

District 12 Norfolk

Prime Time

Fall 2022 Issue 68



The Blue Morpho butterfly, native to South and Central America is particularly significant to Carolyn Cruickshank and former staff members from North School in Simcoe. In this issue, you will learn about some of the amazing things that she and our members are doing to make our communities vibrant.

We will be honouring our 2022 25 Year Members at our Fall Luncheon in October. Find out how Stu Ross answers the question, "What have we wrought?" We have a lot of catching up to do and news to share in these pages. Read on and enjoy!

Blue Butterfly Adventures



Carolyn Cruickshank

Where does a story begin?

A couple of years before I retired from North School in Simcoe, a friend invited several on my staff to join her **Relay for Life** team. We were not sure what was involved but we knew Sharon and if she said, "Let us," we usually said "OK."

In Sharon Laramie's words, we soon learned, "This event is more than a fundraiser."
Participating team members take turns walking through the night. It is a 12 hour

opportunity to share emotions and fun with family and friends, to celebrate all cancer survivors, to remember loved ones who lost their lives to any form of cancer and to fight back against the many types of cancer.

It was part of the program to name your team and that is when we became The Blue **Butterflies.** I am going to quote from Sharon's Facebook page ... "The name of our team, "The Blue Butterflies", was inspired by the movie that is based on the true story of David Marenger's life. As a young child, David was diagnosed with brain cancer and told he had only a brief time to live. The Children's Wish Foundation granted him his wish: an adventure trip to Mexico to find a specific blue butterfly. He did just that. Later, upon his return to Canada, David's cancer went into remission. At the age of eighteen he no longer needed his medication. As an adult, David has travelled the world raising money for paediatric cancer research and treatment.

His message is one of hope, belief, and perseverance. Our team has adopted the blue butterfly as our symbol as we continue to hope, believe, and persevere in our fight against cancer.

Ten years later we were still collecting pledges and planning how to decorate our team's tent and walking around the track all night in whatever butterfly gear we had produced. We wore flashing antennae, blue gossamer wings, specially made t-shirts and blue butterflies flew about our area.





Eventually we decided that to raise even more money for our team to donate, we should hold a yard sale and add it to whatever we had raised.

Prizes were given for several reasons and the night of the relay, we realized we had quite the competitive team. Our butterflies became bigger. Our banners were lighted with twinkly lights. Our collected money grew every year, and we had a wonderful time. We won for most enthusiastic, best decorated, and I think we even raised the second highest amount of money one year!

The yard sales were exhausting, and a night spent going round and round the track meant sleeping in the next day, but we persevered for ten years. Our sales became a neighbourhood event and people returned year after year and we happily anticipated what would be donated for the sale and to make new friends - which we did every year.

Sadly, Sharon passed away suddenly after our third year, and she is still missed today. In her honour we renamed our team, and we became **Sharon's Blue Butterflies**. The yard sales and the relays continued. Another friend to our group passed away a couple of years later from cancer and again we renamed. Now we were **Sharon and Maxines' Blue Butterflies**. Each of us had experienced loss and sorrow because of cancer and we felt this was a part we could play in the quest for a cure.

While our team consisted of a core group of retired teachers many others came alongside and their help was invaluable.

At this time, the **Relay** for Life was changing its format and the allnight walks were finished. We completed our tenth relay, and decided we also were finished.



A few years passed and we heard about a young lady who needed alternative treatments to try and cure her cancer. So up went the butterflies and the yard sale signs, and we had an amazing sale. While we raised a huge amount of money she passed away before the sale. The money was given to her young daughters to help them with their education. (continued next page)

And to end this story we come full circle. We had not had a yard sale for a couple of years when Russia began the assault on Ukraine. Sharon's earlier statement seemed to apply, "a message of hope, belief and perseverance." We had to do one more fund raiser. This time to help Ukraine relief. So, we did.

We wanted to give our money to helping those most needy and imagine our surprise when a gentleman from Toronto came past the house, saw all our Ukrainian flags flying and he stopped. He was involved in arranging relief funds and specifically helping a lady still in Ukraine as she set up soup kitchens, helped the elderly and looked after the injured. That was exactly what we had hoped to do with the \$4,500 we had to give. She was so thankful to receive our money.

