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Your Community Magazine

Issue 184 July 2016 FREE

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**Erin's
crowning glory**

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Disruptive Technology

I attended an investment conference recently hosted by fund house Neptune. The theme being technology, or rather disruptive technology, and how investors can profit from this revolution in all areas. The presenter started off by asking did we think that by 2030 all new cars would be electric. A few hands in the room went up out of about 30 delegates. He then went on to state Henry Ford's famous quote at the start of the 20th Century 'if I'd have asked people what they wanted, they would have said a faster horse' you know the one. But then he told us to google a picture of 5th Avenue in New York in 1900, and then again in 1910 and see the difference. If you do it, and I recommend that you do, you will see in 1900 everyone either walking or being driven in a horse-drawn carriage. Now fast forward just 10 years, and you cannot move for cars, and not a horse in sight.



Don Wernham,
Financial Planner

This is what is meant by disruptive technology, when something is invented, and at first there is an aversion to it, and then it moves very quickly before taking over. You could say the same with Apple and the Smart phone. They predicted that by 2020 the new Tesla electric cars would be coming off the production line for around \$31000. At present they are around \$80000 to purchase new. Now I understand that people have issues with electric cars and right at the centre of the stress of the past 6 months, is the market's extremely negative reaction to the renewed fall in the oil price. But, the point they made at this seminar was that the technological developments that are currently taking place are so good for us that we should be worshipping them like manna from heaven.

For users, electric vehicles are a better technology path and, as such, we believe that they will make the transition. Tesla's Model S P85D performs at such a high level that it broke Consumer Reports' rating system. Initially the car scored 103 out of 100. It was the fastest car they'd ever tested, reaching 60mph from a standstill in just 3.2 seconds. While there are faster cars in existence, the report noted that Model S achieved this despite being "ridiculously energy efficient." With just 18 moving parts compared to over 2,000 from the average petrol-powered car, it's also far less likely to break down. Eventually Consumer Reports downgraded the car to 100 out of 100 after making changes to their scoring system, but you get the picture.

Now for the financial markets, the main implication is that maybe in a decade from now we may hardly be purchasing any new combustion engines. Now, consider that two-thirds of global oil demand happens to be based on transportation as the end use, and it is clear that we are experiencing a paradigm shift in the global economy.

A lot of food for thought.

Disclaimer - Please note views are my own and do not constitute advice

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Printed by TwentyFourSeven

Editor's comment

PREDICTABLY, perhaps, a new application to make permanent the temporary caravan site in Warrington Road, Walton, is being opposed by Walton Parish Council and a significant number of Walton residents.

It is not yet 12 months since the last application was thrown out by the borough council and as the temporary consent granted in 1997 ran out in December 2014, it is clear the residents are not legally entitled to remain on the attractive, canal-side site.

We refer to them as residents, not because we know not whether they are of Romany origin, but because it would be misleading to describe people who have lived there for nearly 20 years as "travellers."

The last application attempted

not only to make the temporary site permanent but also to increase the number of families living on the site. The new one suggests that if approval was given, the number of families and caravans would be reduced.

On their behalf, it is argued that there are no alternative sites for them to go to and certainly locally, this appears to be the case. But while this might be a sustainable argument for a renewal of temporary permission to allow time to find an alternative site, it is certainly not an argument for making the site permanent.

Last year, we were told the site was already overcrowded and that amenity buildings on the site had never been given planning consent. We did not hear of any disruptive behaviour on the part of the residents, other than, possibly, increased traffic on Warrington Road.



But the issue surely is whether or not a caravan site, whether temporary or permanent, is an appropriate development in the Green Belt?

Deadline for the August issue of Village Life is July 19

New baby red squirrels come out to play at Walton Zoo

THREE red squirrel kittens have been born at Walton Hall Gardens Children's Zoo, taking the total number of births on a special breeding programme to 40.

Zoo ranger Peter Cookson Dean said: "This is our first litter of the year and we are keeping our fingers crossed there will be another litter later in the summer.

The young squirrels are now four weeks old and have just started leaving their nesting box to explore their enclosure.

