

**June 2009
Issue**

MBPD RETIREE NEWS

Unity is strength for a better retirement

Sam's Corner - "A Collection of disorganized Thoughts" June 2009

By: Sam Gam



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One day this month as I was preparing to go for a motorcycle ride, the rains finally came. It hadn't rained here in South Florida for a long, long time. Now, the rain won't stop. So much for riding my motorcycle. So, as I sat on the rear patio watching the deluge, I thought about "motorcycle politics", which is a term I coined while I was standing in the kitchen, looking at those little sugar ants that come in from heaven knows where, and just crawl around aimlessly, annoying us. Just so you know, the motorcycle story and the ant story are totally unrelated. But these are collections of "disorganized thoughts", so please bare with me.

Anyone who has ridden a motorcycle for any period of time, especially on the open highways, has experienced firsthand "motorcycle politics". It's when for example, you're riding your bike on a two lane road and you pass a motorcycle, or a group of motorcycles, and the riders wave to you. The first time this happened to me, I was confused. Why are they waving at me? Is there something wrong with my bike? I pulled to the side of the road and dismounted. I checked my headlight to see if it was working, or perhaps there was an aardvark stuck to the front of my fairing. Nope, my bike was in good



Vinny's Breakfast

On May 22, 2009 breakfast was held at the **84 Diner** with 13 people attending. Attending were Alan Skolnick, Billy Rosenstein, Bobby Jenkins, John & Cathy Tighe, Wally Neumann, Greg & Maritza Strong, Mike Bauer, Vinny Aprile, Don Freeman, Gary Schiaffo and retired firefighter Tom Columbano.

General Membership Luncheon on June 17th



The general membership luncheon/meeting will be held on Wednesday the 17 of June at **The New China Buffet** (954-442-8108) located at 8369 Pines Blvd. It is on Pines west of University for a block or two. It's in a strip mall next to the Dollar Store, north side on the street, in case you need to do some shopping before or after lunch. The best part is that it only costs ten dollars, tax and tip included and a private room.

Sam's Corner Continued from page 1



June Birthdays

Dave Allen, Vinny Aprile(BIG 50), Frank Azcarate, Ed Bason, Yetta Brodie, Mark DeFusco, Tony Dominguez, Kevin Graham, Phil Johnson, Milton Lewis, Mario Martinez, Dave McLaren, Charlie Metscher, Bob Moorehead, John Murphy, Charles Seraydar, Alan Solowitz, and Elayne Wolfenson.

"Police motor officers will almost always not wave at anyone, except another motor officer."

shape. I made some inquiries, and discovered that bikers are part of a special fraternity, so, it's customary to wave at other bikers when they pass you. Of course, there are exceptions, many of them. This is where experience and a healthy knowledge of motorcycle politics come in handy.

This is a rather complicated issue. If you're driving a Toyota Corolla, you usually don't wave to other Toyota Corollas. This motorcycle business is different. Riders of Honda, Yamaha, Suzuki, etc.. Cruisers or touring bikes will almost always wave to each other. Most Harley Davidson riders will almost always wave to each other. Harley and riders of other makes of motorcycles will sometimes wave to each other, but this is usually *before* the Harley rider realizes who he is waving to. Most hardcore Harley riders will not wave at riders of "rice burners". A "rice burner" is a name given to a Japanese bike. It's not nice. Japanese bikes do not use rice as fuel. They use gasoline. But Harley owners don't know this, and I'm not about to tell them.

Police motor officers will

almost always not wave at anyone, except another motor officer. To do so is a sign of weakness and can expose the motor officer to great ridicule from his colleagues. It doesn't take much for a motor officer to expose him or herself to ridicule. I'm told that one time, when Ed Avila crashed his bike, he explained to his crew that he was "ejaculated" from his bike. This description of his accident exposed him to potential ridicule, although I don't know why, it was perfect English as far as I'm concerned.

Don't expect a Hell's Angel, Outlaw, or other "one-percenter" to wave back at you. They may only wave to each other, and only if they've just killed someone and everyone knows it. Do not under any circumstances smile and wave to a hard core member of a biker gang if you are not one, and especially if you're riding one of those pink rental scooters. Bad things could happen to you.

