



ACHOT
UMJC SISTERHOOD

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An Achot Newsletter

Issue No. 10

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Shavuot

by Abby Korotney

Shavuot, which means "weeks", is one of the *Shalosh Regalim*, the three biblical pilgrimage festivals celebrated in the Jewish calendar. It commemorates the day that G-d gave the Torah to Moses and the People of Israel. Shavuot also commemorates the harvesting of wheat in the Land of Israel. It is known as the "spring

harvest" as well as the holiday of the first offering.

The date of Shavuot is directly linked to that of Passover. The Torah mandates the seven-week Counting of

the Omer, beginning on the second day of Passover and ending with Shavuot. This counting of days and weeks



is understood to express anticipation and desire for the Giving of the Torah. On Passover, the Jewish people were freed from their enslavement to Pharaoh. On Shavuot, they were given the

Torah and became a nation committed to serving G-d.

In ancient times on Shavuot, people came from all over the Land of Israel to bring their first fruits to the Temple. In modern times, people get up at dawn and make their way to the Kotel (Wailing Wall), the last remnant of the Temple to

pray, after a full night of study. According to Jewish tradition, Shavuot is celebrated in Israel for one day and in the Diaspora (outside of Israel) for two days.

(continued on page 2)

Ruth

by Abby Korotney

The Book of Ruth is one of the most moving and inspirational passages in the Bible. It is a story primarily about the love, devotion and friendship between two women--Ruth and her mother-in-law Naomi.

The Book of Ruth is integral to Shavuot which falls in the harvest season. Some biblical scholars surmise that this is because the story takes place during the barley harvest in ancient Judea. Another reason that is given is that Ruth is the ancestress of King David who was born on the festival of

Shavuot.

Ruth was a Moabite princess who married the son of Naomi and Elimelech. After her husband died, Ruth followed her mother-in-law to Israel and converted to Judaism. Ruth has been called by biblical scholars: "the paradigm of the *ger tzedek*, the 'righteous convert', who with great sacrifice forsakes her former life and identity to be born anew as a Jew."



(continued on page 3)

Shavuot *(continued from page 1)*

Shavuot is unlike other Jewish holidays in that it has no prescribed *mitzvot* other than the traditional festival observances of abstention from work, special prayer services and holiday meals. Among the holiday customs are: *Akdamut*, the reading of a liturgical poem during Shavuot morning synagogue services; *Chalav* (milk), the consumption of dairy products like milk and cheese; the reading of the Book of Ruth at morning services; *Yerek*, the decoration of homes and synagogues with greenery; and *Torah*, engaging in all-night Torah study.

In regards to the all-night Torah study, the Zohar describes Shavuot as the wedding day on which the Children of Israel are the bride and the Torah the groom. To prepare her spiritual dowry, the bride remained awake all evening studying.



It is customary to eat dairy foods on Shavuot. In her book, *How to Run a Jewish Household*, the author Blu Greenberg explains some of the reasons why we eat certain foods on this holiday. Foods like cheese blintzes, cheese kreplach and cheesecake are served. The symbol of



kreplach, a three-sided pastry filled with cheese, refers to the idea that G-d gave the Torah in three parts (the Torah, Prophets, and Writings) to three categories of people (Kohen, Levite and Israelite) through a third born child (Moses,

whose older siblings were Aaron and Miriam) in the third month of the Jewish calendar. Another thought is that the idea of dairy foods came from the Song of Songs (4:11),

“Knowledge of the Torah is like milk and honey under the tongue”. From this verse came the custom of serving two challot made with honey.

Other customs include buying or

making challot that are longer than usual. These challot are symbols of the wave offering--the two loaves of bread that the Jews were required to bring to the Temple on Shavuot. The priest would wave these loaves before the altar.

Some rabbinic scholars have cited that the experience at Mt. Sinai was not only a revelation of G-d's truth, but a revelation of G-d's love. The Torah was and continues to be G-d's "love letter" to His people

Israel. It embodies G-d's presence. It has been said that when you learn the Torah you can actually feel G-d's closeness to you. The Talmud teaches that when G-d gave the Torah to the Jewish people He said, "I am giving you My soul in writing."

