Oct 2026

President's Patch

By President Jenny Weaver, photos by the author

We opened our fall meetings on Monday, September 14, delayed a week by Labor Day, and following the closure of another successful Alaska State Fair. I believe it was one of the best MMGA meetings I have attended. Jodie Anderson, Director of the Institute of Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Extension (IANRE), joined us as guest speaker. Jodie is smart and funny—she engaged us from the get-go with her humor, expertise, and knowledge of the Mat-Su Valley.

Jodie began her presentation with an interesting report on weather data from the fall of 2025. She noted that weather throughout the Mat-Su differs significantly depending on where you live, even within neighborhoods. Weather reporting sites typically utilize airport weather stations, which are often a distance from our individual gardens. She explained the difference between soft and hard frost. Basically, a soft or light frost can occur anywhere between 32°F and 36°F. It may do damage to some plants, especially sensitive plant parts above ground. A hard frost drops to 28°F and can kill plants completely.

Jodie invited members and guests to share their own recollection of the first frost at their homes. We viewed a map of the Valley with locations indicated where our members garden. Jodie added that information to a large whiteboard that listed valley locations (Palmer, Wasilla, Lazy Mountain, Butte, Palmer and Wasilla Fishhook, Farm Loop, Meadow Lakes, etc.). It was fun to see the information take shape as our meeting continued.

In addition to a hard frost in early October, the Valley experienced no snow cover, or when it did snow, fierce fall and winter winds blew it away. Our gardens were left exposed to extreme cold and desiccating winds. Insulating snow was late, well into January, followed by a spring that included late frosts and temperatures that wavered above and below freezing.

Across the Valley folks reported perennial plants, shrubs and fruit trees that either died completely, or showed up late. Some plants emerged, but did not flower or fruit, or provided a lackluster showing of both.

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Regular Meetings
First Monday of the Month
Next meeting
Oct 12th, 7:00 P.M.
Please Note Date Change
LOCATION:
Rebarchek Farm, Sojdin Barn, East Rebarchek Road, Palmer, Alaska
AGENDA
Guest Speaker:
Don Berberich, Topic: To be determined
Business Meeting follows

SOMEWHERE IN THYME

WAYBACK ARTICLES FROM PAST MMGA PUBLICATIONS – OCT 2012

How can I protect my apple trees from vole feeding damage?

The best method for the control of voles is to use **1/4-inch hardware cloth** or plastic cylinders to protect individual trees and shrubs by wrapping the base of the trunk up to about 18 inches high. The cylinder should be tight to the ground or buried slightly and extend higher than the maximum depth of snow in winter, including drifts. Where rabbits are also a problem, the height of the cylinder should be at least 18 inches above the **snow depth**.

When making the cylinder, overlap the edges at least 1 inch, and fasten them securely so gaps do not form that could admit voles. Cylinders of galvanized hardware cloth should last about five years, so make them large enough in diameter to accommodate expected trunk growth if they remain in place during the growing season. Remove and replace cylinders promptly if the trunk becomes constricted, and do not allow outside materials (leaves, mulch, grass clippings) to accumulate in the cylinders. Clear and/or mow grass and weeds in the orchard and around each tree to reduce cover for the voles during the winter.

Extension.org; last updated 10/3/11; downloaded 9/12/12

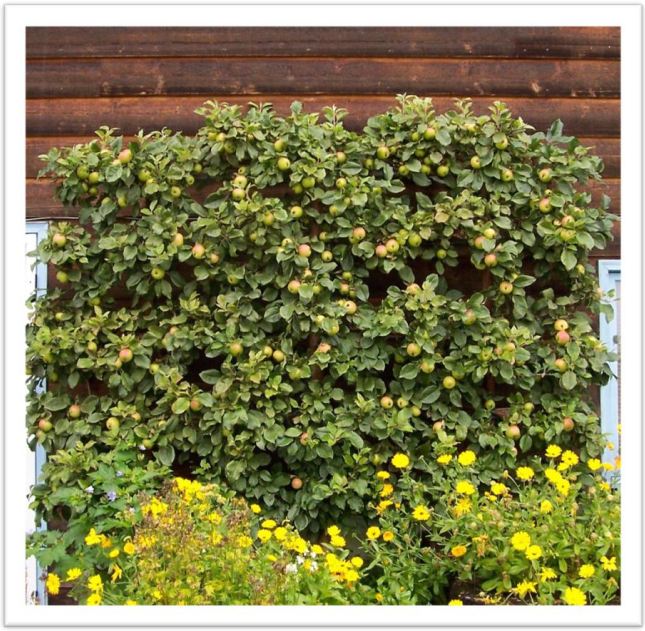

Photo by Curtis Mueller, Alaska Master Gardener, Dan and Marian Elliot's Espaliered Apple Tree (2012)

