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Dink4Pink fundraiser
to fight for breast
cancer research
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San Jose brings 150
homeless neighbors
indoors; removes nearly
300K lbs. of trash
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Mosquitoes carrying West Nile virus are detected in San Jose

By William Bellou
Publisher

Mosquitoes carrying West Nile virus have been detected in San Jose for the first time this year resulting in the spraying by the Santa Clara County Mosquitoes and Vector Control District.

Spraying treatments were conducted on August 29 to control the population of adult mosquitoes who carry the virus for 3-4 hours encompassing zip codes 95118, 95124, 95125 and 95136. The treatments include the pesticide Zenivex which is approved by both state and federal environmental protection agencies.

"Protecting our community from West Nile virus is one of our top priorities," Dr. Nayer Zahiri, manager of the Mosquito and

See WEST NILE, page 10

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Future of East San Jose youth center uncertain after fire

By Lorraine Gabbert
San José Spotlight

A devastating fire that recently gutted a vacant youth center in East San Jose hasn't diminished the community's desire to restore it for future use.

The former Mexican American Community Services Agency (MACSA) building burned down Friday, breaking the hearts of Eastside



Corina Herrera-Loera, a trustee with the Alum Rock Union School District, places flowers during a vigil after the fire. She said the community is heartbroken. Photo by Lorraine Gabbert.



A fire engulfed the former Mexican American Community Services Agency youth center building in East San Jose on Aug. 29, 2025. Photo by Lorraine Gabbert.

advocates who want to revitalize and reuse the space. The Alum Rock Union School District, which owns the property, held an emergency meeting the next day to authorize assessing what remediation and possible demolition needs to occur. The San Jose Fire Department is still investigating the cause of the fire.

"There is a substantial amount of debris," Rogelio Ruiz, district legal counsel, said at the meeting. "There are tall standing structures that are burned out that are leaning. There is asbestos contained in building materials ... and potentially some lead as well. All of these materials are in a very tight and close com-

munity, and of course, in proximity to the classrooms (at Renaissance Academy at Mathson)."

The emergency designation — approved unanimously by the board of trustees — allows the district to skip the two-month bid process to select who will handle the work. It also needs approval from Santa Clara County Superintendent of Schools David Toston. District officials expect to have structural engineers at the site this week.

"We failed this community in so many ways already," Trustee Corina Herrera-Loera told San José Spotlight, adding she was speaking

See MACSA, page 10

O'Brien's Ice Cream Parlor reopens

Step back in time and treat yourself as O'Brien's Ice Cream Parlor at History Park has reopened!

Originally a much beloved neighborhood spot in San José, the real O'Brien's first opened its doors in 1874 and quickly became known for its charm and friendly service. The tradition lives on inside the historic re-creation, where hand-scooped ice cream brings the past to life.



O'Brien's is once again serving up a sweet taste of nostalgia—this time with hand-scooped favorites from Santa Cruz's own Marianne's Ice Cream.

Try O'Brien's new HSJ taffy mixes! The Orchard Mix includes Sakauye Farmhouse Pear, Dawsons Canned Peaches & Arbuckle Apple, and the History San José mix features Light Tower Lime, Peralta's Prickly Pear & O'Brien's Vanilla Cone.



Party time!

Sam Seibert, a retired captain who served with the San Jose Fire Department for 30 years celebrates his 106th birthday celebration at the San Jose Fire Museum on Aug. 26. Siebert is most likely the oldest known living firefighter in the United States. "The years have been good to me," says Seibert, who retired in 1976. He was joined by generations of family and friends.

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Times Local News

San Jose brings 150 homeless neighbors indoors; removes nearly 300K lbs. of trash

Dozens more will soon be housed in tiny homes, motel placements

The City of San José recently began clearing Columbus Park — launching the city’s largest clean-up operation in the last decade.

When work began, 370 people occupied the park, including 11 children and over 50 seniors living in unsafe, unmanaged conditions. There were also 120 lived-in vehicles, the majority of which were inoperable.