They will remain at the zoo until they reach thirteen weeks old, at this point they will have to be separated from their parents as the adults will try and chase them away. They will then go into a breeding release programme co-ordinated by the Welsh Mountain zoo.

"The best time for members of the public to try and see them is first

thing in the morning when we open at 10.30am or later in the day after 3pm," said Peter.

The Red Squirrel breeding programme was set up in spring 2006 with the help of funding from WREN and the Waste-recycling group. At present it houses two pairs of adult squirrels.

Red squirrels were once common all over Britain, however since the grey squirrel was brought over from North America in 1876 red squirrel populations have declined dramatically. Red squirrels are still present in Scotland and the North Lake District, but even these populations are under threat with the grey squirrels slowly moving up the country. There is also a colony at Freshfields near Southport.

Grey Squirrels can eat foods before they are ripe enough for the reds and they also carry the parapox virus, which is lethal to reds. Red squirrels

can still be found in specially managed nature reserves around England and Wales.



Prison Governor is special guest at Bawming the Thorn

THORN Cross Prison Governor Pia Sinha was guest of honour at the unique Bawming the Thorn event at Appleton Thorn, which dates back to medieval times.

The prison governor talked about how she had worked closely with the school and the local community over the past two years to improve community relations.

Appleton Thorn is the only village in England where the "Bawming of the Thorn" ceremony takes place each June.

Appleton Thorn Primary School plays a pivotal role in the event providing the dancers for the traditional bawming ceremony, running a number of stalls on the day and providing prizes.

A large proportion of money raised on the day goes to the school to help fund projects and resources.

Knight was Charlie Ison and Page

was Jack Bramhall, both Year Six pupils at the school.

The Mayor and Mayoress of Warrington Cllr Faisal and Mrs Aleeza Rashid were also special guests at the event which sees the Thorn tree "dressed" each year.

Historically the thorn tree which stands beside the local church is believed to be an offshoot of the Glastonbury Thorn, which grew from the staff of Joseph of Arimathea. Adam de Dutton, a knight of the crusades and local landowner, brought it to Appleton Thorn.

The Thorn tree is now designated one of just fifty great British Trees after being nominated by co-founder and original landlord of the village hall to commemorate the Queen's Golden Jubilee in 2002.

A tree is said to have grown at the spot since 1178, although the current one is a relative newcomer.



Thorn Cross Governor Pia Sinha.



Organiser Nora Carlin with the Mayor and Mayoress.



Thelwall Morris Men.



Bawming the Thorn dance.



Twins Harriet and Polly Heald in the fancy dress event.



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Former nursing home company fined for serious fire safety breaches

A former nursing home company has been fined £40,000 and ordered to pay £19,283.52 in costs after pleading guilty to serious breaches of fire safety regulations.

Care home provider Smallwood Homes Ltd, the former owner of Thelwall Grange Nursing Home business, pleaded guilty to eight serious breaches of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 when the company appeared before Judge Roger Dutton at Chester Magistrates Court.

Smallwood Homes Ltd pleaded guilty to eight offences. These included the lack of compartmentation, not having an adequate risk assessment in place, poor maintenance, failing to have a suitable fire evacuation procedure, no evacuation chairs for means of escape from the upper floors and no fire detection in the basement where the boiler was housed. Concerns were also raised regarding the adequacy of staff training.

Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service first served an enforcement notice on the property for fire safety breaches

in February 2014.

Judge Dutton said: "You cannot be too careful, fire can very quickly take hold and have serious consequences and, ultimately, death."

The judge also added that he accepted fully that the company had taken steps to help deal with issues, but that this wasn't enough. He also took into account the fact that the company has since been sold and that Smallwood Homes Ltd no longer owns the Thelwall Grange Nursing Home business.

Simon Gibbins, Head of Protection at Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service said: "Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service aims to help and support any business to operate safely. However we will take action when companies choose not to treat fire safety as a legitimate business requirement. We urge all companies to take their fire safety obligations seriously to avoid prosecution."

Anyone who has concerns about fire safety should contact the Service.

The care home was taken over by new owners in April this year.



