



Kennebec Current



Discovering, preserving, and disseminating Kennebec County history since 1891

Volume 29 Issue 3

KENNEBEC HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

May-June 2019

Thompson Foundation Awards KHS \$25,000 for Expansion Plan



Photo by Rich Eastman

The Kennebec Historical Society has received a \$25,000 grant from the Charles T. & Marion M. Thompson Foundation Unrestricted Fund to help fund its expansion plan. The society will use the grant to defer the costs of the planning and engineering of a proposed addition to the historic Henry Weld Fuller Jr. House, the society's headquarters, located at 107 Winthrop Street in Augusta.

The grant, from a fund administered by the Greater Kansas City Community Foundation, was recommended by the descendants of Henry Weld Fuller, who once owned the land where the society's building stands, and whose son commissioned the construction of the house there in the 1830s. The money is intended to be a match to a contribution from another descendant of Henry Weld Fuller and a longtime supporter of the society.

"I'm very pleased and excited with the opportunity this matching grant will provide our organization," said Patsy Crockett, president of the Kennebec Historical Society. She added, "We are bursting at the seams, truly in need of additional space for our archive material."

In January 2018, the society formed the Carriage House Expansion Committee to address the shortage of space in the climate-controlled archive because of the numerous donations of items to the society's collection, and a recurring water problem in the Fuller house basement. The committee has explored many options for solving those problems, but ultimately it determined that the society should pursue expanding the current building. An expansion of KHS headquarters would allow the society to continue fulfilling its goal of actively preserving the history of Kennebec County.

E.S. Coffin Engineering and Surveying has provided the society with a proposal for engineering services for the addition. The grant money will pay for generating floor plans, mechanical plans and elevation drawings of the addition. Questions about the project should be directed to Scott Wood, KHS administrative director, at 622-7718.

Wayne's Best-Kept Secret

On Sunday, June 9, the Wayne Library Association celebrated the 100th birthday of Grace Burleigh and the complex process of preserving her donation of an Alice in Wonderland room to Cary Memorial Library in Wayne. KHS administrative director Scott Wood was able to participate in celebrating the event, which featured a brief reading from *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, the unveiling of the first professionally restored and preserved panel and a rousing rendition of "Happy Birthday" for Grace.



Scott Wood and Grace Burleigh

Photos by Scott and April Wood

According to the association's solicitation letter, in 1932, Alfred T. Merian painted 17 wall panels with characters in a style similar to that of John Tenniel, the illustrator of Lewis Carroll's book. The room, now in need of restoration, was a part of Burleigh's home, located in the village in Wayne. Burleigh donated the panels to ensure that they would be preserved for future generations. The association created the "Mad Hatter Committee" to coordinate the \$99,000 project budget and lead the preservation of the 17 art panels, and later to reassemble them in the nearby Williams House barn, which will need to be upgraded to improve safety and Americans with Disabilities Act accessibility.

KHS will stay in touch with the Wayne Library Association and the progress it makes on restoring the Williams House barn and preserving the magical Alice in Wonderland room.



President's Message



We are saddened to learn that our chief archivist, Ernie Plummer, will be leaving us to move to Massachusetts to be near his family after many years of his devotion to the preservation and cataloguing of the holdings here at KHS.

My message today is to ask for your help in spreading the word that we are looking for a volunteer archivist. Although we will miss Ernie, we all understand his desire to be able to see his family more often. Also, Ernie has assured us we can call him with questions anytime. I have spoken with State Archivist David Cheever, and he assures me that once you have been involved with archives, it gets in your blood.

We hope someone with archive experience has moved to Maine or is a native and would like to work with a wonderful historical society. The archivist would have volunteer help and also have interns from area schools. This summer, we have three interns working on projects. The KHS archivist would lead these volunteers and interns and would have help from many other volunteers and staff members and support from the Board of Directors.

If you are interested in learning more about being the volunteer archivist at the Kennebec Historical Society, please contact KHS Administrative Director Scott Wood at 207-622-7718, or mail your resume to KHS, P.O. Box 5582, Augusta, ME 04330.

I look forward to meeting you and having the opportunity to hear why you would like to become a part of our KHS family.

