

# Tenants Voice



EDINBURGH TENANTS  
FEDERATION

Issue 98 - June 2016

## CO-PRODUCTION OF TENANT PARTICIPATION SERVICES

ETF is involved in discussions with a range of agencies with a view to agreeing a plan for the future of tenant participation services in the City. This process is called co-production.

Federation members agreed to be part of this process at a meeting in February 2016, and whilst willing to be involved in co-production, a number of concerns were raised about the way tenants had been informed by the City of Edinburgh Council and timescales for tenants to genuinely take part.

Betty Stevenson, Convenor of ETF brought tenants' views to a meeting of the Health, Social Care and Housing Committee in April.

The Co-Production Working Group (CPWG) will run from May to August with the following agencies:

- Advance Social Marketing Ltd;
- City of Edinburgh Council;
- Edinburgh Tenants Federation;
- Neighbourhood Alliance;
- PS Consultants;
- Tenants Information Service;
- Tenant Participatory Advisory Service Scotland;
- Wider Role Solutions.

An Advisory Group of individual Council tenants and representatives of Registered Tenant Organisations (RTOs) has

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been set up as a sounding board about the co-production process. Central to ETF's position on the CPWG is representing the need for full tenant involvement in discussions about a future service.

The co-production process does present an opportunity for tenants to help shape the future support for tenant participation and will enable all of us involved to think of new ways for tenants to be supported to participate with the Council.

An interactive event for individual tenants, RTOs, Councillors and Council Officers will take place in late June, and we would encourage everyone to take part to help shape the future tenant participation service.

ETF's position remains that the provision of tenant participation services in Edinburgh has a strong model in its current system. Members view ETF as being "by tenants, for tenants" and our membership would like to see ETF continuing to deliver this support to tenants. Tenants set the ETF work plan which is approved at the AGM, employ the staff and monitor progress at quarterly meetings. Members see no need to change this delivery model.

## TOUR DE-SOUTH WEST EDINBURGH

ETF was delighted to take both Paul Lawrence, Director of Place and Susan Mooney, Head of Housing and Regulatory Services from the Council on a tour of three communities in the South West of Edinburgh. This was a fantastic opportunity for Paul and Susan to meet with representatives from the areas and get a real feeling for the issues communities are experiencing. Feedback from the trip was very positive from everyone involved. Here are some of the highlights:

First stop was Calders where we were met by Mae Rae and Rodney Burns from Calders Residents Association. A tour of Dunsyre Community Flat was followed by a cup of tea, a chat about how the residents' association was established and the activities that are going on in the flat.



*Rodney, Mae, Susan, ETF's Convenor Betty and Paul outside Dunsyre Community Flat*



*Paul and Susan meet with Kerry*



*An example of the fly-tipping problems in Murrayburn*

Next up was Murrayburn, where we met with Kerry Quinn from Murrayburn Residents Organisation, who gave Paul and Susan a real insight into the waste issues that residents have been experiencing since the closure of the bin chutes. This has resulted in extensive fly-tipping and littering which is causing massive problems in the area.

Finally there was a short journey over to Hailesland where we met with Rik Morley, Kim Carter, Karen MacGregor and Emile Van Loo from Hailesland Neighbourhood Council. Again we wandered round paying particular attention to the bin chutes that the Council is proposing to close.

Overall Susan and Paul found the trip a very worthwhile experience and are very keen to go on tour around another part of Edinburgh in the coming months.



*Paul and Susan meet with representatives from Hailesland Neighbourhood Council*



*An example of an overflowing bin store at Hailesland*



EDINBURGH TENANTS  
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## **ETF Conference, Annual General Meeting and Social**

**Saturday 18th June 2016**  
**10.00am-4.00pm**

**Norton Park Conference Centre**  
**57 Albion Road, Edinburgh, EH7 5QY**



**10.00am-1.00pm, Conference: The Big Conversation!**

Tenant Participation is changing. How can the Federation change with the times?  
Come along and chat with tenants as part of our Big Conversation!

