

A LOCAL CHAPTER OF  
AMERICA'S LEADING NONPROFIT  
COLDWATER FISHERIES  
CONSERVATION ORGANIZATION

THE MERSHON  
**MUDDLER**

◆ *Newsletter of the William B. Mershon Chapter of Trout Unlimited* ◆

1989, 1996 & 1997 RECIPIENT OF THE MICHIGAN COUNCIL TU CHAPTER OF THE YEAR AWARD

## Meanders

A few thoughts from  
the president

Opening Day is Saturday, April 24<sup>th</sup>. As of the writing of this article, we've had two of three weeks of solid, near 60-degree weather and warm rain (and the steelhead are in the rivers;) the Mershon Chapter is receiving some special recognition and assistance from other organizations; and on April 21<sup>st</sup> we've got a new and reformatted chapter spring banquet.

Things couldn't be much better.



*Christopher Radke, president*

**The Banquet.** This year's Banquet includes a casting contest in the spacious dining room with three exceptional and expensive prizes. Accurate casting will be rewarded, however everyone who enters will have a chance at the prizes. This year we have increased the value of our prizes and sales items. There have never been these kinds of opportunities to pick up top-of-the-line rod & reel combos, art, furniture, equipment, dinnerware, books, and guns. Instead of one speaker, we will have some of the Mid-west's most acclaimed experts exhibiting their skills and secrets during the cocktail hours—so be loaded with questions on how to tie those flies your fly-box has been missing; what flies to use and when; and what rivers you should be hitting and how you should approach them. We will continue the traditions of great food, camaraderie, door prizes, bucket-raffles, and silent and live auctions.

**Mershon in the Spotlight.** Many of you may not be aware of the prominence of William B. Mershon as a hard-fighting, give-no-ground, conservationist and

See *Meanders* page 10)

## Calendar of Events



*William B. Mershon chapter of TU*  
41ST ANNUAL SPRING FUNDRAISING  
BANQUET  
**Wednesday, April 21, 2004**  
*Candlelite Banquet Center, Bridgeport*

*Michigan Council TU*  
FLY-FISHING SCHOOL  
**June 11-13, 2004**  
*Ranch Rudolf, Traverse City*

# 41st Annual Fundraising Banquet

By Robb Smith,  
banquet chairman

It has been a good old-fashioned Michigan winter this year, with only teasing glimpses of a spring to follow. The one constant in this mix is the opening of the trout angling season on the last Saturday of April and the holding of our annual spring banquet on the Wednesday evening preceding the opener. This date has been a long-standing tradition of the Mershon chapter and one that seems to get everyone's juices flowing for the big day. This year's banquet will be held on April 21<sup>st</sup>, starting at 5:00p.m. at the Candlelite Banquet Center in Bridgeport.

We hope that all of you will attend and find this year's event the most enjoyable ever. The banquet committee is making changes to the banquet in order to shorten the evening and provide more time for you to enjoy yourselves and your friends as you help support the Mershon Chapter of Trout Unlimited. Our chapter has made significant contributions for the restoration efforts now being

accomplished on the Au Sable and Rifle Rivers and was responsible for a \$20,000 contribution to the South Branch Large Woody Debris Project in 2003. The Mershon chapter has also funded numerous other projects this year, and it is because of your support that we can continue to improve the cold water resources of our State.

This year, to change things a bit, we are not having a guest speaker for our banquet. Instead, we are having several prominent fishing luminaries to enlighten your evening. (Who would ever guess that I'm an electrical contractor?) During the cocktail hour, we will have esteemed guide and author Bob Linsenman signing books, along with the famous fly-tier Jerry Regan demonstrating the tying of several traditional fly patterns used and developed for the Au Sable River. Past chapter president Howard Johnson will also be providing information about Cedars of the Au Sable, which is another resource restoration project seriously supported by our chapter. We hope that you find these gentlemen both entertaining and informative as you spend some time with them.

