

NETAC networks

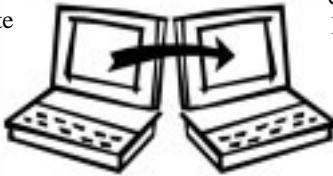
Providing technical assistance to professionals working with students who are deaf or hard of hearing in postsecondary settings

May 1998

Upcoming C-Print training

NETAC will sponsor a C-Print "Train the Trainer" workshop June 1-3, 1998 at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID) in Rochester, New York. C-Print captionists who were trained a year ago and who have been actively using C-Print will come together to learn how to train new C-Print captionists in their respective states.

Plans also are underway for C-Print training for new captionists. Training sessions will be held in Rochester the weeks of July 13 and July 20. Eight C-Print captionists will be trained



each week. In addition, during the week of August 10, Rhode Island will be sponsoring training for 8-10 participants, and plans are being made to offer training during the week of October 5 in Maryland and the week of November 2 in another state in the Northeast. Pam Giles, C-Print Coordinator at NTID, will be leading these training workshops. For more information contact her at 716-475-6019 (voice/TTY); e-mail PGGNCP@rit.edu.

Photo Gallery

NETAC and its site coordinators have hosted many events since its inception a year and a half ago. Here's a glimpse at some of those people and events:



Deaf professionals lead small group discussions with deaf and hard-of-hearing students and their parents at the Voyage to the Future career fair at Camden County College, Blackwood, New Jersey, March 1998.

Dr. John Walstrum, Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs, and Dr. Phyllis DellaVecchia (not shown), President of Camden County College, welcome the NETAC site coordinators and the Department of Education Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) site visit team to NETAC's fourth regional consortium meeting, March 1998.



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The hearing aid myth

by Brenda Battat and Donna L. Sorokin

Over 80% of all hearing loss is sensorineural, which means that the source of the problem is damaged hair cells in the cochlea. Although this type of hearing loss is generally not amenable to medical or surgical treatment, hearing aids often can be of benefit.

That being the case, you may wonder why students with hearing aids still request accommodations to be able to hear in class. The expectation by many people is that the hearing aids will correct hearing as glasses do vision, but this is not the case. Hearing aids provide amplification of sound that is very helpful. But there are other problems some people who are hard of hearing experience, such as not being able to discriminate the speech sounds they can hear, even with the added volume, and not being able to isolate speech from background noise. Hearing aids alone do not correct these problems.

Hard-of-hearing students are individuals who come in all shapes and sizes and so do their hearing losses. As a result, their ability to understand speech varies greatly, as do their needs in the classroom. Communication access has to be customized to meet the student's needs and may include hearing aids, communication strategies, assistive technology, notetaking, computer assisted real time transcription (CART), or some or all of the above.

Assistive technology can stretch a hearing aid's capability. Three types—FM, infrared and audioloop systems—in conjunction with a hearing aid can increase intelligibility of the teacher's voice for a student by bringing the sound directly to the student's ear and by cutting out background noise that otherwise would compete with the teacher's voice. This technology may make enough of a difference that a student will be able to hear in class when he/she couldn't with hearing aids alone, and, depending on the level of hearing loss, the student may or may not need a front seat.

Even so, with hearing aids and assistive listening devices, students who are hard of hearing will still be working hard to hear. It's probably safe to say they can never relax and just absorb what the teacher is saying. They have to go through an additional step of listening intently to process what they are hearing and then form a reaction to it. The listening and processing part alone takes a lot of energy. In addition to hearing aids and assistive technology, they will be using speechreading and any other strategy they know to help them understand speech. All their efforts to hear are dependent upon factors that affect speechreading such as lighting, the instructor's teaching style, and room acoustics. As to why students may request notetakers, many people with hearing loss cannot watch the speaker for speechreading, ensure that their hearing aids and assistive devices are in sync, and take notes at the same time.



Brenda Battat



Donna Sorokin

...with hearing aids and assistive listening devices, students who are hard of hearing will still be working hard to hear.