**1.00pm-2.00pm, Buffet lunch will be served**

**2.00pm-3.00pm, ETF Annual General Meeting**

**3.00pm-4.00pm, Informal Social**

***All welcome to the biggest event of the year for tenants in Edinburgh***

For bookings contact 0131 475 2509, email [info@edinburghtenants.org.uk](mailto:info@edinburghtenants.org.uk)  
or book online at [www.edinburghtenants.org.uk](http://www.edinburghtenants.org.uk)

Please use public transport where possible  
Lothian Buses 35 and 1 travel to Easter Road  
Assistance with childcare and transport may be available

**Places must be booked in advance by Friday 10th June 2016**

## Housing Roadshows



**ETF and the City of Edinburgh Council will be holding three Housing Roadshows in the north, west and east areas over the next couple of months**

**Monday 18th July 2016**

**9.00am-3.00pm, Morrisons, 3 Waterfront Broadway, Granton**

**Monday 22nd August 2016**

**9.00am-3.00pm, Tesco, Meadow Place Road, Corstorphine**

**Monday 29th August 2016**

**9.00am-3.00pm, Sainsburys, 9,10 Meadowbank, Moray Park**

**The purpose of the Roadshows is to:**

- **Provide housing information to tenants;**
- **Promote the support available to tenants;**
- **Raise awareness of ETF and local Registered Tenant Organisations (RTOs);**
- **Promote the Tenants' Panel.**

If any RTOs in the north, west and east areas can help by sending tenant representatives along to volunteer on the stalls, even for a couple of hours on each of the days, please contact Mark Henry at the Federation Office on 0131 475 2509 or email [mark@edinburghtenants.org.uk](mailto:mark@edinburghtenants.org.uk).

# TENANT LED INSPECTIONS UPDATE

It's very difficult to know where to start with Tenant Led Inspections (TLIs) as it has been an extremely busy few months for the group. My fellow inspector Sharon Robertson and I gave a deputation to the Council's Health, Social Care and Housing Committee earlier in the year. This was the first time that inspectors had given a deputation and although it was quite nerve-wracking, it was a very enjoyable and worthwhile experience. Sharon even got a round of applause for reciting her poem to Councillors! We were especially encouraged to hear Councillor Day, Vice Convenor of the Health, Social Care and Housing Committee describe ETF's Tenant Led Inspection Programme as 'the best in Scotland'.

We then held a Public Meeting in the Melting Pot, Rose Street for Council tenants to find out more about what is involved in becoming an inspector and get their chance to become inspectors like us. Considering it was a bitterly cold February evening, we were delighted with the turnout and the enthusiasm of the members in attendance.



*Members finding out more about ETF's Tenant Led Inspections*

We are pleased to say that we have managed to recruit six new inspectors and we are really looking forward to working with them and helping make a difference for other tenants. The first learning module took place at the end of April and all the modules will be finished by the end of June. We are very pleased to report that Dr Jo Ferrie, Lecturer, School of Social and Political Science, Glasgow University will be facilitating one of the learning sessions.



*Discussions taking place during one of the learning sessions*

If that wasn't enough, ETF's established inspectors have started to carry out an inspection of the Council's approach to insulating external walls. We initially met with Iain Murray, Senior Surveyor,

City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) and Sam Reeves, Senior Tenant Participation Officer, CEC to agree the purpose and scope of the inspection. We are very excited about this piece of work and reporting our findings to the Council. There will be a further update about this in the next edition of *Tenants Voice*.



*Iain Murray giving a talk on insulating external walls*

**Heather Ford, Convenor, ETF Tenant Led Inspections**

## **SHELTERED HOUSING LIAISON GROUP UPDATE**



The tenant representatives of the Sheltered Housing Liaison Group (SHLG) are delighted to have chosen a logo. It is hoped that by having this identity, sheltered housing tenants of the Council will be able to recognise information that comes out from the group. Meeting with senior Council personnel, the SHLG has been tirelessly protecting the interests of all tenants in sheltered housing. We appreciate the strains that are put on the Council by budgetary constraints, but we are alarmed by the fact that the complement of 20 Housing Support Officers (HSOs) appears to be seen as sufficient to cope with the number of tenants and allow for holidays and statutory time off. The HSOs are finding it difficult to arrange as many social activities for their clients as they would like. This continues to be a concern and we will raise this at meetings with the Council.

