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21th Annual Colorado Cowboy Poetry Gathering
A Contemporary Expression of Cowboy Life and Culture

ARVADA, CO – The Arvada Center for the Arts and Humanities is proud to celebrate the 21st Annual Colorado Cowboy Poetry Gathering **Thursday, January 14 through Sunday, January 17, 2009**. This internationally renowned event features some of the world's best cowboy poets, singers and entertainers. These rustic entertainers capture the true spirit and lifestyle of their western heritage.

This four-day event features a line-up of over 30 poets and musicians from 14 states, Canada and Australia, who capture the spirit and lifestyle of their Western heritage through poetry, song and verse.

During the Colorado Cowboy Poetry Gathering, cowboy poets, western singers, and old fashioned yodelers bring to life the joys and hardships of the western lifestyle. Audiences can take a break from the fast-paced, high-tech world and relive the life of the true cowboy. There will be some familiar faces, and no doubt, some of the best poets and singers to ever be herded into one corral!

PERFORM BIO's

ELI BARSI of Kennedy, Saskatchewan, has received seven Alberta Recording Industry Awards, a two-time Canadian Country Music nominee, AWA Western Female Vocalist in 2002 & 2006, as well as the WMA Crescendo winner for 2006. Eli was in the top five for this year's WMA Female Performer as well as AWA Yodeler and Best Western Album. For the past seven years, this western recording artist was based out of the Branson, Missouri area. She has recently moved back to her home province and continues to travel North America performing her brand of cowgirl western roots music. With ten top-notch CDs, this singer/songwriter/musician is honored to support our western heritage with her songs and yodeling.

BILL BARWICK of Denver, Colorado, combines his skills of songwriting and storytelling with superb guitar-work to create a performance "not to be missed." In November, Bill was voted the WMA 2009 Male Performer of the Year. Bill received the AWA Male Vocalist of the Year award in 2005. Bill tours nationally and appears regularly at Denver's historic Buckhorn Exchange. You might also recognize him as the on-air spokesperson for television's Encore Westerns Channel, or the numerous radio and TV ads he has voiced. All of Bill's eight albums, including his newest, *Just in Case*, feature great western music and that deep, rich voice.

BILL BREWSTER of Greeley, Colorado, was raised at Cheyenne, Wyoming. His first ranch job was at age 13. It didn't pay much, but there was a lot of room for advancement. Bill entered his first rodeo at 19, and placed in two events, this was the high point of his rodeo career. After service in the army, Bill was a feedlot cowboy, a ranch cowboy, a rodeo cowboy, a cow trader, and worked in other areas of endeavor that were more rewarding. He has appeared with Red Steagall, Yvonne Hollenbeck, Pat Richardson, Waddie Mitchell and

Baxter Black. Bill has a small camp in the Laramie Mountains, a few good horses and is available for day work.

BAXTER BLACK of Benson, Arizona, can shoe a horse, string a bob wire fence and bang out a Bob Wills classic on his flat top guitar. Cowboy poet, and former large animal veterinarian, he was raised in New Mexico, spent his workin' life in the mountain west tormenting cows, now he travels the country tormenting cowboys. He still doesn't own a television or a cell phone, and his idea of a modern convenience is Velcro chaps.
Since 1982, Baxter Black has been rhyming his way into the national spotlight. He's written several books, recorded over a dozen audio and video tapes, CDs and DVDs, and has achieved notoriety as a syndicated columnist, radio commentator, and more recently with his TV program *Out There* on RFD-TV. From the *Tonight Show* and PBS to NPR and the NFR, Baxter's wacko verse has been seen and heard by millions. He can be followed nationwide through his column, National Public Radio, public appearances, television and also through his books, CDs, videos and website.

KEN COOK of Martin, South Dakota is currently ranching and writing in South Dakota. His wife, Nancy, has a real job in town at the bank. It's a marriage made in heaven. Ken gets to kiss his banker every evening. In June of 2009, Ken was named the "Lariat Laureate" in a global competition at CowboyPoetry.com. He has had the privilege of entertaining folks in several states, including a trip to the 23rd National Cowboy Poetry Gathering in Elko, Nevada. Ken has recorded three CDs, his most recent, *Cowboys Are Like That*, includes the work of Buck Ramsey, Badger Clark, and Ralph Coole…as well as his own.

