OAKLAND



GAZETTE

Governor Moses Wisner Mansion (ca. 1850)

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Dedicated to the history and heritage of Oakland County, Michigan THE OAKLAND COUNTY PIONEER AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY 405 Cesar E. Chavez Avenue Pontiac, Michigan 48342

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LYDIA BARNES POTTER HOLIDAY DECOR

Thank you to the Lydia Barnes Potter DAR Chapter for providing festive wreaths and evergreen arrangements at our 1865 Schoolhouse this season! Their chapter continues to do amazing gardening work around the schoolhouse. Our History Center campus has been elevated by the combined efforts of



many. We look forward to more such collaboration in 2021!

HISTORICAL SOCIETY A WINNER IN PONTIAC IMPACT CHALLENGE

We are thrilled to report that our Historical Society won second place in the Pontiac Community Foundation's Pontiac Impact Challenge! For two weeks, folks were asked to vote daily for one local nonprofit out of 19 worthy contenders to win funding. Hundreds of community members cast votes daily for us - and it made a difference, as we totaled nearly 20,000 votes. Thank you to everyone who took the time to click a vote, and who encouraged others to get involved, too. As part of the win, we were presented with a check for \$5,000.

REVIVING A TULIP BULBS TRADITION

We recently planted 500 tulip bulbs at Pine Grove...the same amount Moses Wisner planted here one season over 160 years ago. The effort also pays tribute to late OCPHS member Clarke Kimball, who lovingly planted bulbs here for many years. We thank the Kimball family for helping make these bulbs, locally purchased from Goldner Walsh Garden and Home, possible. It is our intention to

plant another round of 500 tulip bulbs each year; please contact us if you'd like to be involved with that effort this coming autumn.



NEW LEASE ON LIFE: 1926 PONTIAC FIRE TRUCK



Oakland History Center received an unexpected and exciting request for assistance this winter. Historic fire truck expert Dave Watts, an area resident, reached out with news that he'd acquired three fire trucks made by American LaFrance, in service many decades ago: A Flint, Pontiac, and Royal Oak truck, respectively, that he plans to restore to their historic glory. He wanted to know if we had any images or information on the 1926 truck that was part of Pontiac's department, or Station 3 where it was based. Our answer was yes! Among the images we provided him was this one of the station which stood on Close Street and was later demolished, and the very vehicle he now owns and is restoring. If anyone has memories of that particular fire station, let us know so that we can capture and share them!

Above paragraphs and images courtesy of Mike McGuinness and OCPHS archives collection.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER Charlotte Cooper



The Optimist saw the donut, while the Pessimist saw the hole.

The Optimist saw the glass half full, while the Pessimist saw the glass half empty.

The Optimist saw 2020 as a year of opportunities found, while the Pessimist saw 2020 as a year of opportunities lost.

The staff and volunteers at Oakland History Center seized the opportunity to do things differently during 2020. Events were presented in different formats. Money was raised through grant applications. The large room in the Carriage House became a very interesting museum exhibit space. The artifact storage area was cleaned and organized. The collections of arrowheads and points were re-inventoried. Artifacts from the 1700's were discovered and displayed. The property was improved and security lighting was restored.

We look forward to 2021 with optimism and enthusiasm. We change with the times, and will continue to do so. Our Society is alive and well.

Happy New Year! Charlotte

MOTIONS ADOPTED BY THE OCPHS BOARD OF DIRECTORS IN 2020

- 1...that OCPHS join the National Trust for Historic Preservation's "Preservation Leadership Forum" at the Organizational Level to facilitate access to grant opportunities through the NTHP (Jan 2020)
- 2...the amended "Diversity and Inclusion Policy" as presented by Mike McGuinness (Mar 2020)
- 3...At the Annual Meeting, Kathy Davis, Dave Decker, Joy Dockham, Bill Grandstaff, Ann Johnson, and Linda Porter were elected to the Board for the 2020-2023 term (May 2020)
- 4...elected officers for June 2020-June 2021: President Charlotte Cooper; First VP Sara Cote; Second VP Bill Grandstaff; Secretary Barbara Frye; Treasurer Joy Dockham (June 2020)
- 5...added Section 7 to Article IV of the Bylaws: "If and when necessary, the Meeting of the Members and business may be transacted electronically." (July 2020)
- 6...added Section 7 to Article V of the Bylaws: "If and when necessary, board meetings and business may be transacted electronically." (July 2020)
- 7...amended the Financial Investment Policy of 2008, as recommended by the Finance Committee, by decreasing the amount of the Endowment insured by the U.S. Government from 70% to 60%, and by increasing the amount of the