Richard Hareychuk, an optometrist from Toronto, has since purchased a house just around the corner from us and has become a

friend. The most amazing things happen when one chooses to give back.

Sharon started **The Blue Butterflies** and
the last money we
raised went to her
ancestral country ...
she was Ukrainian.

Our team has assured me that our yard sales are finished. But....



The most amazing things happen when one chooses to give back.





In our next issue ...

We hope you enjoy the stories and helpful information we provide in these pages of Prime Time. As editor, I am always searching for stories about the great things our RTOERO District 12 Norfolk members do in our community and elsewhere.

In our Spring 2023 issue, we plan to feature our members and their involvement with their **Ethnic Heritage.** Here in Delhi, we have a very active **Multicultural Heritage Association** and some of our members are very active. Do you have a story or photos about your heritage to share? Perhaps you have travelled to distant lands and can report on your encounter with other cultures. Please share your learning and discoveries with us. Please contact:

alfredguidolin@gmail.com or 519 582 2945



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Written submissions are welcome in word .doc format. Photos are welcome in .jpeg or .png formats. Due Dates are March 1 and August 1.

Archival copies are available online at **district12.rto-ero.org**

Click the District 12 News and Activities tab, then select Newsletter in the left hand sidebar to access newsletters in .pdf format

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Alfred Guidolin, Editor 36 Melody Drive Delhi ON N4B 3E1

RTOERO Members Helping Ukrainian Refugees

Earlier this year, as the war in Ukraine caused a refugee crisis, a number of community groups gathered to offer support. Among them were members of RTOERO District 12 Norfolk, notably **Stu and Posie Ross.** You may remember their call for help we emailed. Stu was seconded by **Venture Norfolk** to put together a program of English for recent Ukrainian arrivals in Norfolk. They were looking for volunteer teachers and RTOERO seemed like a potential source, so he forwarded the request for volunteers. Our members and others stepped forward! I asked Stu for some insights. Stu writes:

Oh my, what have we wrought? When I first contacted you, I feared that teachers for this project would be in short supply. I was wrong, (a condition I'm getting used to). We wound up with 9 volunteers and more emailing me every other day to see if there any time slots still available. In addition, three students from Holy Trinity asked if they could help because they are interested in teaching careers. So, we now have 12. Most of them are retired Norfolk teachers and most of those are former principals. I've attached the contact list of the participants so you can see just how much response we got from RTOERO members. As I explained to the Holy Trinity students, "You better pick the brains of your mentors before something gets them because there is more educational experience and wisdom amongst the volunteers than can be found in any school in Norfolk today."



ESL Volunteers Needed



Volunteer Teachers of ESL Required Locally

A group of volunteer teachers is being assembled under the auspices of Venture Norfolk to provide 40 ESL lessons to those recent arrivals to Norfolk from Ukraine. We are seeking those willing to teach one or more hours per week for four weeks in Simcoe. Classes are all on weekdays and start later in the week of July 18. If potentially interested please email Stu Ross at ross.stass.homail.com for details or call 519 586-7681.

Now for the facts ...

Total students ... varies from 4 to 7 adults and up to 5 school age kids.

Main goals ... In one month we hope to get them employable in terms of their English. This is a crash course: no frills. What works well? ... Everything! These people are educated and committed. They include an MD and other professionals who have chosen Norfolk over all other parts of Ontario as their new home. Notwithstanding their trauma, they are intense learners who understand and appreciate our efforts.

How much time have the volunteers committed? ... The average volunteer teaches four one-hour lessons over the four weeks. Because they are professionals, they put in inordinate amounts of prep time because they were not ESL teachers, don't speak Ukrainian and they know good teaching when they see it. One retiree put in 4 hours of prep for a one-hour lesson. They are just as intense as the students, often attending classes taught by other teachers just to see how others tackle the challenge.

Other notable features or circumstances ...

The volunteers are not just teachers. The kids are in the same room as the adults and will often contribute to the learning process. Talk about a diverse class! All of the students, in varying degrees, have been traumatized. This means that the volunteers are as much therapists and social supports for the refugees as they are teachers. Rapport, even intimacy, has been built. This need to communicate has inspired much of the intense learning that has resulted.

My rhetorical question remains ... "What have we wrought?" My answer ... "Much more than I ever anticipated!"