In his book *To Be a Jew*, Rabbi Hayim Halevy Donin states that "Shavuot is not just the season of the giving of the Torah. It is also the season of receiving the Torah.

While the giving may have taken place one time only, the receiving of the Torah by Jews must continue to take place every day and everywhere."

"Knowledge of the Torah is like milk and honey under the tongue."

This remains true in our relationship with Yeshua who is the embodiment of Torah. As we seek Him in our everyday lives, let us also receive the power of His Ruach (Spirit) in order that we may draw close to Him and know the fullness of His great love for us. *~*

Ruth (continued from page 1)

In many respects, we are all *gerei tzeddek*, "having undergone that very process ourselves on the first Shavuot of history, when we assembled at the foot of Mount Sinai to be born anew as G-d's people."

Ruth pledges to remain with Naomi after her mother-in-law bids her two daughters-in-law (Orpah and Ruth) to leave her after the death of Naomi's two sons. Naomi appeals to them to leave her, to return to their homeland and find new husbands. However, Ruth refutes Naomi's wishes by expressing her love and unselfish devotion in one of the most moving passages in the Hebrew bible:

"Do not urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. You people will be my people and your G-d my G-d. Where you die I will die and there I will be buried. May the L-rd deal with me, be it ever so severely, if anything but death separates you and me..."

Ruth is the embodiment of G-d's *chesed* (loving-kindness). Without thought for her own well-being, Ruth pledges to remain with Naomi regardless of her circumstances. She puts her hope and faith in G-d and as a result G-d blesses her. Ruth's commitment to Naomi reflects a timeless dedication to her mother-in-law and the people of Israel.

Ruth vowed to follow her mother-in-law not knowing that this act of selflessness would create a chain of events which led to her marriage to Boaz. The marriage formed the bloodline that eventually brought about the birth of Yeshua.

Compassion and loving-kindness, as seen in the Book of Ruth, are some of the hallmarks of Jewish life. One of the most important commandments in the Bible can be summed up as this: "Love the L-rd Your G-d with all your heart, soul and might and love one another as you love yourself". This is the essence of the whole Torah.

This theme is reiterated by the prophet Micah: "He has told you what is good. And what does the L-rd require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your G-d". (Micah 6:8)

In his book *Everyday Holiness*, Alan Morinis says that *chesed* involves acts that sustain one another. We can wish others well and speak kindly to them but we must go the extra mile and find ways to bless people with our time, resources, and acts of service.

As sisters in the L-rd, we are meant to be a balm of healing to one another through our words, our thoughts and our actions. We all go through times of suffering and difficulty. What makes life bearable during these times is the compassion that we receive from those around us.

True *chesed* is giving with a spirit of generosity, giving without the expectation of getting something in return. We may never know what repercussions our actions have in this world. Honoring parents. Encouraging children. Loving our neighbor. Saying Kaddish for the death of a loved one--an act that involves blessing and honoring the person who is deceased and ultimately praising G-d for His sovereignty and goodness.

What are other practical ways we can show *chesed* to those around us? Visiting the sick. Bringing food and clothing to those in need. Volunteering in the wider Jewish community. Becoming part of a Sisterhood. Be an encourager. Write letters or make phone calls to those who are suffering.

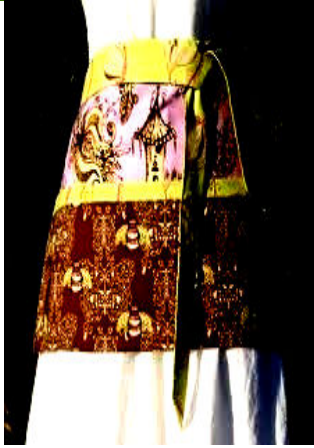
We do not need to be perfect in taking on the trait of *chesed*, but as we take steps to reach out to others, our hearts will widen and our lives will reflect the love of G-d to those around us. We are made in the image of G-d and He gives us the power and strength to love one another.

Let us be like Ruth and reflect G-d's mercy and compassion to those around us. In this way, we can make a difference and help to bring about *tikkun olam* (healing to the world) and be a true reflection of Ruth and our Mashiach Yeshua. *~*

"Do not urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. You people will be my people and your G-d my G-d. Where you die I will die and there I will be buried. May the L-rd deal with me, be it ever so severely, if anything but death separates you and me..."