The group visited the Community Alarms Telecare System during one of the SHLG meetings to look at the alarm system and found it to be efficient and fool-proof for the most part. There had, however, been glitches at one sheltered housing complex where the supply company's cable had broken and it took some time to be put right. We look forward to hearing that the repaired cable is allowing the system to work properly.

After a meeting with the Manager of Edinburgh Building Services, several appalling examples of badly finished and unfinished work were completed. Pleased as we were by the outcome, we felt that it should have been done right at the beginning. Tenants are asked to call Repairs Direct themselves and not to rely on their HSO to make the call for them, although we realise that this may not always be possible, due to language difficulties, etc.

Later this year it is hoped that there will be a Sheltered Housing Conference. We hope to announce the date and venue in due course. Watch this space!

**John Fayrer, Tenant Representative**

# ETF GETS SPOOKED!

Sometimes ETF members like to do something different. A fundraising ghost hunting trip in the City Chambers for foodbanks in Edinburgh has to be one of these moments; as Justine Bradd explains:

“Poverty in Edinburgh is a big issue and we wanted to help raise funds and awareness of foodbanks run by the Trussell Trust who are doing a great job in supporting people from Edinburgh. So ETF teamed up with local ghost hunters, Lothian Paranormal Society (LPS), to carry out a paranormal investigation in the depths of the City Chambers! This was a rare opportunity as not many people have had access to the vaults beneath the City Chambers. LPS brought a range of equipment to monitor activity such as infrared cameras, voice box recorders and a Ouija board.”



*ETF representatives on the ghost hunt*

A representative from LPS said: “The investigation mainly focused above ‘little Annie’s’ room in Mary King’s Close. Questions were asked to see if there was any paranormal activity and it was interesting to witness potential activity through the various devices. On the night of the investigation we started off with base readings using various tried and tested methods and theories. We were aware of the history from neighbouring vaults (Mary Kings Close). During the investigation we heard what sounded like a child making

a playful scream. We went to see if the recording from the adjacent vault was similar to what was heard but there was nothing on this recording. In the rooms in the main building there were shadows moving past the windows which were around 5 ft. tall. While chatting about the shadows and trying to debunk them we heard some loud steps and bangs in the room next door but upon inspection there was nobody around and security staff were on the ground floor. The bangs seemed to be in response to questioning which suggests an intelligent haunting. Overall the results were mixed but between the history and the interaction we did get; we would say there was definitely something spooky going on. Would we say haunted? Not telling! Next time, we’re in the City Chambers we’ll watch out for ghosts.”

Heather Ford said “Thanks to the City of Edinburgh Council for letting us raise money for charity by giving us the opportunity to have two nights in the City Chambers ghost hunting. A special thanks to Frank Donoghue, Facilities Manager, City Chambers. We all had a spooky time and are already planning our next hunt!”



*Cameras set up in various positions in the vaults*

If you would like to make a donation to the Trussell Trust, with the money raised going to foodbanks in Edinburgh, please visit: <https://mydonate.bt.com/fundraisers/justinebradd1>.



# HUMAN RIGHTS BASED APPROACH

The tenants in West Cromwell Street, Persevere and Citadel Court Residents Association (WPCRA) have been working with ETF and the Scottish Human Rights Commission (SHRC) to help tenants and residents communicate with the City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) to raise human rights issues that involve and affect the whole community. Heather Ford updates us on progress: “We carried out a survey with all residents in our area and had a great response. The results allowed us to see not only the issues that individuals have in their own homes but what the issues were that affected everyone. We had a meeting at the beginning of April to take forward issues that the residents wished to raise with the Council and other organisations. We will be meeting with the organisations and the Council in June to discuss these issues. We are talking to each other - both tenants and home owners are listening to each other’s concerns regarding not just the housing conditions but also anti-social behaviour.”

ETF representatives attended a one day training session with the SHRC on Human Rights Law and the use of human rights based approaches. ETF also had a very positive meeting with Sarah Davidson the Director General of Communities with the Scottish Government about our project with the SHRC and the wider implications for housing in Scotland, given the First Minister’s commitment to including human rights monitoring as part of Scotland’s National Performance Reporting.