DORIS DALEY of Turner Valley, Alberta, was just named the 2009 Best Female Poet by the WMA. She also received honors for Best Cowboy Poetry CD, with *Beneath a Western Sky*. Doris is a Canadian who dazzles audiences with her brilliant introductions. Here's one she just made up! "She's wild and woolly and full of grit, quick on the uptake, slow to spit. Hangs her hat in Turner Valley, wrangling poems is up her alley. From Texas to Utah, BC to Nevada, a western stage is where she's atta. She scrubbed her neck, she fiddled and fussed, her battle cry is "Arvada or bust!" Cowboy life and themes inspire her...she works for cheap so why not hire her. Our northern sister, our Canuck desperado: it's Doris Daley, back in Colorado!"

ZEB DENNIS of Longmont, Colorado, writes his unique brand of cowboy poetry in the tradition of the old western poets. He has had the opportunity to cowboy and shoe horses on some the last big cattle ranches located on the Colorado Front Range. His poetry captures the thrill of a wild cow chase, the beauty of the Rocky Mountain sunset, and the pain of the rancher as his western ways of life slowly fades away. You'll find yourself riding and laughing with him, as the verses of his poems tell the story of the old cowboys. Zeb has two CDs and three books available for additional enjoyment.

CONNIE DOVER of Weston, Missouri, spends much of her time as a ranch cook in the beautiful country between Wyoming's Wind River and Absaroka Mountains. She finds her inspiration in the landscapes and history of the American West, and her music shows the ties between songs she sings around Wyoming campfires and their Celtic ancestors. Her chance meeting with cowboy singer Skip Gorman on a Wyoming cattle drive blossomed into a musical friendship that has led to concerts throughout North and South America. She received the Speakeasy Prize in Poetry, the Western Folklife Center's Yellowstone-Teton Song Contest Grand Prize, and an Emmy Award for her soundtrack production of the PBS Civil War documentary, *Bad Blood*.

ELIZABETH EBERT of Thunder Hawk, South Dakota, is still living on the home place, still missing her partner of 62 years, and still traveling due to the grace of God, her kids and grandkids. They think they are doing a good deal chauffeuring an old lady, but Elizabeth sees it as an opportunity to introduce them to the joys of cowboy poetry and for them to meet the good people who sing and recite. A win-win situation. Highly respected and adored by other performers, Elizabeth is known and loved as the "Grand Dame of Cowboy Poetry." She has traveled from coast to coast, won numerous awards and has several CDs and books to share.

RICHARD ELLOYAN of Dayton, Nevada, is a singer, songwriter, and poet of unique wit and imagination. Raised in the historic mining town of Virginia City, Nevada, Richard grew up surrounded by the romantic stories and characters that shaped the growth of Nevada and California. Richard brings to life the images and philosophies of the cowboy and those who are cowboys at heart. He has the good fortune to work and live in the Sierras, surrounded by ranches and mountains, which are a constant source of inspiration. Richard has recently released his fifth CD, *Rodeo Bones.*

MARK GARDNER of Cascade, Colorado, and REX RIDEOUT of Conifer, Colorado, have been performing the historic music of the American West for over 25 years. They approach "cowboy" music as historians and musicologists, consulting rare diaries and journals, early sheet music, vintage recordings, and oral sources. In their performances and recordings, they feature vintage instruments and use historic playing styles. Gardner and Rideout have brought their unique, educational programs to audiences all over the West, from Fort Union on the Missouri to Santa Fe's Palace of the Governors. Last year, the duo was recognized by *True West* magazine as the "Best Musical Tour of the West of 2009." Watch for Rex's forthcoming solo CD, *Ladies' Choice.* Mark's latest history book, *To Hell on a Fast Horse: Billy the Kid, Pat Garrett, and the Epic Chase to Justice in the Old West*, will be released by William Morrow in February.

THE GILLETTE BROTHERS of Crockett, Texas, took over the running of the family ranch in 1983. Since then, Guy and Pipp, have found that diversification is not only a necessity, it keeps things interesting. Their involvement in the cattle business as well as the music business, both as performers and music venue operators, proves challenging. The revitalization of cowboy music and poetry in recent years has allowed the brothers to combine their life long interest in the history of the west and its music with their musical experience. In addition to performing at the many prestigious venues in the United States, these boys are International favorites. In 2005, the Gillette Brothers traveled to Japan representing the State of Texas at the World Expo. They have recorded and released six albums of traditional cowboy music interspersed with a few originals. Most recently they have been exploring the Celtic roots, country blues, minstrel and medicine show songs that influenced cowboy music.

