

# AACUSS Talks

A T L A N T I C A S S O C I A T I O N O F C O L L E G E A N D  
U N I V E R S I T Y S T U D E N T S E R V I C E S

## AACUSS ANNUAL CONFERENCE SAINT MARY'S UNIVERSITY JUNE 3-6 2007

### IN THIS ISSUE

- Exciting success in programming
- Saint Mary's gears up for Summer conference
- Photos from Fall Workshop!

Keith Hotchkiss, Saint Mary's University

The 2007 Conference Organizing Committee extends a warm welcome to everyone planning to attend this years conference whose theme is "AACUSS WITHOUT BORDERS" AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE.. This years conference is being hosted by Saint Mary's University and we hope to have something for everyone. Ben Yang from the University of Toronto will be one of our keynote speakers as well as Jim Fox President of the Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE).



I think I spotted the room I want!

We have chosen this theme as all of our campuses have been affected by increasing numbers of International students and visitors .Donnie Jeffrey

is our Program Chair and his committee wants to provide excellent sessions for all divisions. Our Call for Papers will already be out by the time you read this. The deadline to submit a proposal is January 31<sup>st</sup>.

We will have space available in our

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Oonagh Holmes, Acadia University

Greetings AACUSS Colleagues. Here we find ourselves at the end of first term already. I am sure that the term was filled with excitement, challenges, opportunities, and initiatives for us all.

welcome your input and submissions at any time! If you know of any other new members in Student Affairs at your institutions, please let them know about AACUSS. We would love to have them join us.

Our membership year is well under way with plenty of new members. For some of you , this will be your first issue of AACUSS Talks. We

There was a terrific turn out at the Fall Workshop hosted by UNB Fredericton with Anne Forestall and her team. There were a total of 90 people registered for the work-

## EDITORIAL: WHAT WE SAY AND WHAT WE DO



The pen is mightier than the word-processor—graffiti expresses buried sentiments about editorial policy?

submitted would be included in the newsletter. Then, as I was assembling this edition, I not only left a few pieces out, I also considered leaving even more out. I will pause here for your gasps of surprise and indignation.

As I was wrestling with my editorial dilemma (when I phrase it that way I don't feel nearly as picky or arbitrary), it occurred to me that in deciding what I thought was good AACUSS Talks material, I was shaping what I thought AACUSS was about. This dovetailed nicely into thoughts about the recent Fall Workshop and what I saw there that made me appreciate this organization. A colleague (who shall remain nameless and therefore any wrath about the quote should be directed at me) once commented that AACUSS was like a younger, prettier sister to CACUSS (Canadian Association of College and University Student Services). And as younger, prettier sisters are wont to do, we tend to be quite smug and self-congratulatory about this. I mean we tend to be pretty gracious about it, welcoming folks from west-of-New Brunswick whenever they want to share in the special tie we seem to enjoy. But like any younger sister worthy of the appellation, I think we also sometimes look up to CACUSS for the sense of organization it displays, for the professional demeanor it carries and sheer number of committed professionals it brings together.

So it turns out I'm a big fat liar. I hope this doesn't turn into the quote that galvanizes AACUSS members to impeach an executive member (yours truly) for the first time in the organization's history. But here's the deal. When I put out my call for submissions I pretty much promised that any reasonable piece sub-

I think that was one of the things the organizers of the Fall Workshop tried to achieve – a greater sense that AACUSS is a cohesive entity with a shared purpose, common perspectives and mutually achievable goals. We've always been good at socializing, networking and supporting as a group. As a matter of fact, that is one of the founding principals and recurring themes we see in the history of organization. I think we've also (admittedly I only speak from personal observations of recent history) served as a good launching pad for new programs and research and the individuals who wanted to pursue them. In many ways, I think it is through the sharing and reviewing programs that we build a common identity for AACUSS. The divisional representatives and the vital work they do provides the many professions and occupations within AACUSS a chance to address specific needs for standards, best practices and education, but it is through the sharing of broader social networks and programs that reach across divisions that we become a unified group rather than a federation of divisions.