Endowment not insured by the U.S. Government from 30% to 40% (Oct 2020)

- 8...adopted the budget for 2021 as presented by the Finance Committee at the October meeting (Nov 2020)
- 9...adopted a resolution celebrating the historic impact of former Oakland County Commissioner Mattie McKinney Hatchett (Nov 2020)

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR Mike McGuinness



2020 was one for the history books. The current pandemic has shaped this past year in dramatic ways, but we've creatively adapted to advance our mission.

Our Historical Society was awarded \$86,000 in grant funding — smashing the past decade's annual totals combined. This was our most successful budget year in our organization's modern history,

despite the pandemic. We re-branded our location as the Oakland History Center. We introduced innovative programming ideas. Our commemorations of Oakland County's Bicentennial were re-imagined. We continued our exponential growth on social media. Our grounds were elevated and new features were added. We've made strides in modernizing the organization of our collections. Our archives have grown with a number of fascinating additions, and we can now proudly exhibit Governor Moses Wisner's Civil War pistol. Oak Hill Cemetery was benefited by multiple preservation projects. All of that was accomplished, and so much more.

No matter what external obstacles remain (or newly emerge) in the new year, we will continue our forward march. The cause of saving and celebrating our local history is too important and too fun not to keep going! The most important ingredient in this effort is you. Your membership, your involvement, your support. Thank you. I ask you to keep us a part of your life, so we can keep enriching the lives of all in the community.

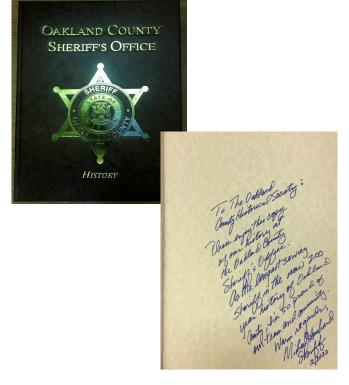
PS — In December we received many contributions on Giving Tuesday to boost our nonprofit. I'd like to recognize and thank those donors: Amy Annett, Emily Barberi, Debbie Battani, Jerry Beets, David Birdsong, Carol Ciaramitaro, Charlotte Cooper, Norma Jean Darr, Renee Floer, Ken Fugitt, Joanne Green, Dr. Tia Harvey, Rob Heath, Judy Hauser, Jane Karaguleff, Jane Kelley, Geoff Leach, James Lewis, Juanita Lindsey, Amy Capps McIntire, Carla Meier, Helen Olson, Amy Peterson, Jeanette Pierce, Angela Rakowski, Jill Robinson, Tina Rowan, Diana Rowland, Diane Salton, Robbie Samples, Francesca Silverman, Scott Stewart, Judge Mark Slavens, Sara Ston, Bette Twyman, Colleen Vieira, Jody Weissler DeFoe, Susan Loveland, Jackie Wilson, Barbara Winter, and Coleman Yoakum.

With gratitude and optimism, Mike

COLLECTIONS COMMITTEE SHENANIGANS Dave Decker

Your Collections Committee has been up to some shenanigans, that's for sure.

First off, let's recognize the donation of this history of the Oakland County Sheriff's Department. The Department is 200 years old this year, and we're honored to be the recipient of this history book, published in 2003. This copy has been signed by both Undersheriff Gerald McCabe and Sheriff Michael Bouchard. This history of the department fills a big hole in our library and we are really grateful to Undersheriff McCabe for his assistance. It's a welcome addition to the collection and has already been used to answer some questions.



Rumor has it that a new book celebrating the bicentennial of the department and its 200 year history is in the works and will be available in the spring. We look forward to getting that book – and some more signatures too – when it hits the streets.

A HISTORY HIGHLIGHT: WHAT IS THE OLDEST THING IN THE HISTORY CENTER COLLECTION?

