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Ways to Breathe Life into Your Practice

By Karrie Osborn

You know you're a great therapist. You provide your clients a safe place for relaxation, rejuvenation, and healing. Through your work, your clients are better able to manage their stress and their pain. But you're finding that the passion you once had for the work is dwindling, and is instead being replaced with a feeling of burnout.

Revisit Your Business Plan Talk to and Goals Colleagues 1 **Borrow** a **Great Idea** Don't Create/ **Forget You** Improve 2 Never Your Stop **Website** Learning 5 Volunteer

You're not alone. Even veteran therapists experience burnout symptoms from time

to time. The trick for a sustainable practice, however, is knowing how to eliminate burnout before it ever begins. Here are some simple tools to help you breathe life back into your practice and keep burnout at bay.

Borrow a Great Idea

Ideas and inspiration can come from anywhere. Whether it's finding untried marketing ideas or discovering a new modality for your bodywork toolbox, always be on the lookout for ideas to inspire you. Your *Massage & Bodywork* magazine is a great resource. For example, did you read Eric Brown's article, "6 Steps to Build a Better Practice," in the November/ December 2011 practice-building issue? Brown, the founder of Bodyworkbiz.com, had great tips for growing and strengthening your practice, including how to get clients to rebook (it's easier than you might think). Access this and other articles online at Massageandbodywork.com or ABMP.com.

The ABMP BizFit Practice Management Series at ABMP.com is another resource that has a variety of materials designed to help practitioners maintain a healthy business. This series includes videos, articles, webinars, tips, and even Top 10 Lists of ideas to help MTs have healthy, sustainable practices.

2 Never Stop Learning

One of the best ways to light a fire under your practice is to seek out educational opportunities. Check out the Continuing Education Calendar at ABMP.com. There you will find a vast array of hands-on and online courses from which to choose, all organized on a month-by-month basis. Log in to the Members page, and click on "Continuing Education Calendar" under Account Tools and Information on the right.

You can also visit ABMP's Online Education Center for affordable online courses and ABMP's popular webinars. And don't forget the advertisers in *Massage & Bodywork*. Flip through the pages to find dozens of CE offerings from a variety of continuing education providers, including Massage Review Publications and the Institute for Integrative Healthcare.

3 Talk to Colleagues

Whether you're a new MT who wants practice advice or a seasoned veteran who needs to hear a fresh perspective, having the ear of others in the massage community can be invaluable. Massageprofessionals.com is a great resource for every massage therapist. Want to network with people in your city? Use Massageprofessionals.com to make it happen. Want to hear about the business protocols of other successful therapists? Log in to Massageprofessionals.com and jump into the conversation.

2012 ABMP BizFit Workshops

ABMP's BizFit Workshops are a great complement to the informative ABMP BizFit Practice Management Series found at ABMP.com. Participants at these interactive workshops for massage professionals receive six (6) continuing education hours approved by NCBTMB.

In the ABMP BizFit Workshops you will learn how to:

- Obtain and retain new clients.
- Develop grassroots-marketing skills.
- Improve your mental edge (identify blind spots that hold you back).
- Understand and utilize new social media tools and websites for marketing and client education.

Upcoming Workshops

March 31 – San Francisco, California June 9 – Chicago, Illinois June 23 – New York, New York August 11 – Seattle, Washington September 22 – Minneapolis, Minnesota October 13 – Boston, Massachusetts



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4 Revisit Your Business Plan and Goals

When was the last time you looked at your business plan? It's probably been awhile, hasn't it? Now is the perfect time to evaluate the validity of the goals you originally set, and to see if there are ways those goals can be improved or updated. In fact, it doesn't hurt to review your business plan and goals every year. If your plan is more than a few years old, then it most likely needs some updating for things like social media strategies. How should you reach clients through Facebook or Twitter? How much traffic do you want going to your business website? Do you offer online discounts? These are all things to consider as you re-evaluate your business plan.