Our project also featured in the SHRC Statement on adequate housing to the UN Human Rights Council in March 2016. This can be accessed at the SHRC website [www.scottishhumanrights.com](http://www.scottishhumanrights.com).



ETF representatives with Sarah Davidson

# SFHA PARLIAMENTARY RECEPTION

The invitation to attend this event came in a call from Harry Woodward, Dunedin Canmore’s Tenant Participation Officer asking if I would be interested in going to a Parliamentary Reception, sponsored by the former MSP, Jim Eadie, to do with housing issues which was being organised by the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA). It sounded interesting despite the vague description so I agreed to go. Mary Taylor, CEO of SFHA called me to tell me a little more about the reception. Little did I know what I was letting myself in for.

I met Mary and two other tenants, John, from Bield Housing Association Sheltered Housing in Livingston and Billy from Glasgow who had recently moved into his first home with Blue Triangle HA. It's at this point we learned our fate. Mary asked if we could stand up, on stage, and make a little speech to the then Housing Minister, Margaret Burgess, MSP's, housing association Chief Executive



John, Billy and Bryan with the former Housing Minister, Margaret Burgess

Officer's and staff, to help illustrate the SFHA's campaign for increased funding for social housing. The theme of our speeches was to describe how social housing helped each of us to get our lives back on track after some difficult experiences. We all had totally different stories but the common theme was the value of the safety net of good quality social housing that became available to us.

Our contributions were well received and later we had the opportunity to talk with the Minister, various MSP's and housing professionals. Within weeks of that reception the Scottish Government announced more funding for social housing initiatives across Scotland. I like to think that my nerve-racking little speech, along with John and Billy, in SFHA's 'Fairer and Healthier Scotland' campaign had some influence on that outcome.

### Bryan Pitbladdo, Hyvots and Moredun Residents Association

## INTERNATIONAL PRACTICE EXCHANGE, INDIA

Our Development Coordinator, Clare MacGillivray recently took part in a practice exchange programme in North India run by the International Association for Community Development (IACD). The study visit brought together 20 community development academics and practitioners from five continents to find out about how communities are contributing to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Charlie McConnell, President of the IACD said, "It was excellent to see a representative from the Edinburgh Tenants Federation participate in IACD's recent Practitioner Exchange trip to India in March. Clare brought huge insight, as well as past experience of working within an Indian context of often absolute poverty. Whilst homelessness, rather than social housing, is often the lot of the Indian poor, we also saw hugely inspirational community action in the rural and urban areas we visited. There is much to learn, especially around the impact of climate change, but also much to share between North and South."

Here's an interview with Clare about the trip.

### Why did you get involved in the IACD practice exchange?

My work is usually all about the local. But having started my community development career in grassroots work in India 20 years ago, my passion for connecting local practice to global issues remains strong. The practice exchange programme was a real opportunity to think about my place in the world; to learn about how grassroots communities are contributing to big global issues at a local level and to reflect on this aspect of my work as a community developer.

## So what are the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and what has this got to do with tenants in Edinburgh?

The SDGs are a global commitment by countries of the world to end poverty, fight inequality and injustice, and tackle climate change by 2030.



Edinburgh's tenants are already involved in making change happen on the SDGs – they just don't know it yet!

Much of what the Federation already does is connected to these global goals. Look at our work about improving housing conditions, tenants' campaigns against rent increases, looking at ways to end poverty and increasing real and genuine tenant participation. All of these fit into the bigger global picture. And volunteers in Edinburgh are making change happen by their local actions. It's about time they recognised the global worth of their efforts.

### Tell us about the programme. What were you actually doing?

We visited Delhi, Ranikhet (in the foothills of the Himalayas) and Jaipur finding out how communities are thriving even when faced with real difficulties, like poverty and climate change. We spoke to local folk and practitioners as well as meeting with heads of Non-Governmental Organisations in a conference in Delhi.

