

PAYDIRT

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Letter-from-the-Editor

By: Brayden Sealy

What is up, new and loyal readers?! For those unfamiliar, Paydirt is New Mexico Tech's very own newspaper organization. Paydirt serves to bring you the latest and greatest information about what is happening around campus. From small-time Residential Assistant events to official Tech events. We also plan on dropping bombshells of information that might catch your attention. Paydirt is a tight-knit staff, dead set on quality articles that are sure to knock your New Mexico Tech merchandised socks off.

We're currently off to a late start this semester. As much as I would like to put out as much Paydirt as physically possible, I would trade a week or two of Paydirt for the sake of having a full set of staff. I would not like a repeat of last semester, wherein I came in on weekends to meet deadlines. As fun as it was, I have bigger things on my plate this semester.

We at Paydirt appreciate your continued support and reading of the fun material that we live to create. I intend for this semester to be some of the best in recent memory!



Meet The Staff

Brayden Sealy: Editor-In-Chief
Chronically tired. Newly switched Civil Engineering student in my second year at Paydirt and New Mexico Tech. Enjoying my time, wishing I was asleep, or just not existing to begin with. I enjoy rotting in the Paydirt office (stop by and say hi, or don't).



Jaden Waltz: Layout Editor

Hello all, I am Jaden Waltz, I am a Material Engineer, this is my second year at New Mexico Tech. I am obsessed with William DaFoe. I also read, write, drink water, and pose.

Haley Cordova - Journalist

Holy crap a Paydirt already? And such a bold departure from the original source material! Hey folks, I'm Haley Cordova! In case you missed last semester (or you're a freshy) I am Paydirt's local cat lady, theater kid, and bookworm. I am a junior Psychology major and a minor in Education. Besides loving to write, I love to watch different types of animation and read different genres. Hope you like my articles!





Rosa Maria Trujillo - Journalist
Hello! My name is Rosa Maria Trujillo and I worked at Paydirt last semester, as some of you may know. I am a journalist and a Biology major (wooh I love Biology!!) and I am getting a minor in Education. I love rock music and writing as well but that was stated last year as well.

Sawyer Solfest- Journalist

What's up gang? Guess who they let out of the crypt. I retired from paydirt and am back to wreak havoc. Seas will rage, storms will gather, and something will something. I am a senior Biomedical Science student although if I'm done by the end of the year it will mean a being greater than man has replaced me and bent me to its confusingly non-malicious will. Much Love.



Lilia Oakeley- Photographer

Hiya, My name is Lilia (Lily-uh) or Lily for short. I am happy to announce that I am Paydirt's new photographer! So far I am loving the job and generally enjoy being artsy fartsy. But as for my background, I am a 4th year Computer Science student with a minor in Computer Engineering. I spend the majority of my time on campus listening to music and maddogging people. So, apologies for my RBF, I promise I don't hate you. I love reality tv and farming sims, tell me your favorite songs atm and I'll tell you mine! Go miners?

The High School to College Transition

By: Rosa Maria Trujillo

Note these are all from personal experience and do not have any research attached to them, it is all advice then you can feel free to take or leave.

Going into college is a hard transition for many. It may be the first time you are on your own and maybe also be your first time sharing a living space with someone all at the same time all at the same time. The workload is a whole lot more than it was in highschool and the stress from trying to keep scholarships and having loans creeping down your neck is very hard to deal with. A lot of people eat less and drink less water (that is simply from observation and personal experience). There are also less chances for messing up when you rely on good grades in order to keep scholarships. I will try my best to help you with the transition from my personal experiences and the experiences of others (if you are a freshmen). I will make a list and then explain further.