Ruth (1:16-17)





RECIPE CORNER

Chocolate Cheesecake

excerpted from Grandma Doralee Patinkin's Jewish Family Cookbook

Yield: At least 12-18 servings.

Crust:

1/4 cup sifted flour	1/4 cup brown sugar
1 1/4 pound butter	1/2 cup chopped nuts

Filling:

2 8-ounce packages cream cheese	3 egg yolks
3/4 cup sugar	1 teaspoon vanilla extract
3 egg whites, beaten until stiff and peaky	
3/4 cup chocolate chips, melted with 3 tablespoons milk	

Topping:

1 1/2 cups sour cream
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 tablespoons sugar



Combine the crust ingredients and press gently into a 9 x 13 inch greased pan. Bake at 350 degrees Fahrenheit for 15 minutes, until light brown.

Cream the cheese. Add egg yolks, one at a time. Gradually add sugar. Add the vanilla. Blend well. Fold the beaten whites into the cream cheese mixture. Pour over the baked crust. Drizzle the melted chocolate over the cake and swirl with a fork.

Bake at 350 degrees Fahrenheit for 20 to 25 minutes. Remove from oven.

Combine the topping ingredients and spread over the baked cheesecake. Return to oven and bake at 350 degrees for an additional 8 minutes, or until the top begins to crack.

This is a very high cake. Should you desire to use a larger pan, I would suggest you cut the baking time.

This freezes very well. Cover with plastic wrap first, and then with aluminum foil.

B'tayavon!

*A delightful
and
traditional
way to
celebrate
Shavuot is
with some
delicious
dairy desserts.*

Grandma's Blintz Pudding

(excerpted from *Grandma Doralee Patinkin's Jewish Family Cookbook*)

Yield: 12 servings

Batter

1/3 pound butter	1/4 cup sugar
1 1/2 cups sour cream	6 eggs, or 1 1/2 cups egg substitute
1/2 cup orange juice	1 tablespoon fresh orange rind
1 cup flour	2 teaspoons baking powder
2 tablespoons orange juice	Zest of one lemon finely minced
1/2 teaspoon salt	

Filling


1 8-ounce package cream cheese	2 cups small-curd cottage cheese
2 egg yolks, or 1/2 cup egg substitute	3 tablespoons sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract	orange marmalade

Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit. For the batter, cream butter and sugar well. Add the eggs, sour cream, orange juice, and orange rind and blend well. Incorporate the flour, to which you have added the baking powder and salt.

Combine the filling ingredients.

Grease an oven-to-table baking dish (approximately 13 x 9 inches) and pour in half the batter. Set balance aside.

Using a tablespoon, drop dollops of filling on top of batter, using all of the mixture. Spread very lightly with a fork. Pour the balance of the batter over the top.

Bake for 50 to 60 minutes. When it is almost finished, remove from oven, frost with the orange marmalade, and return to the oven until it is hot and bubbly. Allow to set for a few minutes. *B'tayavon!* 



*Why do blintzes
when you can make
blintz pudding?
Easy and portable!*

Join Us Today!


As a sisterhood, we have the goal to connect with one another in becoming all that the L-rd G-d of Israel has for us.

We are here to help enhance our love of G-d, Torah and Israel. We are dedicated in the bond of the testimony of the love of G-d as witnessed in Messiah Yeshua, who when asked what the greatest

commandment was, answered, "Love the L-rd your G-d and your neighbor as yourself."

It is in this spirit that we will create stronger bonds with one another and reach out our hands in tzedakah to others. Please join us in this dynamic venture!

Visit:
www.umjc.net/achot.

You can either become a member online by clicking on the menu item "Become a Member", or by filling out our form below on the back page of this newsletter and sending it into the UMJC office. 





Are you enjoying this month's newsletter? If so, forward this newsletter to 3 women you know. Get the word out about Achat !!

LAUGH A LITTLE!

Three Wise Women

What would have happened if three wise Jewish women had gone to Bethlehem instead of three wise men? They would have:

- * asked directions.
- * arrived on time.
- * helped deliver the baby.
- * hired someone to clean the stable.
- * made a brisket.
- * and brought practical gifts.