5 Volunteer

Sometimes you can find inspiration by helping others as a volunteer; it can remind you of the passion you hold for massage therapy. An opportunity to stretch your volunteer wings is right around the corner—EveryBody Deserves a Massage Week is July 15–21. This award-winning national event is a time when therapists from around the country lend their hearts and their hands to raise awareness about the benefits of massage, bodywork, and somatic therapies. For more information, log in to ABMP.com and click on "EveryBody Deserves a Massage

More Inspiration

Check out "Not Happy With Your Practice? Change It," page 78, in the current issue of *Massage & Bodywork*, for ideas on how to maintain a healthy, sustainable practice.

Week" under the Marketing Center tab. There you will also find an "Outreach and Volunteer Opportunities" link where you can find additional ways to volunteer, as well as post any volunteer opportunities you might have for colleagues in your area. You help others every day in your therapy room. Volunteering to those beyond our circle can sometimes remind us of the power of a giving heart (and hand).

6 Create/Improve Your Website

The time has come—if you don't have a website, you need to get one ASAP. Prospective clients look for local businesses on the Internet. Can you afford to not have a presence there? We at ABMP want to simplify life for you. That's why you can create your own professional website in a matter of minutes through ABMP's website builder. It's really that easy. Log in to ABMP. com, then select "Create/Edit Website" from the Account Tools and Information section on the right-hand side of the page. There you will find a step-by-step guide to walk you through the process. We even have text ready for you to use on your pages (Benefits of Massage, Frequently Asked Questions, etc.), as well as design templates created with you in mind. Click on the Tutorial video to see how easy it really is. ABMP provides unlimited web pages and free web hosting.

7 Don't Forget You

Take a mental health break. You can't give the best attention to your clients if you can't give them your entire focus. Find a meditation retreat to re-ground yourself. Spend a sunny afternoon journaling at the park. Feed the ducks. Find something to help you clear your head so you can think more clearly about the questions at hand. Healers must find their own mental and physical place of health before delivering proper care to their clients. It's evident to all when that's not the case.

This is the perfect time to take your own advice. Get a massage. Find a therapist you can trade services with, or enjoy a day at the spa to not only get some pampering, but to see how others deliver a massage experience. Self-care is critical, especially in this profession, so make it a priority.

By rekindling your passion, evaluating your goals, and practicing some self-care, you can invigorate your work, and breathe life back into your business. Start today!

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Different Strokes

The Voice of ABMP

For questions or comments, please call 800-458-2267.

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If you've moved, changed your email address, added or canceled a phone line, or if any other contact information has changed, please let us know. We want to be sure you're receiving your ABMP publications and membership-related communications in a timely manner.

Update your contact info by logging in to the Members section of ABMP.com or contact us by phone or email, as listed above.

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Members in the News

You can find links to the articles listed here on ABMP.com. Look for the "ABMP Community" section on the right, then click on the "ABMP Members in the News" link.

Emilie Ashton in "YMCA Expands Massage Programs," *Barrington Patch*.

Jennifer Boal in "Evolve Spa in Scott Towne Center Isn't Just for Luxury," *Chartiers Valley Patch*.

Gustave Boisits in "Bringing Some 'Loving Healing' to the NFL," *Fox Business.*

Sean Davis in "Melodic Massage," American Spa.

Jenny Farr in "Local Woman Joins Ipava Business," Canton Daily Ledger.

Regina Fulmore in "Good Day Street Talk," Fox 5 News New York.

Beth Goren in "The Healing Touch: Body-Mind Centering," Many Hands.

Julie Hightman in "Holistic Massage Therapist Moves to New Clinic in Sandy," *Sandy Post.*

Kim Hover in "Massage Therapist's Nimble Fingers Truly Make It 'A Dog's Life," *Daytona Beach News-Journal.*

Kimberly Huneycutt in "Personal Transformation Inspires W.Va. Wellness Coach to Share Gift of Health," *The State Journal.*

Theresa Labell in "Local Massage Therapist Has Magic in Her Fingers," *The Henrietta Post.*

Aimee McDonald in "Holistic Practitioner Heals Humans and Animals Alike," *Castro Valley Patch.*

Elise and Thomas McMasters in "Ohana Bodywork & Massage: Extended Family Grows in Templeton," *Paso Robles Press*.

Mark Mills in "Massage at Work to Fight Off Flu, Stress," 9 News Colorado.