*“ . . . it is through the sharing and reviewing of programs that we build a common identity for AACUSS ”*

Which is my long winded way of saying that's what I look for in AACUSS Talks material. I think pieces welcoming new staff and bidding farewell to old staff are crucial parts of AACUSS and will always be a part of our newsletter. Similarly, articles that describe programs that reach out to all members and could be of interest to all divisions, directly or indirectly, are gold. Not only are they of interest to everyone, but they strengthen the common bond we share as student service professionals. Articles that are more focused to the needs of one division have a place here too – the membership spoke quite clearly last year about the impor-

## AACUSS SUMMER CONFERENCE (CONT'D)

Residences but we have secured a special rate of 135.00 a night at the Lord Nelson Hotel (1 800-565-2020) for those who prefer hotel. Mary Ellen MacEachern is chairing our social committee that includes Ysaac Rodriguez so you know you are in store for some great maritime fun. Our meals and breaks will take on an International theme as well.

Kati Kilfoil is our Registration Chair and her committee will be responsible for welcoming you to AACUSS WITHOUT BORDERS.

We will have our Conference website up before Christmas and we will update it as our program takes shape. On behalf of all of us in Student Services at Saint Mary's we hope you will be able to join us in Halifax in June and we look forward to hosting this years conference.

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE (CONT'D)

shop and this number included representation from all of the AACUSS divisions as well as eight students. The workshop saw several new members as well. We are delighted to have students joining us as well as our new colleagues from various institutions. Welcome!

The workshop started with a high energy keynote from Andy Thibideault. The remainder of the day was spent brainstorming and debriefing issues related to the areas of wellness. The conclusion of the day was an opportunity to share program ideas and other

student and professional related resources relating to the areas of wellness. I suspect that many networking opportunities resulted from that discussion. We look forward to hearing about any of your attempts at implementing these ideas in the coming issues of AACUSS Talks and/or at future professional development events. Thank you, once again, to the UNB Fredricton team for your hard work and hosting.

Before you know it we will be heading to St. Mary's University for the Spring Conference. Keith

Hotchkiss and his team are well underway in the planning process. They welcome your suggestions at any time.

I wish you all a very successful end of term, and the warmest holiday season. Stay safe, take care and we'll meet again in the new year.

Sincerely  
Oonagh C. Holmes



### EDITORIAL (CONT'D)

tance of the divisions. Because your editor doesn't belong to all the divisions, members including such articles may want to include a blurb explaining why the article is relevant to a particular division. Cindy Crossman's article on a continuing competence program for nurses is an example of such an article in this issue, although other members may see something in it they can use in their own profession as well. Where I drew the line today was at articles that seemed to be more about what else is going on at an institution that isn't so related student service. I also (and I

may get yelled at here) feel that articles should focus on process and specifics that are of interest to members rather than just the general feel-good expectation that the wider institution might want to publicize – we're a friendly group, but we're also a professional association.

And that . . . (why do I feel like I just aged significantly by starting my paragraph that way, but that may just be the length of this piece), is how I came to turn some pieces down. As always, I'd love to read, and share, what you the members have to say about that, either in support or in opposition.

James

## OUR BEST TIMES ARE NOT WASTED

Kris Trotter, Mt. Allison University

On Thursday September 21st Mount Allison's Pub was packed and rocking. "It was the most people I have seen at the pub in a while and the atmosphere was great," said senior student Ankit Kapur. What makes this extraordinary is that on this night not one drop of alcohol was served.

The "All Ages Dance Party" was a kick-off event for both the Mount Allison on-campus Pub, which will run all-ages dance nights every third Thursday this semester, and the "mini-grants" project of the new campaign— Our Best Times Are Not Wasted.

*" a process which engages many members of a community is valued more than a product accomplished by a few people"*

Approximately 300 students came out to dance, socialize, play pool, and bid to win one of the 5 raffle prizes. Entrance surveys indicated that most students came to dance, and exit surveys indicated that a fantastic time was had by all, despite or due to the absence of alcohol. "It was so nice to dance without being groped", wrote one student. Thanks to

delicious, creative blender drinks created by Pub servers, the all-ages event actually made \$13 more than they would have on an average Pub night where alcohol had been served.

