

I have recently learned that a dear friend of mine has Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, known as ALS or Lou Gehrig's disease. As many of you know, it is a progressive neurological disease for which there is no cure. I knew that she was having some physical difficulties last December, but had seen nothing in our brief internet exchanges that alerted me to this diagnosis.

This stunningly sad news has made me intensely and intentionally reflective regarding my relationship with my friend. You see, there were years when we worked very closely together. I spent time with her and her husband in their home. I knew about their children and grandchildren and their daily lives. We shared the ups and downs of life and work. We talked about our perspectives and beliefs. We laughed and cried together. We walked the streets of New York City and had great adventures. But, that was years ago...when my life revolved around NYC as much as it did around Boston.

In the last few years, Facebook reconnected us. We chatted from time to time and made comments about each other's postings. It felt like old times. Yet, finding out this important news about her life caused me to reflect on the unconscious way that I allowed that surface relating to my friend to lull me into the feeling that I was truly reconnected with her life. There was certainly no intent on my part to avoid a deeper connection with her. I simply wasn't consciously aware that our interactions were so much on the surface.

My reflections made me wonder about the rest of my life and relationships...even about my relationship with God and my desire to be "Christ-like" in my daily walk. Where might I think that I'm paying closer attention than I actually am? Where might I need to pause and ask a deeper question or simply take the time to be more fully present in a moment or situation or conversation?

With all this in my heart and mind, I told my friend that I would be in touch each day as she travels this ever-increasingly difficult journey. The truth is... I have not done that. I have found it very difficult to do. It is not simply remembering... which is in itself challenging with life continuing to flow by. It is also worrying about what to say. I feel bad talking about my life that is so full of the things that her life no longer contains. And, I don't want to offend or cause more pain or sadness. I actually wrote to her last week that I felt sometimes like what I was writing was just senseless drivel! She immediately wrote back that "she likes to read my drivel." And, I realized that my worrying was more about me and my fears and feelings than it was about her and hers.

## ***LIGHTINGS AND ALTAR FLOWERS...***

**The Rose window** lighting for September is given in loving memory of Ralph W. Ellis.

**The Tower** lighting for September is given in loving memory of Lois and Bill Bird and Paul Carlson by Timmy and Charlie Bird.

**The altar flowers** today are given in loving memory of Muriel S. Gibbs by Brad Gibbs, Donna Grenier, Martha Vigeant, Jeff Gibbs and families.

## ***WE LIFT UP IN PRAYER THIS WEEK...***

- ✠ Kevin Tracy and Margaret who are sick and were sent to Milford Hospital
- ✠ Edward O-Tetteh who celebrated his birthday on Friday. May God bless him.
- ✠ “That the transportation problem my sister is experiencing will be resolved soon” ~ Judith
- ✠ Little Bella Bond and all involved
- ✠ The family of Harry Spencer (senior) who is on hospice care at Knollwood Nursing Ctr
- ✠ Those who have had miscarriages and are grieving their loss
- ✠ Linda & Louie D’Acri who recently celebrated their 46<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary
- ✠ Pierre and Carolyn Bellil and family, as they attend to the health and continuing care of Pierre
- ✠ Merlene Henney, sister-in-law of Judy Barton, who has breast cancer, and whose treatment was delayed because of a high temperature
- ✠ Students who are being bullied at school, and for the perpetrators that they may cease to do so and find help
- ✠ Baby Lulu who is recovering from another surgery
- ✠ Jake’s continued remission from cancer.
- ✠ For someone’s journey with sobriety and for the Lord to be in his life and family
- ✠ Terry Johnson, Bev Grimshaw’s sister in law, fighting an unknown illness
- ✠ Families seeking God’s protection
- ✠ For the refugees and migrants feeling the conflict and violence in Syria

## ***OUR INTERFAITH RELATIONSHIP WITH THE WORCESTER MOSQUE***

Wesley United Methodist Church is building a relationship with the Worcester Mosque on East Mountain St. A new committee has been formed with members from both congregations participating. The first event planned was the mosque's invitation in July to share their observance with Ramadan with us. We will be hosting the next event planned for Wesley Church. Our joint committee, Interfaith Relationship Builders for Community, will meet monthly on the first Tuesday at 5:30 PM. If you have any suggestions for the Builders for Community, please contact Kate Devlin or Margaret Watson.

