



The

Flame

Congregation of the Humility of Mary

Fall 2008

The Humility of Mary Shelter Miracle

by Sr. Johanna Rickl, CHM

Stunned silence filled the room. Board members of Humility of Mary Housing, Inc. (HMHI) had just heard from Sandra Walters, HMHI Co-director, that John Lewis Community Services (JLCS) would close on September 20th. They were aware that JLCS was in trouble—earlier it had closed the John Lewis Coffee Shop, a center for persons needing a meal, as well as a food pantry associated with the agency.

The homeless shelter and other services provided by JLCS were an essential part of the continuum of services offered in the Quad Cities by various agencies and groups. Besides providing many services itself, JLCS was the grantee—in effect the channel—for numerous grants (nearly \$1,000,000 annually) which helped it and six other agencies meet housing and service needs of a large and varied population, including veterans, youth, persons with mental illness, homeless adults and single parents, and those in transitional housing struggling to acquire their own homes.

Then came the question, “Shall we try to take over the operation of the shelter?” Board members responded by forming a small group to study the feasibility of such action. The concern for single parent families with housing needs had brought Humility of Mary Housing, Inc. into existence 18 years ago. Could the good work of HMHI be protected while it risked expanding its mission to include emergency/temporary shelter for adults?

The HMHI staff, community leaders, board members and other agencies began to seek ways to resolve the many obstacles in less than a month. Major issues were to raise a minimum of \$300,000 for expenses for the rest of the fiscal

year, prepare grant proposals for the next year’s operation, make an arrangement with the Iowa Finance Authority for use of the building, prepare and file articles of incorporation, apply for tax exempt status, and hire staff for the shelter.

Doubts started to multiply. The HMHI staff asked “How can we get all this done? What if we fail?” And later, “I called the Community Foundation (where people could donate to the shelter) and there is no money.” And, as the deadline date neared, “We’ve learned that work needs to be done on the shelter building itself.”

As each critical decision time came, there was always someone to remind us that we needed to put our trust in Jesus who asks us to love one another (Jn 15:12) and to care for the least ones among us (Mt 25:40). For the Sisters of the Humility of Mary it was also important to fulfill our mission statement by striving “to be attentive to the call of the Spirit in the signs of our times, especially the needs of the poor and the powerless.”

(Search and Service Book I, page vii)

Many people prayed and worked. The Quad City community responded generously. The HMHI staff and Sisters of Humility persevered in faith and action. Miracles happened. **Humility of Mary Shelter, Inc. (HMSI)** opened on September 21, 2008, had an open house on October 12 and continues to provide shelter each day, nearing its maximum capacity of 84 adults.

Donations to HMSI may be sent or delivered to Humility of Mary Shelter, Inc., Attention: Sister Mary Ann Vogel, 1016 W. 5th Street, Davenport, Iowa 52802.





The Flame

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The Flame is published three times a year for the Congregation of the Humility of Mary and their friends.

Our Mission: We, the members of the Congregation of the Humility of Mary call one another to live the Gospel with simplicity and joy following the example of Mary.

Like our founders, we strive to be attentive to the call of the Spirit in the signs of our times, especially the needs of the poor and the powerless.

We commit ourselves as individuals and as a congregation to work for justice within the human family and to care for the earth itself.

Congregation of the Humility of Mary

820 W. Central Park Avenue
Davenport, IA 52804
563/323-9466
sisters@chmiowa.org
www.chmiowa.org

Editorial Staff:

Lisa Martin Bellomy, Communications Director
Karen Brooke, Development Director

Communications Advisory Committee:

Associate Maria Delsing
Luz Maria Orozco, CHM
Joan Sheil, CHM
Elizabeth Thoman, CHM
Delphine Vasquez, CHM

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Mutual Understanding Continues to Grow

In late September I attended the annual meeting of the bishops of Iowa and the heads of religious communities in the state. There were 14 present including three active and two retired bishops and eight sisters. The meeting was hosted by Abbot Brendan Freeman of New Melleray Abbey, the Trappist monastery in Peosta, near Dubuque.

