

SITUATION CRITICAL

Recent scientific studies have considerably darkened the outlook for our home planet and for its possibilities of avoiding catastrophic climatic changes. A study released late last month warned that the carbon dioxide being poured into our atmosphere in increasing amounts will likely remain there for hundreds of thousands of years because of the deteriorating functioning of natural sinks like the oceans and our disappearing forests.

At the same time, the rapidity of the loss of arctic ice has stunned scientific observers and all but confirmed that the first large tipping point in the climate equation has been reached. The accelerated absorption of the sun's warmth as the ice is replaced by darker surfaces threatens to release vast quantities of greenhouse gases locked up by permafrost. This area contains twice as much carbon dioxide as currently resides in the global atmosphere, plus enormous amounts of methane, an even more potent driver of climate change.

These and other developments have convinced leading climate scientists and observers that global emissions must peak by 2015 and be cut by 6-8 percent per year between 2020 and 2040 if we are to have a realistic chance of not exceeding 450 ppmv CO_{2e} (parts per million by volume of carbon dioxide equivalent) – beyond which runaway change becomes increasingly likely.

That doesn't look hopeful. A recent paper
see Climate Change page 2

ACTION MEETING ON AEROTROPOLIS

EH members and friends are invited to a January 8 meeting to take action against City Council's aerotropolis proposal that would use vast sums of public money to subsidize the destruction of thousands of acres of farmland around the airport.

The size of this airport employment growth district is being strongly challenged by the provincial government in a debate that city officials are keeping secret and thus preventing public participation in the decision-making about this critical feature of Hamilton's future.

Thursday, January 8, at 7:30 pm
1130 Barton Street East, Suite 207
info jminor@cogeco.ca or 549-0900



WALK TOGETHER

Some say the strength of a community is measured by the time and energy residents give to community initiatives.

Kirkendall is strong, as we've seen while spending the last five months promoting active transportation there. Large crowds have gathered for walking tours, safety seminars, and to help on a neighbourhood study.

The risk, however, is that this activity may wane when we leave. We are outsiders in the neighbourhood; a core group of residents have been working on the issue. But we always hoped a broad cross-section would see value in our work, and continue it.

They are. The Kirkendall Neighbourhood Association has formed a new committee to focus on pedestrian issues. And by concentrating on walkability, they will strengthen the very foundation of the community – the physical and social well-being of its citizens, the economic strength of its businesses and the health of the natural environment.

The committee has plenty of work to tackle: major issues revolve around traffic congestion and driver behaviour on the Main Street thoroughfare. Pedestrians and cyclists are troubled by unsafe crosswalks and speeding traffic.

Environment Hamilton's work in Kirkendall has largely focused on the assets of the community – the nature trails, the historical gems and the great variety of businesses accessible on foot. We have highlighted pedestrian opportunities, hoping to shift people out of their cars and into their sneakers. At the same time, we knew we would have to tackle
see Walk Together page 6

INSIDE:

SCHOOL
ECO-FAIR...2

AVOIDING
POLLUTION
LIMITS...3

PESTICIDE
RULES...4

100 MILE
LUNCHEON...5

FAITH AND
SUSTAINABILITY...6

FRUIT HARVEST...7

SIX WISHES...8



SCHOOL ECO FAIR

EH held an environmental fair at St. Helen's School in December with the co-operation Green Venture, the City's public works department and the school's staff and Eco Team.

This collaboration featured interactive stations on Eating Local, Personal Environmental Stewardship (anti-littering and graffiti), Air Quality (alternatives to transportation including the Smart Car), Water Conservation and Recycling.

HSR and Green Venture conducted the Transit tour for the entire school body (153 youth and 20 staff) to visit on a rotation basis. The student portion of the event was two hours long.

After the student portion was over, all the organizations were joined by Horizon Utilities to set up their displays in the gym with handouts for the adult portion which coincided with parent/teacher interviews.

Environment Hamilton distributed over 120 energy savings kits, HSR handed out transit maps applicable to the area (Oriole Crescent), Horizon gave away compact fluorescent light bulbs and LED night lights and Public Works staff provided goodies such as small compost bags.

Principal Danny Donato said that he has never seen so many parents attend a function at his school. There were also participants from the neighbouring McQuesten community including the seniors club that utilizes part of the school for its programs.