SKIP GORMAN of Grafton, New Hampshire, is an expert of music that was performed around campfires by cowhands and westward settlers in the late 19th century. As an exquisite singer, guitarist, fiddler and mandolinist his music follows these roots. Skip's experience as a working cowboy on Wyoming ranches and his knowledge of Celtic, Spanish and African-American heritage bring a scholar's knowledge to his music. Gorman has performed on Garrison Keillor's, *A Prairie Home Companion*, and documentary filmmaker, Ken Burns, has featured Skip's music on PBS specials. Gorman has several award-winning CDs including an INDIE award. Skip often performs with Connie Dover. As a duo they have toured extensively in Argentina, Paraguay and Chile under the auspices of the US Embassy.

CAROL HEUCHAN of Hunter Valley, New South Wales, Australia, is making her first appearance at Arvada. She is Australia's Champion Bush Poet, five times Bush Poet Laureate winner and also the winner of the richest prize for writing poetry, a $34,000 tractor, which she reckons she can't drive for nuts! A fair dinkum Aussie horsewoman, she has been riding, competing and working with horses all her life including in "Man from Snowy River" country. She is an International horse judge but poetry has now taken over, with four books and three CDs in the last five years. Her heart is in horse poetry but she has a broad repertoire and is a passionate performer.

JESS HOWARD of Wibaux, Montana, grew up around livestock in Arizona and California. After serving in the military, he made camp in Montana. Jess couldn't seem to make enough money to leave before cold weather hit, so he stayed and became a native. In 1970, Jess was the N.R.C.A. saddle-bronc champion. He discovered a new "life-after-rodeo" and began shoeing horses for a living. He spent 20 years as a farrier in Nevada, then went back north where he ran some cows, shod some horses and drove tuck now and then. Jess has been featured at Elko and many other gatherings around the country. His only claim to fame is being a brother to the legendary Pat Richardson. Pat who? you say –

BOB HUFF of Pagosa Springs, Colorado, was one of the poets who participated in the first Arvada Gathering twenty-one years ago and has returned frequently as a featured performer. His poems reflect ranch life in southwest Colorado and packing in the San Juan Mountains. Some poems are intended to be humorous while others are quite serious, he hopes the audience can tell the difference. As the years advance, his pack trips and rides have gotten shorter. Bob still monitors a 30,000-acre grazing unit for the Forest Service. Days up in the forest on a good old horse by himself are still some of the best that life can provide.

JIM JONES of Corrales, New Mexico, is a native Texan who has lived in New Mexico since 1991. He's produced sixteen albums of his own and others' music along with three award-winning children's character-education music videos. Of his CD, *Still Ridin'*, Emily Drabanski (New Mexico Magazine) says, "Jim Jones has released another gem. If you like Ian Tyson, you'll appreciate Jones' earnest Western tunes and his warm, commanding voice." Jim was named 2008 Male Western Vocalist of the Year by the AWA. His song, *Cowboys of New Mexico*, was named 2008 Western Song of the Year by the New Mexico Music Association.

ROSS KNOX of Benson, Arizona, was born and raised on a ranch in Eastern Oregon. After leaving home at the age of 16, Ross went to Nevada to cowboy. He spent 16 years packing supplies to the bottom of the Grand Canyon. Ross was one of the original poets at the first Cowboy Poetry Gathering in Elko, Nevada in 1983. He is one of a handful of poets who has been invited every year since. He's made 'em all but one, missing only the year his son was born. Although Ross does many of his original poems, he is primarily known for his vast knowledge and recitations of the classics. His CD is titled *Make Me a Cowboy Again for a Day*.

BONNIE KROGMAN of Wood, South Dakota, loves to make people laugh. Her poetry, mostly humorous, has gotten plenty of fodder from the 40 years she has been ranching with her husband, Kenny. They were able to raise their children on a ranch in the same traditions in which they were raised. The values learned in their ranching lives have helped them succeed, and they plan to continue their way of life for as long as they are able, knowing that one day their children will return to their roots. Bonnie has appeared at various gatherings, including Old West Days in Valentine, Nebraska and Durango, Colorado.