Use of arms

Hymie is walking along Hendon Avenue carrying a large, heavy water-melon when he sees his friend Abe coming towards him.

"Hi Abe," says Hymie, "Nu? How are you?"

"Oy vay," says Abe, throwing his arms up in the air, "Don't ask! But tell me, how are you?"

"Me?" says Hymie, "You ask how I am? You want I drop my water-melon?"

The Eye Test

When Jacob from Poland applies for a driver's license, he is asked to take an eyesight test. The optician points to a card on the wall with the letters C Z W I X N O S T A C Z and says to Jacob, "Can you read this?"

"Read it?" replies Jacob, "the man's my best friend."

The Dream

Moshe was talking to his psychiatrist. "I had a weird dream recently," he says. "I saw my mother but then I noticed she had your face. I found this so worrying that I immediately awoke and couldn't get back to sleep. I just stayed there thinking about it until 7am. I got up, made myself a slice of toast and some coffee and came straight here. Can you please help me explain the meaning of my dream?"

The psychiatrist kept silent for some time, then said, "One slice of toast and coffee? Do you call that a breakfast?" *~*

Sisters in the Hood—Susan Lerner



By Abby Korotney

Susan Lerner was born in New Jersey into a Greek Orthodox family. After her parents' divorce in her teen years, Susan stopped attending the Greek Orthodox church. It was during the late 60's that Susan was exposed to the Jesus movement and became a born-again Christian.

At the age of 20, Susan married Daniel Lerner, a conservative Jew with an atheist outlook. The couple met on the Hudson River onboard the Sloop Clearwater, an 1800's Dutch sloop replica used for environmental education. Daniel was second mate on the ship and Susan came on as a volunteer.

Soon after they were married, Susan and Daniel started having children. After their second child was born, Susan's grandmother passed away. This event was the catalyst for Daniel to think more deeply about G-d, spirituality and what happens after death.

The couple moved to Houston, Texas where they met friends who were members of a Baptist church. Their friends invited them to a dinner at the church, where the guest speaker was from the Jews for Jesus organization. Daniel had never heard of a Jew who believed in Yeshua and he was upset with his friends for inviting him to this event.

On the way home from the church, Daniel prayed that Yeshua, if He was real, would reveal Himself in some tangible way. Within two weeks, Daniel became a Believer in Yeshua as Israel's Messiah.

In the meantime, Susan had fallen away from her faith for a variety of reasons. Growing up, she did not have a good father

figure; a father who was reliable, trustworthy and loving to his children. However, she recognized G-d's hand on Daniel's life and this made it easier for her to return to G-d.

Susan and Daniel became part of Church of Christ. Their experience of the church was somewhat disheartening as they found it to be very "works-oriented and doctrinally-focused".

Five years later, Susan and Daniel experienced "the Baptism in the Ruach (Spirit)", which allowed them to grow in their relationship with Hashem. However, Susan became cognizant that even as Believers, her children should grow up to know their Jewish identity.

As their oldest child approached the age of 13, Susan discussed with her husband the prospect of raising their children to understand their Jewish roots. Daniel searched and found a Messianic Jewish congregation in Houston where all five of the Lerner children were bar and bat mitzvahed.

Susan's adult children are thriving. Her oldest son is presently seeking ordination as a Rabbi within the UMJC. Her second son is part of a Modern Orthodox Yeshiva. Another son has served in the Israeli army.

Susan and Daniel are leaders within the Messianic Jewish movement. Daniel is part of the Messianic Jewish Rabbinic Council and he also works within the Messianic Jewish Theological Institute (MJTI). Susan has held leadership positions in her Sisterhood and she and Daniel lead a chavurah in

their home on a weekly basis.

One of Susan's great joys in life are her three wonderful grandchildren. She enjoys gardening and has a gift for hospitality. One of the ways that Susan extends hospitality to others includes hosting Shabbat dinners in her home.

Susan also enjoys the energy of being part of a thriving, diverse metropolis (Houston). She is enthusiastic and passionate about life and people. Several years ago, Susan decided to pursue a career in Real Estate. She has been active as an agent for one year.