CLIMATE CHANGE from previous page
from the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research concludes that "the current framing of climate change cannot be reconciled with the rates of mitigation necessary to stabilize at 550 ppmv CO₂e and even an optimistic interpretation suggests stabilization much below 650 ppmv CO₂e is improbable."

James Hansen, the director of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies, argues that even 450 is a "recipe for disaster" and that "the safe level of atmospheric carbon dioxide is no more than 350 ppm, and it may be less." His analysis was released last spring – on the 20th anniversary of Hansen's 1988 presentation to the US congress that marks the beginning of wide public awareness of the climate change problem.

In late November of 2008 Hansen told a Stanford University audience. "We've reached a point where we have a crisis, an emergency, but people don't know that".

That was in the middle of an enormous government bailout of the financial sector – a process that currently has many other corporations lining up lined for their "share", and has many asking why such funding has been deemed impossible to find to address the much more serious environmental threats.

"Instead of giving companies these huge sums of money so they can continue business as usual, buying and selling, merging, and paying their executives obscene salaries and bonuses," noted David Sukuki, "we could put it toward renewable energy, sustainable urban planning and research into ways to lessen the impact of climate change — things that really would stimulate economies."

The economic crisis may be the last chance of governments to admit that there is no future for business or other aspects of human civilization on an environmentally degraded planet. Instead of trying to revive the disastrous system of over-consumption that has brought us to the current crises and can only lead to worse ones in the future, we need to seize the opportunity it presents to transform our relationship with the planet.

"We will not — and let me be clear on this — we will not aggravate an already weakening economy in the name of environmental progress,"
Canada's Environment Minister Jim Prentice, 2008

In 2009 about 550 people have attended one of the 27 free EH showings of environmental films such as "A Crude Awakening" and "An Inconvenient Truth"



St. Helens' Eco Team with their mentor Linda Benish

ALTERNATIVE STANDARDS TO DELAY POLLUTION LIMITS

For anyone living in the shadow of our industrial core, a formal process recently initiated by our local steel producers is worth paying attention to. Both US Steel (Stelco) and ArcelorMittal (Dofasco) have applied for 'alternative standards' for some key chemical pollutants the companies currently emit to our local air. The companies are required to do this under our new provincial regulation for local air quality, known as Regulation 419, because they are unable to meet the regulation's tough new air quality standards within the required timeframe.

Some Background on Regulation 419

Ontario's Regulation 419 came into force in 2005. It ushered in a process that allows the province to establish tough new air quality standards that restrict the levels of pollution that industries can emit to our local air. Unlike previous standards, these new standards are focused, first and foremost, on protecting our health and the health of the environment.

Despite this priority focus, the new regulation still provides some wiggle room for polluters in the form of alternative standards. The regulation includes a process that allows companies to request they be subject to less stringent, alternative standards for a set period of time while they work to make the necessary process changes and capital investments to meet the more stringent standards.

The regulation requires that companies who apply for an alternative standard prepare an action plan, setting out how they will work to 'continuously improve' their emissions over time until they meet the new air standards. Alternative standards can be granted for anywhere from 1 to 10 years.

Hamilton Steel Producers and Alternative Standards

Under the new regulation, Ontario's iron and steel sector is required to meet the new air standards by the year 2010. Companies unable to do this were required to apply for alternative standards by October 31st of 2008. Both US Steel and ArcelorMittal submitted alternative standard applications, indicating that they will be unable to meet the new 2010 standards for suspended particulate matter (fine dust). US Steel has also indicated it will be unable to meet the 2010 emission standard for sulphur dioxide.

In addition, both companies applied for alternative standards for benzene and benzo(a)pyrene, two known cancer-causing chemicals. Incredibly, Regulation 419 does not yet include standards for these chemicals. There is a provincial guideline for benzo(a)pyrene that both companies indicate they are currently unable to meet. The guideline is not legally enforceable and was not formulated with human and environmental health as priority concerns. MOE has indicated the final standard for benzo(a)pyrene will likely be tougher than the current guideline. There is not even a guideline in place for benzene. Thankfully, the MOE has recently initiated processes to develop standards for these harmful chemicals. However, it is unlikely that standards will be finalized in time to be considered as part of the US Steel and ArcelorMittal applications. Because no standards exist, the companies were not required to apply for alternative standards for these chemicals. But the companies have agreed to include these chemicals, likely in anticipation of the fact that standards will soon exist that will require them to take action to reduce their emissions.