Riders of those sport bikes, or "crotch rock-

ets" usually don't wave at each other. It's hard to wave when you're traveling at 160 miles per hour while cutting in and out of traffic. Some people get mad if you don't wave. I get annoyed if I wave to another motorcyclist and he doesn't wave back.

I see it as a sign of disrespect and I take it very personally. I just feel like he doesn't like me, then I become depressed. After a while though, I realize he doesn't even *know* me. By the time this realization hits me, I'm in Key Largo and he's in Marathon. I'm not a boater, but it's my understanding that boaters wave to each other all the time. In fact, boaters wave to everybody! I've had occasion to be fishing on the shore and had boaters wave at me. This really gets my blood boiling!

Just because they have a boat, and I don't, doesn't give them the right to taunt me! I may need therapy when this is over.

I've often wondered if pilots wave to each other as well. If a pilot flying an airliner out of Ft. Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport passes a pilot



**Motor Officer
Not waving...**

Sam's Corner continued from page 2 ...

landing there, do they wave at each other? Do pilots passing over Wichita, Kansas wave to each other? Can they even see each other? I would think not! Perhaps Billy O'Neil can answer this. Was he waving at another pilot when he crashed his plane in Everglades City? Was that angle even investigated? Do we even need to bring this up again? These are deep, deep questions that cannot be answered in this forum at this time, but I am open to feedback. Recently, I attended an informal retirement party for Kenny Chapman, who retired after about 25 years with the city. Also in attendance were Don McGavern, Willie Pacheco and his family, Kenny's wife Rosana, Dave Porter and his wife Loretta, Richie Pelosi, Greg Strong, Rich Mendoza, Joe Prevish, Paul Doyle, Sam Azicri, E. Zacarias and his daughter, and last but not least, Jeff Cohen and his wife Laura.

The party was held at the British Pub in Pembroke Pines. We spent over six hours there. Don't recall if we drank, but we had a great time. I was honored to be there, since it was really a motor officer party, but it was fun listening to the motor officer "war stories", of which there were quite a few. Some of the funniest

ones centered on Sgt. Ed Avila. Yes I know, this is the 2nd time I've mentioned Eddie Avila in this newsletter. Sorry Eddie, it's just your turn!

Kenny told me he was a bit apprehensive about retirement. He explained that he didn't want to be bored. Sound familiar? I went through the same thing. I explained to him that it will take a while, but in a few months, if not sooner, he'll have so much stuff to do; there won't be enough hours in the day. Of course, with this rain, it's going to take a bit longer.

May was an interesting month for me. I had the pleasure of meeting up with many retirees and active officers for "a few beers". Some retired cops will tell you that they don't like to talk shop or tell war stories. This is a bunch of crap. Get a bunch of retirees together for a few drinks and the war stories will soon start to flow. There are some good ones out there.

During one of our get togethers, we started bouncing names off each other. My favorite time on the job was undoubtedly during the "Marielito" days. I can honestly say we had a blast. I was a dispatcher when it started, then I became a

full time officer. The midnight shift was crazy. I hate to rattle off too many names in this column, because if I miss someone, they tend to get offended. But if I miss you, please feel free to e-mail me and I'll mention you next month.

Some of the players out there on midnights during Marielito season were Mike Bauer, Chuck Press, Mark LeVine, Pat

Franklin, Don

McGavern, Billy Guillem, Bill Lamb, Chuck Hayes, Wally Neumann, Mike Auch, Eddie Bason, Mike Frins, Tony Sabatino, Steve Groves, Steve Nagel, Jerry Vanderberry, Glenn Hodges, Jeff Schaefer, Pearl Hernandez (Riley), Charlie Seraydar, Jimmy Blicht Sr. and Joe Matthews to name a few.

Those were incredible days that I will never forget. South Beach reminded me of that movie, "Gremlins". The first few furry little creatures that arrived on the Beach with their bizarre tattoos were cute. But then as time went on, more furry little creatures arrived and

turned into little demons, tearing up South Beach with a vengeance. I remember when Chuck Hayes carried a cow prod, perfectly within guidelines during those days of course. Once, we got into a knockdown, drag out with a little Marielito fellow. They were wiry little buggers. Chuck maneuvered his first generation Taser type weapon in for the "kill", and zapped me in-

stead. This aggravated

me, but after it happened, I became part of the "in" crowd. In those days, that was a good thing.