Kim Novotny in "People Spending More and More to Pamper Their Pets," *Utah Valley Daily Herald.*

Sharon Puszko in "Thriving Through Touch," Chicago Tribune.

Suzanne Smith in "Discover How Sugar is Making Personal Grooming a Little Bit Sweeter," *San Diego Gay & Lesbian News*.

Sarah Willette in "Mu-Xing Massage," The County Women's Journal.

Tell Us Your News

If your practice was mentioned in print, online, on the radio, or on TV, let ABMP know. Send an email to differentstrokes@abmp.com with the subject line "Members in the News" and include a link to the news coverage online, or scan and attach a PDF of printed material.

ABMP abmp Stone Massage **Safety Video** New for You

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We know that your worst nightmare is harming a client. That's why ABMP is partnering with members who practice stone massage, and working to eliminate the incidences of clients harmed during those sessions.

In the past, ABMP has experienced an unacceptable number of insurance claims because clients were injured during stone massage therapies. In fact, it is responsible for the highest number of claims of any modality we've handled in our 25-year history, thanks to injuries such as third-degree burns, permanent scarring, and skin discoloration.

ABMP's Director of Education Anne Williams has been practicing and teaching the modality for 14 years. "It's easy to get attached to a particular practice or protocol," she says, "but when new information enters our profession that demonstrates a significant, unsafe trend we should pay attention and evolve our methods."

We want to work with you to eliminate these injuries and protect your right to safely provide stone modalities for your clients. Williams has produced a video, "Stone Massage Safety Guidelines," detailing various safety protocols for the work. The 8-minute video identifies contraindications, discusses cautions for treating special individuals, and reviews how to safely deliver stone massage without harming a client or experiencing the stress of a liability claim. "I really believe

that if stone massage therapists across the country work within the guidelines we have presented, the number of burns from hot stones will drop to zero," Williams says.

When practitioners join ABMP or renew their membership, they're now asked whether or not they practice stone therapies. Those who answer "yes" are directed to the video; they have 10 days to watch it and agree they will follow the safety guidelines in order to activate their liability insurance coverage for stone massage. This additional coverage is provided to members at no additional cost. While a relatively small proportion of ABMP members practice stone massage (less than 10 percent), the risk associated with unsafe practice of the modality has the potential to adversely affect our member liability insurance program. This is why we are requiring these new steps.

ABMP has shared the video with leading educators in our field and received widespread approval. We've also made it available to the profession as a whole; therapists who want to review and refresh their training may view it at ABMPtv.com.

We want to make sure that ABMP and its members are doing all we can to keep clients safe, stone sessions enjoyable, and insurance costs affordable.

Every Body Deserves a Mass

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EveryBody Deserves a Massage Week July 15–21, 2012

It's time to start planning for EveryBody Deserves a Massage Week (EBDMW), July 15–21, 2012. Want to share healthy touch with the underserved? Want to collect money or canned food items for your local food bank? Want to thank a local firefighter or police officer with free chair massage? Want to get your name out in the community? Want to bring in new clients?

There are thousands of ways you can be part of this fun, community-minded, businessbuilding event that celebrates massage; and the effort can be as big or as simple as you want. Log in to ABMP.com and find the "EveryBody Deserves a Massage Week" link under Marketing Center, where you can print your own postcards, posters, and coupons. Start planning today for a great event in July!

Need Photos?

Be Mindful of Copyright Laws

You're building a new website for your massage practice and you're looking for photos you can use to augment the site's design. What do you do? Do you find yourself going online and downloading whatever applicable photo you find in a quick Google image search? If so, then you might be breaking the law.

Know Your Source

In this age of highly accessible information, it's not always easy to remember that the same copyright and plagiarism laws that govern print, apply to the Internet as well. Copying images and text and using them without permission can land you in trouble.

When you need images for your website or print marketing materials, know your source. Make sure the photos you select are those that are actually available for your use. Some people, even today, still think that the act of putting something online means it's free for all, with no ownership or copyright rules. Those assumptions are incorrect, and can lead to major legal trouble—not to mention major costs.

