

# pittsburgh applause!

arts & entertainment newsletter

## WQED Multimedia: Lay Offs, Salary Cuts

Pay cuts and massive layoffs are part of a three-year plan to turn around the finances at Pittsburgh's iconic public television media organization.

**WQED Multimedia** is the parent of WQED-FM and WQED-TV, the first community-sponsored television station in America. The organization is about \$5 million in debt.



Tom Fontaine of the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review* reports that "14 full-time employees and one part-timer received layoff notices during an emotional morning and afternoon at WQED's Oakland studio, and two other full-time workers were offered part-time jobs or severance pay."

WQED's Debra Acklin told Fontaine that she is confident about the future as she is saddened by the cuts. "Give WQED a few years. We won't just bounce back; we'll bounce higher." Check out his full article at <http://triblive.com/news/adminpage/9148675-74/wqed-cuts-employees#axzz3nFYAJ05U>

Acklin cites growing competition for audiences. There has also been a drop in contributions, especially critical grants from the Richard King Mellon Foundation.

In a separate *Trib* article, Fontaine writes of the opinion of former

WQED board member and one-time Allegheny County Chief Executive Jim Roddey. He calls the drop in foundation support to be significant. "That, to me, is a clear message that the foundation has been disappointed with [the reduction in] local programming and the station's efforts to be viable in the community."

*The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette's* Maria Sciuolo recently sat down with Acklin, board chairman William Caroselli and former chairman W. Thomas McGough to discuss WQED's future. "You can't fundraiser your way out of debt," she quotes McGough. "We can't credibly ask [foundations] to relieve us." Read about the conversation and related information by visiting <http://www.post-gazette.com/ae/tv-radio/2015/09/30/After-deep-staff-cuts-where-does-WQED-go-from-here/stories/201509300053>

**For more, see the editorial on page 13.**

**Inside This Issue**

Schell Games wins three gaming awards	Page 3
Irish & Classical Theater Oks Play Desite Money	Page 3
SAG-AFTRA members ok new contract	Page 3
Carnegie Science Center wins important award	Page 4
August Wilson's plays heading to cable TV	Page 9

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## Schell Games Wins Three Big Gaming Awards

Local gaming firm **Shell Games** has won three Proto Awards for its “I Expect You to Die” virtual reality (VR) video game.

Schell Games is a full-service game design and development company established in 2002 by Jesse Schell. The Proto Awards were founded in 2014 by the **Virtual Reality Foundation** to honor the efforts the trailblazers in immersive video.



“I Expect You to Die” puts the player into the role of an elite, polished secret agent who must use his/her wits and fun gizmos on a dangerous mission with a series of ever more deadly situations. It was named Best Overall VR Experience, Best Gameplay and Best Interactive Design.

You can preview the game by logging on to [https://share.oculus.com/app/i-expect-you-to-die#\\_ =](https://share.oculus.com/app/i-expect-you-to-die#_=)

## SAG-AFTRA Ratifies Pact

More than 98% of **SAG-AFTRA** members have ratified a new sound recordings contract.



SAG-AFTRA represents thousands of performers in television, film, radio and new media. The union has hundreds of members in the Pittsburgh area and maintains a full-time office in Downtown Pittsburgh.

The new agreement, which runs through 2017, includes a new payment formula for online streaming and non-permanent digital downloads that encompasses revenue from new media.

“I am proud of the gains we achieved in this groundbreaking contract and I’m pleased that the voting members agree,” said SAG-AFTRA’s Dan Navarro, in a press release. “This is a big win for our recording artist members; it is truly a contract for the 21st century.”

Details are available online at <http://www.sagaftra.org/sag-aftra-members-ratify-sound-recordings-code>

**For more on the PICT’s issues, see the editorial on page 13.**

## PICT Moves Forward Despite Money Woes

The struggling **Pittsburgh Irish & Classical Theatre** (PICT) is going forward with its next production, despite a financial crisis that forced the company to lay off its entire staff.

After last month’s issue of *Pittsburgh Applause* was released, the company revealed that it was essentially out of money. This forced PICT to lay off all employees and cancel its October production of “The Tempest.”

