

BURROWING OWL

CENTRAL NEW MEXICO AUDUBON SOCIETY, ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

OCTOBER - NOVEMBER 1985

CALENDAR

Welcome! Central New Mexico Audubon Society meets the third Thursday of each month at 7:30 P.M., St. Timothy's Lutheran Church, Copper and Jefferson, N.E. Nonmembers are welcome at all meetings, field trips, and special events.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 17 - Regular Meeting

Bring some momentos of your summer activities for a show-and-tell session entitled "What I Did Last Summer." Slides (up to 12), artifacts, etc., would be welcome. Mr. Ault, wildlife biologist with the Fish & Wildlife Service, will bring us up to date on the problems and controversy surrounding the Ojo electric line in the Jemez Mountains. See Welcome Paragraph for time and place.

SATURDAY & SUNDAY, OCTOBER 19 & 20 - NMAC Meeting and Field Trip

Meeting: 1 p.m., Saturday, October 19, at the NMIMF campus.

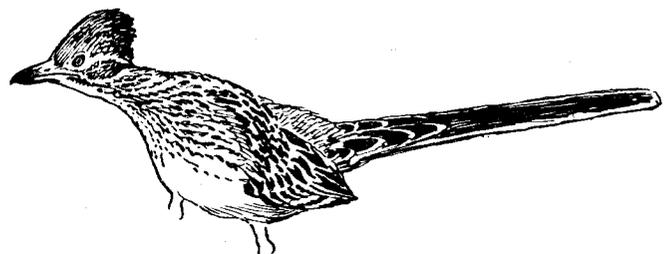
Field Trip: Meet at Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge headquarters at 6:45 a.m. Call George or Evelyn Price (831-5028) or any Council officer listed on the back page for more information. Everyone is welcome at the meeting and/or the field trip.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 26 - Field Trip

Join Mary Lou Arthur (256-7359) for a half-day trip to Juan Tabo Gorge, a locale favored by many wintering birds, such as Williamson's Sapsucker, Yellow-Bellied Sapsucker, Golden Crowned Kinglet, and Cassin's Finch. Meet at 7:30 at the intersection of Tramway and the road that leads to Juan Tabo Picnic Area.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 10 - Field Trip

Visit the former Elena Gallegos Land Grant, recently made accessible after the City and the Forest Service acquired most of it for Open Space and wilderness. We will explore portions of Baca and Pino Canyons, where we should see a good number of foothill residents and winter visitors. Meet at 9 a.m. in the parking lot of the Elena Gallegos Picnic Area, which can be reached by turning east off Tramway Blvd. about two miles north of Montgomery. Signs on Tramway mark the turnoff road. Since this trip, led by Hart Schwarz (266-1810), will probably last until midafternoon, bring lunch and water.



THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 21 - Regular Meeting

For some years, CNMAS has sponsored camperships for teachers to the Audubon Camp of the West. This year we sent three teachers to the camp, and they will share their adventures with us at this meeting. See Welcome Paragraph for time and place.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7 - Field Trip

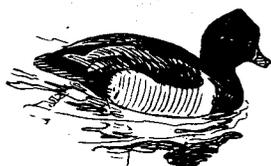
Accompany Bruce Halstead (766-2174 work or 299-9397 home) on a pre-Christmas reconnaissance at Bosque del Apache NWR, where the cranes, geese, and ducks should be abundant, as well as many birds of prey. Meet in the parking lot of Physics & Astronomy Building, Yale & Lomas, N.E., at 7 a.m. for an all-day adventure culminating with a stop at the Owl Cafe.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

This month I want to tell you about two books which would make good gifts for the coming holiday season, or you might want to buy them for your own library. They are both conservation-oriented, a subject we are all interested in.

The first book is by Paul Brooks, Speaking for Nature, How Literary Naturalists from Henry Thoreau to Rachel Carson Have Shaped America. First published by Houghton Mifflin as a hard-cover in 1980, it is now available as a paperback from Sierra Club Books. The roll call of authors mentioned in this 304-page book is impressive: Burroughs, Muir, Edwin Way Teale (my favorite), Sidney Lanier, John Wesley Powell, Bob Marshall, George Bird Grinnell, Frank M. Chapman, Florence A. Merriam, Mary Austin, William Beebe, Roger Tory Peterson, Loren Eiseley, and Rachel Carson. I have missed many, and since the cutoff date was 1962, there are several well-knowns such as Edward Abbey who will have to wait until a later edition.