The meetings were stimulated by the publication of a Vatican document in 1978, *Mutuae Relationes*, that encouraged local bishops to get to know the religious communities in their dioceses. I was most impressed with our relaxed interaction and the bishops' genuine appreciation of the contribution of men and women religious to the diocesan missions. I learned that it was not always so informal. The early meetings were marked by some distance between the hierarchy and women religious especially as sisters left parish schools for ministries with the poor. Also, communities were seeking higher salaries to meet the increased costs of older members at the same time parishes had to hire lay teachers for the schools.

Fortunately, mutual understanding has grown, fostered greatly by the broader understanding of "church" defined as "the people of God" by Vatican II. This year the Davenport diocese planned the agenda on the topic of "intergenerational cultures" using a new study on the topic published by the Center for the Study of Religious Life. Our discussion of that report was complemented by a panel of four Loras College students who described their faith formation, emphasizing the importance of the Catholic community at the college. We found the social aspects of their religious practice tracked the research findings on Generation X in the study.

We shared solemn Vespers with the monks and postponed our social hour refreshments to the evening when we enjoyed watching and laughing together at the movie "The Bucket List." All agree that informal evening time together has contributed to the overall success of the gatherings. Next year our topic will be issues around retirement needs including how to balance care of elderly members and clergy while continuing our missions.

We are proud that Iowa has the reputation of having one of the most successful gatherings between the bishops and leaders of religious congregations in the country.

-Sr. Mary Rehmman, CHM President



Srs. Micheline Curtis and Bea Snyder.

Sisters Volunteer for XStream Clean-up

In August the Sisters of the Humility of Mary joined hundreds of volunteers during XStream Clean-up 2008 – a Quad-City-wide effort to remove garbage from the streams flowing into the Mississippi River. CHMs have been involved for five years and are eagerly sought to staff the volunteer registration tables.

Sr. Bea Snyder reflected, "It was encouraging to witness the enthusiasm of so many taking part in the

clean-up. People were eager to get started and valued the opportunity to help. I was impressed by the number of parents with their children and the anxious 'let's get going' spirit . . . and the City of Davenport Sanitation Department picking up the trash as fast as the volunteers piled it up!"

Sr. Delphine Vasquez said, "One of the most impressive things for me was the enthusiasm of the people who came to help make Credit Island look better after the spring floods. It was not an easy job as there was a lot of debris in the area. It was encouraging to see many young (and not so young) people give up a gorgeous Saturday morning to help out. I was glad the Boy Scouts received badges for their contribution!"

Seminarians Learn From Sisters

Dear Sisters,

I came to the Diocese of Davenport because God called me to do it. Rev. Robert D. Gruss met me two years ago in Morelia, Mexico. He was looking for some seminarians who wanted to come to Iowa. Having finished a degree in philosophy and one year in theology, I was already a seminarian in Mexico for about eight years and now I have been a seminarian for this wonderful diocese for almost two years.

It was wonderful to spend time visiting you this summer. I have never been so close to the sisters as now. I am very impressed with your hospitality and kindness to me. I am also very happy because you shared with me your experiences and how you continue doing good things for our Lord Jesus Christ. Such as, Sister Marilyn Reyes who was my English tutor last summer and this summer. She is a very smart nun who does many good things for God through the people. I know that she is 89-years-old and still helping people who need her support in different kinds of activities. Sisters Marilyn and Camille Clark were helping Oswaldo Ojeda and me during this summer almost everyday with different kinds of tasks. For example, how to improve our English because we still have difficulties – but little by little we are growing in our skills, thank God for their help.

I had the opportunity to eat with many sisters and share conversations about my family and culture. Also, they shared stories about their families and current ministries. They were a huge motivation to me to continue growing in my faith and knowledge for the good of our Catholic Church. All of them are for me great nuns and friends who are praying for everyone everyday. To the past and the present president of the Sisters of Humility, thank you very much for giving us this wonderful opportunity visiting all of you. May God continue to bless all of you for all your kindness. Let us keep in touch through our prayers.

-Anastacio Ponce, Seminarian from Davenport, Iowa



Sr. Camille Clark, Oswaldo Ojeda, Sr. Mary Rehmman, Anastacio Ponce, and Sr. Marilyn Reyes.