“As we’ve cleared Columbus, we’ve removed nearly 100,000 pounds of trash and moved about 40 people indoors – every single week,” said San José Mayor Matt Mahan. “This is an incredible achievement made possible by many departments working in tan-



dem to create the change our residents have been demanding. We have a long way to go, but we’re proving in San Jose that when you create basic, dignified housing, require people come indoors and establish no encampment zones, we can maintain lasting progress.”

After extensive outreach over a 70-day period, approximately 65% of those occupying Columbus Park had agreed to come indoors as of last week, and more than 160 peo-

ple have since moved into shelter placements. Casa Linda and Fontaine Inn are both now at capacity and move-ins will continue this week at the Alura Hotel, Bristol Hotel and the Taylor Safe Sleeping Site.

“The progress at Columbus Park speaks to our unwavering commitment to reduce unsheltered homelessness and improve our neighborhoods,” said City Manager Jennifer Maguire. “It shows what is possible when we combine com-

passion with action. We are helping residents move into safer living conditions while preparing the park to be a place of pride and belonging for the entire community.”

Police, Fire and BeautifySJ teams have since made significant progress cleaning up the park, removing nearly 300,000 lbs. of trash and 110 vehicles from the area. Potable water distribution and city outreach services continue to be offered on site.

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Times Local News

AVAC hosts Dink4Pink fundraiser to fight against breast cancer

October 4 charity event brings pickleball community together to raise \$50,000, benefiting Cancer CAREpoint, a nonprofit supporting Bay Area cancer patients, survivors and families

By William Bellou
Publisher

In honor of Breast Cancer Awareness Month, the award-winning Almaden Valley Athletic Club (AVAC), will rally the community and its love of pickleball to fight against breast cancer during its Dink4Pink charity event held Saturday, October 4th from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.

The Heart of the Event

Every year, thousands of women are diagnosed with breast cancer, and it's not just happening to middle-aged or older women. AVAC's Tennis and Pickleball Office Supervisor, Alex Camp, was diagnosed with breast cancer at 35. Considered 'too young' for screenings, which typically start at 40, she had to advocate hard for imaging. Soon after, doctors confirmed she had breast cancer that had already spread to her lymph nodes despite being in an early stage.

While she's cancer free today, her journey was one of the most challenging life events she's had to navigate. Cancer CAREpoint, a local nonprofit offering free support and resources to patients, survivors, families and caregivers, was a vital part of her support

See DINK4PINK, page 9

Cancer survivor **Alex Camp** and her husband **Kyle**, at this year's Cancer CAREpoint annual Garden Party. Alex is AVAC's Tennis and Pickleball Office Supervisor.

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Times **Local News**

Volunteer Management Unit offers opportunities

By **Domingo Candelas**

Did you know that the San Jose Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Services (PRNS) Department has a Volunteer Management Unit (VMU)? The VMU hosts FREE volunteer events throughout San Jose that anyone can participate in!

Volunteers with our Parks & Rec Department play a vital role in keeping our parks and trails safe and well-maintained so that everyone can continue to enjoy them!

If you're looking for a long-term volunteer



opportunity, the Adopt-A-Park/Trail Program is for you! This option is perfect for service clubs, faith-based organizations, and neighborhood associations. To learn more about the service commitment and application process, visit the PRNS webpage.

By maintaining our public spaces, we have more opportunities for activation events, building stronger neighborhoods!

It is my pleasure and privilege to serve as your City Councilmember.

San Jose on the hunt for new e-scooter provider

By **B. Sakura Cannestra**
San José Spotlight

San Jose is looking for a new e-scooter partner after negotiations with the exclusive vendor fell through.

Scooter users were surprised to see an announcement in the Spin app saying it would end services on Aug. 27 in San Jose. City officials said they declined to renew the company's permit because Spin never deployed the required minimum of 500 scooters. But a Spin representative said the city didn't address rampant vandalism.

Colin Heyne, spokesperson for the transportation department, said Spin had a one-year contract with the option to extend it another year. The permit allowed Spin to deploy up to 1,000 scooters citywide, but city data shows the company only deployed about an average of 240. Heyne deferred questions about why Spin couldn't reach its minimum requirement to the company.