The second book is a big, beautiful National Geographic Society publication



titled Our Threatened Inheritance, Natural Treasures of the United States. This 400-page book with 300 color photographs by James P. Blair and written by Ron Fisher was compiled after a year's trip around our country visiting federal holdings--the national parks, forest and wildlife refuges, Bureau of Land Management holdings, and other federally owned areas which encompass more than 1/3 of our nation, 700 million acres.

Everywhere they went, Fisher and Blair met with government employees and others who are concerned about our national heritage and how to preserve it. This book does not give all the answers, but reminds us once more of our obligation to nurture and preserve that priceless heritage in order to pass it on to future generations. This book is available from National Geographic Society.

Our chapter owns a fine library, and it is made available to you at regular meetings. Carol Davis is the Librarian and will be happy to help you find the book you are looking for.

A correction from the last OWL. Please don't try to find the International Crane Foundation at Barabas, WI! It should have read "Baraboo." Yes, that is the name of a place in Wisconsin!

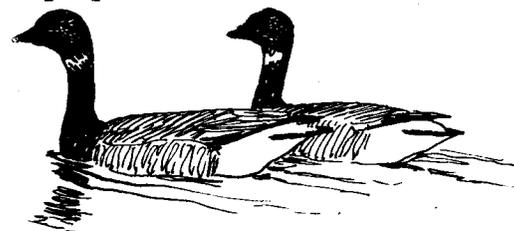
--Marge Carrick

NEW COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN TAKE OFFICE

After some time of doing a great job as Membership Chairman, Lew Helm will move to Conservation Chairman, where he no doubt will continue the good work.

Donna and David Brody will take over as Membership Chairmen. If you have an address change, miss your OWL, or have other problems of a similar nature, give the Brodys a call at 268-9647.

Ethel Ringer will take on the task of Greeters Chairman, assisted by all the officers. She can use everyone's help in making new people feel welcome.



Teddy Borrego will become Audubon Adventure (Education) Chairman, doing the very important job of spreading the Audubon philosophy among young people.

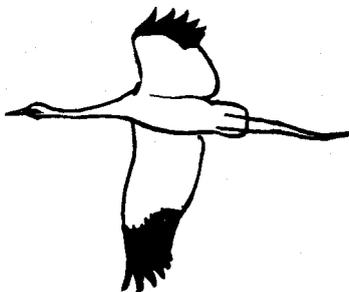
We hope everyone will give the new Chairmen plenty of support.

FALL CRANE COUNT

By the time this reaches CNMAS members, the first of the cranes will have returned to the middle Rio Grande Valley. But the "big push," which usually occurs in late October and early November, is still to come. I am again requesting assistance from CNMAS members that live in the Valley on a crane migration study. From last year's study, we now know that a large portion of the population makes the trip from Colorado in two days; thus, many cranes are seen in the morning or early afternoon over Albuquerque. What we would also like to know is how many cranes make the trip in one day. These cranes would probably appear over Albuquerque in late afternoon, sometime between 3:00 and dark. Between 17 and 20 thousand Sandhill Cranes can be expected to pass over us this fall. The foster Whooping Crane flock is also getting quite large; 40 or more are expected to leave Idaho for New Mexico this fall. If you are interested in counting migrant cranes, please contact me at 345-2827 (I am sometimes gone for several days at a time, but please leave a message with my machine). Record location, date, time, and numbers of Sandhill and Whooping Cranes seen. Serious regular counts are encouraged, but incidental observations will also be delightedly accepted!

I am also in need of a scanning receiver, such as the 50-channel Bearcat Scanner 250. If any CNMAS member has one they could loan me for about a month, it would be greatly appreciated!

--Dale Stahlecker



CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS JUST AROUND CORNER

Believe it or not, by the time you read this, there will only be about 75 birding days until Christmas. In late September, as I write this, it is hard to plan for something so far ahead, but by the time the next OWL is out, the counts will be upon us. So start planning now to join in the fun!