In essence, many students will be using a combination of technology, communication strategies, and every inch of concentration just to hear, and even with all that, it is entirely possible that some students, depending on their needs, will still not get everything said in class. Even though they may hear most of what the teacher says, there is a good chance that unless they have all the appropriate assistive technologies, or the teacher remembers to always repeat what the other students in the class are saying, the student will miss questions and comments from the class. Because

of this some students may request CART. They may need this to fill in the gaps of what they are not getting through technology and other strategies or because their level of hearing loss is such that those other options do not work at all for them. CART provides verbatim transcription of everything said in the class. It may be the most reliable way for the student to get the information he/she needs, but even here the student is dependent on the accuracy of the stenographer, and this varies greatly.

Although they definitely will be working hard to do so, hard-of-hearing students can and do succeed at achieving communication access. They are able to

do so when they have responsive teachers and school administrators who facilitate their requests for accommodations and are determined to educate themselves and others about strategies for communication.

*Brenda Battat is Deputy Executive Director and Donna Sorokin is Executive Director of Self Help for Hard of Hearing People, Inc. (SHHH), a national educational organization of and for people who are hard of hearing. SHHH provides its educational offerings in a number of ways, including written materials such as the bimonthly magazine, **Hearing Loss: The Journal of Self Help for Hard of Hearing People**, other publications and videos, an annual convention, and participation in research activities. The address is: SHHH, 7910 Woodmont Avenue, Suite 1200, Bethesda, MD 20814; 301-657-2248 voice; 301-657-2249 TTY; 301-913-9413 fax; Web <http://www.shhh.org>.*



State updates

CONNECTICUT

- The second statewide NETAC consortium was held in February at Manchester Community-Technical College. Seven post-secondary institutions, one secondary school, and two community service agencies were represented by 19 participants.
- The March 19 teleconference was hosted by Quinnipiac College in Hamden. It was followed by a one-hour roundtable discussion of issues raised during the broadcast.
- Site coordinator Elaine Taylor and Mark Myers, state NETAC director, presented a workshop on “Best Practices: Support Services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students” at the PEPNet national conference in Orlando, Florida, April 29-May 2. They also will represent NETAC at the American Association of the Deaf-Blind national conference in Hartford, Connecticut, June 13-19.
- In June the Connecticut NETAC team will join with Linda Iacelli, employment specialist at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf at Rochester Institute of Technology, to present the “Working Together: Deaf and Hearing People” workshop for postsecondary professionals and community services providers from across the state.

DELAWARE

- Delaware NETAC hosted a statewide consortium meeting March 19.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

- The District of Columbia is working with its advisory group and consortium members to answer questions and concerns related to financial aid and sensitivity training.
- A May “Career Day” program is being planned and will include a panel of students who are deaf from the D.C. area.

MAINE

- Twenty participants registered for the March 19 downlink. A “morning dialogue” for college admissions officers and disability coordinators preceded the event, which included a demonstration of real time captioning as well as C-Print over the ATM network.

MARYLAND

- Maryland had three sites for the March 19 teleconference: Hagerstown Junior College, Towson University, and Salisbury State University.
- NETAC sponsored a panel discussion May 6 at the Maryland Rehabilitation Center in Baltimore. The topic is, “Innovations in Literacy Training for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students in the Postsecondary Setting.”
- NETAC and Catonsville Community College are presenting C-Print on June 5 at a conference sponsored by the Nation’s Capitol Area Disability Support Service Coalition titled, “Issues and Innovations: Postsecondary Disability Support.”

MASSACHUSETTS

- NETAC Massachusetts downlinked the March 19 teleconference to more than 100 people through downlinks at Northeastern University in Boston; Holyoke Community College in Holyoke; and Northern Essex Community College in Haverhill.
- NETAC Massachusetts will host the annual New England AHEAD group May 29 at Northern Essex Community College.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

- Twenty-one people statewide participated in the March 19 downlink, more than four times as many as the previous downlink.
- New Hampshire continues working on its “lending library” of videotapes and books related to deafness.

NEW JERSEY

- New Jersey NETAC hosted the NETAC regional meeting at Camden County College in Blackwood, March 25-28.