- ~ Make new friends
- ~ Go some of the social events
- ~ You may feel behind in life
- ~ Remember to eat and drink water
- ~ No, you do not need to have 3 hours of study time per credit hour
- ~ Keep contact with your family (if you have a good relationship with them)
- ~ It's okay to feel lonely
- ~ Have fun

Making new friends is super important and even if you came here with people you know like a romantic partner and friends you still need new friends. It is hard to make new friends but if you are only friends with the people who you came into college with then you could be holding yourself back from doing more things. In freshman year I did not meet new friends and felt very lonely and isolated even though I came into school knowing three people. The funny thing with those 3 people I came into college with is that I do not talk to two of them anymore and the other one is no longer attending tech. So I came into my sophomore year loney and without

any friends but if I had socialized and talked to people in my freshmen year I would have had a better time in freshman year and would have had people to hang out with in my sophomore year. You can make friends with people who are in your major so that way you can make a study group (10/10 would recommend), or in any of your classes. This one is hard and you may get rejected but you may also meet a new friend. You can walk up to people sitting alone and eating alone and ask to sit with them and eat with them.

Another great way to make friends is to go to the events the school has and to go to some of the parties that other students hold (DO NOT GO ALONE, GO WITH SOMEONE YOU TRUST) you do not have to go to all the events but some of them are fun and you may meet fun people and great new friends. All of my friends this year are people I met at the social events the school held and I went to those alone but the parties I asked them to go with me.

Feeling like you're behind in life is something I am experiencing a lot. People in my home town are moving in with their romantic partners, some have so much more money and are on their way to getting a good and stable job and some are moving up at my seasonal job. The thing is everyone is on a different path, since all humans are different. What works for others won't work for you. I am not going to use the overused quote from one of our old presidents. But when you look at other successes and ignore your own, you can feel like you're falling behind in life. Everyone works at their own pace.

Water and food are important and sometimes you forget to eat and even drink water. I know this happens to me quite a bit, especially during midterms and finals week. There is a whole lot to say here. Just remember to do the two things that keep you alive. It will make you feel good and it is a good way to stay healthy.

You will hear this from so many teachers and "student helps" places where you need 3 hours of study time PER credit hour. This may add up to 60 hours or more of

studying. The thing is some classes that are worth 3 credit hours may only require one hour of study time while others (the evil labs) will in fact require 3 to 4 hours. Still goes to show though dependent on the week and what classes give you the hours of studying will change and very rarely will you need 60 hours of study time.

Stay in contact with your family (if you have a good relationship with them) they can help with the small little things you didn't even think about and they can be a great emotional support! It will also be easier for you to beat feeling lonely. It may be harder to keep in contact with them since you are out in college and time gets away from you but it is great to still be with your family.

Feeling lonely is very normal in college and most people, if not everyone, has felt this way. The best thing to do in order to stop feeling lonely is to enjoy your time alone with yourself. When you feel lonely and have too much alone time on your hands, do your hobbies, maybe find a new hobby. Read a fun book, draw, play video games, go to the gym, write, watch a show/movie. Doing anything while you're feeling lonely can help you feel less lonely and may help you get to know yourself and help you grow to be a better you.



The last one is pretty self explanatory, just have fun! You can not pay to be miserable, you should also pay to have fun.

I also have interviewed several juniors about advice they have:

Q1: How did you deal with the transition from high-school to college?

~ I didn't handle transitioning from highschool to college, however the biggest thing I did was get "new supplies" like different pencils or highlighters. It was very hard I didn't deal well, however I went to events and met my professors to try understand what college is.

~ The first month seems to be the hardest for incoming freshmen. The transition from living with parents and/or siblings to living with another freshman can be kind of hard. During that first month I did my best to make friends and participate in the activities that interested me on campus! I think those two things alone really helped me get through the transition. It's no lie when people tell you that getting involved makes you stay engaged with your learning. Building a sense of community is often easier in the freshman dorms and it's really important to be comfortable and feel like you belong.

Q2: What advice do you have for incoming freshmen?

~ Meet people, meet everyone, the group you have now isn't gonna be forever? Meet your professors and find a support system in your department if you can.

~ Make friends and try any clubs/sports you're interested in. But most importantly: take care of your mental health, it's okay to not be okay, and it's okay to ask for help.

These are just some things I wish I knew sooner and I hope this list will help you.

Stop Banning All the Cool Books



By Haley Cordova

“Don't get mad, get even. Don't spend time waving signs or carrying petitions around the neighborhood. Instead, run, don't walk, to the nearest nonschool library or to the local bookstore and get whatever it was that they banned. Read whatever they're trying to keep out of your eyes and your brain because that's exactly what you need to know.”
-Stephen King.