*Cover page continued...*

I write this self-reflective piece as an invitation to us all to never discount the impact and importance that we can have in someone's life. I write this as an invitation to take a risk to be in a deeper relationship with someone who is important to you or someone who is a stranger that shows up in your life or in our midst in the Wesley community; or maybe to seek a more compassionate understanding for someone who you struggle with. I write this as an invitation to ask what it means to "be Christ" with and for one another...in the good times, and, especially, in the difficult ones.

I have learned much about myself and about life and about my faith these last few weeks. I would welcome the opportunity to talk with you about the experiences of the last few weeks and/or about any thoughts you have about all of this after reading this column. Or, as the days and weeks unfold, about anything that life has to offer you that causes you to reflect on yourself, your relationships with others, your relationship with the God of your understanding, your practice of the Christian faith.

It would be my privilege, and I promise to stop and be in the moment and to listen and be present...

*~ Lisa Fagerstrom*



### **DR. RICHARD SACRA TO SHARE HIS MISSION EXPERIENCE**

On Thursday, October 22<sup>nd</sup>, Dr. Richard Sacra, medical missionary to Liberia, will speak to our congregation about his experiences and life in Liberia. The program is sponsored by the United Methodist Women but, because of the importance of this mission, will be open to all Wesley members, our associate WAUM church members, and other community members. Dr. Sacra's talk, entitled "Ebola and Its Aftermath: Keeping the Focus on Africa" will be followed by a Question-and-Answer Period. Dr. Sacra contracted Ebola himself last year and was successfully treated in the United States. Since then he has returned to the Liberian mission at ELWA Hospital. Our event begins at 6:30 p.m. with a meet-and-greet with Dr. Sacra. The address will follow at 7 p.m. and at 8 p.m. Worcester Mayor, Joseph Petty, will present formally the Keys to the City of Worcester to Dr. Sacra. Light refreshments will be provided.

## **NEW MEMBER CLASS**

**Beginning Wednesday, October 7, 7:00pm-8:30pm**

A new member class will be starting at Wesley. Membership classes will run for six weeks, and will be held on Wednesdays, (beginning October 7), from 7:00 pm—8:30 pm in Mary Ellis Lounge. Please contact Pastor Shandi to sign-up. If you're interested in becoming a member but the class schedule does not work for you, still contact Pastor Shandi and let him know. Contact info: [pastorshandim@wesleyworc.org](mailto:pastorshandim@wesleyworc.org) or 508-799-4191 x108.

## **EXPLORING THE BIBLE: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE BIBLE**

**Beginning Tuesday, October 6, 7:00pm-8:30pm**

Do you know the stories of the Bible? Do you know how the Bible is organized and how those texts were chosen? Have you ever thought about all the different ways people approach the Bible and decided for yourself what to think?

If you said "no" to any of these questions, you need Exploring the Bible. This six-week course in basic biblical literacy assumes no prior knowledge of the Bible and is not biased toward any particular Christian tradition. Exploring the Bible is a three-part course to introduce you to the Bible. The first part, "What is the Bible?" will run for six weeks. It will be followed by parts two and three: "What is the Old Testament?" and "What is the New Testament?" each also running for six weeks.

This first course of Exploring the Bible: The Dickinson Series gives students a broad overview of the entire Bible, including chapters on how to select a Bible suitable for your needs, how the Bible is organized, how the collection of books that comprise the Bible were chosen, different ways that people approach the text, and what archaeology has to tell us about the text and its stories.

Please come and join us on Tuesdays, at 7:00pm, beginning October 6 in Mary Ellis Lounge. (Depending on interest, a second class may be formed for Tuesday mornings at 11:00am). To sign-up, please email [pastorshandim@wesleyworc.org](mailto:pastorshandim@wesleyworc.org) or call the church office.

## MESSAGES FROM THE CHURCH BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR

### Year to Date Budget Results through August

	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Total Income	383,001	390,179	-7,178
Total Expense	436,623	430,264	6,359
Difference	<b>-53,622</b>	<b>-40,085</b>	<b>-13,537</b>
Pledges	206,835	216,613	-9,778

Please make every effort to keep your pledges up to date.