PENNSYLVANIA

- All state consortium members downlinked the March 19 teleconference.
- Site coordinator Lori Hutchison met with the executive director of the Pennsylvania Association of Private School Administrators (PAPSA) to explain NETAC and its objectives.
- Hutchison has begun working on a transition model to present to students in the western part of the state who are deaf and hard of hearing. It will be a model program that may have a “train the trainer” component; it will focus on informing students about the kinds of skills they should have when they decide to attend postsecondary training; and also will teach them how to be better consumers of access services.

PUERTO RICO

- The priority in Puerto Rico continues to be creating awareness of opportunities in postsecondary education for students who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- Plans are underway to host a conference during September’s Deaf Awareness Week.

RHODE ISLAND

- Providence College was the downlink site for the March 19 teleconference on ADA.
- NETAC Rhode Island hosted a statewide workshop titled, “Building the Pipeline to Higher Education” May 13. The workshop focused on transitioning issues for students who are deaf and hard of hearing and is geared toward high school counselors, students, parents, educational administrators, college disability service providers, and vocational rehabilitation counselors.

VERMONT

- The state’s advisory board met March 13 at the Community College of Vermont.
- Three sites—St. Albans, Randolph, and Bennington—participated in the March 19 teleconference.

When will they learn?

by Jane Jarrow, Ph.D.

The issue of who pays for interpreters has long been a topic of debate in higher education. When it comes to classroom/instructional activities, the relative roles and responsibilities of the postsecondary institution and the Vocational Rehabilitation system have yet to be decided definitively. Despite hopes to the contrary, the recent PEPNet teleconference featuring VR Commissioner Fred Schroeder did little to resolve the issue. *But even if the VR system has some responsibility in paying classroom interpreters for its deaf clients, that does not absolve the postsecondary institution from shouldering the cost of interpreters for other activities.* Assigning responsibility for assuming such costs is an institutional decision—but somehow those costs must be paid. If we acknowledge this up front—that payment of interpreter fees is ultimately the responsibility of the institution—then it would seem we could save a lot of time, energy, and finger pointing at the expense of the quality (and timeliness) of services to the deaf population.

Case in point: Recently I was contacted by someone at a private institution in the NETAC region. As part of an assignment, students are required to recruit someone from the community with knowledge of the subject matter to come in and address the class. Not that it is pertinent to the discussion that follows (other than being even more embarrassing for the institution), but this is a Special Education class. One student, who does not have a disability, has found a knowledgeable individual within the community to address the class—and that community volunteer is deaf. The gentleman needs a sign language interpreter to voice interpret his presentation and to assist him in the question/answer and discussion periods. The student asked with whom she should speak at the institution about arranging for the interpreter for the one-hour class session.

Now we begin a classic exercise in institutional denial. The faculty member says, “The whole idea is to bring in volunteers to make these presentations. I have no money to cover costs involved for his participation. Go talk to the people in Disability Services.” The Disability Service provider says, “The funds we have access to are earmarked to cover costs associated with accommodations for students at the institution. This gentleman is not a student here. Go talk to the Department Chair.” The Department Chair says, “I have no line item in my budget to cover the cost of accommodations for academic activities. That’s the university’s responsibility. Go talk to the Academic VP.” The Academic VP says, “My office has never been asked to fund accommodations before. I don’t think I should have to fund this out of my budget. Let’s ask the university attorney.” After consultation with the university attorney, the decision filters back down the line that the student must pay for the interpreter. The reasoning? She is bringing in this speaker as part of a class assignment, and if there are costs involved in fulfilling that assignment, then those costs should be hers. **WRONG!!!**

Let’s take that last statement to its logical conclusion. Presumably, then, if the student had recruited a community volunteer who was a wheelchair user and the classroom was inaccessible, the insti-

tution would expect the student to pay the cost of installing a ramp. Oh, you think they could just move the class to an accessible location in that instance? You mean the institution would take the responsibility of providing the accommodation that allows this person with a disability to participate? Well, then, what is different between moving the class or providing the interpreter—except for the cost involved? Somehow it always comes back to money. Ironically, providing the interpreter for the hour of classroom time would probably cost less than \$50. Aside from the amount of staff time already spent in discussing this situation (and the associated salary costs), how much do you think the institution paid their general counsel for an opinion on this issue?

