Learning

Forbes Avenue

Did you know ...?

1.1 billion people in the world lack access to clean water. At any given time, 2.6 billion people are

suffering from a disease caused by lack of clean water. Nearly 5,000 children die every day from water-borne diseases. Help Amizade and NMRWA's team raise awareness about World Water Issues. To register for the Nine Mile Run Watershed Association team go to <http://www.amizade.org/resources/walkwalk2010.html> or call Lisa at 412.371.8779 x115. A \$10 donation is required to participate in this event.

### Nine Mile Run Stream Sweep

Saturday, April 24<sup>th</sup>

9am—noon

Meet in the Lower Frick Park soccer field, use the Lancaster Avenue entrance.

Join NMRWA as we sweep Nine Mile Run of litter. Every time it rains or snows, litter from the streets in the upper watershed communities of Pittsburgh, Edgewood, Wilkinsburg and Swissvale washes into the stream. Help us keep Nine Mile Run beautiful. We provide gloves, safety vests, and trash bags. Please wear long pants and sturdy boots or shoes. Register by contacting Lisa at 412.371.8779 x115 or email [lisa@ninemilerun.org](mailto:lisa@ninemilerun.org).

### NMRWA Open House

Thursday, May 20<sup>th</sup>

5:30pm—8pm

NMRWA offices

702 South Trenton Avenue

Join the staff at NMRWA to explore innovative options for residential storm water management. See our rain barrel workshop; learn how to install and maintain your barrel for optimum performance; discover techniques

for incorporating rain barrels in your landscape and best products and methods for painting a rain barrel. See the NMRWA rain garden and talk with our staff about how you can be part of the Nine Mile Run Rain Garden Pilot Project. Find information about permeable paving options in our region. As always, refreshments will be served! Please RSVP by calling 412.371.8779 x115, or email [lisa@ninemilerun.org](mailto:lisa@ninemilerun.org)

### Nine Mile Run Watershed Street Tree Inventories

### Edgewood and Swissvale

June, 12<sup>th</sup>

### Wilkinsburg

June 26<sup>th</sup>

In 2005 and 2006, NMRWA coordinated a volunteer street tree inventory in the watershed communities of Edgewood, Swissvale and Wilkinsburg. Many changes have occurred since then, older trees were removed due to disease or power line conflicts, and more than 240 young trees planted. Updating the number and health of our trees for 2010 will help NMRWA identify areas for future tree plantings and allow us to advocate for tree care and maintenance in the watershed communities. Please join us for round 2! For more information contact Justin at 412.371.8779 x116 or email [justin@ninemilerun.org](mailto:justin@ninemilerun.org)



*Nine Mile Run Stream Sweep*

## URBAN ECOSTEWARD WORKSHOPS

Free and open to the public. Please register by going to [www.pittsburghparks.org/uestrainings](http://www.pittsburghparks.org/uestrainings) or by calling 412-682-7275.

### UES Woodland Wildflowers Walk & Evening Campfire

Thursday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>  
5:30—7:30pm  
Frick Environmental Center

Celebrate the 40th anniversary of Earth Day by learning to identify our region's spring wildflowers. The walk will be followed by a campfire and marshmallow roast.

### UES Early Season Invasive Plants

Saturday, May 5<sup>th</sup>  
9am until 12noon  
Frick Park, lower parking lot off of Lancaster Ave

Do you know what garlic mustard looks like? How about Japanese knotweed and mugwort? These and other invasive species threaten native plant populations by out-competing for light, space, and nutrients. Find out how to identify and remove invasive plants early in the season.

### UES Shrub and Tree Identification

Wednesday June 2<sup>nd</sup>  
6—8pm  
Riverview Park, Chapel Shelter

Join experts from the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy and discover some useful tools to identify native and non-native trees and shrubs. We will learn to recognize branching patterns, as well as distinguish differences in leaves and bark and fruits and seeds.

## OTHER COMMUNITY EVENTS

### The 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Earth Day Festival at the Frick Environmental Center

Saturday, April 17<sup>th</sup>  
11am—4pm  
2005 Beechwood Blvd.  
Squirrel Hill

Come celebrate Earth Day at Frick Environmental Center! This free and exciting family festival runs from 11am to 4pm on

Saturday, April 17, 2009. Explore nature, enjoy local entertainment, learn ways to practice sustainable living, and much more. For more information or to volunteer, call Patty Himes at 412-422-6538.

### Wilkinsburg Spring Tree Planting and Arbor Day Celebration

Saturday, May 1<sup>st</sup>  
10am—1pm  
Meet at the Lincoln Statue on Penn Avenue

The Wilkinsburg Shade Tree Committee and NMRWA will be planting 35 trees in several locations in the borough. This project is part of an extensive tree

replacement program initiated by Duquesne Light to promote a safe and utility-compatible tree canopy for Wilkinsburg. Trees are a vital element for a livable urban environment, providing important environmental, health and safety, and social and economic benefits. Volunteer for this exciting project by sending an email to [trees@wilkinsburgpa.gov](mailto:trees@wilkinsburgpa.gov).

### Pittsburgh Urban Christian School (PUCS) Trash-a-thon

Friday, May 7<sup>th</sup>  
PUCS  
809 Center Street  
Pittsburgh, PA 15221

Join PUCS for this an annual school wide event. Following a presentation by NMRWA about watershed issues and solutions, students, parents, and community members gather to help clean litter and trash from the streets and vacant lots of Wilkinsburg. Make a donation to the cause at [www.pucs.org/trash-a-thon.htm](http://www.pucs.org/trash-a-thon.htm).



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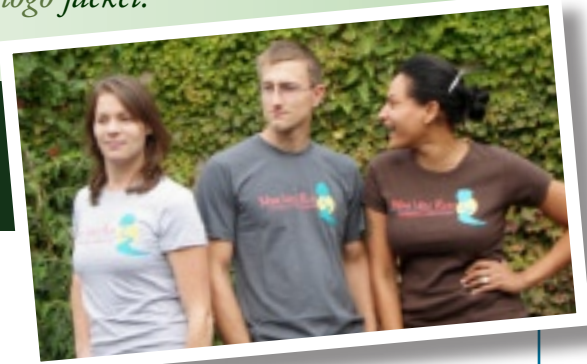
# PLEASE JOIN US!

*Your membership contributions are a vital source of support for our programs.  
And our members' voices lend strength to ours as we advocate for green approaches to our urban challenges.  
This year, beginning March 1<sup>st</sup>, we are offering new gifts to thank you for your support:*

- \$20** BASIC MEMBERSHIP
- \$50** SUPPORTER LEVEL – *NMRWA logo Hat*
- \$100** STEWARD LEVEL – *NMRWA logo T-Shirt*
- \$250** RESTORER LEVEL – *An autographed Poster-sized photo of Nine Mile Run by John Moyer*
- \$500** PROTECTOR LEVEL – *NMRWA Rain Barrel, with delivery and installation included*
- \$1,000** VISIONARY LEVEL – *All of the above, or NMRWA logo jacket.*

*And check out page 6 for information about our new members-only events! Go to [www.ninemilerun.org](http://www.ninemilerun.org) to join today, or use the enclosed envelope.*

*The Nine Mile Run Watershed Association is a legally incorporated 501 (c)3 charitable organization.  
Official registration and financial information may be obtained by calling 1.800.732.0999.  
Registration does not imply endorsement.*



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