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HANNEL





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Museum - Research Room - Gallery - Camera Collection - Café

President's report

Welcome to the last edition of our newsletter for this year. The time has flown, and we prepare for the madness and mayhem that Christmas brings.

We are very pleased that the storage shed is nearing completion, and the curatorial team is working on the internal layout to enable the processing of donations of items to become more streamlined and efficient. The correct

storage environment will certainly assist in the preservation of our cherished historical paraphernalia, ensuring they will survive safely for future generations.

18 months ago, we received a letter from a 9-year-old student who noticed we did not fly the Aboriginal flag and wanted to know why. She listed the reasons she felt it should be installed and after much discussion about protocols etc., Lottie was invited to raise the flag to fly high. I presented Lottie with a Jim Waldie medal and congratulated her on her observation and initiative in writing to us. Just goes to show that one voice can make a difference!!

The last "Night at the Museum" presentation of the year was well attended. Well-travelled photographer and adventurer, Neil Sorensen guided us through an



Lottie and Judi at the raising of the aboriginal flag at the Museum on Monday 25th November

amazing foray into the northern Canadian wonderland. Thankyou Neil for your amusing and informative session.

I would also like to thank Sheila for her continuing efforts in securing interesting speakers on fascinating topics. We would love to hear more suggestions for next year, so please contact Sheila or email the secretary at the museum.

We hosted a visit from the Honorable Dean Winter (Leader of the Tasmanian Labor Party) who was impressed with our collection and interested to hear about some of our challenges.

The mural is finally installed and has already created interest and visitation. The simple design captures the early "white settlers" industries on which the Channel has been built. We are hoping to include an Indigenous aspect later.

I would like to acknowledge and thank Joel Gajda (artist) for his patience and interpretation of the brief. A huge thank you also to Andrew W for finding and liaising with Joel. A great effort by Andrew W, Andrew T and my long-

suffering husband (Mick) for installing the framework and mural. THANKYOU!!!

This project would not have been possible without the support of the Kingborough Community Arts Grant, Bunnings Kingston and our wonderful volunteers.

The Museum reception desk has been enhanced with a lovely WELCOME quilt that depicts the happy faces of students from Margate Primary School and beautifully crafted into reality by Helen W. Thankyou Helen for brightening up our entrance to the Museum and to the students who participated.

A special thankyou to Peter H for quietly maintaining the gardens around the building and always making sure the plants are looking healthy for all to enjoy.

Finally, I would like to thank all our wonderful volunteers for a big year of achievements which would not have been possible were it not for your continued support, commitment and dedication.

Wishing all a very happy, safe, healthy and fun Christmas and we look forward to another even more successful year next year.

Kindest regards

Judi Castle

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Mural

The new mural on the north wall was officially opened on December 4th. It depicts images of the heritage of the Channel area, and subjects from the Museum displays.













Page 2: Images of the mural. Above: Judi Castle at the opening of the mural with Museum members and representatives of Kingborough Council Arts Grant scheme.

Right: Joel Gajda, the artist who produced the mural.

Introducing...Mary Tomney

I was born the youngest of three in London in the early 1950s. Our mother, being a strong Catholic, ensured that we were all educated at convents. However the nuns failed to persuade me of their way of thinking – back then, they encouraged us young girls to become secretaries, to work in a bank or go to Uni. No, at the age of 17 I left school aiming to become a London Policewoman, the only one in a class of 30.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, my parents didn't want me to be a policewoman in London, nor did my boyfriend (who's now my husband of 52 yrs) so I did the next best thing — went to work at New Scotland Yard to buy time until I reached 19 when I could be accepted into Hendon Police School without their permission. However, I must have done something right – or was it wrong – for instead, I was offered a job working for



Mary at Reception

the Security Service (MI5). I can't reveal what my work was (if I did I would have to kill you!) but think about it - the early 1970s with the Cold War and the IRA very active in Ireland.

Back in those days we didn't have computers or mobile phones so much of the work involved phone tapping, legwork, a great deal of paperwork and, sometimes, driving fast cars around London plus checking mail and, of course, dead letter boxes!

We also had a safe house purely to observe the Russian Embassy and I was involved in the expulsion of a number of Russian 'diplomats'. While I watched them, from behind a net curtain, leaving their Embassy they lifted their hats towards us to say 'Goodbye' – they knew we were there all the time. I remember one Christmas they even gave us some caviar, to have with our Champagne.

