

July 1992

TCMA Activities Newsletter

Texas Cave Management Association (TCMA)

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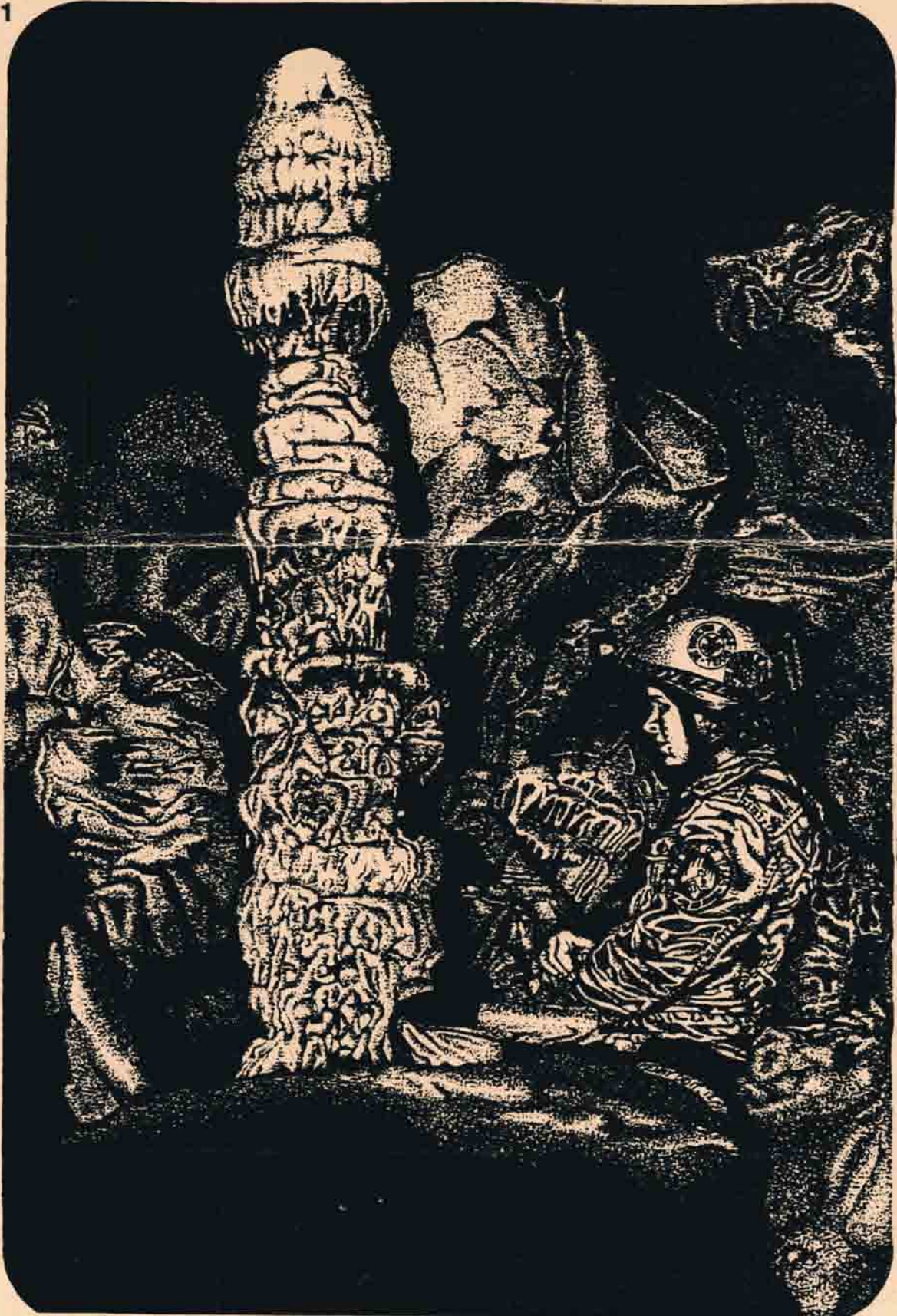
ACTIVITIES NEWSLETTER

NW
TX

Solutions To Cave Related Problems

Vol. 3, No. 1

July 1992



The TCMA Activities Newsletter is the official publication of the Texas Cave Management Association, a Consortium of the National Speleological Society. Distribution is free to TCMA members. Associate membership costs \$10 annually. Lifetime membership, in equal \$25 installments, is \$100. Send membership requite to TCMA, P.O. Box 310732, New Braunfels, TX 78131. Additional complimentary copies are distributed on a temporary basis at the Editor's discretion to cave owner*, NSS members and internal organizations, and other* involved in cave conservation projects.