*The Pittsburgh Tribune-Review’s* Alice T. Carter reports that the PICT has decided to go forward with its December production of “Oliver Twist” as part of its survival effort.

“The way to pay our bills is by getting [“Oliver Twist”] on so we can manage to move on to next year,” PICT’s Alan Stanford told Carter. He explained to her in the article posted at <http://triblive.com/aande/theaterarts/9177737-74/company-pict-pay#axzz3nFYAJ05U> that lingering debt, rising costs and poor ticket sales together created the financial bind.

PICT needs at least \$65,000 and donations have been coming in to help and the company sees “Oliver Twist” as a potential profit-maker. Nevertheless, at press time, even the PICT web site, [www.picttheatre.org](http://www.picttheatre.org), remains offline.

## Science Center Wins Prestigious Award

The Carnegie Science Center has won the 2015 Roy L. Shafer Leading Edge Award for Business Practice.

CARNEGIE MUSEUMS  
OF PITTSBURGH

Opened in 1991, the Carnegie Science Center (CSC) is one of the four components of the **Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh**. The center is dedicated to inspiring learning and curiosity by connecting science and technology with everyday life.

The award is presented by the **Association of Science-Technology Centers** (ASTC), a

global organization providing support to science museums and related institutions. It's named in honor of a former ASTC president and is presented to members in recognition of extraordinary accomplishments.

For the CSC, this means honoring the center's Carnegie STEM Excellence Pathway, a program that helps schools improve their science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education practices.

"The Pathway has resonated with schools across the country at a rapid pace because it addresses an urgently felt need," said the CSC's Ann Metzger in a press release. "Across the nation, we

face a shortage of workers with the STEM skills demanded by 21st century employers. Schools recognize the critical role they play in developing the next generation STEM workforce, and they're looking for help in developing effective strategies to improve their STEM education programs."

Participation in the Carnegie STEM Excellence Pathway is free.



## Show Jim That You Support Him!

Jim Richards does many things for Pittsburgh arts community --- most for free --- despite limiting health issues. So show your support in one or more of the following ways:

- \* Purchase an ad in *Pittsburgh Applause*
- \* Sponsor a project
- \* Hire Jim to do your marketing
- \* Give him free tickets to your show
- \* Make a monetary donation

James A. Richards  
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## CBS Launches Transition Plan

A transition plan for its entertainment division has been announced by **CBS Corporation**.



In Pittsburgh, CBS Corporation owns two television and three radio stations, most notably KDKA-TV.

Nina Tassler, who has chaired the division since 2004, will step down at the end of the year and continue in an advisory role through at least 2017. Her current

#2, Glenn Galler is being promoted into her position.

“CBS is a special place,” said Tassler in a press release. “For the past 18 years, I’ve been blessed to be part of an amazing team that has lifted this network to an enviable run of success. It all starts at the top with [CBS chief Leslie Moonves], my boss, mentor and friend for two and a half decades, and a leader who inspires excellence in every part of the creative and business process. I owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to Leslie, my colleagues at CBS and all the actors, producers and writers who were part of this incredible journey. I will always love

this place, yet it is time for my next chapter, and I’m thrilled that I can pursue my other creative interests while still being part of the Company. I pass the baton to Glenn with great confidence and pride. He is an outstanding leader with great respect for the artistic process and a clear vision for programming success.”

Tassler’s tenure has helped the company’s flagship CBS Network become the country’s #1 network and has been involved in bringing hit shows such as “The Big Bang Theory” and “The Good Wife” to the air.

## NBCU Buys Out Asian Park

NBC Universal has announced that it has purchased the 51% of Universal Studios Japan that it did not own in a recapitalization deal.



NBC Universal is owned by **Comcast**, which operates Pittsburgh’s cable television franchise. Universal Studios Japan is a theme park located in Osaka that opened in 2001. Most of the roughly 8 million annual visitors are tourists from various Asian countries. The investment banking firm **Goldman Sachs Group** had owned most of the shares since 2005.