Well, we have some mastodon bones. Those are definitely the oldest. And there is a large collection of over 600 Native American points and tools, which are the second oldest. The Native American points collection is under special scrutiny at the moment — a future article will cover those artifacts. One of the real highlights of working at the History Center are the surprising, and wonderful, "old timey stuff" we get to work with. Like sausage stuffers. Or chamber pots. Or corn shuckers. Everything has a story, and we get to tell those stories. The oldest European object(s) in the collection are these two wooden boxes...

Colonel Petrie's Tea Box



Accession number 1556.01, Colonel Petrie's tea box, ca 1714, donated by Mrs. Katherine Cuthbert Hathaway approx. 1964.

According to Mrs. Hathaway, the donor of these two boxes, this tea box was carried by Colonel Petrie, a British officer in the War of Spanish Succession, which was underway from 1701 to 1714. But you can't take tea onto the battlefield without the proper amendments, right? So we also have...

Colonel Petrie's Cream and Sugar Caddy

This box was used to carry the cream and sugar for Colonel Petrie's tea.



Accession number 1565, Colonel Petrie's sugar and creamer caddy, ca 1714, donated by Mrs. Katherine Cuthbert Hathaway approx. 1964.

Being conservative, we date these objects to about 1714, which makes them about 306 years old. Both objects are in truly outstanding condition. I only dropped the one once, and it didn't fall very far. Honest. You can barely see the damage. Imagine, though, good old Colonel Petrie at the end of a long hard day at the battlefield, calling for his orderly: "Spencer! Prepare my tea!" and poor old Spencer whipping up a good spot of the old brew, smoke and gunfire all around, from these fine wooden boxes, and our colonel relaxing in front of his tent, with all the comforts a hot cuppa brings.





Another Oldie But A Goodie...Stamp Act Document or Dispatch Box

Another early gem in our collection is this simple, embossed leather covered wooden box. What is the deal with the History Center and its old boxes?



Accession Number 1554, Stamp Act Document Box, ca 1765, donated by Mrs. Charles Van Buskirk approx. 1910. Please pardon the string. It's got delicate leather hinges and we don't want people opening the box.

Donated to the Pioneer and Historical Society in 1910 by Mrs. Charles Van Buskirk, this is listed in our records as a "trunk small leather". It's a leather-wrapped box with leather hinges, a clasp to hold it closed, and the inside is lined with newspaper — what appear to be news articles from an agricultural journal. There are brackets on the top which used to hold a handle.

Information provided by Mrs. Van Buskirk when she donated the box suggests that it was made by Mr. Kelly, her grandfather, while in Scotland. He brought it with him to the United States in 1765.

But we think there's more to the story – we think it's very likely an artifact of national significance.

The Stamp Act

Remember the Stamp Act from your American History class? In March of 1765, the British Parliament imposed the Stamp Act, meant to raise revenue to pay for a standing British army in the colonies. It was not popular in the colonies or abroad. It had been imposed without consultation from Colonial government and was taxation without representation.

And so, in 1766, Parliament repealed the Act. In celebration, a number of leather-wrapped, embossed document boxes were made and used to carry the news of the repeal to the colonies, most embossed with the words "Stamp Act Repl'd" and the date. Our box does not have that embossing, but it so closely resembles other examples of Stamp Act document boxes that we're pretty sure that's what we have.

We know of two examples of this box in other collections. They can be found at the <u>National Museum of American History's Behren's Center</u>, and in <u>Princeton University Library's Museum Objects Collection</u>. We've reached out to the National Museum, but expect no response. It's the Smithsonian, what can you do?

We are also reaching out to Princeton – hopefully we'll have an update on this soon.