LIZ MASTERSON of Denver, Colorado, is known for her distinctive singing, yodeling and expertise as a Master of Ceremonies. She specializes in concerts, folk festivals, agricultural events, cowboy poetry gathering cultural centers and educational programs. Past venues include the Smithsonian Institution, the Kennedy Center in Washington DC, the Lincoln Center in New York City. She yodeled on the Discovery Channel's *Mythbusters* Show! Her talent was recognized by True West Magazine. Liz has toured 38 states and recorded seven albums of western and swing music. Her newest CD, *Roads to Colorado*, was given the Will Rogers Award for Best Western Album of 2009 by the AWA. She performs solo, and with various musical partners, including Sweethearts in Carhartts.

AL "DOC" MEHL of Boulder, Colorado, traces his family roots to central Kansas, where his grandfather raised six children on the family homestead. Tales of his family's experiences give him the fabric to weave the history and the mystery of the West into his original poetry and music. He has performed in cowboy poetry festivals from El Paso to Cheyenne. Al has a CD of his poetry titled *Cowboy Pottery*. Doc received the First Place Silver Buckle for his original poetry at the 2009 National Cowboy Poetry Rodeo Event in Montrose, Colorado. His poems have been featured on www.CowboyPoetry.com. Al's two music CDs show off his fine songwriting, and he is also an accomplished cellist.

MIKE MOUTOUX of Pinos Altos, New Mexico, works on a large cattle ranch near Silver City where the work is done on horseback much as it was done 100 years ago. He has twice been nominated for Cowboy Poet of the Year and his new CD, *Spirits Still Remain*, has been nominated for Cowboy Poetry CD of the Year with the WMA. Mike's performances include classic songs mixed with original songs and poems. "New Mexico's Most Enchanting Cowboy" he strives to take his listeners to places and feelings they may not get to any other way. "I want to put them as close to being in the saddle as words and music allow, and at the same time leave 'em laughing."

MICHAEL MARTIN MURPHEY of Amarillo, Texas, the "singing cowboy poet" is not only the number one, best-selling singer/songwriter of American Cowboy Music, he's one of the world's most respected singer/songwriters in the Pop and Country-Western field. Murphey is the world's most prominent musical representative of the Western horseman, the horse rancher, cattle rancher, and cowboy. He's also a lover of the outdoors, with a strong commitment to issues regarding farmers and ranchers, open space, and management of natural resources. Although Murphey did have some love song-related hits, most of them were penned by other writers. The majority of his own work involves nature and his respect for all things living and the universe at large. And let's not forget that his biggest hit, "Wildfire", was about a mysterious dream horse on the vast American heartland prairie.

ANDY NELSON of Pinedale, Wyoming, is a second-generation farrier who has the experience, talent, and humor to bring authenticity and entertainment to an audience. As a featured poet or a popular emcee, Andy performs frequently throughout the U.S. In 2006, Andy was named the WMA Male Poet of the Year, and in 2009, he Skinny Rowland Humor Award from the AWA. Andy and his brother Jim host a weekly syndicated radio show *"Clear Out West (C.O.W.) Radio"* and have been named DJ's of the Year by both the WMA and the AWA. Andy's new book, *Jonah,* combines Andy's poetry with stunning photography.

JOHN NELSON of Gunnison, Colorado, is at home on horseback leading a pack string in the Colorado wilderness or down a remote Four Corners canyon. For 30 years John has operated the Gunnison Country Guide Service. In the early days of that career, he often worked as a ranch hand and range rider during the off-season of the outfitting business. In the late 1980s, he began writing and reciting cowboy poetry to entertain guests and wranglers in the backcountry. Since then, he has performed for numerous gatherings, other events, guest ranches, radio and TV. His poetry is available in both CD and DVD, and is called *Word Wranglin' and Rhymin'*.