I also recall another time when I spent 3 days in a room by myself (I was allowed out to go home!) to search

through a mountain of tapped phone transcript calls of an IRA lady to find evidence confirming that she was involved in a bombing in London. Found it too and was thanked by Special Branch, which was very rare.

On a lighter note, I was once invited out for lunch by my boss. Yes please, and I brushed my hair and checked my make-up thinking of a upmarket restaurant in Mayfair. How wrong could I be! The two of us jumped into an enormous Army Chinook helicopter and flew out to the north of London. When we landed, he went to his meeting and I was handed a tin of Army survival rations, which appeared to be left over from the war!

I married in 1972 and, in 1975, our family came along and I had to leave the Service. We moved out of London and went to sleepy Suffolk, so different to London that it took me about 18 months to get used to the slow pace.

Once our two boys had started school, I returned to work and, for 15 years, was PA for Suffolk County Council's Treasurer. In my spare time, and for nearly 20 years, I was a parish councillor and volunteered for our local Scout Group where I ended up as the 'Acting' Group Scout Leader, so called as I wasn't a uniformed Scouter!

So how did I come to live in Oz?

During that time, our sons completed their schooling and Mark, our eldest, went off to Uni. Andrew, younger by 3 years, preferred the idea of backpacking around Australia and, while in Adelaide, he met a girl. Two years later they were to be married and Andrew asked his brother to be Best Man. So Mark came out to OZ and - guess what — Mark also met an Adelaide girl and married her! There was only one thing for it - Phil and I followed them and moved to Adelaide in 2007. Our three lovely Grandchildren were born in Adelaide, Jaxon and Isaac in 2008 and Evie in 2011.

In Adelaide, I became a Property Manager for a well known Realestate company, then volunteered at the Districts Courts in Adelaide. Have you ever wondered what goes on behind the scenes of a court room - not always pretty but they have fantastic cleaners!

So how did I get to be in Tasmania?

Well, in 2019 we came for a weeks holiday, loved both the scenery and friendly people and decided to move here – Phil and me, Andrew and Jen, Isaac and Evie (Jaxon comes in school holidays). Andrew & Jen were able to get jobs straight away and their children into Calvin School and Phil was able to start up his own business, again.

By the way – I can trace my Dad's family back to 1634, when they owned the land that the Bank of England sits on, - but that's another story.

Well that's me and I'm still glad that I didn't choose banking.

Mary



Amateur scallop fishers 1983— written by David Tulip, originally published in

Modern Fishing, January 1986

The Fisheries patrol boat *Freycinet*, gliding smoothly through the pre-dawn calm of the D'Entrecasteux Channel, suddenly swung hard to port to bear down on a stationary runabout just inside Simpson's Bay. As they got closer the crew saw a 4.5 metre Haines half-cab with four aboard, one sprawled across the foredeck and the others standing in the rear. Two of them held fishing rods.

"You blokes all right?" yelled out one of the inspectors.

"Yes, thanks, mate," replied Brack, waving a screwdriver, "just a faulty navigation light."

"G'day, Bob, g'day Norm," sang out Andy, recognising his brother and mate on the Fisheries vessel.

"G'day, Andy. What are you doing here?"

"Fishing for scallops, mate."

"That's not how you catch scallops," said Bob, indicating our rods and lines.

"No? What bait do you use?"

The Fisheries officers looked at each other and shook their heads sadly.

"Good luck. You're going to need it," Bob said, as the Freycinet pulled away to look for more worthy game.

Kevin Bracken, Andy Cole, Bob Jones and myself had turned out on a cold July morning to try our hand at scallop dredging. After 15 years of closure due to overfishing, the D'Entrecasteux Channel, just south of Hobart, was partially opened in 1982 for a short season, and after that successful experiment was being reopened today for a month.

However, to prevent the beds being fished out again, the Tasmanian Fisheries Development Authority would be closely monitoring the situation, and intended to close the season early if catches dropped off too quickly. Fishing was limited to daylight hours only, and the relatively-inefficient lip dredge (1.2 metres wide maximum) was the only device permitted to amateurs and professionals alike. Added to this a bag limit of 1000 per amateur and 15,000 per professional had been applied.