Walking with Immigrants

by Sr. Jeanie Hagedorn, CHM

In August, nine CHMs were part of an immigration rally in Postville, Iowa. On May 12 this little town of 2,200 residents received a surprise visit from the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) which carried out the largest raid at a work site in U.S. history. Agriprocessors, a kosher meat packing plant, employed a large number of undocumented workers, primarily uneducated people from Guatemala. On that sad day nearly 400 of the workers were arrested, bussed to Waterloo and detained on criminal charges.

It was a powerful experience to literally walk with the immigrant people who are suffering such pain from abuse, discrimination and unbending law enforcement. It is beyond me how humans can treat other humans so inhumanely! But the sun was shining in spite of predictions of a storm; spirits were high in support of the immigrants, children were laughing and playing and there was a palpable determination to work for comprehensive immigration reform.

We prayed, sang and marched together through the town and listened to words of encouragement from the speakers. There was standing room only in St. Bridget's Church with hundreds of supporters overflowing into the yard. The reports are that 1,000 people participated in the day and I was proud that women religious were well represented.

"Without humility there can be no humanity."

--Sir John Buchan



“Real” Action to Follow Training

by Sr. Cathleen Real, CHM

In October I was proud to attend a training workshop on global warming conducted by former Vice President Al Gore. It was held in Nashville, Tennessee, the headquarters of The Climate Project, a non-profit organization started by Mr. Gore to work toward reducing global warming.

This first ever training for faith-based community leaders was a life changing experience. Admittedly, having Al Gore himself spend more than six hours teaching us the science of global warming was a drawing point, but the real intent was to be part of the urgent business of moving the country toward a more sustainable earth. There is an added moral imperative for those of us from religious traditions to put ourselves into this effort if we truly value the world with which God has blessed us.

With so many of us in attendance we were actually discouraged from approaching Mr. Gore. But since he had spoken in Des Moines less than a week earlier I took an opportunity to give him a news clipping about his appearance and to share information about the Earth Charter Summit that the CHMs were holding in the Quad Cities. He laughed when I pointed out that one of the keynote speakers, Dr. Jerry Schnoor from the University of Iowa, is considered by some to be the “Al Gore of Iowa.” On Friday at the end of the training session, Mr. Gore shook my hand and addressed me as “Sister.” I was impressed that he remembered me.

On Thursday Mr. Gore, using power point technology and updated scientific data from the Academy Award winning documentary, “An Inconvenient Truth,” gave detailed consequences of global warming. Two renowned scientists, Dr. Henry Pollack, Professor (Emeritus) of Geophysics at the University of Michigan and Larry Schweiger, President of the National Wildlife Federation, were on hand to add scientific background. We were led through slides showing the impact of carbon emissions on temperature increases and the consequences of warming trends

which have already brought about more frequent and violent hurricanes, tornadoes, wildfires, flooding and droughts. He then talked about ice melt throughout the world, especially in Greenland and Antarctica, where ice covers are disappearing at an alarming rate. Sea levels would rise dramatically if this ice were to disappear, flooding much of Florida, New York City, the Netherlands, the coasts of India and China and resulting in displacement of millions of people.

He pointed out that our country is the largest per capita user of energy. But our nation has in the past successfully addressed other seemingly impossible challenges, and by putting our moral convictions and technological advances into the global warming issue, we can reduce the risk of future disaster.

This was not just another workshop for me where handouts end up in an unread file. Each of us committed ourselves to develop a slide presentation based on Mr. Gore’s presentation and to make it widely available to people of all faiths. Be assured that I will condense the six hour presentation we received from Mr. Gore!

In accepting the Nobel Peace Prize in 2007, Mr. Gore stated, “Make no mistake, the next generation will ask us one of two questions. Either they will ask: ‘What were you thinking; why didn’t you act?’ Or they will ask instead: ‘How did you find the moral courage to rise and successfully resolve a crisis that so many said was impossible to solve?’”

I believe that Quad Citians of all ages are ready to rise to this challenge and work for an America and a world which are more just and sustainable. I look forward to joining with others on this challenge.

If you want to catch a glimpse of me next to Mr. Gore in our group photo, just go to the website www.theclimateproject.org and click on the article on faith based training.

For questions, additional information or to schedule a presentation, contact Sr. Real at ccreal@msn.com or 563/323-9466.

Earth Charter Summit

The Quad City Earth Charter Summit was a success with more than 250 people in attendance. Many speakers and organizations inspired hope and generated energy for a sustainable and peaceful future.