“We are excited to expand our global footprint with this wonderful theme park in Osaka and are

excited by the opportunities that lie ahead in Japan and all of Asia,” said Brian L. Roberts, Chairman and CEO of Comcast, in a press release. “This investment represents a huge opportunity and commitment to creating value for our shareholders and continuing to grow internationally.”

In other news, the company’s Fandango online ticketing service has reached a deal to acquire Brazil ticketing firm Ingresso from **B2W Companhia Digital**.



## Pittsburgh Recorded Album Released

Actor and singer Christopher Larkin has released his debut album, reports Linda Ge on The-Wrap.com. Some of songs were recorded in an unnamed Pittsburgh studio.

Larkin is best known for appearing on the post-apocalyptic television series "The 100." He performs his music under the pseudonym Carry Hatchet. Larkin also performed in the play "Oblivion" earlier this year at **City Theatre**.

Samples of songs on "The News Today" are available online at <http://www.christopherlarkin.com/music/>



## Pittsburgh Applause Gets Own Web Site

As part of an effort to make professional news and other resources more easily available, a dedicated Pittsburgh Applause web site has been launched.



Located at [www.pittsburghapplause.com](http://www.pittsburghapplause.com), the site is where future issues of the newsletter will be published.

Visitors can also easily access links to various resources to help in their arts/entertainment professional endeavors, both commercial and non-commercial. These include trade media, unions and local organizations.

There are still some kinks to work out (not all of the back issues links are working), but it should be a valuable tool for everyone.

## Images

Celebrate Pittsburgh's arts & entertainment history and community.



*The director's cut of the film "54" is just one of the movies making their Pittsburgh debut at this year's Reel Q. Celebrating its 30th anniversary, Reel Q is the world's sixth oldest lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender film festival.*

To have an image considered contact Jim Richards at [jim@james-richards.com](mailto:jim@james-richards.com)

# C'mon Over, Neighbor!



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## Wilson Plays Heading To TV

The famous Pittsburgh plays of the legendary August Wilson will be adapted for cable television, reports the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette's* Rob Owen.

**TimeWarner**

A winner of the prestigious Pulitzer Prize, playwright August Wilson (1945-2005) is best known for his ten plays chronicling the African-American experience over the course of a century. Since most of them are set in Pittsburgh (especially the city's historic Hill

District), the series is often called "The Pittsburgh Cycle."

Academy Award winning actor and director Denzel Washington will produce the ten-play series for **Time-Warner's** Home Box Office (HBO). The plan is to do one play each year for a decade.

"He did 10 plays," Owen quotes Washington. "I'm directing and producing and acting in one."

At press time, it was unclear if the Pittsburgh-set plays will actually be filmed in Pittsburgh.



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The Spooky Season has returned and with it our terrific special section of Halloween events including a growing list of haunted houses.



FRI  
9

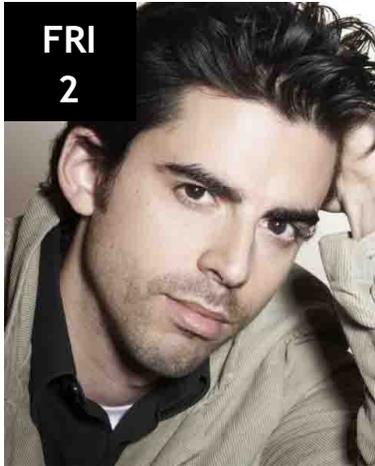
# ReelQ

The 30th annual Reel Q opens at the **Harris Theater** tonight with an impressive selection of full-length and short films about the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community.



MON  
19

One of the greatest artists in the history of modern music, Stevie Wonder, shares some of his biggest and most beloved hits at **Consol Energy Center**.



FRI  
2

Singer, songwriter and pianist appears on the **Heinz Hall** stage to perform songs associated with the late, great Frank Sinatra.



SAT  
10

Sure, you know about his famous soup can paintings, but did you know Andy Warhol also created book art? He did and the **Andy Warhol Museum** is showcasing some of them.