Tips for winterizing your lawn

- Do not use high nitrogen fertilizer after September 15
- Mow the grass short – 2 to 3 inches
- Bag up grass clippings
- Rake and bag up leaves
- Take soil samples before the ground freezes and have the soil tested

Oh, how we love pumpkin season. You did know this Gourdish squash has its own season, right? Winter, Spring, Summer, Pumpkin.... We anxiously anticipate it every year. ~Trader Joe's Fearless Flyer, October 2010

Preparing Your Yard and Garden for Winter

by Don Janssen, UNL Extension Educator

Each fall as the growing season comes to a screeching halt it seems like the landscape is soon forgotten. Thinking about the landscape now and protecting it from the winter months will reap dividends next spring.

Soil around trees and shrubs can dry out over winter. In some cases, drying out causes considerable damage to the plants. Mulches conserve moisture. They also have many other wonderful qualities.

For recently planted trees and shrubs mulch gives new roots more time to develop. Mulch also helps minimize the effect of temperature fluctuations that can heave plant crowns out of the ground. Mulch also prolongs plant dormancy in the spring and reduces the chance of late spring frost injury to new leaves and flowers.

Wood chips, shredded bark, and pine needles all make good mulches. The mulch should be coarse enough not to blow away. Apply about two to three inches of mulch around the base of the plants. Do not mound the mulch around the trunk of trees.

New trees and shrubs depend on proper watering for their first three years in the landscape. In the first two years, a tree replaces its original root system it lost in the nursery. Excess water loss can lead to "winter burn" or death. Water all trees and shrubs that have been in your landscape less than three years one last time before the ground freezes (usually around Thanksgiving).

All needled and broadleaf evergreens need to be watered one last time before the ground freezes since they will continue to lose water from their foliage all winter. This is important especially for all newly-planted evergreens since they often have root systems too small to absorb enough water during the winter.

Wrap the trunks of newly planted, thin-barked trees with tree-wrap paper to prevent sun scalding of the bark. Closely spaced trees in nurseries help shade each other, but when they are transplanted to open areas, they may receive full exposure to winter sunlight. If you do not protect them, sun scalding can occur. This can damage or kill tissue under the bark. Paper tree wrap can prevent the rapid temperature changes in the bark that cause frost cracking and sunscald.

All paper wraps should be removed in the spring. Wrap can cause damage to the tree if left on the tree too long. Wrap does not provide protection from rodents.

You may also need to protect your trees and shrubs plants from rodents. If you've had rodent damage in previous years, you may want to place wire, hardware cloth, or a plastic spiral around the trunks of small trees to protect them. It should be at least one to two feet higher up the trunk than the expected snow level and be sure to submerge the material two to three inches into the ground.

Also, clean up old, diseased, or insect-infected foliage or fruit around the yard. Clean away weeds, tall grass, and leaves from the trunk area.

This resource was added November 2007 and appeared in the Lincoln Journal Star Newspaper Sunday of southeastern Nebraska. It may or may not apply in your area. If you live outside southeastern Nebraska, visit your local Extension office

Credit: Please acknowledge the author(s) and University of Nebraska-Extension at http://lancaster.unl.edu unless otherwise credited on the Web site.

BULB INFORMATION

Source: Alaska Home Gardeners Facebook Group

Bulbs are generally divided into spring planted and fall planted types. Most of these are from the lower 48, so timing may be off a bit for Alaska. Below are some links to help guide you through.