What Does This Mean for the Public?

You may be wondering, "Why should I care about all of this?" But hopefully you're wondering "What can I do?" First, you should care because the alternative standard setting process could influence the health of our local air well into the future. Second, there is a lot that you can do. The provincial alternative standard setting process requires the companies to communicate with community members by explaining why they need an alternative standard, to help us to understand the human health and environmental risks involved should an alternative standard be granted to them, and to describe how they will work to meet the actual standard over time.



In 2009 over one thousand home energy kits (supplied by Union Gas) have been distributed by EH – a value of over \$40,000.



TRANSIT PASS

Transport Canada has confirmed a \$50,000 contribution to EH's Passport to Hamilton project launched last summer to promote the HSR's family day pass.

The city is also providing dollars and in-kind support to the EH project, and over 80 destinations across the city are offering discounts to pass users – at recreation centres, museums, art galleries, waterfront attractions and independently-owned restaurants and more.

Up to six people (maximum 2 adults over age of 19) can ride on the \$8.00 HSR day pass. A option is two mothers and four kids – plus kids under the age of three ride free.

We have now distributed over 9000 Passport maps showing transit routes and destination locations. In the first three months of the project, pass sales rose 30 percent – five times faster than our objective. And it appears we are getting many people on the bus who have never been HSR riders.

EH staff are now going into schools to teach students about transit and have them map out a trip for their families. With parental approval they will then receive a pass to take home – on condition the family takes the trip within 60 days.

ALTERNATIVE STANDARDS from previous page

There are already community members who have become involved by attending public open houses and expressing their views to both MOE and the companies. And there are more opportunities for community involvement coming in 2009 through open houses and community meetings. A final decision will be made on the alternative standard applications in April of 2009.

For more information on the MOE's Regulation 419 and alternative standards, visit www.ene.gov.on.ca. Consider contacting US Steel or ArcelorMittal or visiting their websites to learn more about their alternative standard applications.

Finally, Environment Hamilton is very involved in this process and we are happy to guide you to more information, to help you to understand the process, and to ensure that you are told about any open houses or public meetings associated with this process. Call Lynda at (905) 549-0900 or via email at contactus@environmenthamilton.org.

COMMENT ON PESTICIDE RULES

In June of this year, the province took a huge step in favour of the environment by passing the *Cosmetic Pesticides Ban Act*.

Details of the implementation of that Act are now being worked out through the development of a new general regulation under the provincial *Pesticides Act*.

Key components of the draft regulation include:

- A list of the pesticides that the province is proposing to ban for cosmetic use.
- A list of pesticide products the province plans to ban for sale.
- A list of domestic pesticide products the province is proposing to restrict for sale.

Take the time to comment – you can make a difference!

This is an important opportunity for anyone concerned about pesticides to ensure that the province is pursuing as stringent a regulation as possible. Your input can make a difference. Environment Hamilton knows this firsthand.

Our efforts to push for change in the aftermath of the Biedermann Pesticides fire, including commenting on the province's preliminary plans for the Cosmetic Pesticides Ban Act, have resulted in the following change being included in the draft regulation:

Pesticide Storage and Fire Department Notification Requirements

"In response to a recent fire in a facility that packages pesticides, the ministry is proposing to extend storage and fire department notification requirements for pesticide manufacturers to harmonize these requirements with those that exist for operators and vendors. These requirements would ensure local fire departments know where pesticides are stored, and that they are stored in a manner that protects public health and the environment." -*Excerpt from MOE Factsheet on the draft general regulation.*

More information about the draft regulation, including a link to the Environmental Bill of Rights registry posting for the proposed regulation, can be found at www.ene.gov.on.ca/en/land/pesticides/.

**The Ministry of Environment is
accepting comments until December 22,
2008.**

*EH's seventh
Trees Count
project
inventoried more
than 1200 public
and private trees
in Dundas this
summer - and
the Dundas
Valley Tree
Keepers
stewardship
group continues
its work
protecting the
urban canopy
and offering
public education
on the urban
forest.*

CLIMATE CHANGE CHAMPIONS SIGN UP AND COOK UP A (LOCAL) STORM!