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Old school building's future in the balance



THE future of the historic Grappenhall Hall School building is in the balance following the decision by the borough council to seek permission to sell off the site.

The former residential school for pupils with special educational needs closed last year when it was moved to Padgate.

The borough council has indicated its intention to apply to the Secretary of State for Education for permission to dispose of the site and has been consulting with local people and parish councils.

A number of possible uses have been suggested, including a hotel, free school and nursing home.

Grappenhall and Thelwall Parish Council says it is open minded about the future use of the 13.3-acre site but stresses that it should be appropriate to the Grappenhall Village Conservation Area.

In a statement, the council said: "Whilst we are happy for Grappenhall Hall School to no longer be used for educational purposes, we ask that Warrington Borough Council recognise that as an educational site, the impact on the village has been minimal, and has had little impact on the character of the village. We respectfully ask that any future use takes this into consideration."

Stockton Heath Parish Council has also been consulted and has stressed the importance of preserving valuable green spaces within the site.

They believe the old house itself is listed and, as such, must be preserved.

Any future development on the site would be restricted due to access issues in a conservation area and the site's close proximity to a primary school, they believe.

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over the Arctic Circle. Why not experience a night in the Ice Hotel in the far north of Sweden between December and April followed by a couple of nights in a "warm" room in adjoining hotel. Also from here you might be able to experience the Northern Lights. In Iceland there are warm volcanic thermal baths, glaciers, volcanoes, wildlife i.e. whales and Arctic birds, Golden Circle of beautiful waterfalls plus the largest glacier in Iceland, Reykjanes & the Blue Lagoon etc.

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Letter T is the theme for Thelwall Rose Queen

Report and pictures by Paul Jackson

THANKFULLY some dry and warm weather greeted the day for this year's Thelwall Rose Queen festival.

The floats arrived at the Parish field accompanied by excited and busy participants, helpers, drivers and officials from the Parish Hall committee who were on hand to ensure a safe and successful parade.

The theme of this year's parade was the letter T and there were some very imaginative ideas from the various groups designing and decorating their entries. From Tarzan to Timelords, a whole host of colourful and exciting contestants for float of the year.

This year's Rose Queen was Erin Broadhurst who is 11 years old and attends Thelwall junior school, who was joined by last year's Rose Queen, Jennifer Tipping. The Queens looked resplendent on their thrones surrounded by their attendants, soldiers and crown bearers.

The procession, which travelled through the crowd lined village streets, was led off by the rousing strains of the Bolton Caledonia Pipe Band. People gathered at the Pickering Arms, the Little Manor and set up impromptu garden and street parties to celebrate the day and there was a wonderful party atmosphere throughout Thelwall. Local resident Karen Stilling set up a lovely Teddy bears picnic scene in her garden which she hopes will inspire friends and neighbours to do likewise. Along the route the Thelwall Morris men made regular stops to entertain the crowds with their historic and energetic dancing.

The parade made its way back to the Parish field where stalls, entertainments, refreshments and a fun fair were waiting.

On the main stage the Rose Queen

and her entourage were welcomed by the Reverend Douglas Black who also gave thanks for the clement weather. After taking her place on the throne, Erin was crowned Rose Queen 2016 by Mrs. Janet Fowles.

Next into the parade ground came all the float competitors and the results were announced giving 3rd place to the 2nd Thelwall Rainbows with their Time and space themed float. In 2nd. came Thelwall Pre School with their Tarzan inspired entry. And taking the title of Float of the year 2016 were a very excited and happy Thelwall Infant school who designed and built their float using a theme of Toys.

After all the official proceedings were complete it was time for fun and entertainment for the hundreds of people at the festival. On offer were donkey rides, coconut shys, tombolas, competitions, inflatables, candy floss, and cakes. To entertain the crowd there was dancing from the Thelwall Morris Men and the Rosabeth Royals, a fun dog show, extreme mountain biking displays and Thelwall Juniors with their street dance.



■ Crowning glory for Erin Broadhurst.