Our Best Times Are Not Wasted is a partnership between the Students Administrative Council and the Student Life department, with the financial and moral backing of senior administration, based on a similar program at the College of Charleston (South Carolina). We endeavor to find, publicize, celebrate, and support those Mount Allison students who do not drink alcohol, drink moderately, or are temporarily moderating or stopping their alcohol consumption. To date, "Times Not Wasted" provides students with weekly updates on local non-alcohol weekend events; provides "mini-grant" money (up to \$300 a month) for students to create their own non-alcohol weekend events; provides a discussion e-forum; provides educational material; promotes dialogue around issues around student drinking; distributed 500 water bottles bearing the campaign slogan to students who support the concept.

Our Best Times are Not Wasted is a *health promotion* campaign

which will strive to use *community development* techniques. Health promotion may be defined as "working to change beliefs so that individuals learn to



Notice the absence of the beer cups ubiquitous in most pub pictures? "Our Best Times are Not Wasted" demonstrates the potential for success of community standards approaches.

decrease less healthy behaviour and/or engage in healthier behaviours." Community development is characterized by leaders who work as facilitators, engaging a group of people to define their own goals and their own means of achieving those goals. In community development, a *process* which engages many members of a community is valued more than a *product* (or outcome) accomplished by few people. (For example, a community mural completed by every member of a village may not be as "beautiful" as a mural completed by a visiting professional artist, but by community development standards the former is far more valuable to the community.)

Community development is a unique form of raising the capacity of a community to define and meet its own needs. Often university "teaching" may be char-

## MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY WELCOMES NEW ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Christine Burke, Memorial University



Make sure you welcome Nancy when you see her at conferences!

We are pleased to welcome Nancy Parsons who joined Housing, Food and Conference Services at Memorial University in October 2006 as Assistant Director. Previously, Nancy has held various positions at Memorial including as a Chemistry lecturer at the Marine Institute, as Associate Director of Distance

Education and Learning Technologies and as Assistant Registrar/Development Coordinator with the School of Graduate Studies. Originally, her career started out as a high school Chemistry teacher. Nancy holds a BSc (Chemistry), a BEd, an MEd and an MBA, all from Memorial.



## TWO NEW FACES AT UPEI

Bob Gibson, University of Prince Edward Island

UPEI is delighted to welcome a couple of new faces to the Department of Student Services. Our newest member of the Counselling team is Heidi MacDonald. Heidi completed her undergrad studies at UPEI, did her graduate work at UNB, and is certified by the Canadian Counselling Association. She was most recently employed at St. FX and our gain

is no doubt their loss – sorry folks! Filling a gap we've had since January 2006, Heidi's arrival brings the counselling complement back to three full-time, professional staff. No stranger to AACUSS, Heidi is looking forward to re-connecting with colleagues at the annual conference in June.

And the ACE Program is again experiencing staff changes, with Cynthia Shoemaker off on maternity leave until September 2007. Joining the Program and Natasha Rose this year is Leslie Holt-Dalziel who comes to us from the Vet College and has made a very successful transition to the Department. A warm welcome to Heidi and

## OUR BEST TIMES ARE NOT WASTED (CONT'D)

acterized as an older 'expert' telling a younger student what he or she should know. In a community development process the analogy would be a group of students saying to a facilitator – who may or may not be older and expert - "Help us create an experience where we can teach and learn from each other." In this way the learning is voluntary, the teaching is mutual, and the learning objectives are defined by the learners. We believe these are powerful forms of teaching and learning.

We expect to demonstrate that non- and moderate- drinkers want to have more recognition, respect and services in the informal/weekend social scene on our campus. We expect to demonstrate that students who arrive at Mount Allison as non- or moderate-drinkers can be influenced to remain so if given adequate peer support and alternatives to drinking-as-socializing . We expect to show, especially in the long term (e.g. four years) that we acted locally to address the sentiment expressed in this quote: "We cannot expect students to say 'no' to harmful drinking when their environment tells them 'yes'" (William de Jong).

This project will be a good example of voluntary, creative, enthusiastic student involvement, via a unique process, leading to tangible positive outcomes such as reports of "more belonging" by non-drinkers. This has transferability to University departments such as recruiting, residence staff, health centre staff, and support to international students. We look forward to reporting on the first year of 'Our Best Times Are Not Wasted' at AACUSS' annual conference in June 2007.