We will have many fine fly rods this year, along with a wonderful assortment of fly-fishing gear and accessories, art work, clothing, cabin goodies, glassware, sporting

goods, barbeque grills, and literally hundreds of wonderful prizes. Besides raffles for our Ruger Red Label 28-gauge shotgun and an Orvis Superfine fly-rod outfit donated by Little Forks Outfitters, we plan on having card raffles for a beautiful traveling fly-tying box loaded with fly-tying materials, a fly-fishing vest loaded with the latest gear and gadgets, and a fine Orvis T3 fly rod. We also hope that you will try your hand at our new fly casting competition and raffle which should prove to be fun for everyone.

After our dinner, we will have a short business meeting, followed by a live auction conducted by auctioneer Marty Wegner. Our auction this year will feature a beautiful bamboo fly rod made by Terry Nab, along with some other great items including a custom fly-rod outfit assembled by Mark Fitch, a few beautiful prints, a guided fishing trip with Bob Linsenman, and many other items.

As time for the banquet draws near, please be watching for our Rod Raffle tickets and the 41<sup>st</sup> Annual Spring Banquet invitations in your mail box. We sincerely hope that you will all come out for an enjoyable evening and help support our great sport.

—Robb Smith,  
banquet chairman

## 2004 Banquet Packages

Silver Package	Gold Package
<b>\$100.00</b>	<b>\$500.00</b>
<p><i>Includes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Two banquet tickets</li> <li>•One annual membership/renewal</li> <li>•One bucket raffle ticket sheet (10 tickets)</li> <li>•One fly rod raffle ticket</li> </ul>	<p><i>Includes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Eight Banquet Tickets w/ reserved table</li> <li>•Verbal recognition</li> <li>•Eight bucket raffle ticket sheets (80 tickets)</li> <li>•Eight fly rod raffle tickets</li> </ul>

WILLIAM B. MERSHON CHAPTER OF TROUT UNLIMITED

# 41st Annual Spring Fundraising Banquet

Wednesday, April 21, 2004  
CANDLELITE BANQUET CENTER  
6817 Dixie Highway, Bridgeport

- 5:00 p.m. ■ Hors d'oeuvres and cash bar, as well as music, prize-gazing, and generous bidding.  
*Featuring guide and author Bob Linsenman signing books and  
fly tier Jerry Regan demonstrating traditional Au Sable River fly patterns.*
- 7:00 p.m. ■ Family-style sliced Roast Sirloin of Beef, Orange Roughy, and Roast Chicken.
- 8:00 p.m. ■ Live Auction with auctioneer Mr. Marty Wegner.

Live and silent auctions, bucket and card raffles!

*All proceeds designated for the protection and preservation of the cold-water fisheries  
of the Au Sable and Rifle Rivers.*



## FLY ROD RAFFLE

Orvis Superfine One-Ounce Outfit  
—includes 7-ft, 4-weight, 2-piece fly rod, new CFO II reel,  
Wonderline, backing, rod sack and tube, and reel case. (Donated by Little Forks Outfitters)



## SHOTGUN RAFFLE

Sturm, Ruger & Co. - Red Label 28-Gauge - Over and Under Shotgun  
Featuring - Blued Steel 26" Barrels, Stainless Steel Receiver, and American Walnut/Pistol Grip Stock  
Model KRL-2826-BR—retail value \$1,545

*Prepaid arrangements available by contacting Robb Smith at (989) 893-3792 or [rsmithsr@chartermi.net](mailto:rsmithsr@chartermi.net).*

# Mason Tract Drilling Update

*The proposed exploratory drilling near the Mason Tract has stirred a lot of emotion in those of us that love to fish the South Branch. In the interest of keeping our membership informed, here is the latest communication from the Forest Service on the subject.*

**D**ear Concerned Citizen,  
Thank you for your interest in the proposed exploratory gas well near the Mason Tract in Crawford County, Michigan. The purpose of this letter is to update you on the proposal.

There have been a number of changes to the proposal since the original letter was sent out in June of 2003. Michigan's Departments of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and Natural Resources, Savoy Energy, Bureau of Land Management, and the Forest Service evaluated alternative locations. As a result of this coordination, the proposed locations of the well and production facilities have been moved. The well, which was moved approximately ¼ mile to the southeast, is no longer along the road to the Mason Chapel. Production facilities have been moved approximately two miles to the east. The DEQ issued a permit for these locations in November of 2003. Any operations conducted under this proposal will be done in compliance with DEQ's drilling permit conditions.