If you have further questions, just ask. I have seen and done a bunch of stuff since I retired, (teaching in China blah blah).

Honestly ... Nothing compares. - Stu Ross

ESL Volunteers

Athena Barba
Heather McVittie
Tina Scott
Abigail Rosenhart
Ann Tully
Virginia Birnie
Liz Whiton
Jo Skoblenik
Vince Tongol
John Wallace
Marion Dowds
Evelyn Rosa
Nestor Rosa



The amazing Stu Ross teaching in China 2004

Monthly Coffee Klatches

This summer we enjoyed our first two in-person coffee klatches since COVID 19 relegated us to virtual ones on Zoom. We'll try one more outdoor coffee klatch on the last Wednesday of August in Port Rowan at 10 am - location to be announced and posted on our website, Facebook and by email.







Beginning in September, we'll be having them indoors across our county with locations to be announced. If you have found a favourite coffee shop in Norfolk that you can recommend, drop us a line and we'll add it to our list. Always remember ...

The coffee is free and the conversations priceless!

Our June coffee klatch was held at the Lions Pavilion in Port Dover near Silver Lake. Thanks to Marion Gadsby for reserving our spot!

The weather was cool with a few sprinkles, but we stayed dry and warm under shelter.









We gathered at the Simcoe Lions Pavilion in July and enjoyed stories and reminiscences. The sun was warm but the shady trees provided a cool respite.





It's Prime Time for our Fall Luncheon in Vittoria





Wednesday October 19, 2022 at the Vittoria Community Centre Come and socialize at 11:00 am! Lunch at Noon! Cost \$20

Menu - Debbie Moffat Catering

Chicken Cordon Bleu
Greek Oven-roasted Baby Potatoes
Mushroom & Spinach Bow Tie Pasta
Carrot & Sprout Bake
Tomato & Mozzarella Caprese Salad
Mexican Caesar Salad
Artisan Bread
Dessert: Blueberry & Peach Cobbler / Whipped Cream
Coffee and Tea

Our 25 Year Members Will Be Honoured

All our 2022, 25 year members of RTOERO District 12 Norfolk will be presented with a commemorative pin and certificate. Those who have planned to attend will be celebrated with an audiovisual presentation and keepsake booklet after the luncheon.

25 Year members and their guest will receive a complimentary meal. All recent New Retirees who have not been welcomed with the New Retirees Brunch since 2020 during COVID restrictions will also enjoy a complimentary meal.

Let us know if you are a recent New Retiree on the enclosed Luncheon Reservation Form. We have lots of celebratory meals to catch up!

Be sure to complete and mail your Luncheon Reservation Form by Friday October 7, 2022.

We continue to monitor and follow local Health Unit guidelines for gathering and will keep you informed of any changes to our Fall Luncheon plans!

June Barnet Lee Buffin Patricia Cade Carole Churchill Barbara Crabb Carolyn Cruickshank Donna DeSerrano Ruth Anne Earls Dale Gattinger Joan Guch Peter Guch Christine Ivey John Kristof Malcolm Mann Judy Martin Díanne Moore Denis Murphy Jean Persoon Mardella Roberts Evelyn Rosa Stuart Ross Joan Scott Norris Smith Marion Taylor Betty Vanthuyne Robert Willows Madaline Wilson

Pinch Me



Goodwill
Report
Carol DeFields

I feel fine enough I guess, considering everything's a mess ...

These lines from the Barenaked Ladies song *Pinch Me* seem to sum up the summer of 2022, as we drift through the midsummer days, wanting nothing more than to curl up in a lounge chair with a good book and ignore the news cycle. Who can blame anyone for wanting to "check out" after two years of pandemic uncertainty, the persistent evidence of climate disaster, high inflation, and the need to stand firm against Russian aggression? As Canadians, I think that we all feel that we are entitled to a pleasant summer, and I'm not just referring to the weather.

However, this pesky virus is far from being done with us, and the decisions that we make now with our allies on the world stage will have consequences in the years to come. Polls show that many people are no longer following news about the coronavirus and the Ukraine conflict closely. We can't afford to stop paying attention now, if we are going to be equipped to face possibly tougher times in the future. We can attempt, at least, to follow the advice in the last lines of the song:



Try to see the world beyond your front door, try to figure out what all this is for.