"We hoped that giving a permit to a sole operator would make San Jose a more enticing market," Heyne told San José Spotlight.

Shiraz Rosenthal, a government partner manager for Spin, said the company lost more than 400 scooters to theft or vandalism in the first half of 2025, a "significant portion" of the company's fleet. She said they tried to work with city officials to renew the contract, but San Jose required Spin to pay a permit fee for the maximum 1,000 scooters, which wasn't financially feasible.

"While we're of course disappointed that it came to this, it was an honor to provide the community's residents and visitors with access to eco-friendly, alternative transportation options," Rosenthal told San José Spotlight.

Micromobility devices, such as e-bikes, skateboards and scooters, were controversial when they first began popping up, but companies working alongside local governments and regulators have made them more consistently accessible. While Spin's e-scooters have disappeared from San Jose, the city is still part of the Lyft Bay Wheels program, which provides rentable e-bikes at dozens of stations.

Heyne said Spin asked for a lower scooter number for the additional year extension,



San Jose is looking for a new scooter vendor, after Spin's contract expired. Photo courtesy of Spin.

but the city rejected the request because it ran counter to the micromobility program's goals to provide accessible and effective transportation services.

City data shows people used the scooters one to two times every day. The highest number of scooters available in one month was November 2024, when 499 scooters could be found throughout San Jose.

Spin scooters can still be rented in partnering cities nationwide, the closest being San Francisco.

Monica Mallon, transit advocate and San José Spotlight columnist, said she used the scooters a few times a month and wanted to use one last weekend before she saw the announcement in the app. The scooters weren't available in Mallon's neighborhood, so she could only use them when traveling through more highly trafficked areas, such as downtown.

Mallon said she's seen more people use bikes and scooters on public transit to reach their final destination. She said renting a shared scooter can be more accessible than buying one, because the rider doesn't need to worry about maintenance or theft.

Cities across Santa Clara County have been looking to provide "last-mile" connections, to help residents travel shorter distances from transit hubs or homes. Santa Clara and Cupertino jointly contract with an on-demand micro transit ride-share service, Silicon Valley Hopper, which Sunnyvale plans to sign up with soon.

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OSC has opened a new program for women based upon equine interaction and equine-assisted-learning, designed to develop self-awareness and self-acceptance, confidence and resilience, and safe boundaries.

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Times **Local News**

WATERWISE

Water challenges are formidable

By Matthew Frazier

San Jose is being confronted by a set of formidable water challenges.

The potential for devastating wildfires continue to bring anxiety among residents and local officials alike.

Although the immediate impacts of the drought were somewhat alleviated by statewide water reserves that had accumulated from the previous two wet winters, the precarious scenario that unfolded warranted urgent action and a collective response from the community.

Statewide Water Conditions

California's overall water supply painted a mixed picture as July ended. Thanks to two consecutive winters marked by generous rainfall, reservoir levels across the state were at a commendable 108% of their historical average. This figure offered a temporary sense of relief amidst the uncertainties; however, as dry summer conditions settled in, major reservoirs began to release substantial amounts of water to satisfy various allocations. Particularly in San Jose, this was a critical juncture for water man-

agement.

Regional Disparities

The rainfall distribution throughout California also revealed alarming disparities. While Northern California was fortunate enough to bask in near or above-average precipitation in the lead-up to summer, San Jose found itself in stark contrast, experiencing a severe rainfall deficit. The situation worsened as Southern California grappled with dramatically low rainfall levels, amplifying the risk of drought conditions in that part of the state. Additionally, the Sierra Nevada snowpack, a crucial reservoir for summer runoff, showed signs of weakness as it slipped below the average levels late in winter.

Local San Jose Conditions

Locally, while San Jose managed to avoid an official drought declaration, the statistics revealed a concerning reality: the city recorded its driest June in an astonishing 131 years. This was more than just a record; it was

an alarming indication of the severe environmental conditions we faced. The U.S. Drought Monitor provided some reassurance, noting that as of late July, Santa Clara County remained drought-free. Nevertheless, the prevailing dry trends posed an imminent risk that could swiftly change the status quo. With every passing day devoid of significant rainfall, the future of water security in the region hung in the balance.