The Forest Service received hundreds of responses concerning this proposal. A team analyzed the content of these responses and summarized the issues. Issues are an important part of the environmental analysis. When completed, the environmental document will be mailed and you can again comment. The goal is to mail this document in July of 2004.

A team has been assigned the task of completing the environmental analysis. The team will look at issues, alternatives, and analyze effects. Some of the issues include reduced quality of the recreational experience, negative impact on the local economy, reduced property values, and additional industrial development. One of the alternatives considered will be "no action," which would deny this proposal. Other alternatives may include the existing proposal, or the existing proposal with additional conditions designed to mitigate effects.

A copy of this letter is going to be sent regular mail. If you do not receive a hard copy of this letter, we do not have your regular mailing address. Please forward your regular mail address to receive future mailings.

If you have any questions concerning the exploratory gas well, call Dwight Devereaux at 989-826-3252 ext. 313. Thank you for your interest in the Huron-Manistee National Forests.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL J. WEBER  
District Ranger  
United States Forest Service

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# The Lovells Township Historical Society Second Annual Trout Opener Weekend

by Glen Eberly  
March 16, 2004

The Second Annual Lovells Township Historical Society Trout Opener Weekend is well into the planning stage. Held on Lovells Township grounds on April 24 and 25th, the weekend is a combination of museum exhibits, presentations, and activities.

## Exhibits:

In keeping with the "River Theme" initiated last year, the theme of this year's exhibit in the new log museum will be "William B. Mershon—on the North Branch of the Au Sable River." This is our first exhibit on the Legends of the North Branch series.

Many unique pictures and personal papers relative to his days on the North Branch will be exhibited. Artifacts will include Mershon's High Banks bell, stew and cooking pots, a one-of-a-kind reflector oven, and some "probable" Mershon fly rods. More artifacts are being sought. Focus areas of the exhibit include: 30 years of fishing records on the North Branch, the construction of High Banks Lodge, stocking of brook trout and Montana grayling, the annual total catch by North Branch lodges for many years, fishing equipment and flies of the period, the train cars, private game wardens, and many more.

The old log Kellogg School House will continue to feature artifacts depicting life in the early days of Lovells.

## Presentations:

A PowerPoint presentation, capturing Mershon—the fisherman, friend, business man, conservationist, and outdoor chef—as he delights in his special time spent on the North Branch, will be presented in the Town Hall by Robert Kohrman, an accomplished history authority and professor/administrator at Central Michigan University.

## Activities:

A typical river guide camp from the early 1900s will be set near the log museum and will feature a river guide and an Au Sable River boat. At this camp, visitors will be served a free bowl of (near enough) Mershon's famous fisherman's stew, which he would cook over a fire at streamside to tempt his hungry Saginaw Gang fishermen.

A fly tier will be on hand producing many of the historic Au Sable patterns.

Fly-casting with a demonstration vintage bamboo rod will give visitors a feel of the old days on the river. And, any youngster who lands a fly on a wooden trout profile will be given a coupon, redeemable for a free fly from our fly tier.

The weekend event is free and open to the public. Naturally, donations will be encouraged, as well as membership in the Lovells Township Historical Society.

The research on William B. Mershon and the trout opener program planning is being done by committee members: Glen Eberly, Dr. Roger Fechner, Darrell Fuller, Bob Kohrman, Gerry Lake, Gary Neumann, Ron Rysso, Society President, Jo Ann Smith, and Wm. B. Mershon's grand nephew, Edward B. (Ned) Wickes. Joe Bula represents the William B. Mershon TU Chapter and Bo Brines and Chris Radke have been very helpful with references and encouragement.

The Bentley Research Library at the U of M has a fabulous collection of Mershon papers and pictures. They have been most cooperative, and we will credit them with all their material used in the exhibit.

We are just scratching the surface of this huge Michigan personality. Reading his correspondence—from

*(Continued on page 7)*

*(Continued from page 6)*

and invite to a fishing buddy regarding a private train-car fishing trip, to early correspondence with T. E. Douglas (proprietor of the famous Douglas Hotel and virtual founder of Lovells,) to a tirade about a faulty electric car, to a letter to the poor master in Saginaw requesting assistance to feed a few hungry children—gives the researcher a sense of really knowing the man.