Spring-Planted Bulbs, Corms and Roots, Colorado State University Extension: https://extension.colostate.edu/topic-areas/yard-garden/spring-planted-bulbs-corms-and-roots-7-411/

Bulbs, University of Maryland Extension, https://extension.umd.edu/hgic/topics/bulbs

Growing and Overwintering Fuchsia, Geranium, Dahlia and Tuberous Begonia, University of Alaska Fairbanks, Cooperative Extension Service, http://cespubs.uaf.edu/index.php/download_file/1500/

Fall-Planted Bulbs and Corms, Colorado State University Extension: https://extension.colostate.edu/topic-areas/yard-garden/fall-planted-bulbs-and-corms-7-410/

Planting bulbs, tubers and rhizomes, University of Minnesota Extension, https://extension.umn.edu/how/planting-bulbs-tubers-and-rhizomes

Sources to order from that offer shipping to Alaska:

Tulip World: https://www.tulipworld.com/

Schreiners Iris Garden: https://www.schreinersgardens.com/home

Brent & Becky's Bulbs: https://brentandbeckysbulbs.com/

Old House Gardens Heirloom Bulbs: https://oldhousegardens.com/

Fedco Bulbs, https://fedcoseeds.com/bulbs/

Eden Brothers, https://www.edenbrothers.com/store/flower_bulbs.html

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Jodie explained that many plants, shrubs, and trees expended all their energy to simply survive the strange weather and had no energy to produce flowers or fruit. In essence, we were lucky they survived!

Jodie engaged us all with her humor and blunt honesty. It was a rousing exchange of information and laughter. In conclusion, she asked how we might mitigate future extreme weather. She told us to prioritize plants and trees we simply did not want to lose to weather this winter. Then apply a thin layer of coffee grounds on top of the soil, and mulch, mulch, mulch, with leaves and/or straw. In windy locations, top that with bird netting or plastic fencing to keep the mulch from blowing away.

After a short break and treats kindly provided by Sue Glenn, Rebecca Emerson, and Todd Weaver, we approved the minutes from our May meeting. Dorte Mobley gave the Treasurer's report. She is looking for someone to help her with a Square report.

We then viewed a slideshow of all our events and activities, beginning with the Plant Sale on May 30th and ending with the Alaska State Fair. This was an opportunity to thank all those folks who took the lead on committees and/or helped support events through their continued participation and care. Thank you to everyone who helps make MMGA a great "club." Unfortunately, the majority of our Rebarchek crew was unable to attend, and I regret that they didn't get the attention or kudos they so well deserve.

Upcoming Meetings and Events

Our next meeting is Monday, October 12; rescheduled partially due to our late September meeting but also to accommodate my family travel out-of-state. I appreciate the change. Don Berberich, well known throughout the Valley for his knowledge of gardening, is invited to speak at the meeting, but that hasn't yet been finalized. Stay tuned!

At the October 12 meeting, we will also visit ideas for a 2027 budget, to be finalized at our November business meeting. No Standing Rules revision is required this year, unless a member has a concern they feel should be addressed.

The November 2nd meeting also includes election of officers. We need volunteers to serve as President, Vice President, and Secretary. Dorte Mobley could use an assist as Treasurer or would step down if someone has the desire and expertise to take on this task. Deb Blaylock graciously offered to continue her dedication as At-Large Member including editor of the newsletter, administrator of our main Facebook group and page, and the membership database.

Could you volunteer for a board position? The board meets via Zoom before each monthly meeting to discuss issues and set an agenda. Board members are busy folks, just like you, who help our group stay organized and on track with activities and events. Please consider taking a turn as a Board Member!

Also, in November we host a Members' Garden Slideshow. Do you have some photos to share? It can be a single shot of a beautiful specimen or a series of pics of your season's success. Please submit photos to our MMGA email at matsumastergardeners@gmail.com.

If someone is interested in compiling those photos into a PowerPoint or keynote please let me know!

Sue Glenn's Oatmeal Coconut Gooseberry Bars

Ingredients

- 3/4 C unsweetened coconut
- 1 1/4 C flour
- 2/3-3/4 C Brown sugar
- 1 t salt
- 12 T cut up cold butter
- 1 1/2 c rolled oats
- 1/2-pint jelly or jam; prefer tart like Gooseberry or Rhubarb

Bake 350 degrees 9x13 pan. Using a food processor mix flour, sugar, salt and add butter till crumbly. Add oats and coconut and mix well. Remove 3/4 C of mix for later. In 9x13 pan lined with foil or parchment paper press rest of mix in bottom evenly. Bake 15 mins until lightly browned. Remove from oven and cool about 10 mins.
Microwave 1/2 pint of jam/jelly 30-60 secs to warm up and spread easier. Spread on dough in pan evenly then top with 3/4 cup of reserved mix. Bake additional 7-9 mins. Remove from oven and cool completely. Lift out of pan and cut into bars.