OAK HILL CEMETERY WALK 2020 Nancy Calendine

The annual cemetery walk took place on September 20th. Due to covid, we ran small groups of ten people with a total of 18 tours from 2-5 pm. The theme was "Prosperity and Prohibition," focusing on the roaring twenties and featuring 6 historical figures from that era. We had 22 volunteers that served as guides, merchandise sellers, and parking attendants. On September 18th, Mike McGuinness and 15 General Motors employees helped with a cemetery cleanup. Larry Keehn and Renee Deardeuff spent a month volunteering their time to repair and straighten asylum lot headstones for the walk. We raised \$4,844.96 through ticket sales, donations, and merchandise sales. Our expenses included food, insurance, and the purchase of 6 headset speakers which totaled \$608.63. Final total was \$4,236.96. We plan to use a portion of the money to purchase section markers and possibly a permanent map designating each section.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY MAKES DONATION TO **BOOST TRANSPORTATION MUSEUM**

Mike McGuinness

The story of Oakland County has been fundamentally shaped by transportation, both by how our people and goods were moved and how many of our signature industries were (and still are today) in the transportation field. Helping to preserve and convey that powerful story is the Pontiac Transportation Museum. A decade ago, Tim and Penny Dye (members of our Historical Society) started the Pontiac-Oakland Museum celebrating the Pontiac brand and Oakland Motors in Pontiac, Illinois on Route 66. They, along with an impressive team of supporters. are now establishing the Transportation Museum at the former Crofoot School on Pike Street in Pontiac, Michigan. Their superb collection of carriages, wagons, buggies, trucks, military vehicles, automobiles, bicycles and more produced in Pontiac is a brilliant trove of our county's transportation history. When their initial construction phase is complete, they will be even more of a priceless addition to our local history landscape. We've been actively supporting their endeavor and, in our latest step of solidarity, we've just made a \$1,000 contribution to their nonprofit. To learn more about them, visit:

www.pontiactransportationmuseum.org

HARVEST DAYS, FLEA MARKETS, AND **GHOST TOURS - OH MY!** Mike McGuinness

The autumn months were a magical time at our Oakland History Center campus this year, making the most of the outdoors and social distancing while Mother Nature was amenable.



In September we introduced the Motorama at Pine Grove series, with hot rods and classic cars on display in the grove. We featured a weekly outdoor flea market every

Saturday in September and October, which raised funds for our nonprofit and brought the community together. Our drive-through Harvest Days celebration highlighted our transformed grounds, including dozens of unique scarecrow creations and zombies made out of leaves. We want to especially thank Genisys Credit Union for their sponsorship, in addition to all the organizations that made or sponsored scarecrows.



Member Sally Strait shows off the Waterford Historical Society's scarecrow creation.

Wrapping up the festive fall season, I led 16 walking ghost tours of downtown Pontiac. They generated over \$3,000 for our organization and exposed participants to some of the macabre and mysterious stories of Pontiac's It was a new feature, as was much of our programming offerings in 2020, and we plan to bring these fun activities back in 2021.





Images courtesy of Mike McGuinness



the important stories of the departed alive. Every resident of our area shapes our culture — and shapes the lives of the people they knew. Below we spotlight a few of the deaths in 2020 that resonated here at the Oakland History Center. During their lives these folks made history, helped shape Oakland County, and impacted many others; we know this is true for loved ones you've lost this year as well. We extend our heartfelt condolences to the below history-makers' families, and to you.

BILL BULLARD, JR., Aged 77, of Highland: His lengthy public service career included many leadership roles -- Highland Township Trustee, Highland Township Supervisor, State Representative, State Senator, Oakland County Commissioner for eight years, Oakland County Commission Chair for six years, Oakland County Clerk and Register of Deeds. During his two decades in the state legislature, he sponsored more than 170 bills that were signed into law.

DR. MICHAEL DOYLE, Aged 75, of Clarkston: Practicing emergency room physician for over 45 years. Director of the McLaren Oakland Hospital's Emergency Medicine Residency Program. Many of those medical residents are successful physicians around the world today.

ALICE GILBERT, Aged 88, of Bloomfield Township: First woman elected Oakland County Circuit Court Judge and, as a result, first woman to be elected to any countywide office in Oakland. First a district court judge, she was elected countywide in 1976. She unsuccessfully ran for Congress in 1992, and returned to the bench three years later. Throughout her career she presided over more than 110,000 cases. Wow.