Pictures of Mershon with some of his Saginaw Gang, his private train cars, planting trout in the North Branch with Rube Babbitt, and pictures of his beloved High Banks Lodge on the North Branch give a glimpse of a sportsman's life in the early 1900s. No wonder Mershon described the Au Sable North Branch as "the greatest trout stream in the world."

Now, we know the opener of a trout season is special to you all.

But, consider enhancing your opener experience with a visit to our Opener Weekend. Combine some fine fishing on the North Branch with a look back in time to the days of great fishing, with no cell phones, palm pilots or personal computers. Save April 24 and 25th for a visit to Lovells and bring a fishing buddy.

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## LOVELLS COUNTY HISTORICAL MUSEUM TROUT OPENER WEEKEND SCHEDULE

### *Saturday April 24, 2004*

10:00AM to 6:00PM

Log Museum Mershon Exhibit and Kellogg School House  
River Guide Camp, with Guide  
Historic Au Sable River Boat

#### **Activities**

11:00AM to 4:00PM

Historic Fly tying in Lovells Township Hall  
Vintage Bamboo Rod Fly Casting on Township Grounds  
(Successful Children Receive an Historic Au Sable Fly)

11:30AM to 1:00PM

Free Mershon "Woods Chili", coffee, and soft drinks at the Guide Camp

1:30PM to 2:30PM

Power Point Slide Presentation "William B. Mershon on the North Branch"  
by Robert Kohrman

### *Sunday April 25, 2004*

10:00AM to 6:00PM

Log Museum Mershon Exhibit and Kellogg School House  
River Guide Camp  
Historic Au Sable River Boat

# Fifteen (or so) Minutes from Home

By Chapter Member Bob Kren  
([rmkren@umflint.edu](mailto:rmkren@umflint.edu))

quickie, n. (kwik'-ee) 1. not what you think it is, and shame on you!  
2. any fly-fishing trip that takes more time to prepare for than it does to drive to.

I live in Flushing, an appropriate enough name for a city located on the Flint River downstream from the sewage treatment plant. When I have more of an urge to fish than the time to drive to the Rifle or the Au Sable, I resort to the Flint, which flows right through the center of town. If you're ever in my neighborhood and want to fish for smallmouth bass or carp, or even rock bass, feel free to give my hometown's waters a try.

The first place to go is in downtown Flushing, reached by going west off I-75 on Pierson Road to its end at Flushing Road, about three miles. Bear right onto Flushing Road, and follow it as it meanders west and becomes two lanes instead of four, and changes its name to Main Street. There are two stoplights downtown, and you should turn left at the first one, Cherry Street. Drive to Riverview Park, and pull in at the end of the lot, closest to Tucker (swimming) Pool. Walk past the band pavilion, and down to the river by a small island with a fly-eating tree. The outside edge of the island is deep,

too deep to wade even in the lowest water of summer, but ideal for bass and carp. You can wade upstream and fish the obvious riffle, or downstream and fish the deep slot on the left side of the river. After a bit of a wade, there's a pool below another riffle, a hundred feet above the bridge, and it's deep and full of rock bass. If you want to, you can continue downstream under the Main Street bridge, but the water gradually gets deeper and eventually too deep to wade anywhere in the streambed—here you'll find a very deep slot, which you can reach, but not cast to easily, by parking in the lot of Bueche's grocery store.

The second place to try is upstream from the first. To get there, leave whichever parking lot you're in and get to Terrace Street, on the south side of Main Street, just west of the bridge. You'll go up a steep hill and bear left: you are now on River Road, and the total mileage from the turnoff to the small, unmarked parking area on your left is about 1.5 miles. Do NOT park at River Drive Park, which looks tempting, but has no river access. Once you're there, walk the dirt road down past the green on the golf course to the river. (You can gather golf balls from the river when the water is low and clear—dozens of 'em, if I haven't gotten there first.) But *be careful*, because the mud on the bank is as slick as snot, and you WILL fall in if you're not alert. Wade upstream until you can see the golf cart bridge on the course, and fish on the north side in a deep hole for smallies; or wade downstream from where you get in, and you'll find several deep slots in the rocky bottom, all of them full of bass.