### PROJECT UPDATES

#### Retaining Wall

The block wall and chain link fencing have been completed, and Burnham Landscaping will be transplanting hostas from the front of the church to the open space between the two block walls.

#### Parking Lot Sealcoating and Striping

The entire parking lot will be seal-coated and striped next Spring, after the new pavement has had time to cure.

#### The Nathaniel Wheeler Trust Grant

We are working with Burnham Landscaping to do a landscape design for the front of the church, using the Wheeler Trust Funds and some of the capital budget to cover the labor costs. Instead of replacing the lawn, they will work with weed killers and fertilizers to bring the lawn back over time, and will add some easy care plantings to enhance the front of the church. (You may have noticed portions of the lawn are now brown thanks to an application of Roundup to kill the grass that will be removed for planting.)

#### Third Floor Men's Room Repairs

I am happy to report the roof leak has been repaired, and the ceiling and walls have been completely repaired thanks to the efforts of Gerard Piscitelli! Thank you Gerard! The next step is to paint and do the flooring. Gary Robinson and Eric Thomas are working to get the remaining estimates and to finish this project by donating their time. Thank you for all your efforts!

### **Stage Curtain Estimates**

I have been working on obtaining estimates for a new stage curtain which is part of the 2015 capital budget. My intent is to have numbers for the meeting in September.

### **Chancel Lighting**

Before the month is over, we expect Coghlin Electric to complete the replacements of all lightbulbs in the ceiling of the chancel area. The height of the chancel makes this job extremely dangerous, and one that is best suited for professionals who will also review the wiring and make needed repairs. New LED lightbulbs will be used—so we are optimistic they will do the job for many years to come!

### **Parsonage Projects**

This Fall we expect a new garage door to be installed at the parsonage, along with sealcoating of the driveway. In 2015, both the dishwasher and stove were replaced.

### **Other News – 2016 Donations**

As you know, there are a variety of ways you can donate to Wesley for your annual tithe. I would like to summarize those choices and encourage you to select one for your giving:

Wesley Envelopes – these are requested on an annual basis. You may have seen the yellow envelope request form in the Sunday Bulletin this past week. We will include these in future bulletins as well and ask they be submitted by to me by 11/30/15.

*Or*

You can sign up for Vanco. This choice gives you the ability to automatically have your donation withdrawn from your checking or savings account at a specified time such as weekly, monthly, quarterly or annually. This form is available in the Welcome Office and can be set up or stopped at any time.

*Or*

You can make automatic or one-time donations through the Wesley web page. You can use this option to give to the general fund, Harvest, Christmas flowers, and others. The documentation for this is also located in the Welcome Office. This is a good option if you travel and want to keep up with your giving while you are away.

One more thing...your donation to Wesley is tracked through an “envelope number”—it is a number assigned to your record in our database so we can generate a statement for your taxes. This ‘number’ is the same no matter what method of giving you choose, and it is very helpful if you familiarize yourself with this number and use it whenever you give to Wesley.

Please contact me if you have any questions, ok?

*Peace, Lorna*

## **MISSION MATTERS**

**COMMUNITY SUPPER ON SEPT. 26TH, 4 TO 6 PM...** Linda D'Acri and her family will be in charge of this Saturday's Community Supper. The menu will be chicken parmesan, penne, salad, bread, drinks, and dessert. Donations of desserts (baked finger foods) will be much appreciated. If you are able to set up, serve, or cleanup, please contact Linda ([ljdfamx@gmail.net](mailto:ljdfamx@gmail.net)).

*At the Sept. 16th Mission Committee meeting, Pastor Shandi discussed the Mission goal of having many congregation members attend the suppers. Here's a quote explaining the reasons (from 5 Practices of Fruitful Congregations, which many of us have read): "Mission spreads the faith by exemplifying the compassion, mercy and justice of Christ in the world." So please attend and enjoy fellowship, a good meal, and Lisa's vesper service at the end (about 5:30 to 6 pm).*

**THANK YOU, SUPPER LEADER VOLUNTEERS!** Esther Circle and the Ghanaian Association will be in charge of the Oct. 24<sup>th</sup> Community Supper. Linda D'Acri and team will run, not only the supper in Sept., but also those on Nov. 28<sup>th</sup> and Dec. 26<sup>th</sup>. By the end of 2015, the D' Acri's will have led 11 community suppers, in addition to our Communion Breakfasts! UMW will lead the January 30<sup>th</sup> event. We owe great appreciation to our volunteers, especially those who risk taking on the leadership role.