CECILIA HOLLOMAN, Aged 70, formerly of Pontiac: Graduated from Oakland University, University of Michigan, Wayne State Law School, Oral Roberts University, and Harvard University Kennedy School of Government. Served on the Pontiac School Board. Worked for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Founder of the National Legacy Communities Initiative

MOTOKO FUJISHIRO HUTHWAITE, Aged 92, formerly of Pontiac: Part of the Monuments Men team that saved priceless art, artifacts, and monuments following World War II. Presented with the Congressional Gold Medal in 2015 for her service. She was an instructor at Wayne State University and worked at a publishing firm for many years. She was a Life Member of our Historical Society.

RUTH BADER GINSBERG, Aged 87: Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, 1993 to 2020. The second woman ever, and the first Jewish woman, on the high court. Prior to that tenure, her legal career focused on advocacy for gender equality, especially for women in the workplace.

KATHERINE JOHNSON, Aged 101: One of the first African American women to work as a NASA scientist. Her calculations of orbital mechanics at NASA were critical to the first (and subsequent) American spaceflights. She was portrayed in the movie Hidden Figures

AL KALINE, Aged 85, of Bloomfield Hills: Detroit Tigers baseball legend. Nicknamed "Mr. Tiger," he was one of the most distinguished and decorated players in the history of baseball. After 22 years of playing with the team, Kaline retired in 1974 after surpassing the 3,000 hits milestone.

DICK KERNEN, Aged 82: Placement Director of the Specs Howard School of Media Arts in Southfield. Started at WXYZ radio, and as a DJ at gigs including the Walled Lake Casino; later program director of WRIF radio station. Began at Specs Howard in 1972, received the institution's lifetime achievement award the month before his death this year. He influenced 15,000 students' careers.

BARRY KING, Aged 89, of Birmingham: He never stopped looking for answers, and seeking to bring the killer to justice, following his beloved son Timothy King's abduction and murder. Tim was the final known victim of the Oakland County Child Killer, in 1977.

NICK MENGHINI, Aged 88, of Waterford: The only child of Italian immigrants, he grew up in the Upper Peninsula's mining country. After college he enlisted in the U.S. Army and was stationed in Germany during the Korean

War. He taught math in Waterford Schools for 34 years and, during that time, he also ushered in the district's first computer system. His beloved son Brian Menghini is a longtime member of our Historical Society.

GERALDINE (GERRY) RATHBURG, Aged 95, of Oxford: Previously of Lake Orion. She was a mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother. Gerry was a Life Member of our Historical Society; she and her late husband, Bill, loved volunteering with local history efforts and attending events here.

GENE SCHNELZ, Aged 87, of Novi: Oakland County Circuit Court Judge for 28 years, retiring from the bench in 2007. He grew up in Hazel Park, went to Detroit College of Law, established a municipal law practice in Walled Lake in 1958, and was elected at the district court level before ascending countywide. He was married 64 years and was an elder at St. Matthew Lutheran Church of Walled Lake for over fifty years.

REV. RICHARD SNOAD, Aged 94, of Rochester Hills: Served during World War II in Germany. Taught in Avondale Schools for twenty years, including Alternative Education. Minister for twenty years. President of Good Samaritan Lutheran Church in Pontiac. Served on the Troy Board of Education. Loving husband for seventy years.

STEVE SZABO, Aged 88, of White Lake: A wrestling coach for over forty years, he was inducted in the Michigan Coaches Hall of Fame. He taught and coached at Pontiac Central High School, led the district's Physical Education department, and taught driver's training. He played semiprofessional football with the Pontiac Arrows and Firebirds until he was forty years old.

EDDIE VAN HALEN, Aged 65: Lead guitarist and main songwriter of the influential rock band Van Halen. Regarded as one of the greatest guitar players in American rock and roll history. He has family members who reside in Oakland County.

JAMES WALSH, Aged 74, of Waterford: English teacher at Walled Lake Central High School from 1968 to 2013. Influenced thousands of students over the decades, including our Executive Director. A member of our Historical Society, he was enjoying greater community involvement and world travels in his retirement.

REATHA (FOWLER) WILLIAMS, Aged 96, of Bloomfield Hills: She was a Rosie the Riveter in Pontiac during the war efforts. Later, she worked for the Pontiac School District for nearly three decades -- the first African American secretary hired by the district. She helped shepherd many of the newly-hired African American teachers and staff through the myriad obstacles of the era. In addition to her loving family, she was active in many social organizations and at Pontiac's All Saints Episcopal Church. Her daughter Dyann Hayes is a member of our Historical Society.