Univ. of Iowa environmental researcher, Jerry Schnoor, with Sr. Catherine Linnenkamp, CHM.



Earth Charter co-chair, Lisa Martin Bellomy, with Director of Progressive Action for the Common Good, James Lee.



Moderator, Lisa Killinger, No Impact Man, Colin Beavan, and Earth Charter co-chair, Karen Brooke.

WVIK Public Radio recorded the Quad City Earth Charter Summit keynote speakers. Now everyone can hear this great information at www.wvik.org

School Days in Marshalltown

by Karen Brooke



First communion in Iowa-circa 1938,
Sr. Anita Rose, back row center.

Russell Sellers was six years old at St. Mary's School in Marshalltown, Iowa, in the late 1930s when he met a Sister of Humility, Sr. Cornelia Murphy, his first grade teacher. He describes her as his first of many favorite teachers, all who happened to be Sisters of Humility! Sr. Hildegard Peiffer taught second grade, and she relates how during his grade school years Russell would always look to Sr. Cornelia for support and assistance. Sr. Anita Rose Grimes was the music teacher at St. Mary's and, according to Russell, everyone looked forward to going to her music classes, even those who couldn't carry a tune. "She had a lovely way that made everyone feel welcome and valued. Mother Nicholas Scheetz was our principal, and other Humility teachers were Srs. Eucharista (Mae Murphy), Sarita O'Neil and Clementine McGuire."

"I have such wonderful memories . . . our CHM sisters were like family, much like favorite aunts, they looked after us, expected us to do our best, and they gave us their best. At that time sisters didn't typically drive cars so my mother, like many families, helped out with transportation. My mother was also a really good cook, so once or twice a year she packed up supper and took it to the convent and treated all the sisters to dinner. I think there were eleven sisters then. I even had classmates who became sisters, Srs. Miriam Ehrhart and Jeanette Kopel."



Sr. Mary Cornelia Murphy



Sr. Anita Rose Grimes and Russell Sellers reunite at the Humility of Mary Center.

Russell comments, "The Humility connections for me have never been broken. Over the years, my family and I visited sister friends at St. Vincent's and Marycrest. I'm retired now, and my home is in Minnesota, but several times a year I travel through Des Moines and Davenport. I never miss an opportunity to visit and reminisce with my friends at Bishop Drumm and Humility of Mary Center."

Russell's appreciation and spirit of generosity led him to establish a bequest to benefit the Sisters of Humility. His vision and support will help secure the future of the sisters and congregation that has meant so much to him during his lifetime.

Planning Today For Tomorrow

Since 1854 the Sisters of Humility have been serving young and old with a commitment to education, health care, the homeless, social justice, prayer and pastoral concerns. Their vital and diverse ministries continue today, addressing the multiple needs of God's people, ever challenging times and the mission of the local and universal church. The breadth of CHM history, past and present, is rich with examples of lives and communities that have been transformed by sisters' faith and mission.

You can help. Your planned gift to the Sisters of Humility ensures that their dedication, caring and ministries will continue beyond the present and at the same time will provide care for retired sisters.

From bequests to charitable trusts to gifts of appreciated assets, there are many options and opportunities. All carry the benefit of investing in the sisters' future and partnering in their ministry of God's work. Additionally, membership in the Magnificat Society is accorded to each friend who makes a planned gift and often offers tax benefits.

Contact your accountant, attorney or planned giving advisor for the gifting opportunities that best apply to your situation and objectives. To inform us of your planned gift or to receive more detailed planned giving information, contact Karen Brooke in the Development office at 563-336-8401 or email kbrooke@chmiowa.org.

CHMs Welcome New Associates

Lilianna Barnes, Pineville, Louisiana. I met Sr. Rachel Beeson when we lived in Knoxville, Iowa. I attended Associate Day in Davenport in 2003. I have sent items to HMHI and became acquainted with the works of Sr. Mary Ann Vogel with the poor. This appeals to me very much. As a CHM Associate I will become aware of those who are in need, learn about works the sisters are doing and how I can help, be it through prayer or other ways.