### Here are some highlights in pictures:



Meeting women involved in Community Projects in Delhi



Clare with Anastasia Crickley, Vice President of the IACD, and Chair of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Harassment chatting about human rights based approaches in community development



Ranikhet village women from Umang (grassrootsindia.com)



The IACD Group



Bringing Water to villages in Uttarkhand

## What is different about community work in India compared to Scotland?

Three main things:

1. Women are leading the change in communities in India. It is the women who are making positive change for whole communities – like bringing water to villages, creating social enterprises and helping each other. Their self-help groups make money collectively, and strengthen community connections. And that means they can dream big and achieve positive change. The women's movement is passionate and it's growing. The progressive realisation of human rights for women is key to successfully challenging the problems the SDGs hope to resolve locally and globally.
2. There is a belief that investing in long term programmes works better than short term projects. We often run on annual contracts in Scotland – so it is difficult to plan for change in the long term. It seemed like programmes in India talked about “change in a generation... or two”. That's what communities were working towards. Change was at the pace of the communities themselves.
3. People understand community development. They just get it! Organisations take a holistic approach to enabling sustainable communities. That means they work on health issues, housing, education and the environment. But it always starts with the needs of the community. Empowering communities makes change happen. People know what the issues are and get technical help with solutions. Sometimes in Scotland it feels the other way round - the Government, Councils, NHS provide what they think is best for people rather than giving up power and control and enabling local people to lead.

## Did anything you learned blow your mind?

Great question. Many things!

Being in India felt like going home for me because I lived there for two years. It was a bit of a revelation realising just how at peace I felt being there.

I loved meeting inspiring people who are making change happen on their own terms in their own communities. I saw brilliant and selfless leadership in action. I learned about the Sustainable Development Goals and saw that climate change is affecting people now - especially the most vulnerable people in the most vulnerable environments. But even in this hardship, communities are taking action to counter the effects with fantastic reforestation, hydrology and biomass fuel projects.

I was really inspired by the women's micro-finance movement where small groups of women save Rs100 per month (about £1), then loan money to each other for healthcare, school books or to make home improvements like installing toilets and solar panels. That movement is now worth more than £1.5 Billion to the Indian economy. That is mind-blowing!

It really only takes a few people with fire in their hearts to make big things happen. That was awesome to see in action.

Connecting with IACD participants on the journey was a real highlight for me. Individuals who are making their mark in community development in universities, government organisations and grassroots work round the world. I learned a lot about work in New Zealand, Kenya, USA, India and round the UK. They were lovely people and I enjoyed their company.

I had the conversation of my life about the “soul” of community development - about how we bring much more to work than just professional skills. We bring our whole selves. Our authentic selves. And the joys and risks of openly connecting with others in exposing the self in our work. I never talk about things like that in a professional capacity, so it was mind-blowing to have those conversations with other Community Development professionals.

## What do you bring back to your work at ETF?

I learned about different approaches to community development – finding technical solutions to tricky problems. I learned about using human rights in community development and how this links to the

Sustainable Development Goals. This stuff will fit nicely into our project with the Scottish Human Rights Commission (SHRC) and tenants in Leith.

I definitely have a renewed passion for community development. We need to hold on to that approach at ETF, because building connections between people is one of our greatest strengths. And it's what makes communities passionate and ready for change.

A reflection about the holistic approach; what could we be doing differently to really serve the needs of people in communities in Edinburgh?

Thoughts about leadership; about whether we should have a revolution of leadership training at the grassroots to support people with fabulous ideas who just don't recognise their own brilliance or know how to get started?

Thoughts about individual involvement and the collective; it seems obvious that a collective tenants' movement will provide strength, and yet so much focus is placed on individual participation. What does that mean for the future of the tenants' movement?

Some of these questions have come at a great time for the Federation and I'll be throwing them over to the ETF Members at the Conference this year as part of our Big Conversation in June so watch out for that.

Finally, I rediscovered that I must come to my work with heart. Bringing my whole self to community development practice. Believing in people. Believing in change and believing in the power of the collective. It only takes a few passionate people to make real change happen and if their action is taken with heart... anything is possible.

I feel renewed.

That's what I am bringing back to ETF.

To find out more about Clare's trip to India – you can catch her after the ETF Conference and AGM on Saturday 18th June 2016 from 3pm-4pm in the main hall of the Conference Centre. Or drop her a line at [clare@edinburghtenants.org.uk](mailto:clare@edinburghtenants.org.uk).