It's a big shock that the book reader wants to talk about banned books. I know I did an article about this last semester, but I still have more to say. I am angry. I am angry that the number of banned books has only gone up from when I last wrote this. So hopefully my thoughts and words will make you just as angry about this as I am.

In 2004, 390 books were attempted banned, which is around where it stayed (give or take a few hundred) until a slight decrease in 2020 where there were 156 attempted banned books. Then in 2021, 1,858 books were attempted

to be banned, and in 2023 4,240 books were attempted to be banned. That is a 65% increase over the last two decades. The people who are attempting to ban books are parents and patrons, who make up 52% of the innate sensor attempts. 21% are pressure groups, 13% are board administration, 3% are librarians or teaching staff, and 2% are government officials (the 9% is other).

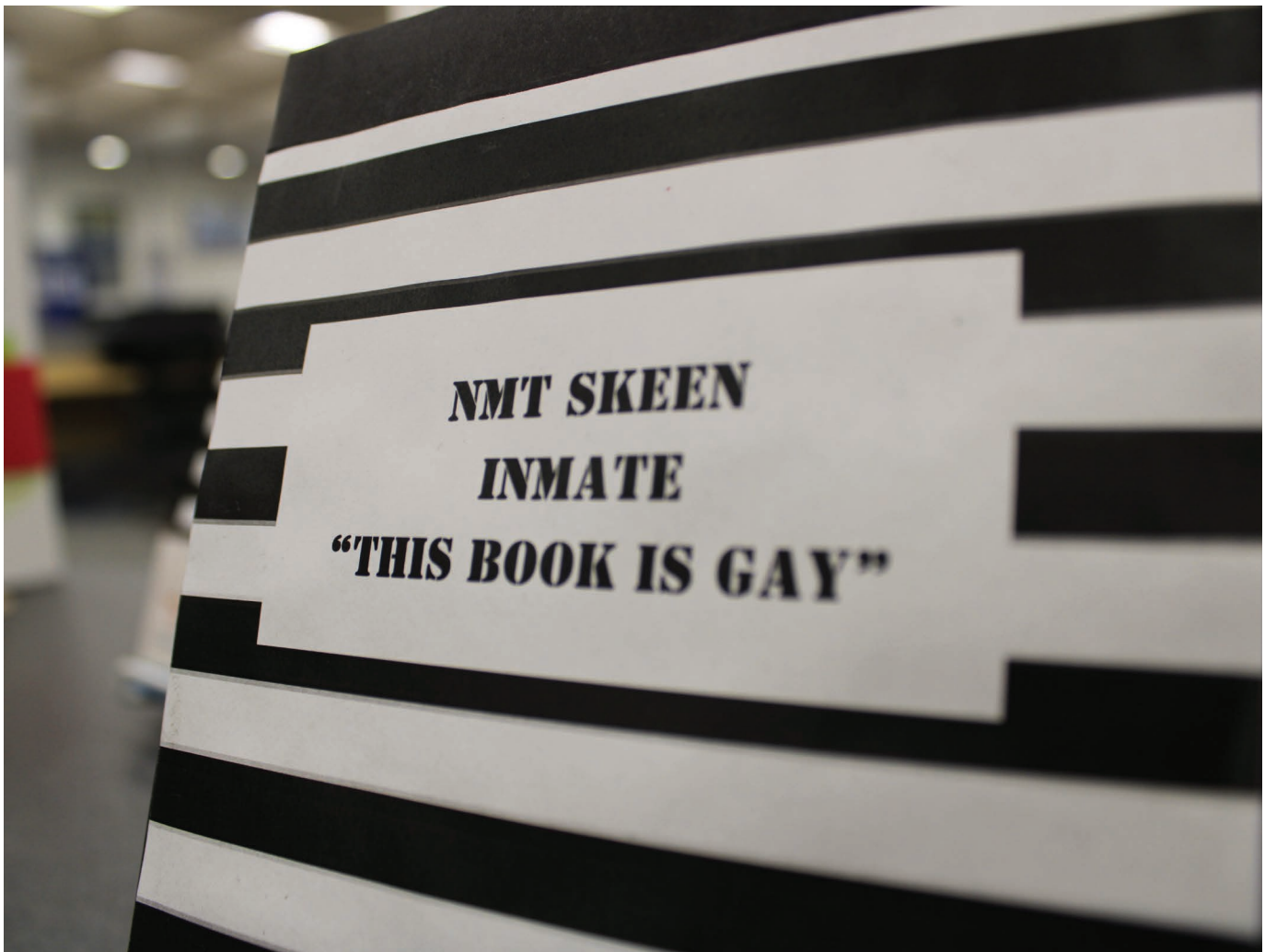
So what exactly is a banned or challenged book? As someone who used to just wonder why people called them “banned books” while they were still in books stores, it can be confusing. There are different ways of banning books. There are books that are challenged which means that there have been a group of people that have tried to ban the book, which is an attempt to ban an idea. Whether or not the idea is outdated, all ideas deserve to be heard and understood. Then there are restricted books, which means that the books remain on the shelves but there is an age requirement or a guardian has to approve of before reading. Censored books are books that can be on the shelves but they have to under-