Wildfire Risk

Compounding these anxieties was the esca-



Water Wise
Matthew Frazier,
Certified Water
Manager



lating risk of wildfires ravaging through dry landscapes, made worse by rising summer temperatures. Predictions released by the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) indicated a higher-than-normal fire potential in Northern California for August and September, amplifying the urgency for enhanced fire preparedness and robust community safety measures. The combination of dry vegetation and high temperatures left many areas vulnerable to fires, leading to increased apprehension among residents regarding fire safety in their neighborhoods.

Immediate action is crucial to ensure water security and mitigate the burgeoning risks of wildfire as the community enters a prolonged dry season. The responsibility lies not only on local agencies but also on individuals and families to engage in proactive measures that safeguard precious water resources and promote fire safety awareness.

By embracing a collective spirit of vigilance and responsibility, the residents of San Jose can work together to navigate these challenging times, fostering a more resilient community that is better equipped to face whatever environmental hurdles may lie ahead. The time for action is now, and through cooperation and preparedness, we can ensure a brighter, safer future for San Jose.

Senator Cortese's bill reducing wildfire risk while protecting native plants approved by assembly

By Sean Eastwood

Times staff reporter

Senator Dave Cortese's (D-Silicon Valley) Senate Bill 653 that defines and promotes environmentally sensitive vegetation management to reduce catastrophic wildfire risk while protecting native plants and wildlife was passed by the California Assembly Sept. 8. The bill now goes back to the Senate for approval.

This bill was passed as the peak of California's year-round wildfire season gets underway running through the fall including significant risks from Santa Ana winds in Southern California.

"My bill about vegetation management is so crucial because it addresses a key tension between wildfire prevention and environmental conservation. Senate Bill 653 is a science-based approach that eases that tension and is protective on all fronts," said State Senator Dave Cortese. "This bill will help guide state agencies that fund these projects to prioritize certain ecological best practices while reducing long-term catastrophic wildfire risk."

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Times **Local News**

IN MEMORY

Alexander Daniel Stepovich

1932 - 2025

*Resident of the Villages
Golf and Country Club*

Alexander Daniel Stepovich passed away peacefully at his home at the age of 92, with his beloved wife, Saundra, and their son Mark at his side.

Alex and Saundra raised a family of three children: Kris Rickard (husband Tim), Mark Stepovich (wife Karen), and Tracy Kepple (husband Jeff). Alex also had four grandchildren: Ryan Rickard, Kelsey Kepple, Natalie Hagwood (husband Garrett) and Claire Kepple. Alex loved his family dearly.

Alex was born in a log cabin in Fairbanks, Alaska. From the day he was born to the day he passed, Alaska held a special place in his heart. His father, Marko Stepovich, was a successful and innovative gold miner who had immigrated from Risan, Montenegro. After years of letters across the seas, Marko met and married Vuka Radovich and brought her to Alaska. They started their family in remote Fish Creek, where they had 4 children: Michael, Alex, Nada and Ellen.

After the start of World War II the family moved to California and settled in a home on Sobey Rd. in Saratoga. Sadly, Marko died of a heart attack and left his 4 young children to help their mother learn the English language and navigate a new life without a father and husband. Alex spent his summers during his high school years working in Fairbanks, a place where he often returned to enjoy fishing, hunting and adventures with friends and family.

Alex attended Campbell High School from 1948-1951 and served as student body president his senior year. He continued with his education at San Jose State University until joining the Army. The military placed Alex as a Medic and he was sent to Guam for two years. It is here that he was inspired to become a dentist.

Alex needed further education to qualify for Dental school. He returned to San Jose State and reunited with his Delta Upsilon Fraternity where he made lifetime friends. He was home for just two days when he met



the love of his life, Saundra King. They were engaged and married within a year.

Alex attended and graduated from the College of Physicians and Surgeons with a DDS Degree. He opened his own practice in 1961 in San Jose. The practice thrived as Alex's reputation in outstanding care became recognized. Alex had a passion for dentistry throughout his 46 years of service. He eventually passed his practice on to his highly skilled and gifted son, Mark.