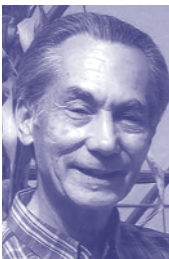
Dee Ewing, Ankeny, Iowa. Sr. Kathleen Henneberry was instrumental in my being able to do Liturgy of the Word/Communion Service when our priest was absent for daily Mass at Sacred Heart Parish in Oxford Junction, Iowa. As a CHM Associate I am looking forward to meetings with the CHMs in Des Moines, to discussion with my contact sister concerning Bible study and the exploration of ways to deepen my spirituality.



Jean Ann Luke, St. Francis, Minnesota. The general purpose for my becoming a CHM associate is for communication, renewal of friendships, and interest in and concern for the sisters and associates whom I have lived with in community. I know the CHMs will make me aware of the differences I can make in the lives of others, offer encouragement to keep my family and self in prayer.



Anthony Joseph Luke, St. Francis, Minnesota. As a CHM Associate I look forward to being informed of CHM functions through community literature, hospitality and correspondence. I will support sisters and associates in need, keeping them in daily prayer and offering financial support when possible.



Members of the New Hope Community, **Sr. Ramona Kaalberg and Sherri Hughes Empke**. Sherri moved to Des Moines to take part in a Clinical Pastoral Education program and join the New Hope Community. Her ability to speak Spanish and sign language is a special gift which she brings to her ministry.



Seeds of Hope Experience

by CHM Associate Nancy Roberson

My sister Phyllis and I spent a week in Davenport with the Seeds of Hope program this summer. Seeds of Hope offers volunteers the opportunity to experience the work and mission of the CHM community. We stayed with the sisters who live on Vine Street and enjoyed their hospitality.

Phyllis and I spent time each day at the various sites where the sisters minister. We learned the specific work that was being done, the challenges that have to be faced and the changes that have taken place because of the presence of the CHM community working with other organizations to support those in need.

One day we prepared and served lunch at Café on Vine. The gratitude offered by the customers at the Café greatly impressed us. We helped Sr. Marilyn Schierbrock at the food pantry and we did some yard work with a youth group. At a neighborhood meeting, we were welcomed and learned of the problems and successes in the neighborhood. Ways were explored that could effect change. Sr. Nancy Schwieters introduced us to the staff at the homeless shelter and we did some work organizing donations. Drug addictions and the services available in the Quad Cities were discussed at a meeting we attended. We learned about the work of Humility of Mary Housing, Inc., and we helped organize donations for the annual sale.

I am a CHM Associate because I want to be part of a community that works with the poor to improve their lives, a community that lives simply so others can live and that cares for the earth. I would invite you to take the time for a Seeds of Hope experience. It will make a lasting impression on your life.

Breaking Bread. Sharing Prayer. Building Community.

The New Hope Community in Des Moines explores ways of living simply, growing spiritually and supporting one another in service. Priorities include peace, justice for all, and care for the earth. Members include those with vows as religious and other seekers. All are welcome to come for a visit, a meal, an overnight, weekend, or longer.

While “listening to the Spirit in our changing world,” you are invited to consider participation in the New Hope Community in some way—as a core member or a member of the extended community. Contact Sr. Ramona at 515-282-3521 or ramonak1@juno.com.

Modern Day Slavery

by Sr. Roberta Brich, CHM

As Sisters of Humility, we strive “to be attentive to the call of the Spirit in the signs of our times, especially the needs of the poor and the powerless.” (CHM Mission) We know now that modern day slavery—human trafficking—fits this need. This call is what compelled me to add my voice, the voice of the CHMs, by taking part in the Social and Economic Justice Conference at St. Ambrose University on October 21.

The United States Bishops declared, “Human trafficking is a horrific crime against the basic dignity and rights of the human person and all efforts must be expanded to end it.” Human trafficking involves holding victims who are forced, defrauded or coerced into labor or sexual exploitation for economic gain. It is known that each year between 700,000 and 2,000,000 women and children are trafficked across international borders, with more than 50,000 women trafficked into the U.S. We know trafficking is also taking place between state lines within the U.S.

Although as early as 1995, when the UN Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing included the strategic objective to eliminate trafficking women and to assist the victims, the global community is just now becoming aware of the extent and violence of such acts. With much effort on the part of former State Senator Maggie Tinsman, legislation was framed to make human trafficking a crime in Iowa; with the help of many faith communities, the legislation passed. The first case was tried and brought to justice in Iowa just this year.