— *Patsy Garside Crockett, President*

KHS Welcomes Two New Interns

On May 22, Maria Gregor and Catherine Rudnicki began their archival training at KHS. Under the guidance of our archivist, Ernie Plummer, and with the assistance of our archival intern Kari Mullen-McLaughlin, the group hopes to do a complete inventory of the John F. Joy Library and start the arduous process of inventorying the KHS collections contained in the Harold L. Jones Archive. Welcome, Maria and Catherine!

From left, Maria Gregor and Catherine Rudnicki, KHS' newest interns.

Photo by Scott Wood



* In Memoriam *

John Bridge, 86, of Manchester, died April 30. A KHS life member and development committee member, he also was a longtime Augusta city councilor, mayor, Bridgecorp CEO, and fundraiser for many Augusta-area civic institutions. See tribute, page 6.

Joan "Jet" Price, a former art teacher, Hebrew school teacher, legal assistant, and Kennebec Historical Society member, died June 13 at her home in Monmouth. She was the wife of longtime former KHS board of directors member Joseph O'Donnell. A Newton, Massachusetts, native, she held a master's degree in fine arts from the Massachusetts College of Art and Design. Her survivors include her husband, two sons and three grandchildren.



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Total membership:

530 on June 7

Life members: 190

The Kennebec Current encourages letters to the editor.

Email letters to

kennhis1891@gmail.com.
All letters are subject to editing for taste, style, and length.

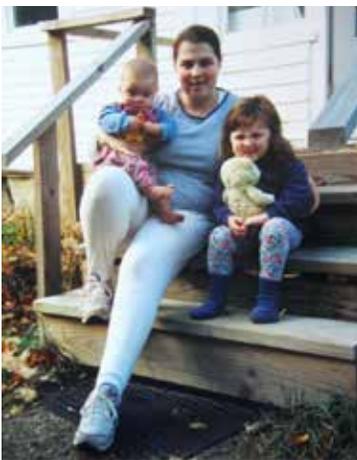
“The Clara House,” North Wayne

The town of Wayne was incorporated in 1798 from New Sandwich Plantation and was named after Army Maj. Gen. “Mad Anthony” Wayne in an era of naming towns for Revolutionary War heroes. He is credited with capturing Stony Point on the Hudson River from the British and commanding Fort Ticonderoga. The Native Americans called the Wayne area Pocasset, which was believed to have meant “where the stream widens,” or something along those lines.

North Wayne, though still part of Wayne, is usually considered by the locals as its own entity, at times with an “other side of the tracks” flavor. It centers on North Wayne village, where Lovejoy Pond is held back by the North Wayne dam before continuing via stream to Pickerel Pond. It is at this intersection of Lovejoy Pond, North Pond (now called Walton), Kents Hill, and North Wayne roads that village life centered. Here was a post office and store, a church, a schoolhouse, and a thriving manufacturing business.

The business was North Wayne Tool Company, and its manufacturing buildings have been gone a long time. One small brick building still stands adjacent to the North Wayne dam and what has been for many decades the town “swimming hole” just above the dam. Originally used as a storage building for the company, for many years it served as the Town Office.

My husband, John, and part of his family hail from North Wayne. His dad, Robert “Bob” McLaughlin, attended the North Wayne schoolhouse. Bob’s mother and stepfather, Vilene and Ken Wells, lived on Lovejoy Pond. My first visit to the town was in spring of 1990, when I was introduced to my future family-in-law, and by the summer we were living in a small trailer on their lawn, having moved up from Providence to a new job. After a few years in various apartments, getting engaged, married, and having a baby (Chelsea), we were ready for a house of our own. We circled back to North Wayne and discovered a little fixer-upper cape in “downtown” North Wayne.



From left, Hannah, Kari, and Chelsea on the porch steps, fall 1996.

Photos courtesy of the author



We fell in love with “The Clara House.” To be fair, it might possibly be more accurate to call it “The Fish House,” as the previous homeowners were Kelsie and Clara Fish; but “The Clara House” stuck. It also would be more accurate to say we fell in love with the history and presence of the house and the town, for it was Clara Fish to whom my husband delivered the newspaper *Grit* as a boy, and he would walk down the hill in a snowstorm to shovel out her walk for her. There was the dam he swam near every summer and roads he would bike with friends. Kelsie was a contemporary of Ken Wells, and they would hunt and fish together. There were fisher cats and bear that ran along that ridge to the west of the house as well as a healthy community of deer and other wildlife. The local lakes and ponds were plentiful with large- and smallmouth bass, white and yellow perch, eel, brown trout, chain pickerel, and many more.