# SCENES FROM THE



# 2006 FALL WORKSHOP



## **UNB/STU STUDENT EMPLOYMENT SERVICE AND THE MULTICULTURAL ASSOCIATION OF FREDERICTON A COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP THAT IS WORKING**

Anne Soucy, University of New Brunswick—Fredericton

With the success of the partnership between Student Affairs & Services and the Multicultural Association of Fredericton in 2005-06 a new Memorandum of Understanding has been signed for 2006-07. Under the new MOU, the Multicultural Association of Fredericton will now provide an employment case manager to work 40 hours a week with international students, two days a week at the Student Employment Service with UNB/STU students and three days a week out of her office at MCAF with all post-secondary international students.

This formalized partnership has allowed us to take an integrated approach to working with international students to make their entire process of finding off campus and post-graduate employment easier. Once international students apply for and receive authorization to work off campus through the International Student Advisor's Office, students work with the Student Employment Service to update their resumes and cover letters and once they are job ready they are then referred to Bonnie Doughty, Employment Case Manager with the MCAF. Bonnie works one-on-one to help international students to develop their job-hunting strategies and to assist them to find Canadian work experiences that are appropriate to their area of study.

Recognizing that international students have a number of obstacles such as differences in cultural norms and limited knowledge of the local labour market and economy as they try to enter the labour market in a new society, we have worked together to coordinate a number of workshops to help address these issues. Providing services and building bridges for since 1974, the Multicultural Association of Fredericton as a local community organization has a great deal of information and experience that will benefit the university and the international students who attend UNB and STU. Use of our service by international students continues to grow as more and more students are finding success in their job search. We saw an overall increase of 166% in 2005-06 over the previous year of international students using our services. The number of clients seen individually by the Employment Case Manager has increased five fold since the agreement.

Janelle Sweatnam, an international student now working at AIDS New Brunswick was assisted by Bonnie Doughty to find employment under the post-graduation work program. This program requires that students find career related work within 90 days after graduation which is often very difficult for any graduate to do. "Bonnie really kept encouraging me and gave me the direction of how to go about getting that job. Without her support, I don't think I could have found that job within 90 days."

## **STUDENT SERVICES AT GRENFELL COLLEGE CONTINUES TO DELIVER IN THE FACE OF CHANGE . . .AND CROWDING**

Mary Sparkes, MUN - Grenfell College

In our submission for the September AACUSS Talks, I mentioned that 'change' was shaping up to be the theme for Student Services at Grenfell College! We've spent all Fall in cramped, temporary quarters while our permanent space was renovated – plus we had a number of staff changes and new initiatives. I promised to report back before Christ-

mas to let you know if we made it through the Fall semester.

The good news is our exile is almost over! We should be back in our new and improved offices in next few weeks. Having staff and students work in tiny offices with no doors through an

## NEWS FROM GRENFELL COLLEGE (CONT'D)

exceptionally busy semester was a big challenge, but we survived and it's almost over!

Our two new initiatives are moving along smoothly. Anna Russell-Mercier, our off-campus Housing Co-ordinator, helped numerous students who couldn't get into residence for the Fall to find other accommodation in Corner Brook. Once that phase wound down, Anna turned to the task of developing activities and services for our off-campus students. She has developed an off-campus (student) committee and conducted an on-line survey to determine students' needs. Most of the activities undertaken by OCH have been very successful. Even though this project is still new (Anna only began mid-August) we are hopeful that the project will continue beyond the initial 1 year and that it will have an impact on retention at Grenfell. We're really interested in hearing from other campuses with this kind of focus on off-

campus students (contact: [amercier@swgc.mun.ca](mailto:amercier@swgc.mun.ca)).

Shawna Peddle has just been appointed Grenfell's first International Student Programme Co-ordinator. For the past few weeks, Shawna has been busy meeting with our out-of-country students and helped organize an International student evening during the 'Celebrate Memorial' period in late October. Shawna will probably be contacting those of you with international responsibilities over the next few months to get a sense of how this kind of position functions at colleges and universities in the region. She's also interested in hearing from you (contact: [smpeddle@swgc.mun.ca](mailto:smpeddle@swgc.mun.ca)).