Given a few more minutes, I drive six miles north on Seymour Road—which lies at the west end of Main Street—to Dodge Road and turn back east to its end. You can also reach this site by exiting I-75 at M-57 and driving west until you cross the river, then turning left on Seymour Road two miles to Dodge Road. The river is very wide and generally shallow here, but there's a deep hole on the east shore about 400 feet upstream, and plenty of other fishable water, including a hole at the point of an island downstream. This is very forgiving water, easy to wade bareback, with loads of room for casting.

I'm hoping this article will get you to think about favorite places you can get to quickly, and encourage you contact me so you can share your nearby secret fishing places. If you're curious what this has to do with trout, big brown trout have been caught downstream from the bridge in Flushing, but major repairs were done on the bridge a few years ago, and I have not been able to find the springs that sheltered the browns since then, nor have I heard of anybody catching one.

**T**he Pine River Area Chapter of Trout Unlimited is opposed to the construction of the Northern Lights Power Plant without an independent environmental impact statement being completed. This statement is needed to determine if the Northern Lights Power Plant will negatively impact the environment and specifically coldwater species.

This plant could have detrimental effects on not only the local fisheries, but affecting all fisheries of Michigan, Ontario and the entire US. Coal-burning power plants release tons of harmful chemicals; a 500 megawatt plant produces 3,700,000 tons of carbon dioxide, 10,200 tons of nitrogen oxide, 10,000 tons of sulfur dioxide, 700 tons of carbon monoxide. Coal-burning plants also produce mercury and arsenic that are very harmful to people. The DNR releases a fish advisory every year to warn against the consumption of fish containing mercury. Mercury is so poisonous that 1/70th of a teaspoon can make fish in a 25 acre lake unsafe to eat. The mercury that could be produced by Tondu at this facility could be over 200 pounds a year and virtually make all of Michigan's best fishing lakes useless.

The emission of chemicals is not the only problem—coal-burning plants produce warm water discharges into lakes and rivers. Tondu is proposing to build this plant right next to the single most important steelhead egg taking facility in the US. The DNR weir on the Little Manistee supports all the state of Michigan with steelhead eggs. Not only does this facility supply Michigan, but it also supplies Indiana and Ohio with eggs from this facility. The steelhead industry relies on these eggs; otherwise the fishery would not exist. Steelhead start their life

in streams for one year, then they move (Smolt) out into the great lakes for their adult life, returning to spawn in the fall. The facility by Tondu could interrupt this cycle by emitting warm water into Manistee Lake. Steelhead need coldwater to survive, and the emission from the plant could be catastrophic to the steelhead fishery, not only locally, but state- and nation-wide.

Michigan does not need another large coal-burning plant on our waters. We need to take all the precautionary steps to make sure that the Northern Lights project does not affect our salmon and steelhead industry. The environmental impact statement is an excellent way for the City of Manistee Planning Commission to show their commitment to improving our community.

## **Proposed Power Plant in Manistee**

*By Patrick Kochanny, President  
Pine River Area Chapter of TU  
23297 Mackinaw Tr.  
Tustin, MI 49688*

*The power plant proposed to be built in Manistee has generated lots of debate in the Manistee area, and since many of our members fish the Little Manistee (which is also the source for the steelhead eggs responsible for most of the Great Lakes steelhead stocking programs), we are printing this communication from the Pine River Chapter TU for you.*

## *Meanders*

(cont. from page 1)

trout-fishing enthusiast; nor of the prominence of the Mershon Chapter of Trout Unlimited, which has nationwide recognition because of leaders like Art Neumann, Harold Kleinert, and Howard Johnson, among many others.

This year the prominence of Mershon, the person, and Mershon, the chapter, is being recognized in two very public ways. First, a museum is opening on Opening Day in Lovells, Michigan, dedicated to William B. Mershon, the person. As you probably know, Mershon made his fortune in logging at a young age, but then quickly turned into the state's leading conservationist for the remaining 30 years of his life. Mershon was decades ahead of his time, however he had and used science, charm, emotion, an ability to organize and mobilize, and at times an in-your-face-until-you-do-the-right-thing persistence to influence legislation, regulatory policy, and the public's view of conservation. The museum captures and exhibits all of these aspects of Mershon and should be a fun and positive experience for all of us.