This was to be our first attempt at scalloping. Armed with Brack's home-made dredge, four extremely amateur scallop fishermen got under way again and headed for the melee of boats gathering in the centre of the bay. As the light strengthened we were able to see a veritable armada heading from all directions towards the scallop grounds. We were also able to see snow lying on the hilltops not much above sea level, and Andy reached for the Stones Green Ginger for the first (but not last) time for the day.

This being our first time, we decided to start dredging well short of the mob in the centre of Simpson's Bay — staying out of the heavy traffic until we'd got the hang of it. The first two drops produced nothing but a small shark and an empty shell, but on the third — colour! One solitary scallop! An argument about how to divide up the catch if we didn't get any more was cut short by Bob slipping the shellfish into his inside pocket and claiming possession to be ten-tenths of the law.

As we steadily approached the main fleet I was amazed at the number and variety of boats which had turned out on a cold winter's morning. Everything seemed to be there, from 3 metre tinnies with Seagull outboards through half-cabs, full-cabs, yachts, a game-fishing boat, traditional wooden fishing boats to the 75 foot exsteam ferry *Reemere*, built in 1909. Such is the appeal of the humble scallop! I later counted 160 boats, not including boats behind boats and round the headland, and, all day, still coming across the Channel from the Tasmanian mainland ramps. An incredible sight, probably not seen since Dunkirk!

It soon became obvious that we weren't doing it right. All round us, boats were lifting full dredges, while we were only getting a few scallops at a time. Much speculation as to the reasons for this occurred. Putting a paper

bag over Bob's head didn't help much nor did talking nicely to, or abusing and threatening the scallops. Various boat speeds and directions were tried, then eventually we noticed that the other boats were not using a length of chain between their dredges and hauling ropes. Removal of our chain immediately improved things — apparently the chain had been causing the dredge to overturn as it fell to the bottom, and we were fishing upside down, only catching those unfortunate scallops that flipped up off the bottom trying to get away!

Bob helped himself to a cup of coffee from Brack's Airpot with startling results. On taking the first sip, he changed colour several times, steam came out of his ears, and eventually he was able to utter:

"Jeez, Kev how much rum did you put in this?"

"Half a bottle, like you said."

"I meant half of the half bottle you had. Did you buy another half for the other pot?"

"Oh!"

All hands immediately rushed for the coffee!

The afternoon wore on, as we trawled hour after hour, still not filling the dredge, but at least we were all going to get a feed now. Brack's 55 Chrysler never missed a beat, despite all those hours of running at low speed. I've seen lesser motors oil up their plugs in a fraction of the time. The time passed pleasantly enough; unlike all the poor people we were at least out on the water. On the mountains, up towards Hobart and out to sea on the other side of Bruny Island rain fell almost continuously, but we scarcely felt a drop all day. Bob and Andy continuously stirred each other about everything under the sun, and we lifted the dredge every 20-30 minutes, so life was far from boring.

There were four jobs to be done while the dredge was coming in — one had to drive, two were needed to haul and tip the dredge, and one acted as ballast, stopping the boat tipping over as the dredge came aboard. I found this last job suited my temperament perfectly. I lay back against the gunwale in the pale wintry sunshine, sipping high-octane coffee, content to let my mates take all the glory while I took on the awesome responsibility of keeping the boat the right way up. I thought it was rather rude, therefore, when a pair of wet gloves was thrust at me and I was told it was my turn for a pull! Given this rough treatment, it was only right that I should haul in the first full dredge of the day, then!

"OK, you blokes, that's how to catch scallops!" I modestly claimed.

"Rubbish, it was my good driving that found them," said Bob.

"It was all in the way I threw the dredge out," said Andy.

"Cut the bull and get the bloody thing back in the water," said skipper Brack. "Half an hour to knock-off time and we finally hit a good patch."

Time for some serious scalloping. We really worked hard for the next few hours, returning mostly full dredges and turning one almost-full bag into two and a half. Finally, regretfully, Brack announced we had to go.

"Told the girls we'd ring them by five," he said, "you know how they worry."



Throwing out the dredge.

Everything stowed away, full throttle and nothing happened! 55 horses couldn't get the boat up on the plane with all those scallops on board! So we chugged slowly back out of the bay.