Unfortunately, as of this date, we still have not found a replacement for Jimmy Karam in the Housing Manager position. The search continues. Staff in Student Housing have really struggled to keep things together all Fall but are anxious to get the staff complement back to full strength.

Student Services staff are also involved in several important institutional initiatives. In May of this year Memorial University entered into a partnership with the Pepsi Center, a large recreational and conference complex adjacent to our campus. Student Services is facilitating a consultation process with students and student leaders to determine how we might enhance recreational opportunities for Grenfell students through the Pepsi Center.

As well, several of us are involved in the (provincial) Post-Secondary Student Services Advisory Committee and associated working groups. This is an initiative of the provincial government, intended to enhance co-operation and collaboration between the province's two public post-secondary institutions – Memorial University and the College of the North Atlantic.

That's how things are at Grenfell! Best wishes of the season to all

## PROGRESS FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AT UPEI

Joy Ikede, University of Prince Edward Island

Many things are **up** these days, inflation is hitting gas, housing, food, cars, heating oil, etc. But here at the University of Prince Edward Island (UPEI), although going through the pains of inflations with everyone, we are also enjoying a different kind of an upsurge. Our internationalization group is thriving, our international student intake this year is up, so is the number of countries represented by our students.

This increase in activity and students has also led to an increase needs and a greater recognition that international students face unique challenges settling in. A few new initiatives, at once modest and significant, seem to be making headway here at UPEI.

The PEI community has, through the initiative of Her Honour, Lt. Gov. Barbara Hagerman, gotten involved with the well being of our international students. An initiative called the **Ambassador Family Program** matches families with international students at UPEI. The Lieutenant Governor, in partnership with UPEI, has put a call out to PEI families to serve as ambassador families to our international students.

Each ambassador family meets the student(s) matched with it, and invite him/her home at least three times a year, like during Thanksgiving, Easter and Christmas. The families are asked to connect

## LET'S TALK ABOUT SEX . . . BABY!

Sara Rothman, University of New Brunswick, Fredericton

To badly misquote Salt n' Pepa, let's talk about... healthy relationships, safer sex, sexual orientation, sexual health and sexual diversity. Let's talk about sex...baby! Students on the Fredericton Campus of the University of New Brunswick can talk about all of these subjects and more in the Sexuality Centre. Opened for just over a year now, the centre is a peer-led resource that offers information and resources on all aspects of sexuality.

Originally conceived as a pride centre for students who identify as GLBTQ (Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transsexual, Transgender, Queer and Questioning), the concept was expanded after considerable campus consultation. Support for the Sexuality Centre was strong, but where would it live? Like many campuses, finding free space at UNBF is no easy task. And the students backing the creation of the centre were clear that they believed the centre should be central, easy to access, and accessible for all students. That is quite a wish list.

Enter the Student Union Executive and Council. With the support and lobbying of the Union, a former meeting room in the Student Union Building was secured. Funds from the Campus Safety Audit Steering Committee which was interested in improving both the physical and social aspects of safety on campus were offered for renovation of the space. The centre operates now with the ongoing support of the Student Development Coordinator, in Student Affairs and Services.

Since the grand opening of the Sexuality Centre in September 2005 student support and involvement has grown by leaps and bounds. The original Sexuality Centre Coordinator was hired through a campus work-study grant, and set out to recruit volunteers. An original roster of 9 students ensured that the doors were open for about 30 hours each week. But traffic was slow. For those who did venture in, they found a group of well-trained students at the ready to guide visitors through the materials available or to offer referrals to campus or community resources. Clearly the message needed to go beyond the centre itself, so the students began to organize awareness activities that would advertise the centre to the campus community and draw more students in the doors. A weekly column in the cam-

pus newspaper, discussion evenings, participation in wellness events and a poster campaign all helped to spread the word.

By September of this year, getting students involved was easy. So easy, in fact, that when the call went out for volunteers, 19 people responded within hours. More than 25 volunteers have been trained to either staff the centre or be involved in events, and the traffic through in October alone was greater than all of the visits combined during the 2005-06 academic year. In fact, there are so many volunteers that the centre is open more than 50 hours per week, including some evening and weekend hours. And the volunteers are busy outside of the Centre, too. In the past 10 weeks they have organized or participated in an Orientation Week Amazing Race, Clubs and Societies Fair, a same-sex marriage debate with the faculty of Law, a Rocky Horror Picture Show fundraiser for AIDS New Brunswick, a Halloween trick-or-treat, and a Transgender Day of Remembrance vigil. The weekly Brunswickan articles continue and the groundwork is being laid for a live weekly radio show on the campus station, CHSR. The winter semester plans are well underway, too, focusing more on sexual health with the highlight being a "git'er done" themed promotion of testing for STI's and breast and testicular exams.