Websites that provide stock photography, and the photographers themselves, keep track of where their photos appear across the Internet. By using a free photo searcher, such as www.tineye.com, it's easy to see all the places that a particular image has been re-posted online, and easy for that image's rightful owner to take legal action against theft.

Don't take the risk. There are many sources of high quality stock images (including a whole library of free images at ABMP. com) that you can legally use for free, or for just a few dollars.

Other Photo Resources

Stock photography sites. There are many websites that have inexpensive or free photos and illustrations on almost every topic you can imagine. Preview images have a watermark or other copyright sign across them; when you purchase an image, you get the version without this marking. And no, it isn't OK to grab the watermarked preview images and use them for free. Go to http://www. digitalimagemagazine.com/blog/featured/25-free-stock-photo-sites/ for a list of 25 free stock photography sites.

Federal government. You might be surprised at how many free photographs the government has available. Visit www.usa.gov/Topics/Graphics.shtml for links to many specialized photo libraries, including health and medical images. Visit www.census.gov/multimedia for photo libraries of people and general lifestyle images.

Tourism offices. Every state has a tourism office, and most cities have a visitor bureau for promoting the area. Professional photographs are often available for free use by local businesses. Do a Google search for the name of your town or state plus "tourism" to find the relevant official website. Remember, just because a photo is on their website doesn't mean it's available for your use: look for a photo gallery that specifies that images may be downloaded and used for marketing, or contact the visitor bureau to ask if any images are available.

New Images Added to ABMP Photo Library

Free for member use, the ABMP Photo Library has hundreds of images members can use at their discretion. Whether you need a photograph to include on a postcard you are sending out, or you want a massage-related image for your website, the ABMP Photo Library offers you many choices. New images were recently added to the library, so log in to ABMP.com and look under Marketing Center for the "Photo Library" link.

ABMP 25th Anniversary Celebration Contest

The first winner of ABMP's 25th Anniversary Celebration Contest has been selected through a random drawing. Congratulations to **Michael Bloom from Cocoa**, **Florida**, who wins a full refund of the ABMP membership dues he paid for his 2012 renewal. "When I'm not working as a firefighter or a massage therapist, I spend my free time designing and building stained glass, riding my Harley-Davidson Sportster, practicing yoga and qigong, and volunteering as a Guardian Ad Litem [child advocate]."



Michael Bloom

"One of the fun parts of my primary career as a fire safety inspector is inspecting fireworks displays. Here, I'm holding a 20-inch mortar. It makes a much bigger 'boom' than a bottle rocket." What's your favorite member benefit with ABMP? The free website. It's great to be able to update it anytime.

What benefit haven't you tried that you'd like to take advantage of this year? This year I'd like to take advantage of more of the webinars.

What makes your practice unique?

All body types are welcome, but I specialize in massage therapy for people who use their bodies for work and play. My regular clients include firefighters, police, military, body builders, triathletes, dancers, and acrobats.

A new winner is selected every two weeks, so look for announcements on our Facebook page. Be sure to "like" us on Facebook to learn more! Throughout 2012, all members renewing at or upgrading to Practitioner, Professional, and Certified levels, will automatically be eligible to win a refund on their membership fees.

Every two weeks, we'll conduct a random drawing from all qualifying members who renewed or upgraded their membership during that two-week period. If your name is selected, we'll write you a check for 100 percent of the membership dues you just paid. You could be next.

Good luck! And Happy Anniversary!

Join ABMP in San Diego at the AMC

You're running out of time to sign up and join ABMP at the 2012 American Massage Conference (AMC) in San Diego, April 20–22, at the Town and Country Resort & Conference Center. If you love to blend education and entertainment in a beautiful, casual setting, the AMC is the place for you!

ABMP is proud to once again be the Global Education Sponsor for the event that features 25 one-hour continuing education (CE) courses, all for the low registration fee of \$40. For additional fees, you can also participate in three-hour or full-day CE courses by leaders such as Erik Dalton and James Waslaski.

You'll also have access to an action-packed trade show with more than 100 booths where you can connect with ABMP and other vendors, learn about new products and modalities, enjoy product samples and giveaways, and network with other bodyworkers.