**OCT. 3RD "FALL HARVEST FESTIVAL" BENEFITS DISMAS HOUSE...** Live music, delicious eats, farm tours, hayrides and games await you at the Dismas Family Farm festival. It's at 687 Lincoln Road in Oakham, MA, noon to 4 pm. (Rain date is Sunday, Oct. 4<sup>th</sup>.) The all-you-can-eat lunch and activities are included in the admission donation of \$10/adults, \$6/kids, free/under 4. Across the US, Dismas Houses are geared to the successful re-entry of former prisoners into society-- with vocational and life skills. John Wesley showed great concern for the incarcerated.

## FROM CARTY CUPBOARD

**The Item of the Month for September is...** Meals in a can... this can be Stew, Pasta, or Beans.

**The Item of the Month for October is...** Turkey gravy.

**The Item of the month for November is...** Hearty canned soup.

**The Item of the Month for December is...** Jelly... in plastic please.

At the moment we are in desperate need of the following... Hearty canned soups and Meals in a can.

*Thank you, Nancy Spencer*



How did you celebrate Labor Day earlier this month? Went to the beach, had a picnic with family and friends, maybe did a little shopping to catch the sales?

The Polaris Project reminds us that as we shop, we are “faced with the dilemma of knowing that so many of the things we buy (clothing, shoes, electronics, even food) may be produced by men, women, and children working in inhumane conditions, against their will.

**“We can't know the origins of everything we buy. But we can work together to make freedom happen for the 14.2 million workers trapped in modern day slavery worldwide.”**

Yes, it's happening in the U.S. --- to U.S. citizens!

It's not “their problem,” it's **Our problem.**

**End Labor Trafficking.**

**For more info about the Polaris Project** <http://www.polarisproject.org/>

*Submitted by Barb Ingrassia*

*Worcester Interfaith presents*



## *The Beggar's Bowl*

10<sup>th</sup> annual fundraiser and arts event

*Tuesday evening, October 13, 2015*

*5:30 to 7:30 pm*

*First Baptist Church*

*111 Park Ave., Worcester, MA*

*Corner of Park Avenue & Salisbury St., Worcester, Mass.*

**Come enjoy artisan bread and a bowl of homemade soup, served in a hand-thrown stoneware bowl which you get to take home!**

*Donation: \$50*

*For more information, call Worcester Interfaith  
(508) 754-5001*

# **John in Ultra-High Context: John 11:55-12:36**

## **{notes from the Brewer Hall Study Group, September 6 – 20, 2015}**

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### **As a Third Passover Draws Near, Jesus is Anointed**

(vv. 11:55-57) The notes in 11:57 and 12:10 about the hostile intentions of the chief priests and Pharisees bracket the story of Mary anointing Jesus' feet (12:3-8), suggesting simultaneous action.

(vv. 12:1-2) Lazarus is now designated as he "whom Jesus raised out of [the] dead" rather than the one whom Jesus loved (11:3, 5). This has overtones for the members of John's group, both for Jesus' title as the one whom God raised from the dead, and of God's revelation as the one who raised Jesus from the dead.

(v. 3) The streets here were little more than open sewers, and the reclining guests at a meal would be close to the feet of those near them. Among the well off, normally slaves would wash the feet of guests before a meal. But Mary's action here is symbolic. As the mistress of the house, she assumes the ritualistic role of acknowledging the action Jesus was about to undertake by anointing his feet. (The Mediterranean world viewed the body and soul in terms of three zones of interaction, with the hands, feet, fingers and legs as the zone of purposeful action.) Israelite women normally did not unbind their hair in public, and infrequently even in their own home.