I have wished the following members a happy "milestone" birthday since the last Prime Time deadline. Remember to get in touch at the phone number or the e-mail on the back of the newsletter if you don't want your name listed

William Fleming John MacAulay
Kuldip Gulati Marianne Irvin
Carrolyn Allen Ed Stewart
Mary Brown Margaret Stephen
Peter Guch John Adams

Veda Van Galen Jim Adams

Pamella Bonner Maureen Bartlett Carol Bailey Bruce Harding



We offer our sympathies to these members who have experienced bereavement.

Keith Ashley Margie Ridzon Martin Kowanetz Mike Main Norma Stucker Phyllis Jones

We will miss these members who have passed on.

Willard Challand Winona McNall Richard Hickman Ellen Main Alfred Stucker Barbara Doyle

Grief Support Resources

Hospices provide support for the entire end-of-life experience, from life-affirming care for palliative individuals to supporting their loved ones through the process of death and dying and the grief that follows. Often hospices will offer workshops, support groups and wellness therapies for bereaved people—and you don't always need to have a prior connection to the hospice to join. It's worth seeing what's available at your local hospice.

Healing with David Kessler, a new Spotify podcast - David Kessler is a well-known grief expert. He's behind **grief.com** and the author of **Finding Meaning: The Sixth Stage of Grief**. His podcast covers grief, trauma and perseverance. Most importantly, it will help you feel you're not alone.

Your local library has many books available on grief, so if you're a reader or audiobook listener, consider checking one out. Read reviews to find a book that sounds of most interest to you.

Therapy - one-on-one therapy is always a good idea—especially during tough times, like coping with grief and loss. You may be able to access a counsellor through your local hospice or faith centre. If you are a member of RTOERO's extended healthcare plan, you have coverage for social work and psychology services.

This article was adapted from a recent RTOERO blog post. Find the full post here:

rtoero.ca/coping-with-grief-resources-that-can-help

Finding Our Archives A New Home



Archives Report

Ruth Ellen Kelly

Recently, we had to remove all our archival materials from the Waterford Heritage and Agricultural Museum. No local libraries or museums were interested in taking all of our files and artifacts. Eventually, I was able to find a new place for our archives at the Friends of the Educational Archives (Grand Erie District School Board) located at 349 Erie Avenue in Brantford. Thanks to our member, Bob Stevenson, for his assistance in this matter.

Some items could not be sent to the Archives in Brantford. These will be scanned and stored on flash drives until we can determine how to best display these items. There are several projects that must be scanned and I need some help. If you would be able to scan items and store them on a flash drive, please contact me at 2kelly@bell.net. I will provide a flash drive and a project for you to work on. There is no hurry to get the projects completed so there is absolutely NO PRESSURE for you.

I could also use a person who would transcribe one project by typing and saving it to a flash drive as well.



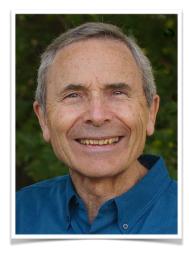
Now, our archives will be digital only. It may take some time to organize our archives, but I will keep you informed of our progress.

Volunteers Needed

If you would be able to scan items and store them on a flash drive, please contact me at 2kelly@bell.net.



Community Grants - Serving Over 9000 Meals!



Community
Grants Update

Peter Scovil

Last fall, a \$2,500 grant from RTOERO through District 12 Norfolk, helped equip the new Riversyde 83 Community Kitchen with a commercial freezer. Church Out Serving has been using the freezer's storage for their frozen meals program that has served over 9,000 frozen meals to individuals and families, including seniors, people experiencing illness, social isolation and others unable to cook for themselves during the pandemic season. The freezer has just been relocated and is now in place in the new commercial kitchen at Riversyde 83 where (once the facility is open) it will be used to support programs including community meals preparation, incubation for new agri-business and some food skills training.

They are wrapping up renovations, hopefully by the end of this summer, with occupancy approval expected this fall.

They are very grateful to District 12 and RTOERO for our support of this community project.

We'll be looking for new ideas in January for funding new projects that will help seniors in our community or elsewhere.





Working Tirelessly For Your Benefit



Benefits Reports

Margaret Payne

Our Benefits Committee works tirelessly for the benefit of all RTOERO members who have Extended Health Care Coverage.