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POSTMASTER Send address changes to the Editor, Jay Jordan, 1518 Devon Circle, Dallas, TX 75217-1205. Telephone (214) 398-9272.

DEADLINES: Articles, announcements, and material for publication must be submitted to the editor.

EXCHANGES: The Texas Cave Management Association will exchange newsletter with other grottos at the Grotto's discretion. Contact the editor.

TCMA Officers

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR Jack Ralph
BOARD CHAIRMAN Carl Ponebabeck
DIRECTORS Ron Ralph
 Mike Warton
 Jay Jordan
 Mike Walsh

Relevant Cave-oriented Information

Texas & Northern New Mexico
CAVE RESCUE Call Collect (512) 686-0234

Texas Caver
 The Texas Caver
 U.T. Station
 Box 8026
 Austin, TX 78713-8026

Texas Speleological Assoc.
 John Spence
 U.T. Station
 Box 8026
 Austin, TX 78713-8026

National Speleological Society
 \$25/year NSS
 Cave Avenue
 Huntsville, AL 35810

COVER ART: Pen-and-ink drawing by **Kenny McGee**.

Conservation Calendar

June

7-18 Kant geology workshop, Mammoth Cave, offered by Center for Cave and Kant Studies, Western Kentucky University, and Mammoth Cave National Park.

14-90 Speleology workshop, Mammoth Cave, offered by Center for Cave and Kant Studies, Western Kentucky University, and Mammoth Cave National Park.

14-90 Exploration of Mammoth Cave, at the park. Offered by Center for Cave and Kant Studies, Western Kentucky University, and Mammoth Cave National Park.

91-97 Carlsbad Cavern Restoration Field Camp, New Mexico. Contact: Dick Venters, CCRP Coordinator, 410 Stallion Rd., Rio Rancho, NM 87124-2326.

August

3-7 National Speleological Society 1992 convention, Salem, Ind. Includes NSS Conservation and Management Section sessions and meeting, many other events.

December

6 Annual Wayne's Cave cleanup, Indiana. Sponsored by Indiana Kant Conservancy and Central Indiana Grotto.

(Send calendar additions/deletions to the **TCMA Activities Newsletter** editor.)

Next Meeting

by **OZTOTL** Staff

The next meeting of the Texas Cave Management Association will be on **Tuesday, Aug. 18** in Austin, Texas. Please contact **Mike Walsh** at TCMA for more information. His telephone number is (512) 629-2168.

Meetings are usually at the Austin Public Library branch on William Cannon in South Austin. The meeting will begin promptly at 7:30 p.m.

Caver Meetings in Austin, New Braunfels

by Jay Jordan

The weekend of July 11-12, Dave "Cave" and Barbe McClung, Sheila Knight and I drove to Austin for a meeting at Pete

Strickland's place near Lake Travis. **Dozens of Austin and San Antonio cavers** were in attendance for the annual **swim and slide show party**, along with a dinner and hot **tubbing**.

Although we did not go **exploring** that very evening, we **talked an awful lot about caving**. Many good caving **spots** from **Mexico, New Mexico, NSS Conventions** and elsewhere were **shown**. Many of the legends of **Texas caving** were in attendance. We even saw **Terry Holsinger (yea, he lives!)** at the party. Another featured attraction, **besides Pete's Eighth Wonder of the Caving World - his 50-foot long concrete dam - was the California ranch-style house** he had **spent four years** building on the **shores of his pond**. It is a **very attractive, well-built home with high ceilings, hardwood floors and lots of kitchen and living space**.

Pete and **Jocie** were **land enough** to let the four of us stay **over** for the night, **after the reveling died down about 2 am. or so**. We awoke **refreshed** and went **swimming**, then had **coffee and homemade muffins - courtesy Jocie!**

After a **leisurely morning**, we **began driving east** into Austin via the very **scenic Ranch Road 2222**, then south on the **MoPac Expressway** and **Capitol of Texas Parkway** toward **New Braunfels**, **stopping at Taco Cabana** for a breakfast taco along the way.

We arrived in **New Braunfels** shortly before noon **Sunday**, in time for the **Texas Cave Management Association meeting**. Those in attendance also included: **Mike Walsh, Jack Ralph, Alejandro Villagomez, Ron Ralph, Carolyn Biegert and Pat Geary**.

After a **grilled hamburger luncheon** and **swimming** in the beautiful, spring-fed **Comal River** in **back of Mike's home**, the **TCMA business meeting** was conducted.