ABMP is excited to host a free Friday evening keynote with icon Deane Juhan, author of *Job's Body: A Handbook for Bodywork* and *Touched by the Goddess: The Physical, Psychological, and Spiritual Powers of Bodywork.* Juhan brings to attendees nearly four decades of experience as a bodyworker, and nearly three decades as a Trager Approach practitioner. He teaches workshops in anatomy and physiology, and nurtures a private practice in Berkeley, California. His presentation is titled "Job's Body Renewed: Healing Our Sacred Wounds."



On Sunday morning, ABMP's

Kristin Coverly is presenting a one-hour CE class: "Claims Happen—Liability Cautionary Tales and What They Can Teach Us."

The festivities begin on Thursday, April 19, with a charity golf tournament and an ABMP Instructor on the Front Lines event, and continues through a Saturday evening gala, with much more in between. Check out the full schedule on www.americanmassageconference.com and join us amid the palm trees! You'll be glad you did.

CONGRATULATIONS! 10-YEAR MEMBERS

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To see a list of all individuals who have been ABMP members for 10+ years, log in to ABMP.com.

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CONGRATULATIONS! 20-YEAR MEMBERS

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Save Your Documentation!

By Jean Robinson

Common sense would dictate that if you have been a statelicensed massage therapist in one state, you could move to another state and become licensed there, too. Unfortunately, the application process for practitioners who are already licensed is rarely different than the process for new applicants.

We seem to be hearing from more and more members that documentation is a problem. Either they went to school before transcripts were the norm, or their school has closed and they don't have a copy of their transcripts, or they didn't save crucial documents related to their massage practice. In many cases, members have submitted their only copy of transcripts to a regulatory board to receive their license and then they move and don't have another copy to submit for their next license. Often they will find that their school has closed and they no longer have the documentation they need to secure their license in a new state.

Just as you save your tax documentation and your own medical history, you need to save all the important documents related to your profession. Associated Bodywork & Massage Professionals (ABMP) is encouraging all members—especially students and recent graduates—to ask your school to provide you an "official transcript" you can then keep in the envelope it comes in, so you have the documentation you may need in the future.

In the meantime, ABMP continues to advocate for reasonable approaches to portability in the profession. It is ABMP's position that if a practitioner has met the minimum requirements for a license in one state, he or she should be able to secure a license in another state by submitting an application, paying the fee, and having official verification of their license in good standing sent from the state in which they are currently licensed.

New Hampshire Voluntary "Licensing" Bill Defeated

On January 5, 2012, the New Hampshire House of Representatives voted to defeat HB 446. The bill would have changed the mandatory licensing of several professions, including massage therapists and bodyworkers, to voluntary "licensing." ABMP was opposed to the bill.

ABMP believes this successful outcome is a testament to the importance of legislators hearing from their constituents. Please take a minute to update your contact information with us. ABMP will alert members when bills (if passed) have the potential to affect your right to practice.

Jean Robinson is the government relations director for ABMP. Contact her at jean@abmp.com.

Did You Know?

Many state regulatory boards require licensees to keep client treatment notes and documentation of all client visits for a certain number of years. Do you know the requirements in your state? Find out by logging in to the Members page at ABMP.com. Click on "State Legislative Information" to find contact information for your state board.



Some examples of documentation all massage therapists should save include:

- A certificate demonstrating the completion of your massage program.
- Transcripts and any other documentation of your grades.
- A copy of the massage program catalog for the school you attended.
- Any and all documentation of continuing education courses you have completed.
- Copies of all state and local licenses related to your massage business.
- Tax returns and supporting receipts and documentation.

Member Profile

By Jed Heneberry

Tieasha James, Houston, Texas ABMP Member Since 2006

Tieasha James received a 2011 Community Service Grant from the Massage Therapy Foundation (MTF) to support her work with low-income women in Houston, Texas, and the experience has been a rewarding one for therapist and clients alike.

Serving the Underserved

In an area where most people hover near the federal poverty level, Tieasha James is making sure that dozens of women have access to massage therapy. "I have a big heart for the community, and I love to give back," says James, whose program Touching Lives is being supported in part by a grant from the MTF. "I was very honored to be able to give a needed service to a population that deserved it."