Why did the institution get into this discussion in the first place? I am still trying to figure that out. I am inclined to believe that they took the matter to the university attorney because they were concerned about setting a precedent—if they pay for the interpreter here, are they going to be asked to pay for disability-related expenses for other non-students in the future? The answer is they are going to be asked to pay for disability-related accommodations for non-students

in the future whether they pay for the interpreter now or not—and they had best be prepared to do so! *Ultimately, the institution is responsible for seeing that persons with disabilities are equally able to participate fully in institutionally-sponsored activities and programs.* If we could get our administrators to understand that as a given, we would spend a lot less time trying

to think of creative ways to avoid paying the costs and a lot more time thinking of creative ways of streamlining the process for requesting and receiving mandated services.

Jane Jarrow is president of Disability Access Information and Support (DAIS). An expert in disability services, she has been providing technical assistance and training to service providers on access and support services for persons with disabilities in higher education and has co-authored or authored numerous books and articles in the field of disabilities in higher education over the past 15 years.

Assigning responsibility for assuming such costs is an institutional decision—but somehow those costs must be paid.

Visit the
NETAC World Wide Web site at
<http://www.rit.edu/~netac>

The Director's column

by T. Alan Hurwitz, Ed.D.



The Northeast Technical Assistance Center (NETAC) is now in the second half of Year Two of its cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS). We just submitted our six-month grant performance report to OSERS as a part of the required documentation for continued funding in Year Three.

I am pleased to inform you that NETAC has once again outperformed its expectations when the OSERS site visit team participated in our fourth regional consortium meeting at Camden County College in Blackwood, New Jersey, March 25-28, 1998. Members of the site visit team included Dr. Afafe El-Khiami, Professor at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock; John Lopez, Consultant from Washington, D.C.; Annette Reichman, Coordinator of the Valley Center for the Deaf in Phoenix, Arizona; and Ramon Rodriguez, OSERS Project Liaison Officer. Thanks to the hard work of the NETAC central office staff, the site visit team received a notebook of NETAC documents, reports, and relevant printed materials for their review and critique prior to their arrival in New Jersey. The regional consortium meeting at Camden County College was an opportunity for the OSERS site visit team to interact in person, exchange ideas, and network with the NETAC site coordinators and central office staff members. Josie Durkow and her staff at Camden County College were gracious hosts.

The regional consortium meeting also included three workshops: "A Postsecondary Model for Meeting the Needs of a Diverse Student Population, including Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Students" presented by faculty and staff members from LaGuardia Community College Program for Deaf Adults; a panel discussion on funding issues and strategies at five different postsecondary education institutions including Camden County College, Community College of Vermont, New York University, Northwest Connecticut Community-Technical College, and the University of Rhode Island; and a model transition/career awareness program, "Voyage to the Future," for high school students who are deaf and hard of hearing and their parents presented by a team of counselors from the National Technical Institute for the Deaf.

Lori Hutchison, Program Coordinator for the Deaf at Hiram G. Andrews Center and NETAC site coordinator for the state of Pennsylvania, and I represented NETAC at the OSERS meeting April 16 in Washington, D.C. The meeting focused on the critical needs of deaf and hard-of-hearing adults who are described to be low functioning (LFD). Representatives from three community-based agencies serving this target population were present at the meeting: Nancy Carr of Lexington Vocational Services at Lexington School for the Deaf, New York City; Theresa Johnson of the Southwest Center for the Hearing Impaired, San Antonio, Texas; and Peg Harmon of the Community Outreach Program for the Deaf, Tucson, Arizona. They presented a "white paper" on the LFD issues with recommendations

for funding direct services and technical assistance for community-based organizations serving this target population. Dr. Douglas Watson, Director of the Research and Training Center at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, and Dr. Marita Danek, Professor at Gallaudet University, discussed the demographics of the LFD population, historical perspectives of LFD services, and transitional concepts for individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing. We had an opportunity to provide insights and reactions to these presentations and recommendations. At this writing, OSERS will be reviewing this issue and making a determination on the future directions for this important area of need. I will keep you posted on its development in future NETAC newsletters.