Among **items discussed**, the riding **lawn mower** that **TCMA purchased** has had recent problems. **Alejandro** outlined the mechanical problems and **proposed** that the mower be sold, with proceeds going to **purchase** a new mower with **warranty**. **Mike** reported that all but \$300 or so of a grant for improving the Whirlpool Cave **Preserve** property **has been spent**, with expenditures including the mower, gravel for road **bow, etc.** **Alejandro's** motion, with a friendly amendment by Jay to **ask** the original mower's seller for help **and/or** remuneration, **passed**.

Another topic involved ongoing **talks** with a property management company for acquisition of **3.6 acres of land, including Lost Oasis Cave** in **Austin**. It was **moved** that Jay **contact** the **property** management company to **iron out details** surrounding a **survey** and title policy.

Mike's motion to **present** an application for a concession to the **Texas Parks and Wildlife Department** to run recreational caving tripe in some **state-owned caves** was approved. **Mike** said the plan, if **successful**, could **gain** **access** to some **caves** on **Texas parks** that **cavers** aren't already visiting.

Editor's Note: **Formal minutes** of the **TCMA** meeting will be **published** at a later date.

TCMA News

by Jay Jorden

Editor's Note: Here in a nutshell is the latest **Texas Cave Management Association** news.

The **Texas Cave Management Association** board on **June 11, 1992** voted to enter into a **contract with NationsBank**, through the **Federal Deposit Insurance Corp.**, for **purchase of approximately 3.6 acre* of land** in **South Austin, Texas**, which include* **Lost Oasis Cave**.

The **cave**, which **contains** a large room and blow a considerable quantity of air, **is located** next to a **subdivision project** and a **junior high school** which **is under construction**. **Mike Warton, an Austin caver and TCMA member**, **has installed** an excellent gate on the **cave**, and a fence was built to include the adjacent land **inside** a compound.

The board met at a **meeting room** of the **Austin Public Library** after member again toured the **cave property**. **Member* also visited** the nearby **Whirlpool Cave Preserve**, which **is owned and managed by TCMA**.

Member* present at the meeting included **Warton, Mike Walsh, Jack Ralph, Carl Ponebshek and Jay Jorden**. Other **were Charlie Savvas and Lee Jay Grave***.

More information on **Lost Oasis** will become available in the coming month, as a **closing** on the property is scheduled.

TCMA News: A Note from the Executive Director

by Jack Ralph

It's time for the recreational caving community to take a long, hard look at their level of commitment to the resource that they depend on for fun and adventure. I contend that if we don't participate and commit our **time, money and energies** to **preserving** and managing cave **resources** they will be lost, **period**. **We will not immediately lose access to all caves; it will be a gradual process** through "development," **withdraw! and neglect**. It's time for an "attitude check*." **For too long we have been thinking that maintaining good cave owner relations and adhering to the "take nothing but pictures -" ethic was sufficient** precaution and payment for visitation and protection. While these are unquestionably **necessary, it's** no longer enough.

Contrary to our impression* within the limited sphere of fellow **cavers**, there is no **dear**, strong land or **resource** ethic in the United States at this time. The National Environmental Policy Act ~~was~~ adopted almost 20 years ago, and it **still** is considered to **represent** a controversy between public welfare and private land ownership **rights**. We have the duty to represent the environmental ethic inherent in this debate and educate the **public** about our position. **Due** to our recreational activities, we **have** an unusual sensitivity to the consequences of **unregulated** development on cave resources, groundwater hydrology, **etc.**

Caving, however, is not a **licensed profession** because society as a whole has not **recognized** the potentially severe **consequences** of incompetent resource management. **Our responsibility** goes beyond **marshalling** data and **information** and **cataloging** **thaw facts**. **Our responsibility** is to put facts into a **context** of **shared community values** to affect appropriate change, in other words **advocacy**. We are responsible for **strengthening**, at every opportunity, the **resource** and **land ethic** that is slowly developing in our society. We are among the **group** that must lead society to a **recognition that humankind has to become an integral part** of our earth's ecosystem **and** suffer the **consequences** of existence on a **dying planet**.

The TCMA is relatively new. As a professional and **scientific** society, our mission encompasses scientific study, resource **advocacy** and **professional** management services. **Our membership** include* an extraordinarily **diverse** group of **skilled** people. **Recognizing**, motivating and utilizing the **skills** and **expertise** of our entire membership is **crucial** to our continued **success**.