The period in which counts can be conducted this year is between December 18, 1985, and January 5, 1986. That gives us three weekends, 21-22 and 28-29 December and 4-5 January, to complete the three counts. We have scheduled the Bosque del Apache NWR count for Saturday, December 21. Meeting time will be 7:30 at the refuge headquarters, or contact Chuck Hundertmark at 897-2821.

After some discussion, we have decided to schedule the Albuquerque Count for Saturday, January 4. This will be the first Saturday after you all get back from Christmas vacation but before you get down to the grind of the New Year. We had a great turnout for the Albuquerque Count last year, so we would like to see if we can do as well this year. Jim Karo, who has done an excellent job as compiler for the Albuquerque Count for many years, has asked to step down this year if possible, or next for certain. So although we don't know who will be meeting you at Corrales Shopping Center at 7:30 a.m. on 4 January 1985, I can assure you someone will be there to organize you all and send you out to beat the bushes! Compiler and any additional details will be announced in the next OWL.

So that leaves December 28 for the Sandia Mountain Count. This has historically been our least attended count, perhaps because of the snow and cold at the top. So let me remind you that there are plenty of lower bird-rich areas to be searched as well. Meeting time will be 7:30 a.m. at the Pete's "Home of the Halfbreed" Mexican Restaurant 1/2 mile north of the Sandia Crest turnoff on



Highway 14. Those eager to be out at dawn can contact compiler Kay Anderson at 821-1606.

One final note. As always, we encourage all members to join in this very fun event. Part day groups can be arranged, good birders will be with all groups. There is no pressure (the diehards can stay out as long as they like!). People with feeders are also welcome. Oh yes, the registration fee, required of all participants, is \$3. Cheap for a day's entertainment, as well as the satisfaction of gathering useful population and distribution data on North America's wintering birds. See you there!

--Dale Stahlecker

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

September 7, Shady Lakes

Twenty-two people enjoyed a delightful day of birding at Shady Lakes. Leader Joann Phillips reports that 23 species of birds were seen at Shady Lakes and at the lake on the adjoining property. A MOCKINGBIRD was seen, for only a third sighting at Shady Lakes. GREAT BLUE HERON, LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE, SHOVELER DUCK, and LEWIS WOODPECKER were among the highlights. The participants reported having a wonderful time.

September 21, Bosque del Apache NWR

Did rain, tornadoes, and fog deter intrepid Auduboners from enjoying a trip to the Bosque? YOU BET! The four people who joined leaders George & Evelyn Price found the fog lifted, the skies blue and beautiful as only New Mexico in fall can be, and birds out by the hundreds. In fact, over a hundred species were seen by the combined resources of Ross & Clara Teuber, Beth Hurst, Laura Lewis, and the Prices. Herons (GREAT BLUE, BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT, GREEN-BACKED, and one LITTLE BLUE), egrets (GREAT, SNOWY, and CATTLE) were everywhere. Lots of shorebirds and CORMORANTS were present. Also seen were KINGFISHERS, BLACK and FORSTER'S TERNS, SUMMER Tanager, various FLYCATCHERS, and swarms and swarms of SWALLOWS. You missed it, folks!



CONSERVATION NEWS

Is there any good news anymore? We hear daily about airliner tragedies, the mess in Beirut, the South Africa trouble, Central America strife, you name it.

On the conservation front, we are concerned with the dismal prospects of acid rain in the Southwest, radioactive uranium piles, token efforts of toxic waste cleanup under the Superfund, continuous loss of wildlife habitat to developments of all kinds, and a very serious decline in the fall migration of waterfowl. Is there anything we can do?

One small glimmering of hope is a possible change in plans by the U.S. Forest Service. Concern was expressed by CNMAS and other conservation groups to the Forest Service's plans to log too much land and build too many roads, all to benefit lumber companies by selling timber below cost. We object, and continue to object, when reviewing forest planning. Other conservation groups also object, some in testimony to Congress. Now it has come to our attention that House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior has voted to cut \$50 million from the Forest Service's 1986 budget request of \$191 million for road construction of all types. Let us hope the cuts remain.