Potatoes! And what about those warts?

During the fall harvest, many home gardeners discover bumpy warty looking lesions on their potatoes. Commonly called "scab," it is most likely caused by varieties of the bacteria Streptomyces. The bacteria can occur naturally in your soil, or it can be introduced by infected tubers used as seed stock.

To learn more about this and other possible potato diseases, you can find more info at this link: https://www.uaf.edu/ces/garden/potato-scab/index.php. Dr. Matney is working on updating HGA-00027, with current research – stay tuned! Credit to Dr. Casey Matney, UAF CES Extension Agent.

Mat-Su Valley Charitable Organizations

These organizations accept donations of extra garden produce (and other items). Please contact them for further information/details if needed. Please email matsumastergardeners@gmail.com if you know of other organizations who accept garden donations that are not listed.

Mat-Su Senior Services, 1132 S. Chugach Street, Palmer, Alaska 99645. Webpage: http://www.matsuseniors.com/, Hours: Monday – Friday, 8 am – 4 pm.

Matsu Food Bank, 5099 East Blue Lupine Drive, Suite 114, Wasilla, AK, 907-357-3769, Website: https://www.matsufoodbank.org/ (On FB). Hours: Monday - Friday, 10 am - 1 pm.

Kids Kupboard, 4800 N Tanis Dr. Wasilla AK 99654, 907-357-5439, email: director@kidskupboard.org, website: https://www.kidskupboard.org/ (On FB)

Wasilla Area Seniors, 1301 S. Century Circle, Wasilla 99654, (907) 206-8800, email: wasillaseniors@alaskaseniors.com, https://www.facebook.com/WasillaAreaSeniorsInc/

Palmer Food Bank, 101 S. Denali Street, Palmer, AK 99645, 907-746-3565, Email: jennifer@palmerfoodbank.org, Website: https://www.palmerfoodbank.org/ (On FB) Hours: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, 1 – 5 pm.

Frontline Mission, 2001 E Palmer-Wasilla Hwy, Wasilla, AK, 907-357-8600, Email: helpfrontlinemission@wlfm.org. Website: https://www.frontlinemission.org/. (On FB)

A few photos provided by President Jenny Weaver:
Kohlrabi Octopus
Pretty Peonies

Below is a scanned copy of the handout Jodie Anderson provided at the September meeting. (Thanks Jodie!) Here is the link that you can click on to take you to the website: https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/cdo-web/search. Follow the directions in the document.

How to find/download free weather data from Matanuska Experiment Station and Extension Center since July 4, 1917.

All of the weather data from all official weather stations across the entire US can be obtained at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's website

https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/cdo-web/search

1. For Weather Observation select "Daily Summaries" (should be already selected, but can find in the drop-down menu)
2. For Data Range select any time period between 1917-07-04 (the date the weather station was established) to 2026-08-31 (the latest month of data entry)
3. For Search For enter "Stations" (should be already selected, but can find in the drop-down menu)
4. For "Search Term" type in "Matanuska AES" (the weather station name for MEFEC)
5. Click on "Search" and a new page will open with the option to "Add to Cart" – an orange button on the left side of the screen
6. Go to right side of the screen and see the "Cart (Free Data) 1 item button – click on that
7. Review all your information and hit the orange "Continue" button at the bottom of the screen
8. You will receive a confirmation email from NCEI CDO telling you about your "order" for the free data
9. You will then receive an "Order Complete" email from NCEI CDO with a File listed as "Download" (in blue lettering) and that data is available for you to download for 7-days.

The data is free so you download the information onto your computer or the only cost will be in personal printer ink and paper.