This note is **designed** to motivate you to become a more active participant in the TCMA. The **issues** go beyond recreation. **Foster** policies encouraging proper management of **cave resources**. **Campaign** for effective mitigation of development **projects**. Sponsor a cave in your **area**. Find new members. **Maintain** your own economic support of the group. Be part of the **solution**. TCMA is **working**. We are a registered nonprofit organization. We **have** the infrastructure and background to facilitate your **commitment**. Call or write, but do it now.

Editor's Note: The Texas Cave Management **Association** is a nonprofit organization that owns and **manages** cave resources. It is based in Central **Texas**. The address for more information is: P.O. Box 310732, New **Braunfels, TX 78131**. The phone numbers are (512) 629-2160 or (214) 398-9272.

construction of an International Center for Bat **Research and Conservation** at Texas **A&M University**.

Dr. Marlin D. **Tuttle** and Dr. David Schmidly are **co-directors** of the new center, termed the world's first institution devoted to **studying** bats.

Two Fort Worth foundations have committed **\$1 million** in **grants** to fund joint research and education programs involving **bats**, including the new center, by Texas **A&M's** Wildlife and Fisheries Science Department and the Austin-based Bat Conservation International.

"While dogs are man's best **companion**, animal friend, **bats** are man's but **ecological** friend," Schmidly said. "Bats pollinate plants, **disperse** seeds and eat countless tons of **insects**, all while playing a **crucial role** in **perpetuating** the earth's delicate **ecosystems**."

Announcement of the center and **funding** by the **Sid W. Richardson** and **Ban** Foundations came May **26** at a **Dallas news** conference. It preceded broadcast of "The Secret World of **Bats**," a **CBS Television** special program.

Schmidly, one of the world's leading authorities on bats, said they are often **misunderstood**.

"When some people **see** a **bat**, they immediately conjure up that it is a rabid **animal** and they want to harm it," Schmidly said.

In reality, **rabies** is no more prevalent in **bats** than in most other **animals**.

Schmidly said Texas has more **species** of bats - **32** - than any other state. **Texas bats** eat about half a million pounds of **insects** each day, **according to** a prepared statement from Texas **A&M**.

Tuttle, founder and executive director of **BCI**, brought **Zoie** the bat to the **news** conference. **His** non-profit group researches and **promotes** bat **conservation**.

Tuttle, who **wrote** the book America's Neighborhood Bats, said that almost 1,000 kinds of **bats** worldwide help maintain many fragile **ecosystems**.

Bats, in their pollination role, **are** crucial to reseeded of rain forests, **many of which are** threatened, said Tuttle.

He said Bracken Cave near **San Antonio** is home to between 20 million and 40 million **bats**, the world's largest concentration. But **many** species of **bats** are threatened or endangered, scientists say. Others are now extinct **because of** **slayings** or habitat **losses**.

Schmidly, author of The Bats of Texas, said the **A&M** center will provide a model program for conservation efforts.

"Bats are a keystone species in many of the world's ecosystems," said Schmidly, adding that the center will study bats' link to economic development and land management.

Bat Research Center

from **staff reports**

DALLAS - **Two** scientist! **have** announced the planned

Texas Cave Management Association: Minutes of June 11, 1992 Meeting

submitted by Jack Ralph

Fundraising

– Jay **Jorden** will draft a letter recruiting Patrons. It should be ready for the NSS Convention.

Cave Acquisition

.. Several caves were discussed, but no action was taken on specific **cans** until later in the meeting.

– Mike **Walsh** made a motion that it should be TCMA policy to actively work toward cave ownership and cave access agreements. Second by Jay. Motion carried.

Cave Management

– \$366 was spent for liability and medical insurance. All TCMA members are now covered with \$1 million liability and \$75,000 accidental death while conducting TCMA business.

.. The 0-9 Well contract is coming up for renewal soon. Mike **Warton** will continue his stewardship of this resource.

Whirlpool Cave Preserve

..TCMA used \$430 of the \$1,000 grant from the **Wray Trust** to purchase an 18 horsepower riding lawnmower.

– Additional road base material will be purchased to make an all-season road to the property.

– Dave (the friendly neighbor) asked to borrow the property for the weekend of July 18 for a staff party. Unanimous approval from the board.

.. It was proposed that the Sunday following each TCMA regular meeting be set aside for the group to meet informally and possibly lead trips to Whirlpool. Discussion will continue.

Monitoring Activities

.. Peter **Marsh** with the City of Austin was informed that gate construction on Midnight Cave would have to be postponed until September at the earliest. TCMA remains active in pursuing management activities with the city on other cave projects.

.. Meetings with Texas Parks and Wildlife Department continue regarding the inspection and management of the caves on the Lakeline Mall area. If funding for the project is decreased,

TCMA will re-evaluate the economics of the situation.