Sherlea Dony, NETAC Project Assistant, and I attended a multimedia training program in St. Paul, Minnesota, January 22-24 that was sponsored by the Midwest Center for Postsecondary Outreach at St. Paul Technical College. It was an opportunity for the representatives from the four regional technical assistance centers to learn more about multimedia technology and discuss future applications for PEPNet training materials.

On behalf of the PEPNet directors, I presented information about PEPNet at the Empire State College conference on "Disabled, But Enabled and Empowered: Building Common Ground for the Next Millennium" in Rochester, New York, March 19-22, 1998. NETAC central office staff coordinated and staffed the PEPNet exhibit.

Elsewhere in this newsletter you will find the latest update on the needs assessment survey prepared by Dr. Gerald Walter and Karen Hopkins which was analyzed for the Northeast region. Copies of the state reports have been given to the site coordinators, who will be using this information to lay down their specific statewide action plans for technical assistance over the next three years. A final report of the needs assessment survey results will be formally presented at the PEPNet national conference in Orlando April 30, 1998.

Once again I continue to be amazed at how much NETAC has accomplished in such a short time. Feedback from the OSERS site visit team attests to this. Without the fine work of the site coordinators and staff members at the NETAC central office, we wouldn't have made it this far! We still have a great deal to do, but I'm confident that we have the infrastructure to make good things happen and to pave the way for individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing to pursue postsecondary education opportunities of their choice.

Alan



Photo Gallery

continued from page 1



John Macko, Employment Specialist, Center on Employment at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf, presents "Working Together," a model program on how deaf, hearing, and hard-of-hearing individuals can work together, at the NETAC third regional consortium meeting at Catonsville Community College, Baltimore, November 1997.

Participants at the satellite broadcast, "Beyond the surface: implementing ADA in postsecondary institutions serving deaf and hard of hearing students" at the Hiram G. Andrews Center, Johnstown, Pennsylvania, March 1998.



Participants at NETAC's Puerto Rico consortium, March 1998.



Alan Hurwitz, Project Director, and Jean Bondi-Wolcott, Voyage to the Future program coordinator, share a laugh during the program at Camden County College, Blackwood, New Jersey, March 1998.



Deaf professionals from the Voyage to the Future career fair: front, L to R: James Libman, Bob Katz, Rodney Danco, Jr., Mitchell Levy; back, L to R: Edward Kinal, Chuck Wallace, Cliff Rowley, Kelly Stephens, Don Ballantyne, Nancy Rowley.



Massachusetts site coordinator Jane Nunes (L) and Pennsylvania site coordinator Lori Hutchison ham it up at the March 1998 consortium meeting.

Northeast needs assessment completed

by Jerry Walter

Societal efforts to provide access to higher education have influenced markedly the numbers of deaf and hard-of-hearing persons seeking admission to postsecondary education. A study conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 1994) has estimated that there are approximately 20,000 deaf and hard-of-hearing persons enrolled in the nation's two- and four-year colleges and universities. This number is in addition to approximately 2,500 students enrolled at Gallaudet University and the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID), a college of Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT).

In the midst of these rapidly expanding postsecondary resources to meet the increasing numbers and a broader range of deaf and hard-of-hearing students, it is vital that the quality of the education to which they have access be maintained and improved. The challenge for all postsecondary education is to find ways to accommodate these individuals so as to improve their chances of success.

With the funding of four regional postsecondary education technical assistance centers for deaf and hard-of-hearing persons,* the U.S. Department of Education directed that a national needs assessment be conducted to determine the specific kinds of assistance provided by each of the centers. This article summarizes the results of the assessment conducted with respondents from the Northeast region by the Northeast Technical Assistance Center (NETAC) at RIT.

The needs assessment focused on the population of postsecondary institutions listed on the 1995-96 Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) maintained by NCES. As a result, questionnaires were sent to 2,361 postsecondary institutions in the Northeast region of the United States, including two- and four-year colleges as well as training programs offering less than two-year degrees.

The questionnaire was designed to gain information about the postsecondary program, the number of deaf and hard-of-hearing students being served, the types of services currently being provided, and the needs for technical assistance related to provision of services to deaf and hard-of-hearing students.