## CARE AND REPAIR EDINBURGH



Care and Repair Edinburgh are a small charity of volunteer Handypersons who can carry out small DIY tasks such as replacing lightbulbs, assembling small flat pack furniture or fixing shelves. The charity, which is celebrating its 30th anniversary saw the number of people assisted in the past year rise from 4314 in 2014 to 5031 in 2015. Care and Repair Edinburgh extended its activities in 2015 with the addition of funded gas repairs and the appointment of a full time dedicated Keysafe fitter and is now working closely with NHS Lothian

and the City of Edinburgh Council to assist with hospital discharges and enable people to make a quick, smooth and lasting transition from hospital care to their own homes. The charity has embarked on a new pilot programme undertaking DIY work at the homes of hospital patients to meet their needs and help speed up discharges. The pilot, which began in September 2015, has assisted 22 patients return home from hospital so far. During 2015, 1,290 patients were also assisted to leave hospital through the installation of a Keysafe at their home. If you would like more information or would like to volunteer, call 0131 337 1111 or email [reception@careandrepairedinburgh.org.uk](mailto:reception@careandrepairedinburgh.org.uk).

# CONVENOR'S REPORT



Welcome to your new look Convenor's Report. If I had to think of one word to sum up the past 12 months then that word would have to be 'change'. ETF is involved in a co-production of tenant participation services within Edinburgh and this will have major implications about our future direction. At our Federation Meeting back in February, members agreed to support the co-production model and we have been having ongoing discussions with the Council about how this will work. There is no denying that the past year has been an uncertain time for everyone involved with ETF, however rest assured we will still work to ensure that tenants across Edinburgh receive value for money and fantastic service to support tenant participation.

I was delighted to meet with Andrew Kerr, Chief Executive, City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) recently (pictured). This was an informal meeting and I found Andrew to be very approachable and down to earth. Andrew has agreed to come on a drive round Edinburgh to meet some of the tenants' groups that we are working with and will be writing an article for a future edition of *Tenants Voice*.

On a similar note, I visited the Wester Hailes area with Paul Lawrence, Director of Place and Susan Mooney, Head of Housing and Regulatory Services from the Council. The aim of the visit was to introduce Paul and Susan to some of our tenants' groups and make them aware of issues the groups are facing. Both Paul and Susan have agreed to visit another area of the city with us in the very near future.



There has been some significant changes within ETF recently as well. We are sorry that Elizabeth Page and Ken McKay have stepped down from our Executive Committee (EC). Both were extremely valued EC members and we wish them all the very best in the future. We are currently busy preparing for our Conference and AGM and are looking for more volunteers to join our EC. If you are interested or would simply like more information, please contact the Federation Office.

ETF is built on very strong foundations and I know that we will be able to embrace all the recent and ongoing changes, grasp them as opportunities and become an even more successful organisation. Dealing with change is never easy but we must move forward or get left behind. Thank you to all our volunteers for the wonderful support that they give to ETF and we look forward to continuing this work over the coming months.

# DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

## ETF Conference and Annual General Meeting

Saturday 18th June 2016, Norton Park Conference Centre, 10.00am-4.00pm

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## Housing Roadshows

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Monday 29th August 2016, Sainsburys, 9,10 Meadowbank, Moray Park, 9.00am-3.00pm

## Comments, compliments, complaints

Please give us feedback on this publication. If you have any comments, compliments or complaints we would like to know. Just contact us at the ETF office.

## About Edinburgh Tenants Federation

Edinburgh Tenants Federation is the umbrella organisation for tenants' and residents' groups in Edinburgh and a Registered Tenant Organisation. Tenants' and residents' groups can become members of ETF and individuals can become Associate Members. Just contact the ETF office on 0131 475 2509 or email [info@edinburghtenants.org.uk](mailto:info@edinburghtenants.org.uk) for more information.

## Thoughtful Quote

*"I finally figured out the only reason to be alive is to enjoy it."*

*Rita Mae Brown*

## Copy Deadline



*Tenants Voice* is usually published four times a year and is distributed to nearly 4,000 tenants, residents, decision makers and other interested individuals throughout Edinburgh. We always welcome contributions from our readers, though we stress that material included in *Tenants Voice* does not always represent the opinions of Edinburgh Tenants Federation. If you would like to contribute an article, please do so by the following deadline:

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