They meet monthly and here are a few highlights for your information. Every year, there are requests put in by members for changes to the health plan. This year was no exception with 55 requests being put forward by members. Of these, **34 plan change** requests were brought to the larger committee for deliberation. The list was further modified and the remaining plan changes will be costed by the Johnson Consulting team. More information will follow at a later date.

Highlights of the Benefit Committee Report to the AGM

Due to Covid, and the cancellation of nonemergency surgeries, the RTOERO Group insurance plans ended 2021 with a net surplus of \$4,040,472. This amount will be transferred to the RTOERO Health Stabilization Fund to offset future premium rates. Prescription drugs still represent the top claim category of the Extended health plan. The top five drugs claimed in 2021 were Nexium, Cialis, Shingrix, Dexilant and Crestor.

Prescription drugs and paramedical practitioners are most used by participants but there is an increase in the usage for psychotherapists and social workers since 2020. In 2022, the decision was made to apply any surplus in two ways: to reduce the rate of the premiums by 3% for 2021 for all three plans and a plan was put in place to subsidize premiums for the next five years to keep premium increases to a minimum. This will continue with rates remaining the same as the previous year.

Since January 1, 2020, Royal Sun Alliance insures the RTOERO travel plan. The pandemic disrupted the travel industry and because of this, Royal Sun Alliance owes a net surplus due to RTOERO of \$7,557,000. The Benefits committee recommended that this travel surplus be transferred to the Health Premium Stabilization Fund, to be committed for travel benefit. This was confirmed by the Board of Directors.



Improved Trip Cancellation/Interruption Coverage For EHC Members

This information was already shared with extended health care coverage, but is important enough that a reminder is given here.

Starting May 1, you are covered if you need to cancel, interrupt or delay a trip because you or your travelling companion have a positive COVID-19 test result, become ill with COVID-19 or die due to COVID-19.

In 2020, the Benefits Committee and the board of directors approved a change to our travel insurance, covering medical emergencies related to COVID-19, even when there was a COVID-19 travel advisory in place.

Now, we are improving our services to members again. Effective May 1, the travel plan will provide coverage to you for trip cancellation, interruption or delay due to COVID-19. This includes coverage for additional expenses if you need to quarantine at your destination or are refused boarding due to a positive COVID-19 test.

For detailed answers to the questions you may have about this improvement to our travel insurance, go to **rtoero.ca/prepared**

If you have questions not answered on the website or if you wish to discuss your specific personal situation call us at 1-877-406-9007 or email:

healthbenefits@johnson.ca

Banning Single Use Plastics

For several years, we've heard about the single-use plastic ban in Canada.
Consultations have been ongoing and in June 2022, the government published the **Single-use Plastics Prohibition Regulations**. The manufacture, import, export and sale of the following six categories of single-use plastics will be banned by the end of 2025:

- checkout bags
- cutlery
- food service ware made from or containing "problematic plastics" (expanded or extruded polystyrene, polyvinyl chloride, oxodegradeable plastic or black plastic made with carbon black)
- ring carriers (for 6-packs of cans)
- stir sticks
- straws



The sale of checkout bags, cutlery, straws, food service ware and stir sticks is prohibited in Canada as of December 20, 2023.

We can expect to see some changes in packaging over the next year, and maybe you've already noticed it, as other local jurisdictions and companies implement their own bans. It's important to know that plastic straws for accessibility needs are excluded from the ban.

A Lot of Catching Up To Do!







Carolynne Paton is hoping to hold a get-together for all the Local School Representatives near the end of September. They will discuss procedures for visiting their respective schools in order to re-establish an RTOERO presence in Norfolk's elementary and secondary schools.

Membership Report

It will be a great pleasure to be able to host a New Retirees Brunch for our newest members. We have a lot of catching up to do! Kayley's will supply a lovely brunch at the Norfolk Golf and Country Club, Wednesday September 14, 2022, complete with mimosas for toasting.

Swag bags of local products are also being delivered to new members as a friendly welcome to our District 12 Norfolk.

A reminder for all members who have changed addresses, emails or phone numbers. Please update changes by calling RTOERO 1 800 361 9888 or using this link https://rtoero.ca/membership. Our main method to contact is by email so look for upcoming events throughout the year.