The second evidence of Mershon's prominence is that the 2005 "Makers Rod" will be named after William B. Mershon, and the chapter will be marketed along with the Rod. The Makers Rod is an extraordinary bamboo fly-rod presentation package that is being raffled for stream conservation projects on the AuSable. The rod is made from individual triangular pieces of bamboo cane, contributed by renowned rod makers from around the world and then assembled by two other of the country's top rod makers. The Makers Rod will be raffled at the Trout Bum Bar-B-Q, at the Fly Factory in Grayling, in June. Tickets are \$50. I would like to

thank Steve Southard for spearheading the naming of the Mershon Makers Rod and for the Fly Factory's willingness to allow our chapter to raise money from this event. Check out the Makers Rod discussion at: <http://www.troutbums.com/makersrod>.

Incidentally, I am in the process of reading an excellent book on Michigan's conservation history that includes significant discussions of Mershon. It's Dave Dempsey's *Ruin & Recovery*, published by the University of Michigan Press. It can be found at <http://www.press.umich.edu/titles/09779.html>.

**Summer Events.** This summer we will have a river restoration project on the Rifle River. Chapter director Mike Meyer is leading the charge on this year's project. If you would like to volunteer or be contacted once the project terms are finalized, please contact Mike at [mikemeyer@charter.net](mailto:mikemeyer@charter.net) or 892-9624.

We will be hooking up with other chapters for this year's AuSable project and more information will be forthcoming.

Howard Johnson is once again expanding the Cedars-For-The-AuSable program. Howard and a large group of dedicated volunteers are expanding the project to include the planting and care of cedar trees along state-owned land—which will involve our chapter adopting a stretch of the river, for which we will be responsible for 5–10 years. These cedars provide excellent predator and cooling cover for trout.

**Fishing.** I hope April 24<sup>th</sup> finds you on your favorite stretch of river with the largest trout of your life at the other end of the line.

WILLIAM B. MERSHON CHAPTER OF TROUT UNLIMITED

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
MEETING SCHEDULE**

*Note: All Board of Directors meetings will be held on the first Wednesday of the month (unless noted) at  
5:30 PM at Garber Buick, 5925 State Street, Saginaw, Michigan*

Wednesday, April 7, 2004

Wednesday, May 5, 2004

The board does not meet during the summer months.  
Meetings will resume in September.

*\* Second Wednesday*

**We welcome you to attend any of the board meetings.  
Your input is an invaluable resource in our efforts to serve the resources we enjoy.**



# APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP



**YES!** Please begin my one-year introductory membership in Trout Unlimited at the rate I have checked at right. I understand my dues payment entitles me to all regular membership benefits, including a TU decal, personal membership card and quarterly issues of *Trout* magazine with *Action Line*.

Please check membership category:

- New member membership (\$17.50)
- Regular membership (\$35) /  3 years (\$90)
- Family membership (\$50) /  3 years (\$100)
- Sponsoring contributor (\$100)\*
- Conservator contributor (250)\*
- Individual Life (\$1,000) (*No further dues*)\*
- Family Life (\$1,100) (*Husband and Wife*)\*
- Senior (62 and over) membership (\$20)
- Full-time Student/Youth (under 18) (\$20)
- Business membership (\$200)

*All contributions over \$12 are tax deductible.*

*\*Note: special benefits provided for these membership categories.*

*\*\*Make checks payable to: TROUT UNLIMITED*

*Clip and mail this application to join TU today!*

Name (please print) \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_  
State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
020 Mershon  
Chapter \_\_\_\_\_  
Michigan Council - Code 5449  
Sponsor \_\_\_\_\_

Payment enclosed\*\*       Please bill me

Visa # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

MasterCard \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: TROUT UNLIMITED, PO BOX 1335, MERRIFIELD, VA 22116

## THE MERSHON MUDDLER

◆ *Newsletter of the William B. Mershon Chapter of Trout Unlimited* ◆

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