Sandy and Alex were married 67 years and lived life to the fullest. They were actively involved in San Jose State athletics, and Alex earned the 50-year service award. He was a board member of the Spartan Foundation for over 25 years. As a couple they received the 1985 Tower Award, the University's highest community award. Alex had the great honor of passing the 1984 Olympic Torch in San Jose and was selected by Peter Ueberroth to be the envoy for the Yugoslavian teams at the Olympics in Los Angeles.

Alex and Sandy enjoyed traveling with friends and family, including many fishing trips to the blue waters teeming with life in Baja, CA. Closer to home and for more than three decades, he would hunt, fish and explore with longtime friends at a ranch in the Hernandez Valley situated in the San Benito Mountains. Alex enjoyed vegetable gardening and landscaping their family homes where they celebrated many special occasions. After moving to The Villages, he enjoyed many years of golfing. Alex loved watching his children and grandchildren grow up and pursue their passions and become successful adults.

He will be remembered as a man with a passion for life, a curiosity for the wild and unknown, and a deep love for his friends and family. Unforgettable.

Three Evergreen Valley residents named to SNHU Summer 2025 President's List

Three Evergreen Valley residents, John Pham, Ethan Gerecke, and Latisha Jordan have been named to Southern New Hampshire University SNHU Summer 2025 President's List.

The summer terms run from May to August.

Full-time undergraduate students who have earned a minimum grade-point average of 3.700 and above for the reporting term are named to the President's List. Full-time status is achieved by earning 12 credits over each 16-week term or paired 8-week terms grouped in fall, winter/spring, and summer.

SNHU is a private, nonprofit, accredited institution with a 92-year history of educating traditional-aged students and working adults. Now serving more than 200,000 learners worldwide, SNHU offers approximately 200 undergraduate, graduate, and certificate programs, available online and on its 300-acre campus in Manchester, NH. Recognized as one of the "Most Innovative" regional universities by U.S. News & World Report and one of the fastest-growing universities in the country, SNHU is committed to expanding access to high quality, affordable pathways that meet the needs of each learner.

NOTE: You are receiving this press release because the student or their parents are from your area. This press release above was prepared for: Publisher - Evergreen Times.

Dink4Pink

Continued from page 6
system.

"Dink4Pink is a full circle moment for me," said Alex Camp, cancer survivor and AVAC's Tennis and Pickleball Office Supervisor. "A year ago, I never imagined I'd be here. I'm deeply grateful for the chance to give back to Cancer CAREpoint, an organization that's very close to my heart. I encourage everyone to sign up for the Dink-a-Thon and help us reach our goal of \$50,000 to make a real impact in the fight against breast cancer!"

Dink-a-Thon: Rally to Raise \$50,000

The charity event's main draw is the Dink-a-Thon, a pledge-based fundraiser that encourages participants to gather "per game pledges" before the event. On game day, they will have a 10-hour window of open play to get as many games in as they can, using their pledges as incentives. The event aims to raise \$50,000, with all proceeds going towards Cancer CAREpoint.

All levels are welcome, including beginners. AVAC will host complimentary begin-


ner clinics for adults and juniors (8 and older). Those who want more action can sign up to play in a one-point tournament where the first to win a single point advances to the next round, making it anyone's game.

Cheer, Watch & Connect

If you want to support the cause without playing come cheer on Dink-a-Thon participants, watch exhibition matches featuring local pros, bid in the silent auction, or try your luck in the raffle. Cancer CAREpoint representatives will also be onsite, sharing resources and answering questions.

"Whether cancer has touched your life or you simply want to support a meaningful cause, Dink4Pink is the place to be," said Josh, Director of Tennis and Pickleball at AVAC. "The event honors AVAC's tradition of bringing the community together and giving back to life-changing causes. We hope to see you there!"