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Money Column

By Margaret Black

'Benefits in kind' rule changes

Changes to the rules concerning the taxation of 'benefits in kind' were introduced from April 2016.

In the past, for a 'benefit in kind' to exist then there must be a benefit to the employee. For instance, if the employer pays £300 in respect of a private medical scheme then the employee would pay tax on the benefit of £300. However, if the employee makes good some or all of that cost then the taxable benefit is reduced, so if the employee repays the full amount then there would be no 'benefit in kind'. Fair enough? You might think so, but not the taxman!

The above is an example of the "fair bargain" rule, which states that if the employee reimburses the employer for the cost, or pays a fair price for the perk, then no benefit applies. The problem from the taxman's viewpoint is that certain benefits are taxable under special rules, the main one being company cars, but a recent ruling stated that if the asset was leased to an employee at a fair value then the benefit of the use of the asset would be negated, being replaced by the value of the lease. Let us look at an example which illustrates this point.

A company acquires a 10 year old used car for £15,000 and it is determined that a commercial lease of such an asset would be £1,800 per annum. The company therefore leases the car to an employee at this fair lease. That would cost a higher rate taxpayer £3,100 of his gross income to pay the lease and avoid any benefit under the "fair bargain" rule. However, the 'benefit in kind' of a car is not based on its value but on its list price new, and if that 10 year old car had a list price of, say, £80,000 then the 'benefit in kind' would be about £25-£30,000.

Guess what – the taxman didn't like this. The new rules remove the "fair bargain" arrangement method of avoiding a benefit in kind. Instead, the 'benefit in kind' based on the special rules applies, although this can be reduced or removed by the employee making a contribution. However, it is clearly much more expensive to remove a benefit of £25,000 than a benefit of £1,800!

There is another potential trap introduced from April that could catch the unwary when considering making good a 'benefit in kind'. In the past, contributions made after the end of the tax year could be taken into account when calculating the benefit. From April, however, only contributions made within the tax year can be taken into account. The potential trap is that if a contribution is paid in year 2 in respect of a benefit received in year 1 then that contribution may be disallowed not only when calculating the taxable benefit in year 1 as it was paid in year 2, but also disallowed in calculating the benefit in year 2 as it related to the benefit in year 1!

Bring back Hector. All is forgiven...

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David Watkinson and Margaret Black

Thousands flock to Antiques Road Show



THOUSANDS of people flocked to Arley Hall, near Warrington, for the visit of the popular BBC television Antiques Road Show.

The weather stayed fine, and antiques lovers of all ages enjoyed the unique atmosphere of the grounds of the house that is the home of Lord and Lady Ashbrook – and has been the home of their family since the 15th century.

It was a family occasion, with often three generations of a family visiting the stands of the specialist antiques experts with their family heirlooms to be assessed and valued.

Many enjoyed picnics in the grounds while others visited the

Arley Hall restaurant, the Antiques Roadshow tea tent or various other caterers.

Newsreader Fiona Bruce – the current face of the long-running programme – was there, along with the many experts who have become familiar faces to TV audiences.

Some families went home happy to find their prized possessions were worth more than they expected. Others were disappointed to learn the junk they had kept in the attic for years was just that...junk.

But the smiling faces suggested that most people enjoyed the day.

The programme filmed will be broadcast on a date to be announced later.



Retailer of the Year

STOCKTON Heath Travel was voted retailer of the Year at the recent prestigious Warrington Business Awards, held in a giant marquee at Lymm Rugby Club.

Partner Linda Crowder, who was presented with the award in front of 500 guests at the event, said: "We sincerely thank Warrington Business Awards for our 'Retailer of the Year' Award 2016, and are very proud

recipients.

"The awards have generated such a positive response and is beneficial to Stockton Heath in general, as we strive to keep the Village alive.

"The trophy will always have a place of honour in the shop. Thank you again to all who voted."

Linda received her award from BBC Breakfast presenter Louise Minchin and Nick Fellows, MD of Newsquest.



Dining delight – with a sense of local history

IT is an indispensable part of the history of Lymm, yet also an essential part of village life today.

It was once a coaching inn and was in the distant past called The Plough Hotel.