(vv. 4-6) As overseer of the group's money, Judas Iscariot's plea for selling the anointing oils (three hundred denarii is nearly a year's wages) rather than for performing the costly social ritual is bracketed by the author with two personal attacks: Jesus' betrayer (cf. 6:64, 71), and his propensity to steal from the group's *glōssókomen* (RSV "money box").

(vv. 7-8) Jesus acknowledges Mary's use of the oils for this symbolic action and also for the forthcoming anointing of his body at his burial. Then quoting Deut 15:11a ("For the poor will never cease out of the land; ...") he replaces the continuation of the proverb with the statement that the disciples will not always have him in close physical proximity, anticipating their anxiety at that time and preemptively allaying it to some extent.

(vv. 9-11) When the crowd of Judeans had learned that Jesus had returned to Bethany, they came not only because of him, but "also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead." The chief priests, recognizing that the presence of Lazarus complicated their plans, decided that Lazarus must die (again) as well.

### **The Close of Jesus' Public Ministry and the Offer of Light and Life to Israel**

(v. 12-14) The crowd then learns of Jesus' availability near Jerusalem, and taking up palm branches, chants Ps. 118:25-26 as they go to meet Jesus, but their intentions are made clear by the addition of the phrase "King of Israel". The six to ten foot long date palm branches were also a symbol of the Israelite nation (brought to the temple at its rededication after the defeat of the Syrians by Judas Maccabeus, 164 BC).

(vv. 15-16) Becoming clear after Jesus is raised, [this quotation from the first oracle of the "Second" Zechariah (chs 9-11, written about the fifth century BC) outlines God's providential dealings with his people down to the time of the coming of the Messiah.]

(vv. 17-19) The crowd consisted of those who had witnessed the last of Jesus' signs – the raising of Lazarus, and those who heard of this sign second hand. {And just as the Pharisees had feared (11:48), their inability to arrest Jesus (11:57) and to do away with Lazarus (12:10)} was directly tied to the “world” (i.e., all of Israel) going after Jesus.

### **Jesus' Final Public Revelation**

(vv. 20-22) The request of the Hellenistic Judean émigrés to see Jesus begins the final event in John's story of Jesus' public revelation. Their chain of access to Jesus, from Philip to Andrew to Jesus, reflected the status of these core followers standing between Jesus and the public. Philip, of Bethsaida (1:43-44), the first disciple to be specifically sought out by Jesus, relays the request to Andrew, also of Bethsaida (1:44), the first disciple to recognize Jesus as Israel's Messiah (1:41).

(vv. 23-28a) The arrival of émigrés to see Jesus signals his certainty that his time had finally come to mark his life's significance (cf. 7:33). Giving the third of his five “unless” statements (describing the requirements of discipleship), he notes that attachment to the current Israelite lifestyle leads only to death, whereas disattachment leads to eternal life. His disciples must follow him in this hour and God will honor them as he honors Jesus. Despite anxiety, Jesus embraces his appointed time and God's will.

(vv. 28b-33) There follows Jesus' alternate state-of-consciousness experience of the voice of God assuring him that God had been revealed as honorable in the past and would be so again. The crowd hears a sky sound – interpreting it as meaningful thunder or one of God's sky servants (angels). (The ancients believed that any sky event had meaning for people on the land below the event.) Explaining to the crowd that the sky sound marked the beginning of his hour, Jesus uses the idiomatic “lifted up” expression for his crucifixion, and the verb *elkūsō* (“will draw”) (all people). This is the same verb used in 6:44, [having the sense of a work of grace, prevenient preparation to come to Christ].

(v. 34) A scriptural reference to the crowd's claim that “out of the law..the Christ remains unto the age” (i.e., will not die) is unclear. Nevertheless, the crowd's question, “Who is this Son of man?” is less a question of specific identity (in this context, it would be Jesus), but rather a question of the role {of such a mortal man}.

(vv. 35-36) Jesus' final plea to the Judean public is an appeal to join his group while he (the **light**) is with them yet for a brief period “lest the darkness overtake you” (cf. 1:4-5). {Darkness was associated both with God's ultimate judgment (“Day of the Lord”: Joel 2:2; Amos 5:20; Zeph. 1:15) and with the fate of the wicked (1Sam. 2:9).}

Marshall, A. *The R.S.V. interlinear Greek – English New Testament. The Nestle Greek Text with a literal English Translation.* London: Samuel Bagster and Sons Ltd., 1958.