go some form of editing for it to be allowed in schools. Banned books are books that have been removed from the area that it was challenged in. Most of the time, books are banned from libraries or classrooms.

What I have started doing, which I encourage everyone to at least try, is to read a banned book during Banned Book Week. I wanted to prepare for this article so I read *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margret Atwood, which is one of the most important books that I have read in my life. You see, Atwood predicted the responses that she would get to her book so she followed a code written in her book, she would not include anything that was made up, in other words, everything she wrote about has happened before.

I get it we are Tech students so taking time out of our schedule to read is a big ask. This is why the library is awesome. The library is hosting their annual Banned Book Read Aloud from September 22-28 from 3 pm to 4 pm. Basically, you come between those times and you listen to the readings of the banned books, and why those books are banned.

<https://pen.org/report/banned-in-the-usa-state-laws-supcharge-book-suppression-in-schools/>
<https://www.ala.org/news/press-releases/2023/03/record-book-bans-2022>
<https://www.freedomforum.org/famous-banned-books/>



President Interview

By: Sawyer Solfest

Over the past several years our institution has seen a strange and difficult period when it comes to our administration. Our former president Dr. Steven Wells was forced to retire due to health issues. In the meantime, we appointed Dr. Daniel H. Lopez.

While necessary, an interim president can be an awkward period for a university. Especially as undergraduate students, many of whom come from struggling departments, watch the interim president and regents grant a 28 million dollar expansion to the Petroleum Science department. It felt a little disconcerting, to be a student at the bottom who could not influence the higher echelon of their university.

Thankfully, we can all look forward to the end of that era. As of April 2024, we have a new president. Although the new administration has kept us updated via published official documentation, it's a lot to read. I didn't read as much as I should and keeping up with things like that is my actual job. So, to make it easier, I corresponded with Dr. Mahyar Amouzegar.

My questions were meant to answer some of the questions that I have heard rattling around the student body. Feel free to read the interview in its entirety below.

Dr. Mahyar Amouzegar Interview:

- How have you enjoyed your first few months at New Mexico Tech? What has joining our institution and moving out to Socorro been like?

“While many universities talk about being a “family,” New Mexico Tech truly embodies this spirit. I've been genuinely impressed by the strong cohesion and cooperation here, not just among faculty and staff, but also within the student body. This supportive environment enhances our campus life and extends into the broader Socorro community, creating a unique atmosphere that is both welcoming and inspiring.

Moving to Socorro and joining NMT has been an exciting experience. I've prioritized meeting with faculty, staff, and students in small groups. These interactions are invaluable—they allow me to connect directly with the people who make NMT what it is and to understand their perspectives, ideas, and challenges. This level of genuine dialogue fosters the kind of collaboration that leads to innovation, something our engineers and scientists can especially appreciate. It's been fascinating to see firsthand how this close-knit community drives groundbreaking research and academic excellence.”

- If you had to pick one thing for the students and staff of Tech to know about you, what would it be?