Just around the corner we met the *Freycinet* again, taking a survey of catches.

"How d'ya go? Get your limit?"

"No. Only 2 ½ bags. Had a bit of trouble at first until we got the knack."

"Yeah. You don't catch scallops on a line at all. You use a dredge. You blokes could have told us!"

"How come your boat's higher in the water now with all those scallops than it was on the way out?" enquired one of the fisheries officers.

"Rubbish. Only had one stubby all day. And some coffee." As we pulled away from the Fisheries vessel big brother's parting shot to Andy hinted strongly that if his freezer was full he was welcome to leave his share at Bob's place. They're a good mob, in fact it had been a good, friendly day for amateurs, pro's and fisheries inspectors alike. Despite the number of boats in a relatively small area and some very loose interpretations of the rules for preventing collisions at sea at times we only heard voices raised on one occasion.

Brack was worrying about the time: "No way will we make a phone by five."

"Why don't you just tell them the truth, that sheer weight of fish caught slowed us down?" I ventured

The others looked at me with pity in their eyes. "What woman is ever going to believe that?" Well, they'd been married for longer than me!

Eventually, however, we made the ramp and the pub. Phone calls to respective loved ones were made and over a quick beer Brack reminded us that we still had a long evening of splitting ahead of us.

"Pity we didn't get our limit, though" someone said.

About five hours later, huddled under Kevin's house in biting cold, we were at last approaching the bottom of the last bag. With the light at the end of the tunnel in sight, conversation, which had died away after the first hour or so, started to return.

"Good thing we didn't get our limit."

"Yeah. Many more, and I don't think I could look at another scallop"

"Might have to change my brand of petrol. Don't think I could handle seeing that Shell sign. Bloke might go right off."

I formed a mental picture of Bob, splitting knife in teeth, shinning up the pole at the local service station, eyes rivetted on the biggest bloody scallop he'd ever seen! I laughed out loud, but the others were too far gone to ask why.

"Oh dear," or something similar, said Andy, withdrawing his hand rapidly from the bag with a scallop firmly clamped on his finger, "the beggars are fighting back."

I drained my beer, trying to ignore the various bits of scallop anatomy floating in it. "The ironical thing is that everyone will think we've got something for nothing, and that we're just dying to give them all away. Fifteen hours of dredging, splitting and cleaning.... was it worth it?"

Everyone looked at the scallops, then looked at me, and I joined in the chorus of "Bloody oath it was!"

Also—see David's booklet 'Scallops: boom and bust', part of our Channel Museum booklets series, available in the Library and for sale at the reception desk. Unfortunately David's photos of the expedition were on slides which have deteriorated in the 40 years since they were taken.

50 years since Santa never made it in to Darwin- Beth Bartlett

January 1974, husband Tom and I decided to Travel Australia on a working holiday. First stop Adelaide where Tom worked as carpenter and I worked as a temp at a book supplier. Living in a tent was a challenge but we loved our new adventure. Three months later Tom was transferred to Whyalla and I started work with BP Australia in their industrial relations department. Our accommodation was interesting to say the least —an on-site van in a caravan park with a prostitute living on one side and a man who was taken away in a straitjacket on the other. Whyalla was a very interesting place. An opportunity came about for Tom to transfer to Darwin. Our adventure continued, travelling up the centre of Australia through Coober Pedy, Ayer's Rock (as it was called then), Alice Springs, Katherine and in to Darwin.

Darwin was a city with a very transient population, very hot with lots of bugs all strange to us Tasmanians. We lived in an old boarding house with Tom's boss, wife and 3 children upstairs; we had two rooms downstairs and another family with 5 children shared the other rooms. The shower was a small room with the shower nozzle and water heater on the ceiling together with an army of cockroaches running around the floor. The house was in the suburb of Parap with a very large water tower behind us and a school and four storey hotel over the road. I worked for the NT Housing Commission in Darwin city. We had a great time making friends, looking around Darwin and making the most of our time in the tropics.

Two weeks before Christmas Darwin had a cyclone warning. Sirens sounded, people stashed everything safely away, stocked up on food and water and readied for the cyclone. False alarm, as cyclones do it veered away from Darwin so everyone unpacked everything and continued getting ready for Christmas.