The Lord bless you
and keep you:

The Lord make His face
to shine upon you,
and be gracious unto you;
The Lord lift up
His countenance upon you,
and give you peace.

*We are grateful to you, our
families and friends, for the
blessing of your prayers and
loving support this past year.
Thank you and
happy Thanksgiving.*

-Sisters of the Humility of Mary

Passages

CHM Associate

Mary Frances Hanrahan

March 11, 1924 – July 31, 2008



A former Sister of the Humility of Mary, Mary Frances carried forth the CHM spirit in her daily life as a CHM Associate since 1990.

Sr. Madeleine Marie Schmidt

July 9, 1916 – August 27, 2008



Sr. Madeleine Marie made her final profession in 1941. She enjoyed a variety of ministries including that of teacher, archivist, consultant, researcher, historian, writer and advocate for women and the disadvantaged.

Sr. Adrienne Marie Savage

December 26, 1912 – August 31, 2008



Sr. Adrienne Marie made her final profession in 1949. Her ministries included those of teacher and principal. She also conducted personality and human relations training and was an active environmentalist.

Sr. Mary Simone Wilmes

May 27, 1916 – November 4, 2008



Sr. Mary Simone made her final profession in 1937 and enjoyed a long teaching career in music and English. She also served as a pastoral minister. She loved life, people and a good joke.

To find the text of sister memorials please visit the news section at chmiowa.org.

Sister Water Project

Dear Sr. Pat,
Women in Tanzania walk up to nine miles to fetch water, not always suitable for drinking, while malaria takes the lives of untold numbers of their children. In Honduras, 50,000 children under the age of five die annually from water-related illness, while 80% of all illness in this Central American country is due to impure water.

The amount that you donated is likely to be sufficient to fund entirely a ring

well in Tanzania. As the urgency around global water issues becomes so increasingly clear, we are eternally grateful for the donation from the Sisters of the Humility of Mary who continue to learn about water needs around the world, speak to others of the need and give assistance. For more information, visit www.osfdbq.org and click on “Sister Water Project.”

Sr. Pat Farrel, OSF
Sr. Carol Besch, OSF



What's New at Our Lady of the Prairie Retreat?

- Recently-elected officers of the New Horizons of Faith Board of Directors are: chair, Phyllis Ammeter; vice-chair, George Dixon; secretary-treasurer, Gary Lane. The board welcomes Sr. Mary Rehmman, CHM president, as ex officio board member.
- Guests and presenters now have a 37-inch flat screen TV for program DVD use.
- Wireless internet access is available for guests in Prairie Heights.
- Three flowering crab trees have been planted near the circle drive as gifts from Sr. Marcia Costello, CHM. Two are in memory of Catherine Enderle and Maureen O'Connor.
- The board arranged with Clinton County Highway Commission to place directional signs in several locations to help guests find The Prairie at 2664 145th Avenue.
- Watch for the 2009 program series sponsored by Our Lady of the Prairie Retreat. If you have ideas for program topics or presenters, we welcome your suggestions.

Heifer International

Heifer, Intl., is most grateful for the gifts the CHMs have given to its organization. We can be very happy for the generosity which we have shared.

Our past gifts have provided a Heifer, a water buffalo, goats, sheep, pigs, rabbits and chickens, plus training in their care and continuing assistance to their recipients. In addition, each recipient pledges to give the first female animal to another needy family. This "passing of gifts" takes place at a special ceremony.

Please consider making a gift, small or large, to continue to promote this organization. Gifts to Heifer make wonderful Christmas presents for family and friends. You can print Heifer cards with appropriate photos of children and their animal to send to your loved one and let them know a donation has been made in their name.

Here at the Humility of Mary Center we pool our Heifer money in order to buy larger animals and gift packages. If you would like your gift to be a part of this larger whole you can send a check made out to the Sisters of Humility to me, here at the Center and I will gladly add it to our collection. To print your card and find out more go to www.heifer.org.

Thank you in the name of Heifer; and thank you for giving me the joy of continuing to be a part of this worthwhile effort.

-Elizabeth Anne Schneider, CHM



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chmiowa.org

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