For more information or to register for the Dink-a-Thon and start collecting pledges, visit www.avac.us/dink4pink




Dink4Pink Pickleball Fundraiser

Saturday, October 4th

Join us at the Almaden Valley Athletic Club as we use our love of Pickleball to fight against breast cancer with an all-day open play event!

Sign up and rally your family, friends and community to support your play with per-game pledges where every match helps raise funds for Cancer CAREpoint. This local non-profit provides free resources to Bay Area cancer patients and their families. All skill levels welcome!

Details: AVAC.US/Dink4Pink



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- Know how to download your camera footage
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Jessica Paz-Cedillos, co-executive director of the School of Arts and Culture, said the fire doesn't erase plans to revitalize the former youth center. Photo by Lorraine Gabbert.

MACSA

Continued from page 1
for herself and not the board. "We must clean that up as soon as possible so our community can have a clean space and hopefully one day rebuild so our community can enjoy it again."

Jessica Paz-Cedillos, co-executive director of the School of Arts and Culture at Mexican Heritage Plaza and San José Spotlight columnist, is determined to rebuild MACSA. Her group is part of the Si Se Puede Collective, which has been working to partner with the school district on managing a revitalized facility.

"This fire does not erase our vision for MACSA," she told San José Spotlight.

"This is our moment to come together, to work with the district and our cross-sector partners, to restore and rebuild. What rises from these ashes must reflect the resilience, brilliance and leadership of East San Jose."

The MACSA youth center, which has been empty for about a decade, was built with state funds. Alum Rock Union School District leased the land to the nonprofit for 52 years for \$1 per year, but when the property was turned over to the school district in 2016, it was in a state of disrepair.

When the district received bids to renovate the building in 2017, the lowest bid was \$6.9 million,

more than the district could afford. As construction escalated, renovation costs skyrocketed between \$25 million and \$30 million. The district engaged in partnership discussions with Gardner Health Services, Goodwill of Silicon Valley and San Francisco State University to no avail.

East San Jose school district seeks partner to save former youth center

In 2023, the district chose a 23-acre site adjacent to the MACSA youth center to build workforce housing, which would require demolishing the building. That kicked off efforts to save the site.

Investing in the youth center is personal for District 5 Councilmember Peter Ortiz, who represents the area. He said MACSA played a major role in his life as a gang-impacted youth, with ethnic studies classes teaching him positive things about his culture.

"There hasn't been a lot of historical investment on the Eastside," Ortiz told San José Spotlight. "This represented a promise to this community. The people feel like that promise is shattered, but I'm not ready to say that yet. Now is not the time to raise our white flags. Now is the time to come together ... and advocate for a new solution."

He said he recently secured \$500,000 in city funding to restore MACSA, which he believes is more than just a building.

"It was a promise and a vision

for East San Jose that we will get the equitable services that we are deserved," he said. "That we will get all of the programs, resources and financial support that was denied to our parents, that was denied to our ancestors."

Victor Vasquez, co-executive director of SOMOS Mayfair, which is part of the Si Se Puede Collective, wants to see the district recommit to a new youth center. He spoke at a vigil at MACSA after the fire, where residents placed flowers along the fence line to mark the loss of the building — still a symbol of resilience and cultural pride for the community.

"(The district has) an opportunity to restore hope in our community," he said. "That center's for their students. The kids still need a gym. They still need a field. They still need a library. They still need a place to hangout and feel safe. We're not going to give up. We're inviting them to be part of something greater than all of us. That building is sacred."

West Nile

Continued from page 1
Vector Control District, said in a statement. "Our licensed technicians are in the field year-round, monitoring and treating areas where mosquitoes breed, helping to lower the risk of disease and keep Santa Clara County safe for everyone."

"The district anticipates that detections of West Nile-positive mosquitoes will increase in the coming weeks, as mosquitoes thrive in the warm weather of the summer and early fall," officials said.

West Nile virus can cause symptoms including tremors, paralysis, fever, muscle weakness, disorientation, joint pain, body aches, diarrhea, rash and vomiting, officials said. It is the most serious disease carried by mosquitoes in the county.



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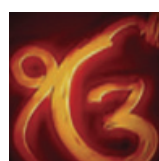


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