Malina BJ, Rohrbaugh RL. *Social-Science Commentary on the Gospel of John.* Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998. pp. 204-213.

Wikipedia. *Book of Zechariah.* 3 September 2015.

The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright © 2001, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2010 [BibleSoft, inc.](http://www.biblesoft.com)

## DID YOU KNOW?

Each week during Sunday morning worship in the main sanctuary the congregation is seated in pews. Pews are unique to churches, and most of us think of pews as one of the most obvious features of the congregational space. However, did you know that for much of the history of Christian worship most of the interior worship space was open space without pews (or chairs)?

In the early church no seating was provided in the Christian basilicas except for a chair for the Presider and a few benches along the sides for the elderly or infirm. Until the thirteenth century the congregation traditionally stood throughout the liturgy (as they still do in Eastern Orthodox churches even today). Worshipers often moved around during the service e.g. to cluster near the pulpit for the sermon or to gather closer to the altar for communion. In Northern Europe as seating was initially introduced, the pews were originally grouped in “islands” to leave space for liturgical movement. It was not until after the Reformation that all churches were provided with seating.

Although many pews were elaborately carved, especially during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, eventually pews were given high backs and sides as protection from drafts and to provide privacy, thus evolving into the simple box-pews that are considered traditional for New England colonial churches. Originally seating was arranged to face the pulpit (which was not necessarily on the same axis as the altar, but that is a different topic!); in Victorian times earlier seating was rearranged to make the altar rather than the pulpit the chief focus of the church.

Although our use of pews results in our being more sedentary than mobile during the worship service, it is good for us to be reminded that what we do with our physical bodies is part of how we worship. Movement of various kinds is still important in Christian worship, perhaps most obviously in the form of processions, presentation of the offering, etc. However movement is also important for the congregation, whether simply in standing for various acts of worship (hymn singing, reading of the gospel, certain prayers) or more actively in moving to come forward to receive communion, pass the peace, or dance during the Praises.

*Submitted by,*

*Deborah A. O'Driscoll*

## 2015 HERALD SCHEDULE

Below are the next Herald mailing dates along with the deadline dates.

<u>Article Deadline Date</u>	<u>Herald Mailing Date</u>
Mon., Oct. 5	Wed., Oct. 7
Mon., Oct. 19	Wed., Oct. 21

If you have an article, please email it as a Word attachment to:

**office@wesleyworc.org**

**2015 ALTAR FLOWER** calendar is now available in the Welcome Office. If you would like to donate flowers on a particular Sunday in honor, celebration or in memory of a loved one or friend, stop by the office and reserve the date. You can reserve the chapel or the sanctuary. After church you are welcome to take the flowers home to enjoy or you may leave them to be delivered to a shut-in. The cost for the two arrangements in either the chapel or sanctuary is \$50. Please be sure to complete a form with the dedication and return it to Debi with the payment as soon as you are able.



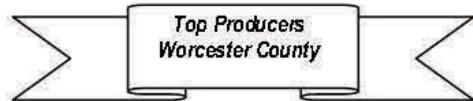
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**WESLEY HERALD**  
**SEPTEMBER 23, 2015**

***DON'T MISS OUT...  
READ THE HERALD TODAY!***

**WESLEY STAFF & LEADERSHIP TEAM**

- Pastor Shandirai Mawokomatanda
- Director of Music Ministries Brett Maguire
- Ghanaian Choir Master Kwaku Dankwa
- Music Assistant Deborah O'Driscoll
- Director of Children's Christian Education Jean Grant
- Director of Christian Formation & Discipleship Lisa Fagerstrom
- Toddler Care Leader Lori Conlon
- Building Superintendent Phil Johnson
- Business Administrator Lorna Mattus-Merrill
- Church Secretary Debi Ritacco
- Custodians Carol Flionis, Gerard Piscitelli, Steve Boyns
- Head Usher David Dagle
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- Ghanaian Association Emmanuel Okrah
- Events & Fellowship
- Layleader Deborah O'Driscoll
- Medical Ministry Ron Ramsay
- Memorial Gifts Carolyn Bellil
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