PRICKLY PAIR & THE CACTUS CHORALE of Dubois, Wyoming, are a dazzling trio. Since 1995 the "pair" of cowfolk, Les and Lockie Hamilton have garnered national attention in their preservation of vintage Western, cowboy folk tunes and old-time fiddle music as true Americana art forms. In their refreshing, diverse style, they also demonstrate that many early cowboy songs & fiddle music came from Celtic origins. Their WMA award-nominated original works perpetuate this genre. Les is a fourth generation fiddle player of Scottish decent from Wyoming's Big Horn Basin. He also adds harmonica, viola and harmony vocals. Lockie's rhythm guitar accompanies her stellar lead vocals. They are joined by Norman Winter, the Cactus Chorale, with stand-up bass, lead & harmony vocals. This trio just received the 2009 WMA Harmony Award! They have seven CDs. The Hamiltons live on a ranch up the East Fork Valley where they train & market performance horses. Norman was raised on a working cattle outfit up the Dunoir valley near Dubois.

GARY ROBERTSON of Thousand Oaks, California, was raised in Oklahoma and loved the poems and stories told by his grandmother. For 25 years, Gary has been writing about the daily trials and tribulations of the cowboy and rancher. Gary started performing and publishing his poetry in 1994. Recently, one of his poems was chosen to be included in the book *Cowboy Poetry: the Reunion*. His poetry has appeared in numerous local newspapers and national magazines. He has been a featured performer at all the major gatherings, and at the National Cowboy Hall of Fame. While living in Oklahoma, Gary worked the IOA Ranch overseeing the cattle, hay, and grain operations. He taught Blacksmithing and Farrier Science at the Oklahoma Horseshoeing School. Currently, Gary works as Ranch Manager, for Greenfield Ranch, in California.

JAY SNIDER of Cyril, Oklahoma, was born and raised in southwest Oklahoma to a ranching and rodeo family. His grandfather was a brand inspector and commissioned Texas Ranger, his dad a rancher and rodeo cowboy, and his mother a rodeo queen. He writes about what he knows and knows of what he writes. Jay strives, in his poetry, to stay true to his roots and be honest to the traditions that have been so much a part of his life. His poetry and recitations have afforded him the opportunity to attend many of the premier poetry gatherings throughout the west. He received the AWA Artists 2008 Cowboy Poet of the Year. *Of Horses and Men* is his most current album, and it is a dandy!

SONS OF THE SAN JOAQUIN of Visalia, California, are among the all-time best in western harmony. As members of the WMA Hall of Fame, the three-part family harmonies of Joe, Jack and Lon Hannah is heard

in a lot more places these days. A rich, burnished vocal blend, it is a distinctive sound that has carried the Hannah family from local church and community gatherings to such far-flung locales as Switzerland and Japan, where traditional cowboy music is esteemed above contemporary country music. The group's sound first took shape in the Great Central Valley of California in the shadow of the mighty Sierra Nevada. The trio got its big break when they were invited to perform at the 1989 Elko Poetry Gathering, where they shared the main stage with Michael Martin Murphey, who then invited them to be part of his first Cowboy Songs album. They then went on to make television appearances at the Grand Ole Opry and Austin City Limits. Their uncanny vocal blend and true love of Western music have made the Sons of the San Joaquin the barometer for all western harmony groups.

MILTON TAYLOR of Hartley, New South Wales, Australia, "comes home" to Arvada with his mix of poetry reflecting his fifty years as a sheep shearer where he learned the tradition of recording history through the medium of telling stories in verse. The poems he presents, including works of the Australian masters like Banjo Paterson in addition to his own, are reflective of rural life and the philosophy of western folk. Milton has won many awards for his performance and writing in Australia and holds the proud distinction of being the sole Australian reciter on the Smithsonian Folkways collection, *Cowboy Classics.* Milton has been busy this week working with children in our area schools.

MISS "V" the GYPSY COWBELLE of Cora, Wyoming, has been living on a remote ranch in Wyoming for the past thirteen years. Miss "V" has honed her homesteader skills such as haying and logging with horses, sewing clothes and tack on treadle machines, building saddles and her signature "Plank" banjos with hand tools. As well as hunting and canning elk, grocery shopping once a year, concocting herbal medicine and dandelion wine, running pack strings and helping her neighbors trail cows through the Rocky Mountains. Rustic, raw, heartfelt and timeless, The Gypsy Cowbelle and her "Cowbilly" music take the listener on a cross-sectional tour of eras, emotions, lifestyles and genres. Miss "V"is on the Wyoming Arts Council Artist Roster and her newest CD is, *"Bypast Hereos" - A Tribute.*