TUE  
20

The above is an example of the interesting pieces created by late Pittsburgh artist Jane Haskell which opens tonight at the **American Jewish Museum**.



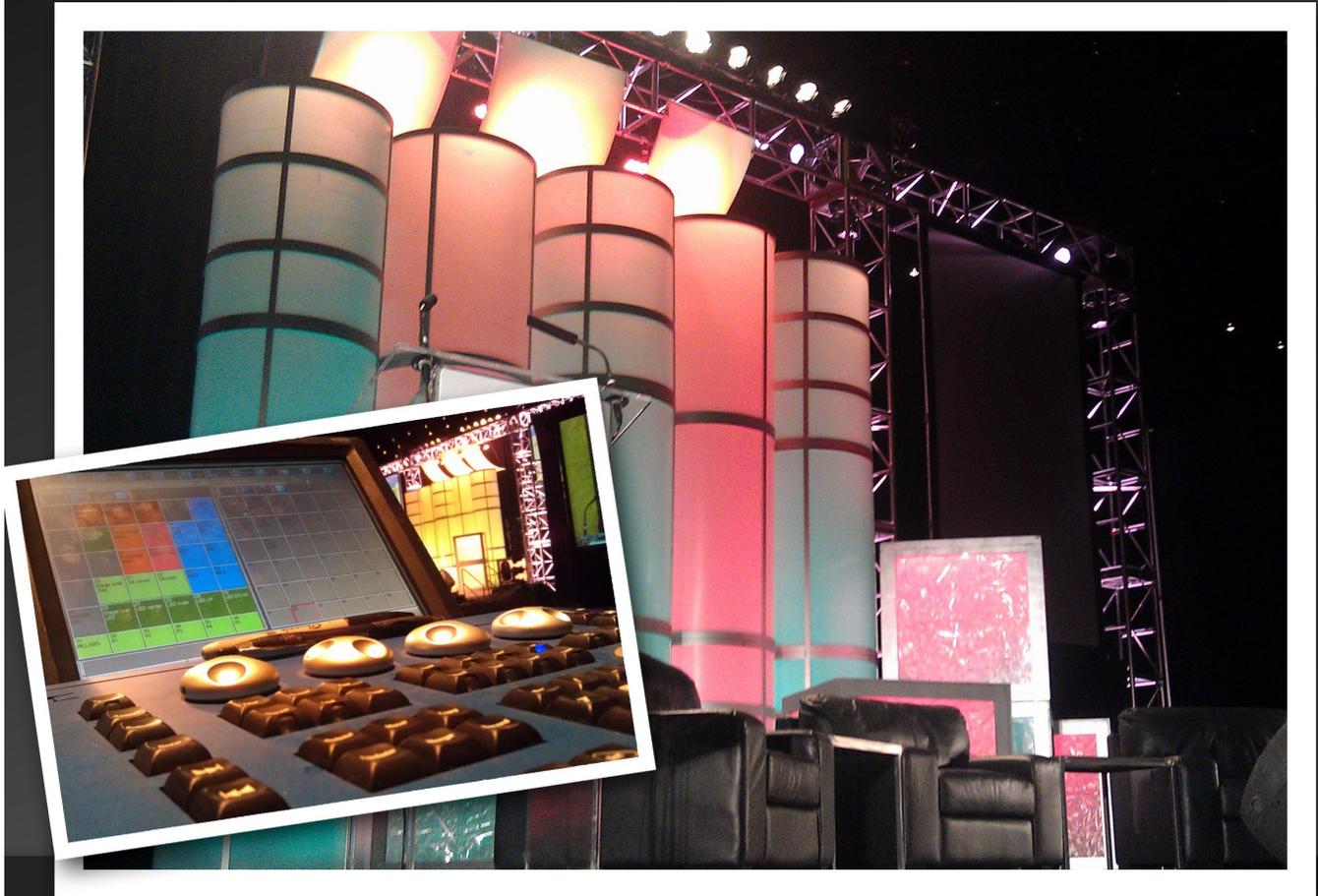
SAT  
3

The small German city of Meissen is famous for its ceramic pieces and now the **Frick Art & Historical Center** is featuring works created by a local artist who worked in Meissen.