I heard the stories of the families that had “been around awhile” going back a few generations, and built an understanding of a web of entangled lives, and of sons following in fathers’ footsteps many times over. Yet only recently have I grasped the depth of these histories in North Wayne and Wayne, not just a few generations but often going back to the town’s incorporation and before, perhaps 225 years. I heard the stories of the Native Americans and how the waterways were like today’s highways. The route began on the edge of Fayette in the north at Lovejoy Pond, leading south to Pickerel Pond (and somewhere in here a brief “Indian Carry,” as it was then called), to Pocasset Lake and then on to Androscoggin Lake, which also touches Leeds. We experienced swimming at the North Wayne dam, attended baked bean suppers at the church, took hikes along Pickerel Pond across the road, and enjoyed neighborhood barbecues with the longtime natives and family.

Continued on page 4

The Collections Box



From the late nineteenth century through the early twentieth century, Augusta was a major center for the publication of pulp magazines. E.C. Allen, at one time the wealthiest man in Augusta, for example, had eleven magazines with a combined circulation of over a million. In one year alone, he used 1,600 tons of paper. Recently we have concentrated on improving our collections of several titles by Allen, and Vickery and Hill. Twenty-four copies of *Hearth and Home*, 49 copies of *Good Stories*, and 91 copies of *Needlecraft* were added to the collections. Any copies you might have of these or other pulp magazines will be gratefully accepted.

Manuscripts include P.F. Sanborn in Hallowell writing to his wife, Sarah L. Sanborn, in Auburndale, Massachusetts, on November 5, 1878, about Nett's illness and other family news. On March 16, 1853, John Davenport in the Augusta jail wrote to his father, Rufus Davenport, in Fayette that he can't be released until they pay up. David Brush in New York City told Levi Allen in Waterville on August 14, 1833, that he can't meet with Allen because of sickness. Fish and Robinson in Fairhaven, Massachusetts, wrote to Thomas V. Smith and Company in Augusta about a lumber order on May 6, 1833. In six letters in 1848, Edward Locke and Company in Boston wrote Robert C. Thompson in Augusta about clothing manufacture. Dexter Hawkins in Augusta wrote to John E. Godfrey in Bangor, April 11, 1850, ordering school books. On May 13, 1857, Billings and Fogg in Monmouth requested partial payment of \$2,000 on an outstanding note from H.W. Miller in Worcester, Massachusetts. D.G. Williams in Readfield sent a semi-annual bill to H.M. Easton for food and household items on April 24, 1860. George W. Miller in Portland sent Roscoe G. Greene, the secretary of state, receipts for the Steam Lottery on September 28, 1833. Does anyone have any information on the Steam Lottery?

Through purchase and donation, several books were added to the collections: indexes to the archives of the Maine Legislature for 1820-25, 1826-30 and 1831-35; *The 26th Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Common Schools, State of Maine for 1879*; Marcia Burnell, *Heritage Above: A Tribute to Maine's Tradition in Weathervanes*; Nelson Madore and Barry Rodrigue edited a collection titled *Voyages: a Franco-American Reader*; Stephen Clark's *Following Their Footsteps* is a guide to recreating the Arnold Expedition; David L. Kendall, *Glaciers and Granite*; and George Otis Smith, *The Granites of Maine*.

We were pleased to be given a fifteen-volume set of Civil War histories by various authors. Thirteen volumes detailed the land campaigns and two volumes presented the Navy's efforts. Finally, we added the 1943 and 1954 volumes of Cony High School's *Coniad* yearbook and Volume 4, Number 4 of the *Cony Cue* for 1919, which was the June or commencement issue.