..Mike **Walsh** and **Carl Ponebshek** will continue discussions with the Edwards Underground Water District concerning cave resources in the recharge area.

..TCMA continues to meet with representatives of the Texas Nature Conservancy to strengthen ties and build a closer working relationship.

Membership

.. Jim **Wolff** completed the new membership list. Copies were handed out.

Public Relation*

.. Jay **Jorden** reports that the Austin American-Statesman may be doing an article on TCMA soon. No more information is available at this time.

.. The Patron Information Sheet will be drafted soon.

.. Jay **hopes** that a TCMA newsletter will be published soon.

Education

..Work is under way to develop lesson plans for middle and high schools in rural recharge areas concerning the connection of caves, groundwater and pollution.

.. **Activities** continue to collect all cave-related videos for the TCMA library.

Bat Protection

.. David Cooper of Bat Conservation International indicated that he may join the advisory board for bat conservation. We look forward to his continued support.

Liaison Activities

.. TPWD and TNC work discussed further. Additional measures will be taken to secure access to TPWD caves on behalf of the cavers of Texas. TPWD still seems burdened at resolving the question of liability and habitat protection on the park.

.. TCMA was contacted by the Karst Waters Institute of West Virginia to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding to increase our working relationship with them. Mike Walsh will pursue the details of the MOU and draft a response.

Publications

.. A sum of \$495 was spent on initial printing charges toward completion of the 1989 National Cave Management Symposium proceedings. Jay is finishing up the last paper and only requires a final proofreading/editing to have a camera-ready draft. Almost \$500 more will be needed for printing costs. Jay hopes to have the publication ready for the NSS Convention.

– The newsletter has been hindered by insufficient funding and

information. Jay asked for material.

.. The Bat Publication is coming along.

-- The publication, My Daddy ~~Was~~ a **Caver**, is ready and will be for sale at the convention.

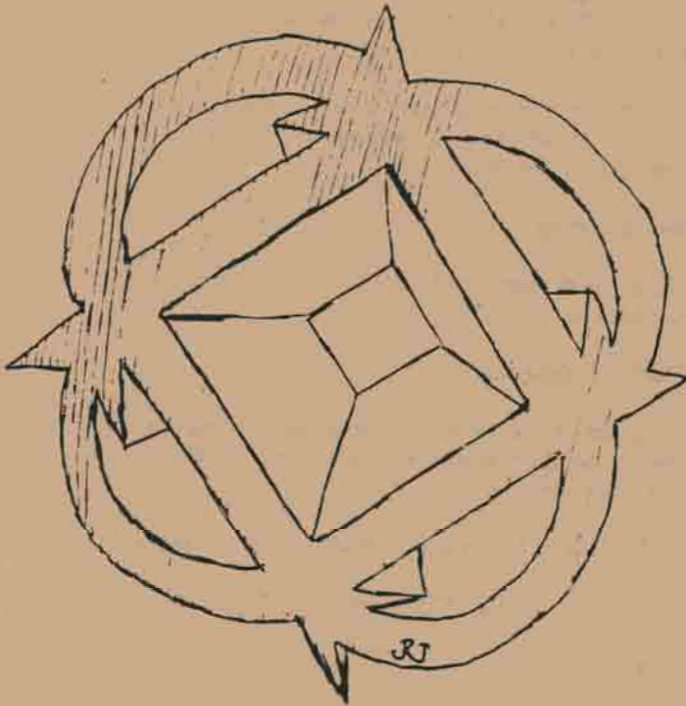
Legal

- **Mike Walsh** explained that the **number** of **requests** for tours to Whirlpool Cave far **outstrips** the availability of qualified volunteers. Another system must be found to compensate those individuals that have given such a great **deal** of time and energy **coordinating** and leading **trips**. The legal aspects of contracting "outfitters" to lead trips for compensation is being **explored**.

- The acquisition of **Lost Oasis Cave** was discussed. A motion was **made** by Jay **Jorden** that TCMA pursue acquisition of the **Los Oasis** Cave tract pursuant to the purchase and sale agreement with the **FDIC** and further authorizing **Carl Ponebahek** to **sign** the agreement and documents necessary for closing. Carl **seconded**. Passed unanimously.

Miscellaneous

The next **meeting** of the TCMA was set for Sunday, July 12, at noon at **Mike Walsh's** apartment complex swimming pool. **The** meeting was to be combined with a **swim party** and general food/**BYOB** bacchanal. Family members and friends were invited.



Texas Cave Management Association
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FIRST CLASS