What can individual members of CNMAS do? For one thing, we can keep our Senators, Congressmen, and State officials aware of our concerns. These people welcome our views and sometimes respond in a positive way. The addresses are on the back of this newsletter.

CNMAS had a booth and spent a very rewarding day on Saturday, September 7, at the Endangered Species Fair sponsored by the Sierra Club, the N.M. Department of Game and Fish, and the N.M. Museum of Natural History. About 3,000 people (and lots of children) came to view the exhibits, see live birds and animals, and to learn the plight of the many endangered and threatened species of wildlife and plants. On the one hand, it was disturbing that such "Fair" is needed. But on the other hand it was good to see the interest shown, particularly by the younger generation, in programs and plans to save many species. Our hat is off to the sponsors of this major effort.

WILD BIRD SEED SALE
AT THE RANDALL DAVEY AUDUBON CENTER

The Randall Davey Audubon Center is holding its first annual Wild Bird Seed Sale. This is your opportunity to stock up on your winter supply of high quality wild bird seed, while supporting the conservation and education efforts at the Center.

The Randall Davey Audubon Center bird seed is a special blend, mixed to attract a wide variety of birds. The seed is priced to be competitive, while eliminating all the unnecessary, costly, and wasteful "fillers" most commercial seed mixes contain. Three types of seed will be offered:

1. The Randall Davey Audubon Center Special Wild Bird Seed Mix containing 60% White Proso Millet; 20% Red Proso Millet; 20% Black "Oil" Sunflower Seed. This mix is available in 25 and 50 pound sacks and sells for \$6.50 and \$12.50 plus tax, respectively.
2. Niger (thistle). George Harrison, author of The Backyard Bird Watcher, says of Niger: "It is more expensive than sunflower, but each seed is so tiny that a pound goes much further. Until you have tried Niger, you cannot imagine how popular it can be among finches. It took a week or so before our goldfinches found it and tried it, but once they become hooked, they were with us every day, all day throughout the year." This seed is available in a 10 pound sack for \$17 plus tax.
3. 50/50 Sunflower Mix. This mix is a 50/50 blend of traditional striped sunflower and a small "oil type" sunflower. It is a favorite of Goldfinches, Pine Siskins, House and Cassins Finches, and Chickadees. This sunflower mix is available in 25 and 50 pound sacks and sells for \$16 and \$30 plus tax (4.87%), respectively.

Notice, this is a pre-pay sale only. All orders must be received and paid for no later than NOVEMBER 4. Your seed must be picked up on SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 16, between 10:00 and 4:00 unless prior arrangements are made. Checks should be made out to National Audubon Society and mailed to: Randall Davey Audubon Center, P.O. Box 9314, Santa Fe 87504.

ROSS' RAVIN'S
By Ross L. Teuber

Hi Folks! It has been quite a while since I last sat down to write a column. A lot of water has passed under the bridge in that time. Spring migration and the summer nesting season are past, and we are well into fall migration. So much has happened and so many interesting things have been done and seen, it is impossible to cover all of them. So I'll just try to touch on the highlights.

Probably the most exciting occurrence during the period was the appearance of a FLAME-COLORED TANAGER in Cave Creek Canyon in May. This bird established a territory, formed a pair bond with a female of debated species, and the pair produced and fledged two young. There has been some disagreement whether the female was a WESTERN TANAGER or was indeed a FLAME-COLORED. (The two species are consecutive in the 6th Ed. AOU Checklist.) Latest word: Noted birders who have had experience with FLAME-COLORED TANAGERS in Mexico have determined the female which bred with the male FLAME-COLORED TANAGER was a WESTERN TANAGER. Rumor has it that the birds had come back and re-nested, but I have been unable to confirm this.

There is good and bad news about this year's WHOOPING CRANE CHICKS. Mike Hawks, Wildlife Biologist at Bosque del Apache, told me on August 29 that of the 18 that hatched at Gray's Lake, 12 were caught and banded. Because of drought and poor conditions, they had gained only about 2/3 of their normal weight for their age. There is some concern whether they will withstand fall migration. Conditions at Wood Buffalo Park were much better; 18 of 19 survived and are in prime condition for the autumn flight. Let me know (265-8962) when and if you see any migrating WHOOPERS. They should be coming soon.