But the Lymm Hotel is now one of a handful of buildings in the village to which a stranger, stopping to ask a local for directions, could be assured of being sent directly to the right place, so well is it known.

It has earned its place in local affections not just because of its history but also because of its cuisine.

When we dined there recently we soon found that its reputation for excellence was more than justified.

We chose a roast tomato and basil soup to start our meal but we could have opted for a white onion and Rosemary soup and there was wide range of other tempting starters too, including chicken and leek terrine, Blue Swimmer crab and crayfish cocktail.



When it came to the main course, there was again a wide choice. Slow roast shoulder of Highland lamb, Scottish rib eye steak and sirloin steak and Gressingham duck leg jostled for attention with free range chicken Balti curry and beer battered cod and hand cut chips with mushy peas. And as we quickly learned, the chef was more than ready to tailor a dish to individual requirements.

The curry was superb and our request for plain, grilled chicken was met without demur and presented appealingly.

The portions were generous so afterwards we could only manage ice cream, but those with heartier appetites had a wide choice of desserts including sticky toffee pudding, lemon posset and white chocolate and raspberry cheesecake.

All in all, a thoroughly enjoyable dining experience with excellent service in the comfortably warm atmosphere of the attractive new Inn at the Lymm restaurant.

Add to all this the fact that the full menu is also available at lunchtime and the spacious car park ensures there is unlikely to ever be a problem parking and it becomes hard to think of a reason for not returning for more!

The fact the hotel is currently running a promotion via Lymm Life offering two people dining a FREE bottle of wine until the end of July is the icing on the cake! (see voucher below)



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What's on in the villages

July 12
STOCKTON HEATH PARISH COUNCIL
Sandy Lane Centre, Stockton Heath. 7.30pm

July 14
GRAPPENHALL & THELWALL PARISH COUNCIL
Council Offices, Bellhouse Lane. 7.30pm

July 19
APPLETON PARISH COUNCIL
Appleton Parish Hall, Dudlow Green Road. 7.30pm

Every Sunday
GRAPPENHALL HEYS WALLED GARDEN
Wetherwin Avenue, Grappenhall Heys, WA4 3DS.
Café open from 12 noon-4pm serving teas, coffee,
home-made cakes and savouries.

Every Monday
COFFEE TIME, St Mary Magdalene's Church, Appleton,
9.15am.

COUNTRY DANCING CLUB
St Thomas' Primary School, Parkgate Road, Stockton
Heath.
8-10pm. Details: 01925 262356

BRIDGE CLUB
Belong Warrington, Loushers Lane 7.20pm. Details
01925 262534

LADIES' FRIENDSHIP CLUB
The Quays Community Centre, Thelwall New Road,
Thelwall.
8pm. Details: 01925 264099

HIGH LEGH BRIDGE CLUB
Village Hall, 7-10pm. Rubber, Duplicate and Chicago
played. Details: Audrey Greaves 0161 904 0120

Every second Monday
PARK (APPLETON) WI
Appleton Parish Hall, Dudlow Green Road. 7.30pm

Second and fourth Monday
WARRINGTON ART GROUP
Bellhouse Community Centre, Bellhouse Lane,
Grappenhall. 7-9pm.

Every third Monday
NATIONAL VEGETABLE SOCIETY
Cheshire District meeting
Grappenhall Ex-Servicemen's Club, Chester Road,
Grappenhall. 8pm. Details: 01925 265773.

Every fourth Monday
MARLFIELD WI
Grappenhall Community Library, Albert Road,
Grappenhall. 7.30pm

Every Tuesday
COFFEE MORNING
St Cross Church, Appleton Thorn. All welcome.
10am-12 noon

PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY
Quays Community Centre,
Thelwall New Road, Thelwall. 7.30pm.
Contact: 01925 757582.