For the Collections Committee — Bruce Kirkham

“The Clara House,” North Wayne

Continued from page 3

“The Clara House” also afforded us productive vegetable gardens, a fight with invasive bamboo, the enjoyment of a larch/tamarack tree, the sound of rain on a metal roof, a found spring-fed well, the perfect little bay window for a Christmas tree, and pussy willows and lilacs in the spring. We thought of Clara as a kind ghost, watching as we cared for and restored her home. We found treasures, too; millstones in the basement, a worse-for-wear Morris chair, Clara's homemade maple syrup in canning jars, old newspapers for insulation in the walls of the ell, pieces of pottery and patent medicine jars in the earth by the daylilies where the old barn used to be, and lush rhubarb plants fed by years of chicken poo. In the midst of all this, we purchased the duplex on the corner as a rental property, made our first outdoor firepit, had a second baby — Hannah, some of you may have met her — and we survived 11 days of no power or heat in the ice storm of 1998 with two little ones. Often as we drive through North Wayne village, we ponder — “Maybe we should move back?”

If you have stories or memories of North Wayne, Wayne or any other town in Kennebec County, we would love to preserve them. Write them down, record them, start a book of reminiscences or share a diary, a scrapbook, or photo album with family, friends, and, ultimately, us. Your experiences are important to record now so we may have them for the future, because history starts today! Should you like to delve deeper into the history of Wayne and North Wayne, we have two books for sale in our bookshop: *Johnson's Kingdom*, by Edward L. Kallop Jr.; and *Illustrated History of Wayne, Maine*, by Jack Perkins. We also have for your perusal in our archival library the following books regarding Wayne: *A History of The North Wayne Tool Company*, *History of Wayne Maine*, *Views of Wayne Today*, *Golden Summertime*, and *A Happy Abundance*.

— Kari Mullen-Mclaughlin, archival intern

Research-ready: Ask a Question; Eventually, the Answer Will Come

In the November-December 2016 issue of the *Kennebec Current*, we printed the photograph below, asking if anyone knew what we were looking at. It turns out that member Greg Skillman did. He got to us on June 5 to tell us that the photo was taken at Pine Island Camp, which is on Great Pond in Belgrade.

Here is Greg's explanation:

Pine Island Camp 1902–2019: Tradition in Transition

The “Sweater Men” from the photograph at right has been identified as a group of counselors in the 1920s along with their dapper director, Dr. Eugene L. Swan, at front and center. These gentlemen hail from Pine Island Camp and were photographed on the island tennis court, known now as the dust ball court, on Pine Island, a small picturesque island on Great Pond, which is part of the Belgrade Lakes. Pine Island Camp — or “PIC,” as the sweater emblem depicts — is a traditional outdoor summer camp for boys 9 to 15 and is one of the longest continuously running youth camps in Maine.



Photos courtesy of KHS archives

The camp was founded in 1902 by Clarence Colby, whose ideas and ideals are still practiced today. He strove to give boys a “healthy and beneficial experience for their minds and bodies,” through a series of customary camp activities and a rich roster of diverse Maine wilderness hiking, canoeing, and fishing trips. Pine Island continues to promote and encourage the timeless values and philosophy of “independence coupled with a concern for others, cooperation, an intelligent sense of humor, honesty and respect for the natural world.”

Dr. Swan was a sailing enthusiast, a proponent of vigorous outdoor life and a pioneer in Scouting who established the outlines of the camp's adventurous excursion program. His son, Eugene L. Swan Jr. — “Jun,” as he was best known to Pine Islanders — took over camp directorship in 1947. Jun was a seasoned educator whose warmth, humor, and imagination included his ability to recollect and tell wonderful camp stories and to find common ground with campers, counselors and parents alike. He, along with his wife, Tats, started an ocean outpost for the camp on Whitehead Island, an 80-acre piece of Maine coastal heaven off Spruce Head. After Jun's retirement, he and Tats remained active in all aspects of Pine Island life until their deaths in 2000 and 2002, respectively.

Like many older summer youth camps and independent secondary schools, Pine Island has made necessary and important changes over the years to keep up with the times. This includes the transition from a family-run business under the leadership of the Swan family since 1908, when Dr. Swan purchased the camp from Clarence Colby, to a nonprofit organization with a board of directors. During the past 30 years, the camp has been under the guidance of third-generation Camp Director Benjamin B. Swan, son of Jun Swan; and his wife, Emily Swan, the camp business manager. Under the tutelage of Ben, Emily, and the board, the camp has blossomed and become invigorated with major upgrades and developments, including a cathartic rebounding from a devastating fire in 1995, establishing an endowment and celebrating an empowering centennial. Other growth includes improving camper enrollment, staffing, and staff training such as counselor education and Wilderness First Responder certification; and incorporating more women for staff diversity, opportunity and community health.