As a Board member and leader within Achot, Susan has a vision for building up Messianic Jewish women within the UMJC. Her desire is to see women in the movement pursue leadership training.

Susan says that her strength comes from knowing that G-d has created her for a good purpose. She walks each day in the confidence that He is working out all things for good.

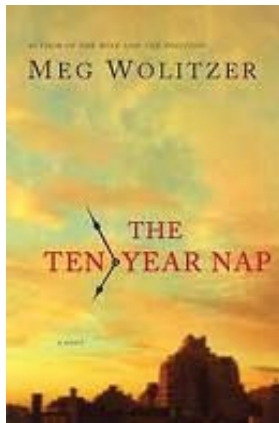
Susan wants to encourage and inspire all women to know that G-d is available to them. He wants them to live and enjoy life and to be at peace.

Learning how to have healthy boundaries has been a cornerstone in Susan's relationship with G-d and others. One of her favorite passages is Psalm 16: "L-rd, you have assigned me my portion and my cup; you have made my lot secure, The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places."

Susan is a delight and an inspiration.

"L-rd, you have assigned me my portion and my cup; you have made my lot secure, The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places."

S



“Wolitzer perfectly captures her women’s resolve in the face of a dizzying array of conflicting loyalties.”
—Washington Post



Good Reads

A Book Review of Meg Wolitzer’s *The Ten Year Nap*

by Marie Singer

Meg Wolitzer is a novelist and screen play writer. The Jewish Daily Forward has featured articles on her work. She graduated from Brown University in 1981. Wolitzer has proven herself a deft chronicler of intense, unconventional relationships, especially among women. She has explored with wit and sensitivity the dynamics of fractured families (*This Is Your Life, The Position*); the devastating effects of death (*Surrender, Dorothy*), the challenges of friendship (*Friends for Life*), and the prospective minefield of gender, identity, and dashed expectations (*Hidden Pictures, The Wife, The Ten-Year Nap*).

Her short fiction has appeared in *The Best American Short Stories* and *The Pushcart Prize*, and she has also taught writing at the University of Iowa Writers' Workshop and at Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs, NY.

The Ten Year Nap is a story of modern young mothers, well educated, brought up to expect great things, and taught to expect success out in the world. They live in NYC. They are married to good, hard working men who are trying to take care of their families in the best way they can. The four main characters — Amy, Karen, Jill and Roberta — look forward to their daily meet-up at a cafe, The Golden Horn, and share the joys and tribulations of

life, family and especially motherhood. These are women who had successful careers before giving up their work to fulfill the demands of motherhood. Ten years have passed and as their children develop greater independence, they begin to take stock of their situation.

I usually am not interested in fictional novels and often not interested in stories about women—in my mind often boring! *And I’m aware that many don’t share my taste.* But, although Wolitzer’s book doesn’t have much of a plot, her writing kept me interested. She makes the reader anticipate learning the outcome of the various characters’ situations. The author has a subtle sense of humor. Also the characters and their situations are not extreme, or melodramatic. To my mind they reflect common, real situations. And the men are not vilified as hopeless bad guys as in early feminist literature.

All of the novel’s characters are unique. One of the book’s secondary characters is Amy’s mom, who is a feminist from the 1st wave of feminism in the late ‘60’s. She made time for her career and political interests without ambivalence. Another secondary character is a woman, who, to all outward appearances seems to “have it all”. Amy develops a platonic fascination with this woman based on her seemingly “perfect” life of success with her child, marriage, and career. But, is this apparent perfection real?

Religious belief is not a factor in these women’s lives. However, the reader with a faith in God and His purposes for

Good Reads *(continued from page 8)*

His followers, can ask herself how she is answering her own questions about her roles as mother, worker, and wife when life circumstances change. Does a person of faith have an easier time facing changes?