James, who has been a massage therapist for six years, works with women at high risk for drug abuse, hypertension, and sexually transmitted diseases—challenges that often prevent them from experiencing human contact, let alone massage. "Sometimes

"It's not just their first massage. These are people that have never been able to afford a service like this at all."

we shy away from certain populations because they have this issue or that issue going on," James says. "So when they come in and I'm hugging them, saying 'How you doing? How you feel?' sometimes they even cry they're so excited. It makes them feel good, very confident about themselves."

In order to realize her desire to work within her community, James partnered with the Bee Busy Wellness Center in Houston, Texas, which caters to the uninsured and underinsured in the area. "It's a really great partnership," James says. "At other places, these people wouldn't be treated due to their inability to pay. It was a perfect match for me." After a year working at Bee Busy, she decided to pursue the \$5,000 MTF grant in order to reach more people.



"They Can't Stop Smiling"

James' grant provides five massages each for 50 women. For many, the program begins with the first massage they have ever received. "It's not just their first massage," James says. "These are people that have never been able to afford a service like this at all. It's a double whammy. It's like waking up on Christmas day when they walk into the room. They're just looking around, excited to be in the atmosphere of a situation like that."

That excitement extends to James, who is refreshed and renewed as a massage therapist with each session. "It's standard procedure for a therapist to give instructions, to always talk to clients about contraindications, but these people are sitting there on the edge of their seat. They can't stop asking questions, and they can't stop smiling."

Once the session starts, that anticipation and excitement is rewarded. "I have some people who come in, lay on the table, and just cry," James says. "They say, 'I feel so good, I've never had anything like this before. People won't even speak to me, and for you to just come and do something like that, it really increased my confidence in who I am."

Connecting Body, Mind, Spirit

Improved self-confidence is an important objective of the Touching Lives program, as are decreasing stress levels, promoting awareness of the benefits of massage, and encouraging the participants to take responsibility for their own health and wellness. In the three months the program has been active, James has seen plenty of evidence that these goals are being reached.

Over the course of the five sessions, the physical benefits have also been striking. "A lot of them have a lot of chronic pain in different areas," James says. "Most of the time it's the back and shoulders, some have problems in their legs, and after about two



Tieasha James with Bridgett Finseu, one of her clients at the Bee Busy Wellness Center.

or three times they come back and say, 'It's getting better!' They didn't even recognize that they had knots—all they knew was that it was painful when they slept, or when they sat down. Now they're hooked."

James has found that it's more than just the massage itself that helps these women learn about the connection between body, mind, and spirit and teaches them to move toward positive and productive life choices, the overall goals of the program. "When they have an actual appointment to come back, that makes them really feel special," she says. "They're really empowered, and it's just—wow."

The experience has been so rewarding for James that she is committed to working to increase access to massage even after the grant runs out. "No doubt I will continue this," she says. "I really want to raise awareness, too. I'm hoping that people will volunteer. It doesn't have to be a 40-hour week, but maybe just five hours. That will touch so many different lives."

Jed Heneberry is assistant editor at ABMP. Contact him at jed@abmp.com.

ABMP Members Awarded Massage Therapy Foundation Grants

Congratulations to ABMP members **Tieasha James** (see our Member Profile at left) and **Tina Allen**, both winners of the Massage Therapy Foundation's (MTF) 2011 Community Service Grants.

Other ABMP recipients of recent MTF grants and awards include:

Practitioner Case Report Contest

2010—Rosemary Chunco 2009—Anthony Balluff 2007—Kim LeMoon

Student Case Report Contest 2007—Jada Bell

Research Grants 2009—Jerrilyn Cambron

Community Service Grants

2011—Tieasha James 2011—Tina Allen 2010—Shay Beider



Start planning now for your next case report or grant proposal to submit to the MTF contest. Even if your project isn't selected, these contests offer great exposure to research processes, and even greater insight into the work you do.

Upcoming MTF Contest Deadlines

Community Service Grants—April 1, 2012 Practitioner Case Report Contest—October 1, 2012 Student Case Report Contest—March 1, 2013 Research Grants—March 1, 2013



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