“I'm both an engineer and a mathematician at heart—capable of being the biggest nerd in the room and geeking out over techie things that others might not find as thrilling. And I'm a serious creative writer with a deep passion for literature, politics, and history.

What I've come to appreciate even more since arriving at NMT is that I'm not alone in this. Our students, faculty, and staff often have incredibly diverse interests and passions beyond the technical fields. My message is this: don't let Hollywood define what makes a great engineer or scientist. We are complex, multifaceted individuals who can pursue a wide range of passions while excelling in engineering and science. At New Mexico Tech, that blend of diverse interests is something to celebrate and nurture.”

- What are your favorite/least favorite elements of our campus?

“My favorite part of the campus is undoubtedly the sense of community. It's a real joy when I walk around and students stop to chat about their projects or research. That level of engagement speaks volumes about the culture here. Our campus is also beautifully maintained, with thanks to our fantastic facilities management team. Despite being small, it feels like a bustling little city with

something always happening.

As for my least favorite aspect, it would be the limited funds to upgrade all our labs and address some of our aging infrastructure. Our students, faculty, and researchers utilize state-of-the-art equipment, to be sure, just not as comprehensively as we'd like. We have incredible potential, but the slow pace of securing necessary funding can be frustrating. Rest assured, the campus leadership is actively working on it, but sometimes the process feels like it moves at a snail's pace. We're committed to finding solutions, even if it takes time."

What are your most vital and central priorities for the next several years? How will your administration affect the current published 5-year plan?

"My central priorities for the next several years include fully integrating our research centers into the campus community to enhance collaboration, resource-sharing, and strengthening the overall impact of our research initiatives. Another key focus is to break down institutional silos to create more cohesive and efficient operations. This approach will enable us to harness better the collective expertise of our faculty and staff, ultimately improving the student experience and fostering a stronger sense of community.

In addition, I plan to establish a clearer identity for our non-STEM programs. While New Mexico Tech is known for its excellence in engineering and science, we have robust non-STEM programs that deserve recognition and a distinct place within our campus culture. Alongside this, we aim to expand our academic offerings by growing new engineering and science Ph.D. programs and creating new undergraduate programs. These efforts will allow us to offer a more diverse and modern range of degrees, ensuring that our students are well-prepared for the evolving demands of the workforce.

New Mexico Tech is on the cusp of achieving R2 status, reflecting our strong graduate programs and significant research funding. However, it's crucial to remember that

NMT is fundamentally a research-driven teaching institution, not the other way around. Our primary mission remains to educate, train, and provide experiential learning for the next generation of STEM professionals. This guiding principle will shape how we approach our goals in the coming years.

As for the current 5-year plan, my administration's role will be to support and enhance it. I've committed to spending time building relationships and listening to constituents to understand the campus culture, aspirations, and challenges. As a quantitative policy analyst by training, I rely on collecting and analyzing data to make informed decisions. This approach will help us strategically align our efforts with the 5-year plan, aiming to take NMT from excellent to extraordinary."

Despite the busy schedule of someone in your position, what are some hobbies and personal interests you hope to maintain?

"I firmly believe in work-life balance, not just for myself but for the 800+ employees of NMT. We perform better in our roles when we take time to nourish our minds and bodies with the activities we love. For me, writing is a passion that I try to indulge in daily. No matter how tired I am, I make it a point to write a few paragraphs each night. Those words might not always make it into my next novel or essay, but the process itself keeps me sane and happy.

I'm also a movie buff. I've written an essay on "Movies You Should Watch (again)." I watch a lot of films, sometimes even while multitasking. Although multitasking is "never" good, you'll often find me working on a budget Excel sheet with a "bad" science fiction movie playing in the background. It's a quirky way to blend productivity with a bit of escapism, and it helps me maintain a sense of balance amid a busy schedule"

The student population has begun to feel some friction with NMT Dining, Auxiliary Services, and Housing and

(Cont. from pg. 10)

ing, operate efficiently and smoothly. In fact, one of my first actions as president was directly related to student feedback. After attending an SGA Senate meeting and hearing concerns about meal options, I worked with our food service provider Chartwells leadership to allow student clubs to host events without being required to use Chartwells catering. This change not only provided more flexibility for student organizations but also supported local Socorro businesses.