It isn't too early to start thinking about Christmas Bird Counts and making plans to participate. Please see Dale Stahlecker's article in this issue for specifics.

A big "Thank You" to all of you who

called or sent in information on the arrival of hummingbirds. This year early arrival dates corresponded very closely with average arrival dates over the past several years. There have been so many interesting reports that I can't possibly include all of them. But I do sincerely thank every one of you who has called. Your calls are the backbone of this column, please keep them coming.

Ruth Luhrs called on April 22 to tell me about a pre-fledgling CRISSAL THRASHER which had been brought to Wendy Aeschlman with a mangled foot and a big air bubble on its side. Wendy doctored and raised it, and later brought it by the house for me to see and photograph.

Way back on April 27, Pat Basham and I did our annual Century Run, and once more came up with over 100 species--116 to be exact! Among the more interesting were both LAZULI and INDIGO BUNTINGS together on the Basham property. We found more than the usual number of HAWKS, and seven species each of SPARROWS and WARBLERS.

May was a great month for birding. On the 2nd, at Bosque del Apache Pat Basham saw ROSS' GEESE, SUMMER TANAGER, BLUE GROSBEAK, COMMON YELLOWTHROAT, MARBLED GODWIT, and best of all a PEREGRINE FALCON and a MERLIN. On the 6th, Joanne Phillips had two GREAT HORNED OWLETS. Earlier she had had NORTHERN ORIOLE, HERMIT THRUSH, and BELTED KINGFISHER at Shady Lakes. She said Hart Schwarz had told her of seeing a YELLOW-THROATED VIREO in the Sandias the week of April 21.

It was a most memorable month for me. During the first two weeks, I traveled to the Boston area to visit a sister. Dave Lange (remember our past president, several times removed?) took me on several birding trips, all very productive. One, a pelagic trip to the Matinicus Rocks, we added 7 new species to my "Life List." Another day we encountered a "warbler fallout" which yielded four new (to me) species, all additions to the "Life List." In about four hours there, we recorded no less than 15 species of warblers, plus many others including SCARLET TANAGER, four species of THRUSHES, and even FISH CROW. Perhaps that trip can be covered in a story in some future issue of the BURROWING OWL. Bitter Lake NWR, Rattle-

snake Spring, and Bosque del Apache produced a lot of goodies. Most interesting at Bitter Lake on July 29 were LEAST TERNS, a WHITE-WINGED DOVE (not often seen there), and EASTERN MEADOWLARKS (singing). En route we spotted a pair of SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHERS north of the La Mesa Rest Area, the first time we've seen them there. Rattlesnake Spring was delightful on May 29 and 30 and yielded such birds as HARRIS HAWK, ORCHARD ORIOLE, SUMMER TANAGER, VERMILION FLYCATCHER, PAINTED BUNTING, and most unusual, a HUTTON'S VIREO! A short stop at Bosque del Apache on the way home produced 3 GREAT EGRET, many WHITE-FACED IBIS, 7 or 8 pair of CANADA GEESE with 3-7 goslings each, and some WILD TURKEY.

The RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRDS also arrived pretty much at the usual arrival date in July. Late July and early August were the occasion for a trip to Southeast Missouri. Finally, after seven years of fruitless searching on every trip to that area, on July 30, the elusive SWAINSON'S WARBLER put in an appearance. Another candidate for the "Life List," the 18th for the year. That might make another story sometime.

When we got back from that trip, Paul Steel told us he had seen a CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD at our feeders while we were gone. We got one brief glimpse of a male the next evening. On August 11, Marge Amato called to report they had all 4 of the regular species of HUMMINGBIRDS at their feeder. Pat Basham's first CALLIOPE arrived on July 18, a male that moved on very shortly. The last female/immature was still there on August 29. When we came home from shopping on Saturday afternoon, August 17, our neighbor Betty Griffin and her daughter were looking up into their mulberry trees. She called me over to see a nest with two large, but as yet unfledged BLACK-CHINNED HUMMINGBIRD chicks. It seems she had cut the nest down, thinking it was a webworm nest. When she saw what it was, she wired it back up in approximately the same place where she had first seen it. Very shortly the mother HUMMER was back, feeding her chicks. I took pictures that evening and the next morning, and watched the young birds. They were still in the nest on Monday morning, but sometime in

the afternoon they fledged. I presume some of the immature BLACK-CHINNED HUMMERS at my feeders are those two chicks. On August 29 I received a letter from a West Virginia birder reporting a sighting of what he thought was a BLACK-BACKED WOODPECKER in the Vermejo Park area. I sent back for details, but they were sketchy and incomplete--not convincing. If this sighting could be verified, it would be a first sighting for the state.