POP WAGNER of St. Paul, Minnesota is just plain deadpan funny. His presence is like meeting Woody Guthrie and Will Rogers riding a single, many colored horse. Pop is a kind of 'textile genius' who is able to spin, at once, both yarn and rope. He has performed in 44 states and ten countries. He is a top notch fiddler-singer-songwriter- storyteller-dance caller-trick roper and mohair cinch maker. Raised up in Roy Rogers country in Yellow Springs, Ohio, his musical yearning and learning came from his Grandfather's banjo playing and the folk music "boom" of the '60s and his passion for horses, and cowboying. Pop has numerous CDs and *Honky Tonk Ranch* is the newest.

BARRY WARD of Elbert, Colorado, is a former fourth generation farmer and stockman. Barry performs his own inspirational songs about the land, way of life, and experiences of growing up and living in rural America. Lon Hannah, Sons of the San Joaquin, put it this way, "Hope you enjoy his heart and his music as much as I do." Denise Withnell, Cowboy Celtic, says, "The first time I heard Barry Ward, I became a fan. He has that great voice and songs that are interesting and ring with sincerity." Barry is among the handful of elite singers who have performed on stage at Carnegie Hall.

DICK WARWICK of Oakesdale, Washington, lives amid the Palouse Hills of Eastern Washington. There are about 30 horses on his place, but that is his wife Sue's fault. Dick, in contrast, opted into the lucrative occupation of poet and has performed his material in such diverse places as Eulo, Elko, Kinvara, Denio, Pinjarra, Tekoa, Gillette, Katoomba, and Arvada. He draws inspiration from animals, nature, human interaction and a lifetime's worth of self-inflicted follies. He has produced two books and several recordings, but his best writing was on the bulk tank of a John Deere combine that, unfortunately, was dismantled and sold for scrap.

JOYCE WOODSON of San Juan Capistrano, California, grew up on the family farm in the Capistrano Valley riding the tractor with her Dad. Her recent album of all original songs, *If I Hadn't Seen the West*, is pure western music. Several of her songs have been recorded by other western performers including, *He's Courtin' Annie* (Jean Prescott, Belinda Gail), *Cheyenne* (Journey West) and *The Cowboy Way of Life* (co-

written with and recorded by Liz Masterson). Joyce was recently awarded both 2008 Best Song of the Year by the WMA and 2008 Best Female Performer of the Year from the Will Rogers AWA.

WYLIE & THE WILD WEST of Conrad, Montana, are known for award-winning blend of Western swing, classic country, cowboy and folk. Served up with a healthy helping of Wylie's infectious energy, this fun band gets the crowd moving every time. From festivals to state fairs, bars to barn dances, it rings true. Despite his successful career as one of America's most popular traditional entertainers, Wylie still gets up everyday and tends to the livestock. It grounds him and is the backbone of his art. The secret of Wylie's honest, soulful music isn't in any musical formulas or flashy gimmicks. Its purity lies in his character: earnest and hard-working; beaming with friendly vigor; a smile as warm as first light rising over the prairie. Wylie has appeared on the Grand Ole Opry more than 50 times, was invited on NBC's *Late Night with Conan O'Brien* and is famous for his Ya-hoo-ooo! heard in the *Yahoo.com* commercials. When asked to define his music, Wylie states, "We are a good-time cowboy band."

YAMPA VALLEY BOYS of Steamboat Springs, Colorado, are back! These two fun-loving cowboy entertainers are pleased to return to the Gathering. THE BOYS, Steve Jones and John Fisher, are in their 10th year of entertaining audiences throughout the west. With their unique blend of ballads, banjo tunes, western swing, traditional cowboy songs, silver screen cowboy songs, originals and plenty of humor, the Yampa Valley Boys pack a musical punch. Steve writes great songs and is known for his pure tenor voice. John plays a variety of instruments, including dobro and mandola. Since their last visit to Arvada, they have released two more CDs. *Playin' Cowboy Music* was released in 2008, and includes *That Irish Kid*, Steve's tribute to "Danny Boy". In 2009, they released *The Christmas Trail*, a collection of western and traditional Christmas songs. THE BOYS were finalists for the 2007 and 2009 WMA's Crescendo Award. Be sure to catch a day time session with the YAMPA VALLEY BOYS!

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