The tattoos on those Marielitos were very interesting as well, many of them were religious, but some were downright wacky. Some of those guys had tattoos everywhere; eyelids, ears, lips, hands. Some even had tattoos on their private parts. How do I know this? Well, they did get hurt a lot, and I had to visit them in the emergency room. How could you not look?

Memorial Day Weekend, 2009 is over for the active members of the



"A Collection of Disorganized Thoughts"

Sam's Corner continued from page 3



New Blood for Retirees Assoc

Executive Board Positions

The Miami Beach Police Retiree's Association is seeking out "new blood" to run for seven available positions on the Board of Directors. The new term, which begins in December of 2009 include: President, Vice President, Secretary, and four Trustee positions.

You will have a two year commitment. If you are interested, please contact:

VINNY APRILE

E-Mail:

vin455@myacc.net

or

CHARLIE SERAYDAR

E-Mail:

seradarn@bellsouth.net

Miami Beach Police Department. My sources tell me that it went fairly well with no injuries to officers. I'm not sure that the crowds are dwindling however. It's my understanding that the usual crowds have been steered from other areas they normally like to visit such as Cancun, Mexico and Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. I can't say why this is. Perhaps these areas just don't have the capacity to handle large crowds, or maybe they're just sick of the lawlessness and bad behavior generated by some of the tourists.

Regardless of the reasons, it looks like the Memorial Day ritual on South Beach is here to stay for some time to come. I had the pleasure of being on duty when the first Memorial Day festivities came to town in 2001. I actually had a blast! It was scary, exhilarating, and exotic all at once. There was and always has been an element of danger during those weekends, but I think the city and the police department has

done a great job of managing the situation. There's only so much a city can do when hundreds of thousands of people descend upon a small area, but I think the Beach has their "stuff" together.

Unfortunately, some of the visitors don't really understand the true meaning of Memorial Day and that's sad. When you get a large influx of parties to one area, you're going to get a certain element hell bent on causing chaos and mayhem. It's an unfortunate irony that many young men and women just like them had to die, so these cretins could have the freedom to act like fools. So sad. On the positive side, some of the officers I spoke to said they enjoyed a great rapport with many of the visitors this year. I can't see a down side to that and I hope that trend continues.

Anyway folks, that's it for this month. I ask all of you in South Florida to stay dry, and the rest to stay dry AND safe. See you next month!

Jack Tighe's "Two Cents"

An M.B.P.D. Retiree's Newsletter Exclusive!

This year's MID-STATE meeting, compared to past meetings (like last year when 20 attended) was sadly short. Only 13 retirees attended; mostly old timers from South Florida who regularly attend our meetings. Even the dinner, although good, did not match past dinners. Ernie PRATHER, now retired from his private investigation firm, came from Alabama where he enjoys feeding and working with animals on his 91 acres. Gene TOREKY came from North Carolina, anxious to enjoy past times and stories with other retirees. He took pictures that we are examining to add to this letter (photos were posted last month). Jim CASEY attended, and, while in the hospitality room amazed others with his ability in not only telling stories but being able to give exact dates on everything. Fred WALDER and Sandy KOHAN matched each other on wearing walrus type mustaches. Sandy and I also matched the loss of our voices. Thank God for our wives who have to interpret and repeat what we say. Only TOREKY and SMITH wore suits to the dinner. SMITH's was the

**MBPD Newsletter
Exclusive!**

Jack Tighe's "Two Cents" *Continued from page 4*

most colorful. Ernestine, Smith's wife became ill so her supper had to be taken to her room. Wally NEUMANN, looking good after a year worth of torture, when the doctors used bone marrow to halt his cancer. Bill ARWOOD attended again. I think he's made every one since he retired. President Bill O'NEIL, talking about his plane accident and the new plane he's probably going to buy (he bought it!). Charlie SERAYDER and Carl WARD brought family that resulted in us meeting our "guarantee". Past FOP President Bob JENKINS said it was a good time for him to retire, as the City has to cover 35 million dollars to keep our pension plan and benefits sound. Some council persons already talked about reviewing the department's budget and our contract.