At Bosque del Apache on August 29 there were a number of returning shorebirds as well as several other interesting migrants. Included were GREAT EGRETS, both species of CORMORANTS, GREEN-BACKED HERON, BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERON, 20 or more WHITE-FACED IBIS, COMMON MOORHEN, SNOWY PLOVER, 3 STILT SANDPIPER, and a SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER, WILSON'S PHALAROPE, 3 BLACK TERN; OLIVE-SIDED, WILLOW and VERMILION FLYCATCHER, 5 species of SWALLOWS including two BARN SWALLOWS, both GOLDFINCHES, and most surprisingly a RED-EYED VIREO of the yellow-green type.

This year, especially the last three months, have been exceptionally good for the sighting of rarities in North America. This has certainly been the case in my own experience. Your reporter is now the Area Liaison for the North American Rare Bird Alert. Any sighting of the real goodies can be speeded to those who are interested by funneling them through me, and will be sincerely appreciated by the whole organization. For further information, please contact me.

On the 2nd of September there were up to 80 MOUNTAIN PLOVER at the Grassland Turf Farm north of Los Lunas, as well as HORNED LARK, WESTERN MEADOWLARK, KILLDEER, MOURNING DOVE, LARK SPARROW, and a GRASS-HOPPER SPARROW. On September 3rd, Dorothy Wise told me of seeing an albino (almost) ROBIN in Fox Park. On the 9th there was a PROTHONOTARY WARBLER at the Rio Grande Nature Center in a mixed flock of warblers (WILSON'S, MACGILLIVRAYS, ORANGE-CROWNED). On the 11th there was an ORANGE-CROWNED in my yard, and Bill Howe called to report a SABINE'S GULL at Cochiti Dam. Steve Hoffman reported seeing 2 immature PEREGRINE FALCONS during the first weekend of the fall hawk watch in the Manzanos.

Which reminds me, the later part of August, while trapping sparrows for Steve, I caught a partial albino HOUSE SPARROW. It was buffy, sort of carmel colored, or like coffee with cream on the upper parts and lighter underneath. Legs, eyes, and beak were not pink, so it was only a partial albino.

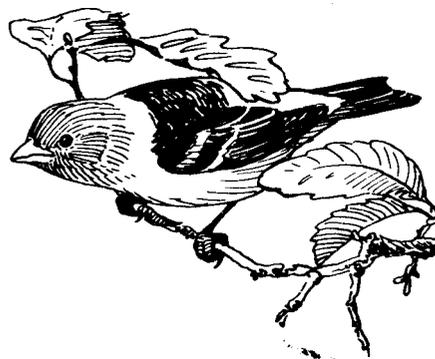
On September 11, there was a YELLOW-THROATED VIREO along the river north of the Rio Grande Nature Center, a first in New Mexico for me, although I have found the bird several times in various places in the midwest.

Ruth Luhrs called on September 13--Friday the 13th--to tell me of a bird which a cat brought in, and which was later turned over to Wendy Aeschelman for rehabilitation. It has been tentatively identified as a female PAINTED BUNTING. This bird was considerably north of the normal range for the species. Unfortunately, the combined trauma of injury and shock were too much and the bird died. I have the specimen, which will be turned over to the Biology Department of UNM very shortly, where identification will be verified or corrected.

My informant who helps keep me up to date at Bosque del Apache tells me there were at least 50 WHITE PELICANS there on September 16.

It seems I've covered a lot of territory and time as briefly as possible, and still have something for you to read. Keep the calls coming, and remember to let me know of any sighting of migratory WHOOPING CRANES. There will still be many more sightings of interesting visitors during the rest of the migration and on the Christmas Bird Counts. So have some real good birding. So long for now, and good luck.

--R.L.T.



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