COFFEE MORNING
Appleton Independent Methodist Church
Appleton Parish Hall, 10am-12 noon

Every second Tuesday
STOCKTON HEATH LIONS CLUB
London Bridge Inn, 8pm
Contact: Grahamctisse58@outlook.com. Tel 01925
262669

BOOK CLUB
Bizzie Beans Coffee House, Bridge Lane, Appleton
11am-12 noon

Every Wednesday
APPLETON HALL BADMINTON CLUB
September - July at Hall Drive, Appleton. 7.30-
10pm. Details: 01925 262356

Every first Wednesday
WALTON WI
St John's Church Community Hall. 7.30pm
Details: 01925 604384

STOCKTON HEATH PROBUS CLUB
Warrington Sports Club, Walton Lea Road, Higher
Walton.
Details: 01925 268540

Every third Wednesday
HIGHER WALTON WI, St John's Community Hall,
7.45pm. Details: 01925 262001.

Every fourth Wednesday
ALZHEIMER'S SOCIETY
Support Group, Brampton Lodge Day Centre, Bridge
Lane, Appleton. 6.30-8.30pm

Every Thursday
THE SILVER QUAYS Senior Citizen's Club
The Quays Community Centre, Thelwall New Road,
Thelwall. Details: 01925 753474.

BRIDGE CLUB
Belong Warrington, Loushers Lane 7.20pm. Details
01925 262534

Every second Thursday
STRETTON WI
Appleton Parish Hall, Dudlow Green Road. 2.30pm.

GRAPPENHALL PROBUS CLUB
Grappenhall Community Centre, Bellhouse Lane,
10am.
Details: 01925 264427.

Every third Thursday
NORTH EAST CHESHIRE FLOWER CLUB
Warrington Golf Club, London Road, Appleton. WA4
5HR 2pm. Details: 01925 740419

GRAPPENHALL WI
Grappenhall Community Centre, Bellhouse Lane
2.15pm

Every Friday
APPLETOTS TODDLER GROUP
Appleton Parish Hall, Dudlow Green Road.
9.45-11.30am. Details: 01925 268153.

To list your event call Village Life on
01925 623632



Village prepares for annual Walking Day

THE annual Stockton Heath Walking Day will take place on Saturday July 9, starting from Alexandra Park with a service at 2pm.

Members of local churches, schools and scout/brownie groups will join together in praise before setting out on their walk of witness.

Theme for this year's event is "Journey into Life", with the service in the park being led by Bethesda Church.

The procession will be accompanied by marching bands and will pass

through the centre of Stockton Heath, along Ellesmere Road and back along Walton Road.

Motorists are advised to expect delays with the following roads closed from approximately 1.45pm - 4.00pm: Alexandra Road, Carlton Street, Chapel Lane, East Avenue (part), Ellesmere Road (part), Grappenhall Road (part) Heath Street, London Road (part), Parkgate Road, Walton Road (part), Walton Heath Road (part) and Whitefield Road (part).

Last year, organisers were overwhelmed by offers of support from

the local community to volunteer as marshalls at road closures, following the withdrawal of this service by the police. Once more, dozens of volunteers are required to help out to ensure the event runs safely on the day. Anyone who can help should email walkingdayorg@gmail.com



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David Mowat
Member of Parliament for Warrington South
www.davidmowat.org

Produced by David Mowat MP, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

Stamp of approval for village post office

STAFF at Stretton Post Office have been given a stamp of approval at the national Post Office Network Sales awards.

The busy post office in Tarporley Road, Stretton beat off a challenge from more than 11,500 branches nationwide to win the title of "Best Branch Local" at a ceremony in London, hosted by TV presenter Anita Rani.

Manageress Susan Carter said: "We're really proud of our achievements and really delighted to receive this award. We all work really hard to offer our customers a great service and we're pleased the Post Office has recognised our efforts through this award."

"We would also like to thank our customers because we couldn't have done it without them."

Kevin Gilliland, Post Office network and sales director from the Post Office said: "We are undertaking the biggest modernisation programme in UK retail history."

"Transforming branches into modern retail outlets and ensuring that our customers have easy access to a wide range of products to meet their needs. People working in branches like Stretton are key to this transformation and to ensuring that our branches remain at the heart of communities for the future."

Last year, the Stretton branch won the quarterly competition but now winning the annual contest means they are top of the pile.

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