MMGA Meeting Minutes – Sept 14, 2026
Submitted by Secretary Rebecca Emerson
Location: Rebarchek Palmer, Alaska
Time: 7:00 PM – 9:30 PM

In-Person Member Attendance:

- Deb & Ken Blaylock
- Rebecca Emerson
- Sue Glenn
- Bonnie Hager
- Craig Lisonbee
- Dorte Mobley
- Marjorie Mueller
- Doug Patrick
- Chelsea San Roman
- Leslie Scott
- Ginger Sweeney
- Kristina Tornqvist
- Isaac Vaughan
- Jenny/Todd/Pearl Weaver
- Dawn Wolski

Guests:

Jani and Eric Anderson
Jodie Anderson, Guest Speaker

Online Attendees:

Kristen Buchta

1.Call to Order / Welcome

Our first meeting of the fall kicked off on Monday, September 14, at 7:00 P.M. at the Rebarchek Barn. Garden treats were shared as snacks for a fun summer recap.

2. Approval of May Minutes

The minutes from our May meeting were reviewed. Kristina Tornqvist motioned to approve the minutes, Rebecca Emerson seconded, and the motion passed unanimously with no objections.

3. Treasurer's Report

Dorte provided the financial update. Our accounts have been successfully consolidated into a single active account at Mat Su Valley Federal Credit Union, where the club doesn't receive as many charges. The old First National Bank account has been officially closed.

Square Reporting: We discussed the need to accurately track gross receipts and Square processing fees separately for clean bookkeeping. Dorte Mobley noted she needed assistance with square reporting if there is anyone willing to help.

4. Old Business

We enjoyed a wonderful photo journey celebrating our packed spring and summer events. A huge thank you to everyone who played any part in all the activities. We made a huge impact on the community this summer with all the help. If you have time check out Rebarchek before the harvest day to see the wonderful plants and Dr Steve Brown's plaque.

5. Announcements

October Meeting Change: Due to scheduling, a motion was made by Deb Blaylock and seconded by Ken Blaylock to bump our next meeting to Monday, October 12. The motion passed.

Rebarchek Farm Harvest Day: Scheduled for Saturday, October 10, with time to be announced, to finalize garden cleanup and winterization.

November 2nd Meeting: Our annual Budget review and Board Elections. We are actively looking for nominations and volunteers to fill key board positions (President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer). Jenny Weaver will be stepping down as president to focus on the MMGA Master Gardener's conference in 2027! If you are interested in any of these positions, reach out to us.

Garden Links (updated March 2024)

Alaska AgrAbility Program **New Mar 2024**
https://www.uaf.edu/ces/agriculture/agrability/index.php

Alaska Botanical Garden
http://www.alaskabg.org/

Alaska Center for Conservation Science
http://aknhp.uaa.alaska.edu/botany/

Alaska Community Forestry
https://forestry.alaska.gov/community/index

Arbor Day Foundation
www.arborday.org

Alaska Division of Agriculture
http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/

Alaska Garden Clubs
http://www.alaskagardenclubs.org

Alaska Grown
http://www.buyalaskagrown.com/

Alaska Master Gardeners Association, Anchorage
http://alaskamastergardeners.org/

Alaska Native Plant Society
http://www.aknps.org/

Alaska Non-Native Species List
https://accs.uaa.alaska.edu/invasive-species/non-native-plant-species-list/

Alaska Orchid Society
http://www.akorchid.org/

Alaska Peony Society
https://www.alaskapeonysociety.com/

Alaska Pioneer Fruit Growers Association
http://www.apfga.org/

Alaska Plant Materials Center
http://plants.alaska.gov/

Alaska Rhodiola
https://www.akroseroot.com /

Alaska Rock Garden Society
http://www.akrockgardensociety.org/

Flora of North America
http://floranorthamerica.org/

Good Earth Garden School
https://www.goodearthgardenschool.com/

Georgeson Botanical Garden
https://georgesonbotanicalgarden.org/

iNaturalist ***New May 2024***
https://www.inaturalist.org/

Integrated Pest Management Program
http://www.uaf.edu/ces/ipm/

IPM Alaska Pest Reporter
https://plw.man.mybluehost.me/

Junior Master Gardener
http://www.jmgkids.us/

Landscape Plants for Alaska
https://visionplusapps.com/alaska-plants/

Mat-Su Borough Rain Garden Program
http://www.matsugov.us/environment/raingardens