JOE WOODS, JR., Aged 92, of Pontiac: Part of the Great Migration, coming from Alabama to Pontiac in the 1940s in search of better opportunity. Served in the Korean War, discharged with honors. Worked for over 45 years at General Motors in the Pontiac Motor Division. Active member of United Auto Workers Local 653, and later a Trustee on the UAW Retirees Board of Directors. Active in his community, his church, his American Legion post, and so much more.

LAMONT "LEE" BEGOLE, Aged 99, of Novi: Veteran of World War II. Novi's Police Chief for 37 years, instrumental in their force's evolution; the police headquarters is named in his honor.

SUE ANN DOUGLAS, Aged 77, of Rochester: Served as an Oakland County Commissioner and very active in her community, including service on the Rochester Planning Commission and City Council.

WILLIAM V. HUNTOON, Aged 75, of Waterford: Owner of the Huntoon Funeral Home in Pontiac for many years. Very active in Jaycees and Rotary.

MCKINLEY "JAB" JONES, Aged 76, of Pontiac: Longtime community leader, worked for City of Pontiac as Holland Community Center Director, among many other roles.

DOUGLAS TREAIS, Aged 88, of Pontiac: Respected educator in Pontiac and Rochester for over three decades, including as Rochester Schools Superintendent.

CHUCK YEAGER, Aged 97: First pilot in history confirmed to have exceeded the speed of sound in level flight, in 1947.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

OCPHS is pleased to welcome the following new members who have joined since our last publication...

Nicole Andress - Pontiac Jerry Beets and Earl Vernier - Pontiac Benjamin Bird - Auburn Hills David Birdsong – Pontiac Mary Ellen Bleakley - Missouri Brigida and Juan Cantu – Pontiac Carrie Christoph - Farmington Hills Chas Claus - Clarkston Julie Ann Dreyer – Ann Arbor Renee Floer - Pontiac Ken Fugitt and Chad Marr - Pontiac Henry Grix and Howard Israel - Bloomfield Hills Dr. Tia Harvey - Pontiac Kara Kaminski and Rose Rhinehart - Pontiac Chene Koppitz - Waterford Cynthia and Nate Krupp - Eagle Susan Loveland - Pontiac Amy Peterson - Clarkston Jeanette Pierce – Detroit Douglas Ritter - Clarkston Tina Rowan – Ann Arbor Robbie Samples - Pontiac Francesca Silverman - Troy Andrew Solon - Lansing Kim Somsky - Lake Orion Sara Ston - Commerce Rick Talbot - Plymouth Ronald Tunningley - Waterford Leigh and John Ustick - Bloomfield Hills Colleen Vieira - Lake Orion Jody Weissler DeFoe - Southfield Jackie and Patrick Wilson - Clinton Township JoAnn Wright - Southfield Patricia Younie - Washington State

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MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

*All upcoming events are TENTATIVE, considering uncertain public health or other external factors.

Throughout Year: Virtual History Talks

February 18: Pontiac Schools Desegregation Virtual History Presentation, with Oakland Literacy Council

May 15: OCPHS 147th Annual Meeting & Election

Spring 2021: Outdoor Flea Market Series

June 3: Governor Moses Wisner Birthday Celebration

June 14: Flag Day Ceremony

June 26: Governor Pat Van Wagoner Celebration

Summer 2021: Outdoor Concert Series

July 24-25: Summer Ice Cream Social

August 30: Pontiac School Bus Bombings 50th
Anniversary Commemoration

Fall 2021: Motorama at Pine Grove Series; Oak Hill Cemetery Cleanups

September 19: Oak Hill Cemetery Walk

October 16-17: Harvest Days Celebration

October 24-25: Downtown Pontiac Walking Ghost Tours

November: Gala Auction

December 11-12: Christmas Open House

Follow us on social media and watch your email for further information on these events!

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Oakland Gazette is a publication of the Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society. Submissions, content suggestions or comments are welcome.

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Contributors: Nancy Calendine, Charlotte Cooper, Dave Decker, Mike McGuinness, Kari Vaughan

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