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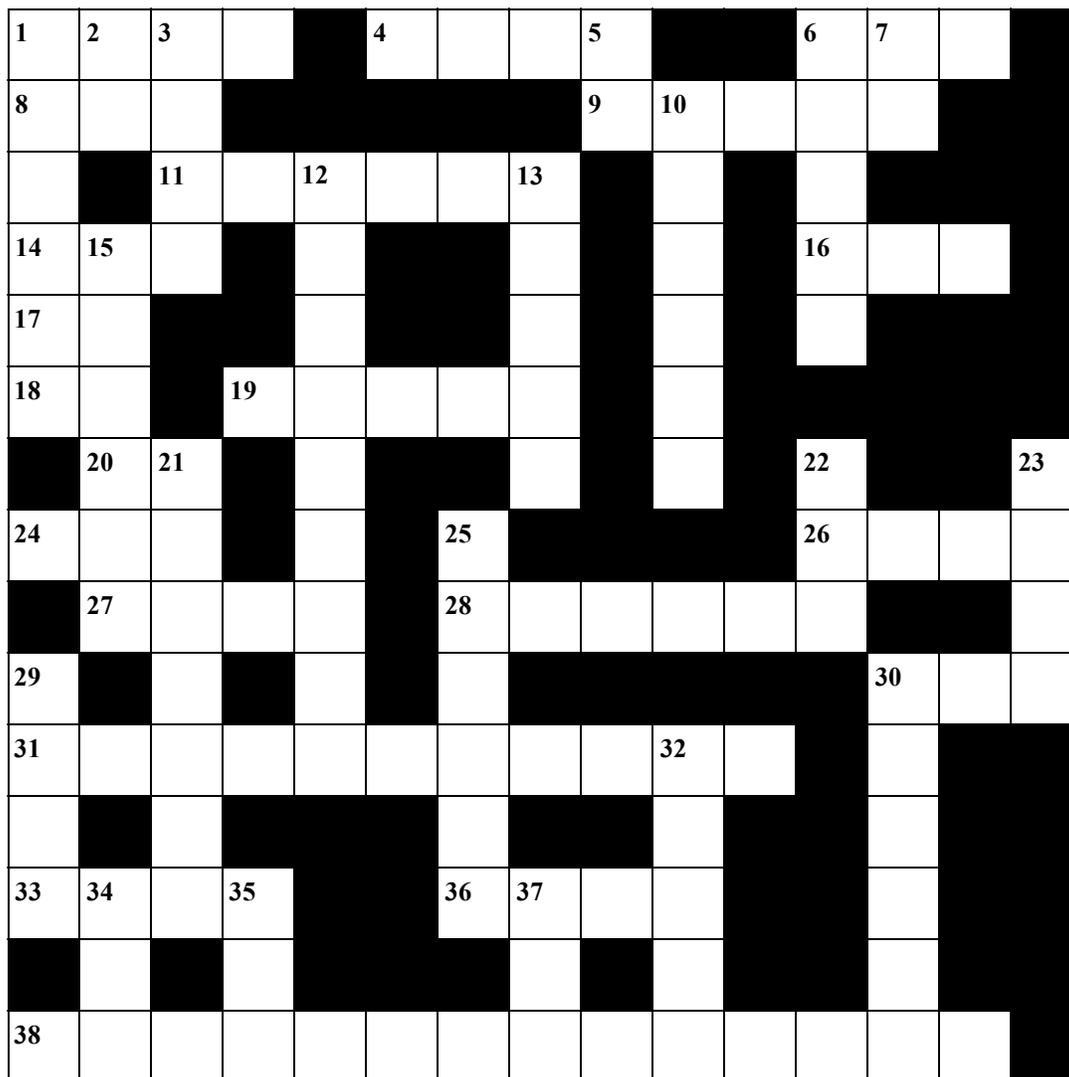