This was the third meeting at this hotel and the third time I got lost trying to find it, even with computer directions. A State Trooper informed me there was no street with my directions to turn south. We have learned that you can't depend on people, gas station workers, or hotel valets with their directions. This year we ended up seven miles away when a hotel desk person was able to give us correct directions.

PAT SCHNEIDER's FUNERAL. In the past, I would name every retiree that attended a funeral. However, the crowd at Pat's funeral was so large that it made that task impossible. Plainly visible in the crowd were Chief Rich BARRETO, staying with Alan SOLOWITZ, who was visibly shaken. Vinny APRILE, Sam GAM, (who wrote about the mass and reception after) Chief Chuck PRESS, Rocco DeLEO, Mike GRANT, Joe McCORMACK, JOHN and Cathy TIGHE, Bernard WINER, Jimmy SMITH. Sam Gam explained some of the services and speeches given honoring Pat. If you attended, you could not but be impressed on the military bearing of the color guard and casket bearers.

We waited a long time for the hearse but the guard and bearers kept that military stance. Facing the church but across the street, the color guard had five flags, going from the American flag to that of Bal Harbour's Flag. Next to them were three bag pipers. At the altar, a female officer stood next to an enlarged photo of PAT, with her head bowed for the entire services. After waiting before going into the church, you heard a rumbling that grew louder when ten motorcycles led the hearse with four following. My congratulations to the officers, and to Chief NORIEGA for allowing these officers to attend.

I MUST INFORM YOU OF THE DEATH of Duke REEVES. Duke left the department early. He died on May 13th. According to his friends, who sent a testimonial, when he left our department, he went to work for Customs. In that position he served both South Florida and California. After serving with the Army, he went to work for the Beach (he rode motors but I also remember him mostly as riding Patrol with Jim REILLY, Lou REILLY's brother). One of his accomplishments was riding a bicycle from California to Miami Beach in 23 days. Duke left Customs in 1980 after a fall down a staircase in the Los Angeles regional Customs office.



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the monthly newsletter.

LUNCH AT 4000 FEET

On Tuesday, August 4th our annual "Lunch at 4000 Feet" will be held at the Rib Shack Restaurant in Highlands, North Carolina. Lunch starts at twelve noon and restaurant says we can stay and sip beer or just "hang out" for as long as we want. This is the perfect time to visit with retirees who have moved away from South Florida and want to get brought up to date on what is happening with retirees elsewhere. Twenty-five retirees attended last year's event with some coming all the way from Miami. The Rib Shack is located right in Highlands on Spring Street just one block from Main Street. For

those with a GPS, the address is 461 Spring Street, Highlands, NC. For those without a GPS, just pull over and ask anyone.

While it's not necessary to make a reservation, Fred and Maddy Wooldridge would appreciate a phone call or e-mail telling them you will attend. It helps with seating arrangements. If you decide to attend at the last minute, no problem, just show up. Our phone number is 828-526-3063 and e-mail is rappeldown@aol.com.

See ya there,
Fred and Maddy



RETIRED SERGEANT PAUL LUPIEN

BIO FOR JUNE 2009, MIAMI BEACH RETIREES NEWSLETTER

WRITTEN BY PAUL LUPIEN

Let me tell you about some of the things important to me as it relates to my police career. Simply put, it was the people I worked with!

Now that I am just completing my rookie year as a retiree, I can proudly say "it doesn't suck". I was lucky enough to get on the department at the ripe old age of 20 (just barely 20), thanks in large part to Pete Corso. Prior to my police career, Pete and I worked out together at a karate school in Davie. Actually, we use to beat the hell out of each other. I only survived because I was a little faster than Pete at ducking. He talked me into taking the test for Miami Beach and trained me on how to take the oral boards. I went into the Police Academy (BLE #43) on Jan 07, 1980. Steve Robbins was my Training Advisor. What can I say about Steve? He's always been a good friend. He took care of his workers and hounded the slugs. Can't say I have a problem with that.

After surviving both Leo and Joe Weber during my FTO phase I was put on the midnight shift in the south end. How lucky could a new officer get than to be put in the same squad with the likes of Chuck Hayes, Mike Bauer, and Pat Franklin? They took me under their wing and taught me how to survive. I owe them a great deal, especially Chuck, thank you.