Pine Island Camp opens its 117th season on Great Pond on June 28. This will be the last summer that Ben and Emily Swan will be directly involved in its day-to-day operations, but they plan to stay active in other important facets of the camp's functioning. In September, a longtime Pine Island camper, counselor and assistant director, Sumner Ford, will become the sixth director in almost 120 years and the third non-Swan family member to take the tiller after Clarence Colby (1902-1908) and Monte Ball (1969-1989).

— Greg Skillman



Here's a second photo of the camp, at left, that Collections Committee chairman Bruce Kirkham bought for the archive. Both were taken by Herman Mansur.

— Ernest L. Plummer, archivist

KHS Given a Look at Maine’s Bicentennial Plans

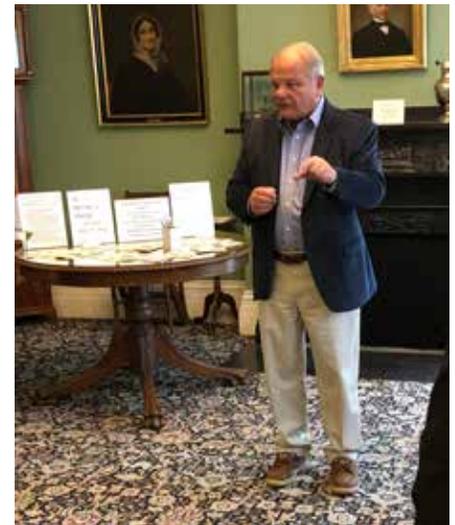
Visits by tall ships to Maine coastal towns and cities, community gatherings across the state and a reintroduction of eastern white pines are among the activities and events that will help Maine celebrate its 200th anniversary, State Archivist David Cheever said May 18 at the Kennebec Historical Society.

Cheever, who is vice chairman of the Maine Bicentennial Commission, was the guest speaker as KHS held a wine and cheese gathering to expand its membership. President Patsy Crockett also announced the nonprofit group’s goal of expanding its 500-plus membership to 1,891, a number corresponding to the year the society was founded.

A flotilla of tall ships from several countries will be a centerpiece of the celebration of Maine’s 200th anniversary of statehood, Cheever told KHS members and guests at the group’s headquarters. Visits to several coastal ports in addition to Portland are also envisioned.

A reintroduction of eastern white pines, the grand trees that were once a staple of the British navy and became symbolic of the state’s growth, is also planned. The bicentennial commission is encouraging community gatherings such as covered-dish suppers throughout the bicentennial year to draw Mainers together in celebration.

Bicentennial celebrations will begin July 26, 2019, the 200th anniversary of the day when voters approved Maine’s secession from Massachusetts. Official statehood happened March 15, 1820.



State Archivist David Cheever, speaking at KHS, announces plans for Maine’s statehood bicentennial celebration.

Photo by Scott Wood

Farewell, John Bridge (1932-2019)



John Bridge speaks in 2014 at a YMCA event in Augusta.

Kennebec Journal file photo by Joe Phelan

The Kennebec Historical Society lost a major supporter with the death on April 30 of life member and former Augusta Mayor John C. Bridge, 86.

John came to KHS late in life, but he did so with the same spirit of generosity and enthusiasm that he applied to helping many other local civic institutions.

John was a member of the KHS Development Committee for several years, and in that capacity he both donated to the society and successfully encouraged other to do so. In keeping with his soft-touch but persistent approach to fundraising, he always suggested that his fellow committee member start their face-to-face appeals with the phrase “Would you consider ... ?”

A Connecticut native, John lived in Augusta for more than 50 years. He managed his family’s construction company, Bridgecorp, until its sale in 2004. He is survived by wife Charlene, a son, two daughters, two stepsons, seven grandchildren, and one great-grandchild.

A lengthy Kennebec Journal story about John’s legacy of community involvement and local philanthropy can be found on that newspaper’s website, centralmaine.com.