The 24th December dawned, businesses were having parties ready for the Christmas break, people were busy finishing shopping for Christmas fare awaiting the big day. A cyclone called Tracy was approaching Darwin, people thought it would be another false alarm so tended to not take a lot of notice. Everyone continued to party and prepare for Christmas.

However, Cyclone Tracy was about to hit Darwin with a vengeance.

In the early evening everyone stood downstairs in the breezeway and watched the wind get stronger, blowing the trailer backwards and forwards across the yard, trees bending in the wind and torrential rain. Upstairs decided to evacuate as a tree had blown down and gone through the roof. Around midnight the storm stopped, everything went still, this was the eye of the cyclone. All the adults realised things were going to get dangerous. Everyone moved in to our very small room. Five adults, eight children and a dog. Husband Tom took the gas stove into the shower area to make a cup of tea. I did not see him again until the next morning. The eye of the cyclone passed. The noise was frightening. One wall of our little room was built from fibro. Water poured in through the light fitting, the children crouched under a table and the adults held up the wall so it would not collapse. We sang songs to the kids to keep their spirits up. Our friend had a kidney stone attack and was in excruciating pain. Luckily the wind was hitting the other side of the house. The caravan parked next to the house was lifted up and taken down the street. As dawn broke we could see destruction everywhere. Surprisingly the tower with the water tank was still standing.

Christmas morning just after dawn the wind stopped. We all left our haven and found Tom who had to stand all night with his back against the wall and foot against the door. Great slabs of concrete were everywhere, trees stripped of bark, a steel girder through the window upstairs and no vegetation. The hotel across the road had lost an entire floor as if one had never been built.

We found the caravan down the street. All that remained was the chassis. The fridge was upside down in the middle of the road and the mattresses speared through the tops of power poles. Our main problem, we had no water or toilet facilities.

The caravan fridge held most of our Christmas lunch and I had the kids presents in my bedroom wardrobe. So celebrated Christmas with the food we salvaged, sang Christmas carols and tried to enjoy the day.

A decision was made to leave Darwin and make the 1,500km drive down to Alice Springs the next day. A trailer was made out of the caravan chassis. We set off next day with our makeshift trailer, cars with smashed wind-screens and all very tired. Our first stop was Katherine where we finally made contact with our families.

We all had a lucky escape from a disastrous event. Some of our friends were not so lucky. It may be 50 years since Cyclone Tracy but the memory is as vivid as if it was yesterday.

Library update

Another Historical Find—Michele Mason

While recording information provided in student registers for various schools in the Channel during the 20th century, an interesting bit of historical information was discovered.

The school registers provide a wealth of information, including the name of the student, their age, their parent or guardian's name and occupation. In some cases, the school the student had been attending before enrolling at the Channel school is noted.

In one instance from a School Register for 1911, a student's previous school was noted as "Watchorn Street RS". A quick Internet search identified this as referring to the Watchorn Street Ragged School, one of three schools in Hobart managed by the Hobart Town Ragged School Association. The other schools were located in Cascade Road (South Hobart) and Wapping. Each of these schools were established in the 1850s and 1860s. In fact, the Watchorn Street school was set up in 1853 by the City Mission and was the first Ragged School in Australia.

The Ragged School Movement began in Britain in the 1840s in the light of the needs of the growing number of urban poor. While the Ragged Schools initiative had strong evangelical and humanitarian underpinnings, the original objective was of a preventative nature – that is, by keeping vagrant, neglected or destitute children off the streets, pauperism and crime could be prevented (see "The Ragged School Movement" https://www.utas.edu.au/library/companion_to_tasmanian_history/R/Ragged%20schools.htm)

The Ragged Schools aimed to provide both moral and religious teaching which was aimed at training as well as educating pupils. By the early 20th century, living standards had increased and state-provided free education was widely available. With less need for the Ragged Schools, the Association was dissolved in 1911.

This small find provides yet another fascinating insight into an aspect of Tasmanian social history, when support for those in need was provided by private organisations rather than government.

Family history donation—Diane Worth

David Tulip recently received a donation for the Library from local family historian Thelma McKay. Included were issues of *Tasmanian ancestry* and the Tasmanian Historical Research Association's *Papers and proceedings*. The *Tasmanian ancestry* issues mean we now have a full run of the journal from V.1 1980 up until V.43 2022— and we have indexes to volumes 1-35.