I had so many mentors over the years. Bob Fitzpatrick, who got me involved with survival training. Fred "MAD DOG" Wooldridge. I can still see his face looking up at me, shouting to do one more pull-up during SWAT tryouts. Ken Glassman, who showed me how to make the difficult *right* decisions as opposed to the easy *wrong* ones. Joe Weber (I love Joe Weber), not only did he scare the hell out of me on day one, but verbally abused me until I lost my Boston accent. Joe also taught me how to talk to people without getting my ass kicked. He is a great teacher and a loyal friend. John Tighe, a great friend, teacher and cop. Not to mention, a decent softball player when he doesn't pull a hamstring in the first inning.

I enjoyed working with so many great men and women on both the Police and Fire Departments. I enjoyed shooting the Captain bars off of Richie Barretto's SWAT hat when he left it lying on the range. While he didn't like it, he knew it was fair game. Alan Solowitz, who intimidated the hell out of every new officer, made sure I drove slow after I watched him chase Larry Hankoff around a police car at Lincoln and Alton. This was done from the safe distance of Lincoln and West. I enjoyed being a cadre for Tony Pizzo's Miami SWAT class. Tony was my Sergeant on the road and after making him do hundreds of push-ups, he would threaten retri-

bution, but in the end just laughed it off. He was a very good sport. I wish him well in the Keys.

One of the biggest challenges of my career was trying to teach Dave McLaren how to use a computer. He worked for me for seven years, and in that time we were able to get him to print labels. But there is hope; I understand he has mastered e-mail. He was great to have in the unit. He would do anything as long as it didn't interfere with breakfast or lunch.

So many great times and great stories to tell (after the statute of limitations ran out). I got to ride motors and ride horses. I served on the SWAT Team and the Honor Guard. Did three tours of duty in the Training Unit and was assigned to the Academy as a T/A. I had the privilege of working for Major Lou Riley, a nicer person I'll never know.

I had the honor of serving with Scott Rakow, John Koppin, Don Kramer, Bob Fitzpatrick, Laurie Wander, Sandy Kusbit, Pat Schneider and many other retirees who have been taken from us.

I had the honor of serving with many of the current retirees who may or may not know the impression they made on me to be a better officer and a better person. Since there are too many of them to name without the possibility of missing a couple of names, I must recognize some of the people I worked closely with while truly enjoying the experience; Bobby Williams, Cathy Tighe, Joe Kishick, Howard Zeifman, Danny Reid, Buddy Petit, Mark Hallman and Billy Godfrey, the hardest working human on the planet. They are all good friends.

I owe a great debt to my best friend Jim Mahle, who's been there since mid-way through the police academy (we didn't much like each other the first half of the academy). We rode motors together, served on SWAT together, jumped out of airplanes, ran marathons and were present at each other's saddest and greatest moments during the past thirty years. Along with Greg Butler, Tommy Lederman Ron McHugh and John Tighe, I was never at a loss when I needed help. Al Boza, who answers his phone on the first ring at midnight, and arrives at my house ten minutes later.

There are so many more still working at the department that made the experience a great one; some that I worked for, and some that I worked with. Again, too many to name.

I hope I get to spend as much time being a retiree as I did active duty. I enjoy the retiree breakfast get togethers, seeing the old faces and hearing the old stories. By the way, there's plenty of old stories and old faces showing up. Now that my hair is graying and I need glasses to see the menu, I feel like I fit in!

Editor's Notes...

Usually, retired officers don't write their own bios, but Paul did a fantastic job writing his. It was "right on the money". I had the pleasure of working with Paul throughout the years, but most of the time, we always seemed to be at different areas of the department. What I remember most about him though is that he was always the "spit and polish" consummate professional. A serious, quiet guy with a great sense of humor, purpose, and love for the job. Paul is the voice of reason, a guy who reminds you in a nice way of the importance of the job, and the importance of going home at night.

He was a "cop's cop", who always looked good and never had the need to pat himself on the back. His job performance always spoke for itself. As a street cop, he was great, but I remember him best as a trainer of cops. He always intimidated me to a certain extent, because with Paul, there was no cutting of corners. In training, you could either do it right, or not do it at all. Paul is an easy going guy who treats people with respect and commands it without having to open his mouth. He really cares about the safety of cops and poured his heart into making sure they were trained right. Guys like him come around only once in a lifetime. I wish Paul and his family the best in his retirement. Perhaps if he gets a little bored, he might consider training cops again. The new generation could certainly use a kick in the butt!