Mat-Su Master Gardener Website
www.matsumastergardeners.com

Master Gardener Research Link (Extension)
https://extension.org/search/

Master Gardeners of the Tanana Valley
https://fairbanksmastergardeners.wordpress.com/

Mat-Su/Copper River Cooperative Extension Service
https://www.uaf.edu/ces/districts/matsu/

Matanuska Experiment Farm and Extension Services
https://www.uaf.edu/afes/places/palmer/

National AgrAbility Program **New Mar 2024**
http://www.agrability.org/

Palmer Soil & Water Conservation District
http://palmersoilandwater.org/

Society of American Foresters, Cook Inlet Chapter
https://forestry.org/cook-inlet-seedling-sale/

South-Central Alaska Beekeepers Assoc.
http://www.sababeekeepers.com/

Southeast Alaska Master Gardeners Association
http://seak-mastergardeners.org/index.html

Sustainable Agriculture – UAF
https://www.uaf.edu/ces/agriculture/sare/

UAF Cooperative Extension Service
https://www.uaf.edu/ces/

UAF Cooperative Extension Service Publications
http://www.uaf.edu/ces/pubs/catalog/

UAF CES Citizen Pest Monitoring Portal
https://pestreporter.alaska.edu/

UAF Herbarium
http://www.uaf.edu/museum/collections/herb/

UAF Alaska Master Gardener Program
https://www.uaf.edu/ces/garden/mastergardeners/

University of Saskatchewan Fruit Program
www.fruit.usask.ca

USDA/NRCS Plant Database
https://plants.usda.gov/home

Wildflower Garden Club of Alaska
https://wildflowergardenclub.org/

BOARD OF DIRECTOR CONTACT INFO

President:	**Jenny Weaver**	**907-982-5446**
Vice President:	**Kristin Buchta**	**907-350-4429**
Secretary:	**Rebecca Emerson**	**334-207-5217**
Treasurer:	**Dorte Mobley**	**907-232-5422**
Member at Large:	**Deb Blaylock**	**907-746-6045**

If you have gardening news, photos, or information you would like to share in the newsletter, please send to the MMGA email.

Website: www.matsumastergardeners.com/
Email: matsumastergardeners@gmail.com

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

OCT 2026 AND BEYOND

Oct 10, Palmer, Rebarchek Harvest & MMGA Plot Clean Up Day, Noon until 3 pm
Oct 12, Palmer, Regular Meeting, Don Berberich, Topic To Be Determined – Please note date change
Oct 27-29, Juneau, Alaska Invasive Species Workshop
Nov 2, Palmer, Annual Meeting, Member Slide Show Presentation of 2026 Gardens
Nov 12-14, Anchorage, Alaska Agriculture Conference, **https://akagconference.com/**
Dec TBD, Holiday Party

2027

Apr 30 – May 2, Wasilla, 2027 State Master Gardener Conference

Don't forget to check out the photos tab on our webpage! It is periodically updated with photos from activities our Association participates in.
https://www.matsumastergardeners.com/photos.html

Club Membership

Each membership year runs from January to December. Annual individual memberships are $15, and family memberships are $20. Family memberships are only for family members living in the same household. The deadline to join is **March 2, 2026**, to be listed in the annual membership directory.
Join or renew online.

Thank you!

How and What to Submit for the Monthly Newsletter

Your submissions are appreciated and make our newsletter what it is – so do not be shy about submitting items for publication.
However, there are a few rules which we all must pay attention to:

Articles, stories, poetry, upcoming events, and pictures (garden-related) are needed for inclusion in the newsletter. Please submit pictures in JPEG format and other items in Word format with no special formatting other than paragraphs. When submitting pictures, please provide a brief caption or explanation as to who or what is in the picture.

If you are not the author or photographer, please ensure you have permission of the author or photographer to use their material in the newsletter. The newsletter publisher is not responsible for obtaining this for you.

Please do not provide magazine articles or pictures from the internet unless they are public domain items.

Deadline for submission of articles and info: 20th day of each month ~~ Thank you~~

Oct 2026

Website: www.matsumastergardeners.com/

Email: matsumastergardeners@gmail.com

MAT-SU MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION
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