Thelma has also given us (amongst other reference works) indexes to births, marriages and deaths in Tasmania, which means, added to the material we received when the Tasmanian Family History Society Huon Branch closed, our family history area has first class research materials available. We have put this material next to the Family History folders and are calling it our Family History Collection. It will take some weeks to work through the donations, but you are very welcome to have a look when you can. And many thanks to Thelma for her very generous donation.

A night at the Museum



Above: Caroline Homer and Judi Castle (President) (photo courtesy Melissa Grabert)

A History of Dover and Surrounds

Wed 18 September 2024.

Caroline Homer's presentation explored the history of Dover and surrounding areas through the lives of convicts and early settlers, and included stories of the convict probation station, timber and boat building industries and early land transactions.

Caroline is the Vice President of the Dover History Group, and President of the Tasmanian Historical Research Association.

Caroline's talk complemented our temporary exhibition Boating at Dover.

Dover Museum and Gallery (managed by the Dover History Group Inc) is situated in the Dover Old School building – 6983-85 Huon Highway, Dover, and is open Saturday, Sunday and Mondays 10:30am to 4pm in summer, and Saturday and Sunday 10:30am to 3pm during the winter months.

What's happening with the Ida Bay Railway?

Wednesday October 16th 2024



The Museum's Mike Groth with Dave Collins.

Dave Collins, honorary member of the Ida Bay Railway Preservation Society presented a potted history of the Ida Bay Railway, its settings and people.

He covered the railway's evolution from mining to tourism - and more recent events that led to its closure. There were positive aspects to the railway's future, opportunities as a community asset with its future in the hands of the community



Neil Sorenson—Journey to Canada

Wednesday 13th November 2024.

Neil talked about his journey to the Canadian Rockies including Banff, Lake Louise, Vancouver and Smith's Inlet. He included Ketchikan, Junee, Anchorage, Denali and other areas in Alaska and a visit to old frontier towns Dawson City and Whitehorse.

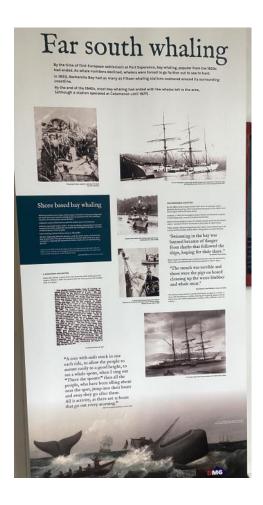
Temporary exhibitions

Boating in Dover September 2024

Our temporary exhibition in September detailed the early history of Dover. This was complemented by the Night at the Museum where Caroline Homer addressed the history of Dover and surrounds.







Spring by Ekaterina Rutledge, October-November 2024

Our temporary exhibition for October iand November was a selection of oils and illustrations by emerging artist Ekaterina Rutledge. The exhibit named *Spring* is inspired by Tasmania's nature. Ekaterina said of the exhibition: "In my art practice I am experimenting with oil paints, using lots of bright colours and creating lots of texture..."







Channel Museum 2024 Night at the Museum

Hello CM members. My name is Sheila Shewry and for the last two years I have been the Co-Ordinator of the Night at the Museum programme. The programme is run the second Wednesday of the month, is free for members to attend while non members are asked to make a small gold coin contribution.

As a Canadian living in Tasmania for five years the role has been challenging and fun and I have certainly learned much about our region!

This year I have programmed topics such as the Shot Tower History, History of Iron Pot, Ida Bay, Dover and Claremont Army Camp. Also a Quiz Night by Mike Avery and The Woodbridge Maritime School. All were well attended and received good feedback.

Our November Night at the Museum was a lively presentation by our previous Presenter, Neil Sorensen titled Journey to Canada. The photography was spectacular!

2025 will see a continuation of the Programme. As the Co-Ordinator I invite you, our CM members to put forth any suggestions you may have. Your name, topic and contact details should be sent to our Museum Secretary on secretary@channelmuseum.org.au. They will be passed onto me and I shall be in touch with you for discussion.

Best wishes for 2025 Sheila Shewry

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Secretary: Andrew Tomes
Treasurer: Sarah Jackson

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