Organisations across the city are getting serious about becoming leaders when it comes to climate change. We now have 18 organisations signed up for this joint EH-Green Venture program, that aims to help businesses, schools, community centres and faith groups cut their energy use – and help the environment at the same time.

St James' Church in Dundas is one of our Champions, and a group of their congregants, led by "Locavore" Sue

Carson, recently created a 100-mile lunch. Sue drew a circle around Dundas on a map and came up with ingredients for a delicious meal grown within 100-mile radius of the town.

As Sue noted, the item that traveled the farthest was the salt which came just within the 100-mile boundary. But 75% of the food came from only a 15-mile radius, bought at local stores or fruit markets.

About 100 people attended and many of them signed up for our online calculator (courtesy of Earth Day Canada) that helps individuals make commitments to cut their personal greenhouse gas emissions.

Our other Champions include:

Bryan Prince Booksellers, The Welcome Inn Community Centre, the Hamilton and District Labour Council, Neighbour to Neighbour Centre, the First Unitarian Church of Hamilton, Parkside High School, Spencer Valley School, Dundas Valley Montessori School and Waterdown District High School. The program runs till September 09 and culminates in a conference where participants meet each other and exchange their experiences and ideas.

We need you to sign up on our calculator! Our team is challenging cities across Canada to see who can reduce their carbon footprint the most!

Contact Julia for the link and password at champions@environmenthamilton.org and



take a look at the Champions website climatechangehamilton.ca.

Where Did the Food Come From?

Mushrooms - Agro Foods Inc, 381 Highway #8 Dundas

Bacon & Beef - Dearsley's Meat, 1154 Powerline Rd, Copetown (cows & pigs born in Cayuga and Arthur, Ontario)

Honey - Cool Creek Apiary, 148 Brant Church Rd, Mt Pleasant

Butter - Ni.He.Za Farms Disley Food Services, Toronto

Eggs - Quade's Farm 111 Inksetter Rd, available at Dearsley's

Blueberries - Picked on Old 99 Rd, Dundas
Apples/some vegetables - Myers Farm Highway #52, Copetown

Organic Flour - Ground by Oak Manor, Tavistock, (at Horn of Plenty, Dundas)

Ice Cream - Hewitt's dairy, Hagersville (at Picone's & Horn of Plenty, Dundas)

Vegetables - Dyments Farm, RR2 Dundas

Vegetables/salads/bread - Manorun Farm, Highway #52 Copetown

Black raspberries - Local farm, sold at Picone's Dundas

Maple Syrup -Simpler Thyme, Highway #6, Freelon

Vinegar - Filsinger's, Ayton

Salt - Sifto Salt, Goderich

100 Mile Luncheon

Beef and Vegetable Soup with Bread

Quiche and Salad with Black Raspberry Dressing

Baked Apples with Honey, Blueberries and Ice Cream

Eighteen businesses, faith groups, schools and other organizations have committed to being Climate Change Champions by reducing their energy use by at least 20 percent by 2010.





Thanks to
Friends of the
Greenbelt
Foundation

More than 250 people have participated in neighbourhood walking tours as part of our Kirkendall Walks project and 30 have helped with walkability assessments. We've also held two personal safety workshops, four community meetings, and two hikes onto the adjacent Bruce Trail, and met with city staff and politicians.

FEED EAT LOCAL

Hamilton Eat Local is asking for your feedback on its 2008 "Buy Local, Buy Fresh!" map as we begin work on the 2009 version in December; please use the subject line "Map Feedback" when you send your ideas to: jlee.eatlocal@environmenthamilton.org

Our revamped Hamilton Eat Local Blog for dedicated "locavores" — now has colourful weekly updates to keep you up on Hamilton's local food scene!

We're starting "Farms to Schools" programming at elementary, secondary, and adult/culinary education levels to nurture food awareness.

And we're continuing to stress the importance of local food procurement policies to the fore by means of educational efforts, media engagement, and public dialogue; working with city and community organizations in cooperative ventures that will put local food provisions in place

Thanks very much to the Ancaster Old Mill for hosting their third map fundraiser. The Sunday Supper blended the work of local artist Guennadi Kalinine with a feast made with love and superb local ingredients, creating a truly artistic dining experience.