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# THE APPLAUSE PUZZLE

## “Reel Q 30th Anniversary”



- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>ACROSS</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Famous gay filmmaker (with 11-Across)</li> <li>4. She often works with 1-Across (with 13-Down)</li> <li>6. See 21-Down</li> <li>8. A green prefix</li> <li>9. Speak aloud, old style</li> <li>11. See 1-Across</li> <li>14. The Penguins are a member (abbr.)</li> <li>16. Gay soap star (with 25-Down)</li> <li>17. Big time video game company, briefly</li> <li>18. Mode of travel (abbr.)</li> <li>19. Local lifestyle magazine</li> <li>20. The UK postal code for Romford</li> <li>24. The number 12, to a Roman</li> <li>26. Where Reel Q started, briefly</li> <li>27. Out!</li> <li>28. Penn or Liberty</li> <li>30. See 30-Down</li> <li>31. TV show set in Pittsburgh but not filmed in Pittsburgh</li> <li>33. Where to get a BLT</li> <li>36. Arrogant</li> <li>38. Famous gay tennis star</li> </ol> | <p><b>DOWN</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Once Bruce, now Caitlyn</li> <li>2. Glossy teen soap starring the current star of “Gotham”</li> <li>3. Famous Ginsberg poem</li> <li>5. A boxer’s goal (abbr.)</li> <li>6. Famous co-owner of Studio 54 (with 10-Down)</li> <li>7. Local youth clothing giant, briefly</li> <li>10. See 4-Down</li> <li>12. Gay actor who was a straight sex symbol in the ‘50s.</li> <li>13 See 4-Across</li> <li>15. Where Reel Q screens</li> <li>21. Famous gay football star (spelling variation; with 6 Across)</li> <li>22. A big primate</li> <li>23. A mythical river or a real band</li> <li>25. See 16-Across</li> <li>29. Local PBS station</li> <li>30. Famous trans athlete (with 30-Across)</li> <li>32. A basic internet act</li> <li>34. Legendary British music company</li> <li>35. Not well</li> <li>37. He owns Homer’s bar</li> </ol> |
|---|--|

**Last Month’s Solution**

T	R	A	C	Y	B	R	I	G	D	O	N	S	T						
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# Pittsburgh Applause Editorial

## Nonprofits' Financial Crisis

By James A. Richards

The bad news has been coming one after the other over the last year: the August Wilson Center, Pittsburgh Filmmakers/Pittsburgh Center for the Arts, the Pittsburgh Irish & Classical Theater and now WQED. All of these and many other nonprofit A&E groups have struggled financially.

Each organization has its own mix of reasons for their respective fiscal crisis. But common among them is too little diversity of their revenue streams.

For more than half a decade, I have served on the board of the Pittsburgh Lesbian & Gay Film Society (PLGFS), which produces the annual Reel Q film festival and screens other indie movies

throughout the year. 2015 marks the festival's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Like so many other small nonprofits, PLGFS was basically existing year-to-year. A few years ago, I proposed a sponsorship program that PLGFS president Mitch Leib successfully modified. It provides for a sponsor for each film. Once the programming committee agrees on the festival's selections, companies and other entities can be matched to each movie. In addition, I was able to tap into my own resources to bring Comcast on board as a festival supporter. This has made it possible for Mitch to secure other large firms as sponsors.

The PLGFS now has three reasonably reliable revenue streams: ticket sales, sponsorships and grants/gifts. Notice how two of

these involve earned income. PLGFS is now more financially stable. This is the approach that other nonprofits, be it large ones or small ones, need to adopt to stabilize their finances and have a future.



# Linked



Join the *Pittsburgh Applause* group on [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com).

As a member of this group, you'll be better able to connect with your A&E peers in Pittsburgh!

Membership is free, but you must have a LinkedIn profile to participate.



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## Keep the Applause Coming

Everyone in our line of work loves receiving applause, but to keep *Pittsburgh Applause* coming your way, its important to support the newsletter through ad buys and monetary gifts to Jim Richards.

Full-page (8" wide x 10" high): \$100  
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For more information, contact Jim at [jim@james-richards.com](mailto:jim@james-richards.com)



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