The Sexuality Centre is still in its infancy but already experiencing success that extends well beyond the scope of promoting healthy sexuality. Our volunteers speak highly of the way in which the centre is allowing them to grow as student leaders and integrate their inside and outside the classroom learning. In the words of one, "I'd say the volunteering experience has definitely been what I was hoping for .... doing the Bruns article and the upcoming CHSR stuff is pretty exciting. I was pretty proud to have actually been published in the paper; I'm definitely sticking that in the scrapbook."

*"Our volunteers speak highly of the way in which the centre is allowing them to grow as student leaders"*

## NEW BRUNSWICK'S CONTINUING COMPETENCE PROGRAM FOR RNS

Cindy Crossman, Mt. Allison University



Beginning in 2008, there will be an implementation of a mandatory continuing competence program for all Registered Nurses in the province of New Brunswick. Other Canadian provinces have integrated this process over the past few years and the Nursing Association of New Brunswick (NANB) has reviewed these programs from other provinces and at the 2005 NANB annual meeting, members unanimously supported the implementation of a mandatory continuing competence program in New Brunswick.

The public expects all health care providers, including registered nurses, to provide safe, competent, and ethical care. They also assume that health care professionals keep their competencies up-to-date.

In accordance with their *Standards for Nursing Practice*, registered nurses hold prime responsibility for maintaining their competence. However, employers and the provincial regulating body also have a role to play, specifically in promoting and enhancing nurses' competencies. On a national level, all nursing regulatory bodies in Canada have made continuing competence a priority. Ontario, British Columbia, Nova Scotia, to name a few, have already developed programs, and the other provinces are in the process of developing them. So, in addition to the professional benefits associated with keeping your compe-

tencies current, completing CCP will also enhance a Registered Nurses labour mobility within Canada - by helping nurses meet the continuing competence requirements of other provinces.

**What is Continuing Competence?** Continuing competency is defined in the Standards of Practice for Registered Nurses as "the ongoing ability of a registered nurse to integrate and apply the knowledge, skills, judgment and personal attributes required to practice safely and ethically in a designated role and setting" (NANB Standards for Practice for Registered Nurses, 2005).

### What is the purpose of a Mandatory Continuing Competence Program (CCP)?

The Continuing Competence Program requires registered nurses to reflect on their nursing practice through self-assessment, to complete a learning plan, and to evaluate the outcomes of the plan. It is an approach through which each registered nurse reflects in a formalized manner on his or her practice at least once annually.

### Three Steps to Meeting CCP Requirements are:

**Step 1.** Completing a self-assessment based on the NANB Stan-

dards of Practice for Registered Nurses; **Step 2.** Developing and implementing a learning plan based on the self assess-

ment; **Step 3.** Evaluating the impact of the learning on practice. According to the Nurses Association of New Brunswick, a continuing competence program is important to meet public and government expectations, to provide tools for nurses, and finally, **this process formalizes what nurses already do to improve their practice.** In summary, maintaining competency levels in all professions only ensures that the client is receiving the best quality care possible whether it is in a traditional health care setting or in community based setting, such as the Student Health Centres' that are located on University campuses.

### References:

The Nurses Association of New Brunswick—The website link for Nurses Association of New Brunswick continuing competency program at <http://www.nanb.nb.ca/index.cfm?include=CCP>



### INTERNATIONAL UPEI (CONT'D)

with the students every few weeks during their first year at UPEI. families can meet with students as often as they like as the type of relationship they have developed would definitely dictate how often they would get together or attend events that come up from time to time. The Program is just a month old and already over 15 students have been matched with families.

Secondly, we have now adorned our Student Centre with flags from over 52 countries represented by our student population. It is such a beautiful sight to behold and we encourage you all to come have a look whenever

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2006-2007

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