The Kennebec Historical Society Welcomes the Following New Members

Janice Chyrl Morrill – Holly, Michigan

Sylvia Reed – Augusta

Douglas and Holly Stevenson – Wayne

Aurielle Maurice – Gardiner

Jason Corbett – Augusta

Judy Paradis – Augusta

Chester and Ginger Hillier – Monmouth

and continues to recognize...

Sustaining Business Members (\$1,000+ annual)

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Pine State Trading Company, Distributor, Gardiner

Upcoming Programs

July Public Presentation: “Midcoast Maine in World War II”



Peggy Konitzky

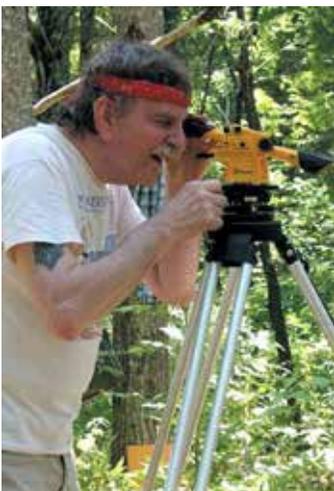
Photo by Scott Wood

Peggy Konitzky, author of *Midcoast Maine in World War II*, will talk about what life was like here at home during the war years. Hear stories and see vivid photographs about how ordinary people took worry about loved ones, rationing, price controls, civilian defense drills, food shortages, blackouts and more in their stride and added new burdens of war work and volunteering to their already busy daily lives.

Peggy is the Historic New England midcoast Maine site manager. She manages Castle Tucker and the Nickels-Sortwell House in Wiscasset, the Bowman Estate in Dresden and Marrett House in Standish. She holds a degree in history from the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service, a Master of Business Administration from New York University and a Certificate in Museum Studies from Tufts University. Originally from Glen Ridge, New Jersey, Peggy has held a number of positions in museum and historic preservation nonprofits in Maine since beginning her second career in 2001.

This KHS presentation is free to the public, although donations are accepted gladly. The presentation will be followed by light refreshments and will take place at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, July 17, in the Jewett Hall auditorium, located at 46 University Drive on the campus of the University of Maine at Augusta.

August Public Presentation: “A Tale of Three Privies”



Lee Cranmer

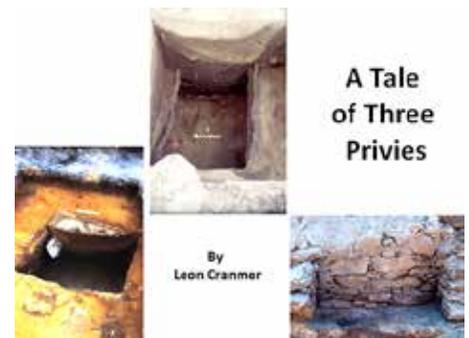
Contributed photo

A “Tale of Three Privies” looks at the archaeological excavation of outhouses on three diverse sites: an 18th-century fort, a 19th-century farmstead, and a 19th-century urban house. From the large quantity of nearly complete artifacts from these privies, a picture of the lifestyles of the sites’ occupants can be developed, along with an understanding of the material culture of the time. We can also determine when these privies were filled in and even speculate about why they were filled.

Our speaker, Leon “Lee” Cranmer, is a historical archaeologist who retired in August 2010 from the staff of the Maine Historic Preservation Commission. He has a Bachelor of Science degree from Stockton University and a Bachelor of Arts degree in anthropology and a Master of Arts degree in history/historical archaeology from the University of Maine. Mr. Cranmer has worked in archaeology in Maine for over 35 years and has conducted archaeology for the state for well over 25 years. Prior to that he spent two seasons in England doing archaeology. He has written one book and numerous articles on Maine historical archaeology and is working on another book on Fort Halifax, a French and Indian War period fort in Winslow. He has excavated hundreds of Maine sites about which

he has written or co-authored site reports. Before his archaeology career, Mr. Cranmer spent seven years in the Navy and is a Vietnam War veteran. He lives in Somerville with his wife, Liz.

This Kennebec Historical Society presentation is free to the public; donations are gladly accepted. The presentation will be followed by some light refreshments and will take place at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, August 21, at the Maine State Library, located at 230 State Street in Augusta.



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Type: New ___ Renewal ___

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