S. Gam



**JUNE 2009 NEWSLETTER EXCLUSIVE
THE PENSION SYSTEM UNDER ATTACK!
LETTER TO THE MIAMI BEACH MAYOR AND COMMISSIONERS BY FOP PRESIDENT
ALEX BELLO.**

March 31, 2009

Dear Mayor & Commissioners,

As you know, I participated in the City Commission Pension Workshop on March 25, 2009. In the week since, I have had the opportunity to share and discuss the opinions and presentations aired there with many of my members, both current and retired. Many of them have since watched the workshop via the internet. Throughout these discussions, there have been some prevailing sentiments expressed by them which both they and I would like to share with you and the rest of the Commission. I know that you would want to hear them.

The heart and soul of any city government is its employees. We are its most valuable asset and the work we perform is directly related to the quality of life for our residents. We are vested members of this community. To our officers, this has never been just a job. When we joined this team, it was with the intention of making it our life's work. The City has always rewarded this commitment with solid and good benefits. The backbone of those benefits has always been the City's Pension System.

The Pension System began in 1945. Since that time, it has successfully weathered bad economic times and it did so because City leaders and employees have worked together for its success through collective bargaining. We have, however, not always worked fairly. Twice in our history (in 1976 and 1993), while facing economic hardships, we bifurcated our pension. The years that followed these bifurcations were marked with resentment between employees working alongside each other, performing the same tasks and alienation from a City that they felt

made them second class officers. In 1993, the allegations also included discrimination and litigation. It left a black eye on an international city. City leaders knew then that they had to put an end to the two tiered system and did. Since October 1, 2000, we have all been together in one pension system. Some on the Commission may not remember these times, but at least one of you actively and publicly decried it back then as racist. It was an ugly time and distracted us from our common mission.

My officers have seen an increase in demands being placed on them. In recent years, the City has hosted a multitude of events as the result of being an international destination and in recent months, they have responded to an increase in crime and risk as the result of a bad economy. They and I feel they warrant your commitment to treat them fairly and equally and with a pension system monitored and controlled by you, us, and the residents. They will resist any decrease in pension benefits or consideration of converting to the Florida Retirement System (FRS), particularly when it is evident that the City will certainly realize increased costs in the short term for this conversion and no guarantee of any savings in the long term. This is no solution for today's economic hardships.

I would also like to express my disappointment with the treatment of our Pension Administrator and the insinuation of fiscal improprieties by the Pension Board. As you may know, the Pension Board is not only comprised of police officers and firefighters, but also three members from City

Administration.

We all realize after last week's workshop that this is a complex issue and I in no way want to minimize it. Still I believe that much time and money can be wasted researching and/or pursuing directions we know we should not venture in from the outset. I wish to avoid hard feelings and feel it helpful to let you know up front that we don't believe that it is in anyone's best interest to pursue an irrevocable decision to enter the FRS, which would in effect create another two tiered, bifurcated pension system. We will most certainly resist any solution that is not agreed to through the collective bargaining process. Working together in good faith will get us through this tough economic period and allow us to remain committed to our employees and principles.

Respectfully,
Alejandro Bello, President
Message to the Retirees:

In a nutshell, the Commission is considering several alleged cost saving options with regard to the pension. This year's city contribution to the pension is \$23 mil. One of the options they have been talking about was switching to the Florida Retirement System. I just wanted to keep the retirees involved and informed. I am not sure yet what direction they are planning on taking, but I think it is important for everyone to know. I also wanted to thank all the retirees for the benefits/pension that they were able to secure for us, I now realize that this is truly the best department.

Thanks,

Alex Bello
Fraternal Order of Police William
Nichols # 8



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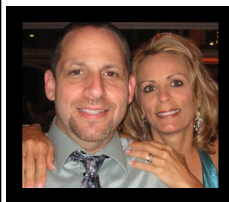
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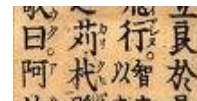
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A Katie Maguire novel

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