The reader will find this story of dashed expectations and the challenge to make a new life, familiar and fascinating. *A*

*** Marie Singer is a member of Congregation Zera Avraham in Ann Arbor, MI. She is an accomplished artist and calligrapher and has created many lovely ketubot for Jewish couples. Marie is also an avid reader and she belongs to a local Jewish women's book group. Marie is a regular contributor to Nu?, the Ashot newsletter.*



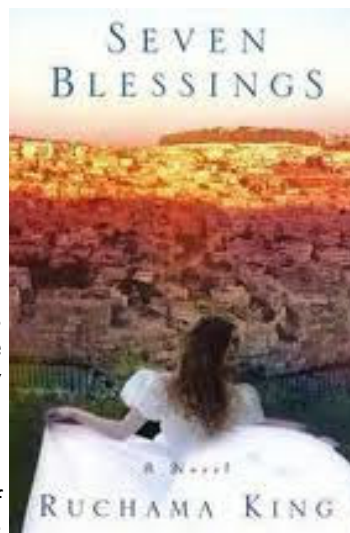
Do you have a great read you would like to share with us? A review of a book you have read? We would love to hear from you!

read

"With warmth, wisdom, and an abundance of affection, Ruchama King opens up a fascinating world. Mining the everyday moments of her characters' lives, she expertly explores love and marriage, belief and hope."

-Tova Mirvis, author of *The Ladies Auxiliary Libraries*

"It shimmers...Its setting is suffused with the glint of Jerusalem light, its characters infused with the city's spirituality....In short, a gem of a novel." --*Jewish News of Greater Phoenix*



"While the machinations of matchmakers have long been a staple of fiction, King's debut novel puts a fresh spin on the subject....King's portrayal of a religious community is as warm and engaging as any in contemporary literature. Her characters jump off the page and into the hearts of her audience...charming, spiritual tale."

- *Library Journal* *A*



A WORD FROM THE CHAIR

by Linda Lieber

*A*choti yikarah,

The above Hebrew greeting states that you are my dear sister; the connotation is one of someone who is very close to one's heart. That is what I want all of us to know and experience by being a part of Achot.

We are looking forward to seeing many of you at our reception on Thursday night at the UMJC conference in Dallas. This reception is a wonderful time to spend with the other women, touching base again and making new friendships. In addition to our normal great fellowship, this year at the reception we will have a short business meeting.

For many years, the women of the board have been working together and striving to make Achot a vibrant part of UMJC for the women. We have, however, basically been an ad hoc committee and need to establish a more permanent form of giving direction to Achot; thus we need to have a vote on by-laws for Achot.

Several of the current board members have been laboring long on your behalf

and are taking a break from the board. This is an excellent time to establish a more permanent form of government. We want and need to fill the vacancies. This helps us not only to give solid direction, but will fulfill the desire to see new faces on the board and committees of Achot. Please consider taking a more active role in Achot in the opportunities you will see in our time together.

Achot was started for each and every one of the women in Union to be a more active participant of the Messianic community. There are great opportunities to use your talents and energy for the community by working to further the spiritual, mental and physical good of your sisters. Our synergy can accomplish great things for the good of the community of believers, as well as for *tikkun olam* and the greater Jewish community.

Looking forward to having fun together as we "BREAK THROUGH AND BUILD UP!"

Love, Linda *A*

“There are great opportunities to use your talents and energy for the community by working to further the spiritual, mental and physical good of your sisters.”

ADVERTISE

Do you wish to advertise in *Nu?* All advertisements are \$7 each. Submissions must not be longer than 50 words and one graphic (.jpg). Send your submissions to : malkahmiriam@gmail.com today in order to have them in the Tishrei newsletter. Please direct your payment to the UMJC office at: UMJC Office, 529 Jefferson St. N.E., Albuquerque, NM 87108

Imagine the possibilities... *ACHOT, UMJC Sisterhood*



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www.umjc.net/achot

Current *A*chot
Board Members
are:

Linda Lieber,
Merryl Eaton,
Abby Korotney,
Sherry Moore,
Susan Lerner,
and Malkah
Forbes. *S*



Membership is open to any individual who is part of any congregation and those who seek to support Achot. (check one below)

Chai : \$ 18 per year _____

Double Chai : \$36 per year _____

Triple Chai : \$54 per year _____

Sisterhood: \$54 per year _____

Either go online and become a member at www.umjc.net/achot, or **detach and send this form along with check** payable to the Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations with a notation for Achot. *This will help us make sure it goes to Achot.*

Please send to:

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Albuquerque, NM 87108

Name: _____

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