New members also receive a complimentary meal for their first time joining us for the Fall or Spring luncheon. Please indicate on the **Luncheon Reservation Form** in Prime Time or email us to make arrangements.

The current number of members for District 12 Norfolk is **607**.

Congratulations to our new retirees:

Janet Blyleven
Richard Dupp
Paula Rasokas
Orval Clark
Gloria Thomas
Teresa Dockx
Nancy Lord
Andrea Ongena
Jane Knechtel
Derek McConnell
Janie Senko-Driedger



Small Things - Small Smiles





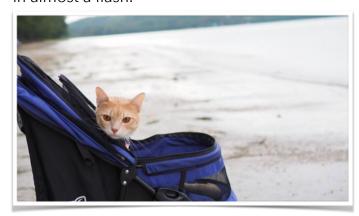


There I was quietly sitting in my car in the driveway. There it was. In the middle of our front yard was a small brownish bird having a dust bath. It seemed to have not a care in world. There it sat preening its feathers, spreading its feathers, raising a small cloud of dust to have a bath. It was too busy to notice me watching him. I am not sure how long that I spent watching that small bird. It appeared that it was enjoying a few moments it spent having its bath. It paid no attention as I edged the driver's door open. Looking in the rearview mirror, I saw the beginnings of a small grin. I am not sure how long I sat there but it was only about two minutes. When the small brownish bird had finished its bath, it just quickly flitted into a tree.

There I was patiently standing in line at Tim's waiting to place my order. It was early on a Saturday morning. Here was a young ponytailed girl dressed in her red Tim Bits soccer jersey and red soccer socks. Her tiny fingers twirled around her father's finger. The red jersey went almost to her knees. She stood mesmerized by the display case filled with its goodies.

It appeared as if she could have been asking for everything she saw. She looked up at her father with her 'please, dad' smile. As they were walking out of Tim's, there were two things I noticed. She had a great big smile and a box of Tim Bits. I heard the word - "next".

There I was on tree lined Lee Avenue returning from my five-kilometre walk enjoying the cool evening breeze. Walking towards me was a stroller and what appeared to be a grandmother, mother, and young girl. The young girl was proudly pushing the black stroller. The stroller had a screened cover. I thought that she was pushing her younger sibling. I was wrong. The girl was pushing a tabby cat peering contentedly sitting in the stroller. There were four people with smiles. The little girl's smile gave a sense of accomplishment. The grandmother's and mother's smiles were ones of knowing parents. My smile was one of sheer enjoyment at a small vignette that could never reoccur. The three adults just nodded at one another and not a word was spoken. It made the last ten minutes of my walk seem to pass in almost a flash.



There I was ... I could keep writing for pages. Each of us has had many similar small experiences that bring fleeting moments of joy into our lives. These experiences allow us to cope with harder parts of our lives.



District 12 Norfolk

Executive

President	Doug Thompson	519 426 1063	president 12@ districts.rtoero.ca
Past President	Alfred Guidolin	519 582 2945	alfredguidolin@gmail.com
1st Vice President	Rosey Guidolin	519 582 2945	rosaleenguidolin@icloud.com
Interim Secretary	Liz Whiton	519 209 6563	lizwhiton@gmail.com
Treasurer	Ginger Pullen	519 582 2661	gingerpullen 46@yahoo.com

Committee Chairs

Archives	Ruth Ellen Kelly	519 426 9207	2kelly@bell.net
Goodwill/Foundation	Carol DeFields	519 586 3745	cjdefields@hotmail.com
Benefits	Margaret Payne	519 428 3489	margaret.payne@live.com
Membership	Lorie Dertinger	519 582 3385	ldery@execulink.com
	Deb Hillner	519 718 3007	debhillner@gmail.com
School Representatives	Carolynne Paton	519 428 3636	capaton@hotmail.com
Political Advocacy	Alfred Guidolin	519 582 2945	alfredguidolin@gmail.com
Community Grants	Peter Scovil	519 443 7297	peterandalma@gmail.com
Scholarships	Liz Whiton	519 209 6563	lizwhiton@gmail.com
Member at Large	Catharine Reed	519 426 7859	cathreed53@gmail.com
	Keith Ashley	519 428 2107	kashley2021@outlook.com

RTOERO District 12 Norfolk website https://district12.rtoero.ca

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