The questionnaires were mailed to the schools in July 1997 with telephone follow-up occurring during August, September, and October. Of the 2,361 institutions in the Northeast survey group, 1,859 were contacted by mail, FAX, or telephone, and 502 were unreachable either because they changed addresses, were no longer doing business, or chose not to answer our telephone inquiries. The total effort resulted in 1,070 returned questionnaires with an overall return rate of 45%. Returns from two- and four-year schools were somewhat higher than schools offering less than two-year degrees, the majority of which are proprietary, for-profit institutions.

**Editor's note: The "four regional technical assistance centers" refers to PEPNet, the Postsecondary Education Programs Network, which is comprised of the Western Region Outreach Center and Consortia (WROCC) at California State University, Northridge; the Midwest Center for Postsecondary Outreach (MCPO) at St. Paul Technical College; the Postsecondary Education Consortium (PEC) at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville; and the Northeast Technical Assistance Center (NETAC) at Rochester Institute of Technology.*

A number of conclusions can be drawn from the results of the study:

- The data about number of programs providing services and numbers of deaf and hard-of-hearing students in postsecondary institutions in the U.S. is generally consistent with the study reported in 1994 by NCES. We estimate that approximately 4,400 deaf and hard-of-hearing students are enrolled in two- and four-year colleges in the Northeast, with the added number of about 265 in institutions offering less than two-year degrees.
- While the majority of public institutions offer support services for deaf and hard-of-hearing students, the majority of non-profits and most proprietary programs offered no services for deaf and hard-of-hearing students. This finding is especially noteworthy, since 81% of all institutions surveyed fall into the non-profit or proprietary categories, but 72 % of all deaf and hard-of-hearing students are enrolled in public institutions. Access by persons who are deaf and hard of hearing to postsecondary education is not consistent across the spectrum of offerings available in the U.S.
- The major objective of the needs assessment was to determine the types of needs which postsecondary institutions have for technical assistance. Overall, it appears there is more of a need for assistance in administering and managing services for deaf and hard-of-hearing students than for assistance with how to develop basic skills in students or in professional development for faculty and staff. While there is considerable agreement among most types of institutions, the less than two-year programs see more of a need for issues of recruiting and maintaining students in their environments than do two- and four-year institutions. Also, proprietary institutions seem to indicate a much lower level of need for the various types of technical assistance than do the public or not-for-profit sectors. We can only speculate about why this difference exists.
- Training and technical assistance can be provided in a number of ways, but direct interaction and sharing through conferences, meetings, and information access is preferred over consultation and site visits to institutions.

These results will assist NETAC in planning its programming and setting priorities for technical assistance during the next three years. It also provides a base of information against which we can judge the effect NETAC is having on improving the services offered to deaf and hard-of-hearing students pursuing postsecondary level education.

Anyone desiring a copy of the final report for the Northeast should contact NETAC at 716-475-6433 (voice/TTY) or through e-mail: NETAC@rit.edu.

Jerry Walter is a member of the research faculty in the NTID Educational and Career Research department and has been instrumental in planning and implementing the needs assessment project.





J.T. Reid, Voyage to the Future counselor, and Annette Reichman, Department of Education Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) site visit team member, at the March 1998 career fair, Camden County College, Blackwood, NJ.

Upcoming 1998 Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf Region I Conference

“Visions for a New Frontier,” a celebration of where we’ve been, where we are, and where we’re heading, will be held October 8-11, 1998 at the Hyatt Regency, Rochester, NY. This conference is hosted by the Genesee Valley Region Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf.

For additional information, contact one of the Convention Co-chairs: Marilyn Mitchell, MKMNSS@rit.edu, (716) 475-6431 (voice/TTY), or Christina Kelley, HAIAS@frontiernet.net, (716) 423-9490 (voice/TTY).

NETAC Networks is produced at least three times a year. Articles should be submitted to Sherlea Dony, editor, NETAC, 52 Lomb Memorial Drive, Rochester, NY 14623-5604, through e-mail to SADDHD@rit.edu, or by fax to 716-475-7660. All articles are subject to editing. Comments and suggestions are always welcome!

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