Find our web page at http://www.environmenthamilton.org/view/page/eat_local but also be sure to visit our lively blog: <http://hamiltoneatlocal.blogspot.com/>. Call Karen or Juby at the Environment Hamilton office: 905-549-0900.

WALK TOGETHER from page one

outstanding traffic issues that the City of Hamilton has failed to deal with.

The irony is, that frustration, and not community assets, is what has motivated residents to get involved with the new KNA pedestrian committee. They are tired of participating in traffic management studies that offer no pedestrian first solutions to problems. Residents and businesses feel they have repeatedly submitted the same traffic concerns to no gain.

Armed with their deep-rooted love for this wonderful place in Hamilton, Kirkendall residents are tackling the obstacles to pedestrians and cyclists. They will show how individuals working together are more effective than individuals working alone.

Follow the Kirkendall Walks Project on our website: www.environmenthamilton.org

FAITH AND SUSTAINABILITY?

As project manager of EH's Energy Initiative for Faith Groups, I was recently interviewed by a graduate student in Theology at the University of Waterloo. He asked about my understanding of sustainability. Immediately the notion of perennial strength came to mind. A sustainable life, with boundaries, does not compromise the ability of those in the future to be supported and nourished.

Faith groups may just lead us in the transition from a our harmful consumer-driven behaviours to stronger, more sustainable lives. And Environment Hamilton is helping this happen.

Faith groups have the advantage of being organized. These groups share a common objective - to honour and respect the Earth and the Creation. Religions and spiritual philosophies all over the world have a long-standing tradition of ecological stewardship. By following the teachings of their faith, they solve real-world sustainability problems.

Faith groups motivate their congregations through services, church bulletins and newsletters. We encourage faith leaders to include a call to stewardship at every service and offer written resources helping their congregations move towards to sustainability and conservation.

Traditionally, faith groups have concerned themselves with social justice issues; now many are focussing on the dilemma of climate change as a social justice issue. They know energy conservation is key - for environment, social and economic reasons.

EH offers workshops on energy conservation for any faith group. We cover do-it-yourself and professional audits of homes and places of worship. Participants receive a Home Energy Conservation Planner, home energy retrofit kits, and information they need to reduce their own energy use - including loans of energy meters.

Melrose United Church has held an energy-efficiency workshop for older homes. They have a popular film series featuring movies that address environmental and social issues and they are in the process of completing an energy audit for their massive old building.

Don't know where to start? Let us help you make the first step. Put your faith into action. Contact me (Beatrice) at 905-549-0900 / beatrice@environmenthamilton.org

FRUIT TREE HARVESTING RECORD

The Hamilton Fruit Tree project – co-sponsored by the Conservator Society and Environment Hamilton – collected 4905 pounds of local fruit this year – up from 2000 pounds in 2007 and the most in four years of operation of the project.

Picking backyard trees and vines with the permission of generous homeowners, the project supplied fresh local organic grapes, peaches, apples and pears to various food banks and breakfast programs across Hamilton. A small amount of fruit also went to homeowners and the volunteer pickers. An added benefit was the diversion of the fruit

from becoming food waste.

Part of the project objective is to increase food storage techniques and this year, we have partnered with the Eva Rothwell Centre (in the former Robert Land school on Wentworth North) to hold canning



workshops. At our first workshop, we canned over 60 lbs of pears and apples into various delicious sauces. Special thanks goes to Bethany Jones, program co-ordinator at Eva Rothwell, and Judy Snider for leading the workshop. More workshops are continuing.

The project celebrated the 2008 year with a volunteer appreciation event at Skydragon in late November in partnership with Canadian Organic Growers to show the film "Tableland" about healthier alternatives to current industrial food systems.

A panel discussion followed with Yuki



Hayashi, a poultry enthusiast who over the summer was raising three hens in her backyard, and with Karen Burson, a chef and a locavore passionate about local food who heads EH's Eat Local project – also a joint venture with the Conservers.

We also partnered with the North Hamilton Community Health Centre to engage kids from their Childrens' Clubs, over the span of the summer, in harvesting various fruits in the Hamilton area and in



preserving the produce so that they can enjoy "the fruits of their labour" afterward.

Thank you to all our homeowners, volunteers and partners with special mention to the Edith Turner Foundation of the Hamilton Community Foundation and to Healthy Hamilton Living for their respective financial support.