I give a lot of credit to Chartwells for their willingness to work with us, especially given the tight margins they operate under. We continue to collaborate with them to keep meal prices as affordable as possible. My leadership team and I remain committed to being accessible and responsive to student concerns. We may not always be able to solve every issue immediately, but we will always listen and work judiciously to find balanced solutions that enhance the student experience.”

- Tech often struggles with factors such as academic success, mental health, and student retention. What are the strengths and weaknesses you've observed in Tech's institutional structures that are meant to limit/combat these issues?

“Challenges related to academic success, mental health, and student retention are not unique to New Mexico Tech; they are common across universities. However, I've observed several strengths within our institutional structures that are designed to address these issues. For instance, we have a dedicated and highly capable faculty who are committed to student success, both inside and outside the classroom. Our small class sizes allow for more personalized attention, which can significantly enhance the academic experience and support students.

We also have various support services in place, such as academic advising, mental health resources, and student

success programs. These resources are vital, but there is always room for improvement. One area where we could strengthen our approach is in promoting these services more effectively so that students are aware of and feel comfortable accessing them.

As for weaknesses, one challenge is the need for more proactive and integrated support systems that address these issues holistically. Academic success, mental health, and retention are deeply interconnected, and tackling them requires a coordinated effort across departments. We are actively working on breaking down silos to ensure that students receive comprehensive support throughout their time at NMT. Additionally, we're exploring ways to foster a more inclusive and supportive campus environment where students feel connected, valued, and understood.

Ultimately, our goal is to create a community where students not only excel academically but also thrive personally. My administration is committed to listening to student feedback and continuously improving our structures to better support the diverse needs of our student body.”

- Are there any roadblocks or difficulties that you've observed since taking office?

“In any organization as complex and diverse as New Mexico Tech, challenges are inevitable. However, I have great confidence in our leadership team, faculty, and staff to address and overcome these challenges efficiently and collaboratively. My philosophy is to involve everyone in the process, ensuring that our rank and file become part of the solution. This is one reason why I encouraged and supported NMT staff to create a Staff Council so that their voices are heard alongside those from the faculty senate and student government. By fostering an environment where we work together to identify and break down barriers, we can tackle any potential roadblocks as

a unified team.

Rather than focusing on specific difficulties, I prefer to approach challenges as opportunities for growth and improvement. By listening to diverse perspectives and harnessing the collective expertise within our community, we can navigate obstacles and continue to move NMT forward. It's this spirit of collaboration and problem-solving that will help us meet whatever challenges come our way”

- And lastly, what is your favorite color?

“Black. It's classic, versatile, and let's face it, it goes with everything. Plus, as an engineer and a mathematician, I can't help but appreciate its simplicity and elegance. Whether it's the sleekness of a blackboard filled with

equations or the depth of a starry night, black has a way of encompassing both mystery and clarity.”

Concluding thoughts:

Pretty cool right? I want to thank Dr. Mahyar Amouzegar for answering my questions. Reaching out to his office was easy and the Chief Executive Assistant helped me probably more quickly and thoroughly than I deserved. With new University and SGA positions filled with quality candidates, we can hopefully look forward to a fun and secure year at New Mexico Tech.





If you would like to enter your pet in Choice Pet of the Month contest, please scan the QR code and fill out the form! Remember to choose a good quality photo and provide as many details as possible about your furry, feathery, or scaly friends!



Do you have any kind of creative material that you want to see featured in the latest issue of Paydirt?

Scan the QR code below and fill out the form!

Please pick a quality photo if submitting photography, pottery, artwork, etc.



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YOUR AD COULD BE HERE

Contact paydirt@npe.nmt.edu
for more information.

See a grammatical error, spelling error, or other "issue" with Paydirt? We put it in to be just a little sneaky... :)



Your *Paydirt Staff:*

Editor-in-Chief

Brayden Sealy

Journalists

Haley Cordova
Rosa Maria Trujillo
Sawyer Solfest

Photographer

Lilia Oakeley

Layout Editor

Jaden Waltz

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Contributions

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paydirt@npe.nmt.edu

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