Funding is being sought to continue the Fruit Tree project into 2009. If approved, the program will include tree pruning / maintenance workshops open to our homeowners in early spring.

Please contact us if you have a fruit tree that needs harvesting, or would like to volunteer or would like to be involved in other ways with the Hamilton Fruit Tree Project.

Juby Lee, Fruit Tree Project Co-ordinator: 905-549-0900; Cell: 289-439-1543; www.environmenthamilton.org

Over 35,000 thousand Buy Local, Buy Fresh maps were distributed in 2009 guiding Hamiltonians to the local produce of over sixty local farms and businesses.

ACTION ON INDUSTRIAL EMISSIONS

In 2009 we've toured over 150 people through the super energy-efficient home of Dave and Cathy Braden to learn how a full-size house can be heated with a hair dryer, not require air conditioning, and draw all its electrical energy from solar and wind power

On November 10th, the City of Hamilton's Committee of the Whole invited representatives from ArcelorMittal Dofasco, US Steel and Columbian Chemical to come to shed light on on-going industrial fallout problems in the city's north end neighbourhoods.

Environment Hamilton, along with McAnulty Neighbourhood activist Lorna Moreau, decided to take the opportunity to request to address the Committee as well.

Our "Top Six Wish List" was pitched to councillors, with advice and direction rooted in our organization's 5+ years of effort to see industrial emission problems properly resolved. Here's our list:

Environment Hamilton's Top Six

1. That local industries take all necessary measures to ensure that compliance with current and future regulatory requirements is achieved.
2. That MOE publicly announce when it initiates charges against local polluters.
3. That MOE proactively amend local industrial air permits to include requirements for continuous emission monitoring technology for point source emissions (stacks) wherever feasible.
4. That MOE require every commercial/ industrial entity that currently possesses or applies for a provincial permit to discharge to air to pay a fee to support regional industrial air monitoring networks to enable these networks to become more comprehensive and financially sustainable.
5. That the provincial government build on the existing 'Spills Bill' (Bill 133) – which currently applies only to spills to water - so that it includes measures to empower MOE directors to impose financial penalties for problematic pollution discharges to air.
6. That the City of Hamilton enforce its existing Streets By-Law and Property Standards By-Law to prevent fugitive particulate emission problems generated by the drag out and re-suspension of dust and debris from area industries onto local streets.

Presented to the City of Hamilton's Committee of the Whole, November 10, 2008

We plan to submit a formal request to our provincial Minister of the Environment, John Gerretsen, to take action on Wishes 3 to 5. We can all play a part in ensuring Wishes 1 and 5 come true, by calling in formal complaints about visible emissions and about the drag out of dust and dirt from industrial sites.

Here's what you can do:

If you see visible emissions from the industrial core, check out our stack keys at www.environmenthamilton.org or give us a call. We can help you to identify the source of the emissions. Once you know this, you can call in a formal complaint to the Ministry of the Environment at (905) 521-7650 during regular office hours and at 1800-268-6060 after hours and on weekends.

If you see problems with the drag out of dirt or other debris from industrial sites (factories, scrap yards, construction sites) call the City of Hamilton at (905) 546-2489, ask to speak to someone in the By-Law Enforcement Department and request that they take action to enforce our Streets By-Law and/or Property Standards By-Law.

SCHOOL RECYCLING

EH staff organized a waste management tour for ten school representatives in mid-November. With the help of Green Venture and a donated HSR bus, the group got a first-hand look at city waste handling facilities and learned about the recycling success story led by EH at Woodward Avenue public school.

Last year, with EH's leadership and donations that provided each child with a litterless lunch kit, the students, teachers and staff at Woodward reduced their monthly garbage from 90 bags to just 4.

Last month's tour is part of our effort to spread this success to public and Catholic schools across the city. A task force focused on this goal will be holding its first meeting in mid January.

ENERGY-EFFICIENT

EH continues to offer tours of Dave Braden's super energy-efficient home. Call (905) 549-0900 to register.

Join Us!



**ENVIRONMENT
HAMILTON**
1130 Barton East
Suite 207
Hamilton L8H 7P9

[contactus@
environment
hamilton.org](mailto:contactus@environmenthamilton.org)
905 549-0900
[www.environment
hamilton.org](http://www.environmenthamilton.org)

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\$25 per year
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