

Vol. 31 No. 4 April 1999 Newsletter of the Deep South Region A. A. C. A.

Cars, cars, cars....from start to finish by Ernie Youens

The DSR's tour this year was one of the most interesting and pleasant tours the club has had. Frances Whigham did as near a perfect job of making arrangements as could be done. We had guided tours through the Mercedes-Benz factory near Vance, Alabama and the Saturn factory just outside Spring Hill, Tennessee plus a guided tour through an ante-bellum mansion with visits to several fascinating antique shops. Due to the distance and limited time, we decided to travel in modern vehicles.

We left a Saraland parking lot at 6:45 A.M. on Monday, March 29th with everyone in the red DSR shirts. After breakfast in Jackson, Alabama and a "pit stop" in Thomasville, we arrived right on time for our 11:15 lunch We reached the at a Cracker Barrel in Tuscaloosa. Mercedes plant at 12:30 P.M. where we were joined by former DSR members Orville and Ann Carter for the plant tour. Each person was given a set of earphones and goggles for a walking tour through the plant. Our tour guide explained the entire operation of the plant's construction of the Mercedes M-5 vehicles while we What starts out in the watched them being made. beginning as sheet metal assembly is test driven over a corrugated floor and made ready for shipment. The cars were random colors on the assembly line with vehicles built to the specifications of the country to which they were to be delivered. Most were USA bound, but many had right hand drives, tag mounting brackets and other features of foreign countries. There were an amazing number of M-5's being driven off the asembly lines. We were told every one of them had been sold before being built. As a matter of fact, the Neeses, the Whighams and the Youens all bought a new Mercedes while there. In the museum we saw a 24-speed Mercedes folding bicycle sporting springs on both wheels and a suitcase to put it in!

Then we were off to Athens for the night. That evening the Whighams invited all of us to their room for a enjoyable birthday party for Ed Lunsford and Anna White. Hershel and Frances had a beautiful birthday

cake with drinks and snacks. Also their daughter and son-in-law, Sharon and Chuck, joined us there. They live in the area and are a fine couple.

Tuesday morning we were all up and taking advantage of the Continental breakfast so that we were on the road by 8:00 A.M. Our destination was the "Rattle and Snap" plantation home near Columbia, Tennessee. It is one of the few that was not burned during the Yankee invasion and has a surprising history of wealth, poverty and tragedy to the family. The beautiful building was rescued and rebuilt from near ruins to its original splendor in relatively recent years. Just before leaving the mansion, we were served a delicious meal in one of the old dining rooms

Next on the itinerary was our tour of GM's Saturn plant. Although it was similar to the Mercedes plant, it was also totally different in many ways. It was not a walking tour. We rode in seven 4-passenger trailers behind a tractor to view the entire building operation of the Saturn automobile. Each trailer had a speaker and our guide rode on the tractor facing the trailers while explaining each feature to us. Her first announcement was that all Saturns being made that day would be black, unlike all the random colors at the Mercedes plant. Like the Mercedes plant, we were able to watch as the cars were constructed from the first piece to a drivable automobile. Although we did not see the engines being built at either plant, I understand the Saturn engines are built there in an area of the plant not open to visitors. While being taken to a Welcome Center where our cars were parked, questions were answered by our guide. At the Welcome Center we had lunch in a picnic area then say good-bye to Ed and Joan Lunsford who left us to visit relatives in the great state of Tennessee.

The rest of the group was on the way to Birmingham, Alabama and arrived, in the rain, about 5:30 P.M. We went to the Galleria Mall's food court where you could get anything your heart desired.

(Please see TOUR on Page 7)

Minutes

Deep South Region A.A.C.A. Meeting March 25, 1999

The meeting was called to order by Eddie Anderson, President, at 7:35 PM. Forty-eight members and two guests were present. L. Mims, chaplain, gave the invocation.

OLD BUSINESS: Eddie reported that the coloring contest at Mertz school was judged last Saturday. The winners won gift certificates from McDonald's restaurant. Vice President's Report: Pat Francis said that the work party on Saturday 3/20/99 accomplished a lot of work but there is still need for another work day. Pat also reported that the parking lot light is now working. Secretary's Report: No report Treasurer's Report: No old business. Editor's report. Patt Paquet reported that the 1999 Member Rosters are still available to paid members. Two couples names should be added to the rosters, Demetropolis and Bowden. Patt also reported that the calling committee will be using the 1999 roster for their call list. Activities Chair Report: No old business. Member At Large: No Report. DSR Car Show: The show will be May 8. Patt Paquet reported that sponsors are being sought. It was decided that there will be no raffle this year. The flyers are going out to advertise at various events between now and May. Patt and Joyce are looking for volunteers to help with the show. DSR Spring Tour: Frances Whigham reported that the tour will lea ve on Monday with between 12-14 members. 2001 Southeast Division AACA Tour: No report.

NEW BUSINESS: President's Report: DSR is holding an open house on July 10 and 11 and will invite area car clubs. We need a chair person for this event. Vice President's Report: No report. Secretary's Report: The February minutes were approved on a motion from H. Whigham and second from A. White. Treasurer's Report: TheFebruary Financial report was approved as written by a motion from A. White and second from A. Rowell. Editor's Report: Patt reported that the last page of the Member Roster has the calendar of events for the year. This will allow more space in the newsletter for advertisements. Activities Chair Report: Ed presented numerous opportunities for club activities. There are three weddings coming up (5/22, 4/3 and 5/29), the members passed a motion to participate in the weddings. The motion was made by B. Musgrove and second from J. Frnacis. A motion was also made to participate in a display at Shoney's restaurant (on 4/13). The motion was made by A. White and second from H Whigham. The motion passed. It was agreed after some discussion to participate in a display fundraiser for Mobile Youth Football. The motion from M. Neese and second from F. Jordan passed. Member at Large Report: No report.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: The 50/50 pot was won by a guest, Tommy Smith. Bill Musgrove won the Easter wreath. A motion to adjourn came from R. Sloan with second from J. Francis. The meeting adjourned at 8:20 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

'99 Roster changes

Please add the following members to Page 17 in your 1999 Membership Roster:

George & Katherine Demetropulos

4812 Mum Court

Mobile, AL 36608-2411 Telephone: 342-9524

Paul & Kathy Bowden 7771 Country Squire Lane Mobile, AL 36695-4237

Telephone: 607-0701 or (W) 452-8300

Mike & Dianna Williamson 3901 Alta Vista Drive Mobile, AL 36605-4250 Telephone: 473-3442

Some DSR car show committee chairs open, help needed

The March 25th meeting gave some members the opportunity to sign up for a specific task. Below you will find a list of what is filled and where we still need your hands to make the day go smoothly:

Chief Judge Door Prizes Larry Burdeshaw Anna White

Door Prizes
Tally:

Buddy Paquet

Writers:

Jim Martin/Cecil Pugh

Day of Show Reg.

Judges Lunch:

Sign Erection:

Joyce Francis/Willma Jones (Need 2 more members)

.....

Hershel & Francis Whigham

Parking:

Need 4-5 members with one

beginning at 7:30 AM Need 2-4 members to put

up/take down signs

50/50 Pot Sales: Need 4 members to share

selling tickets

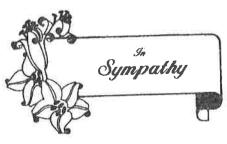
Sanitation:

Richard Jones needs a least

one helper

If you can work even just a few hours on the day of the show, your help will be most appreciated. You can call or sign up at the April 22nd meeting.

It is with great sadness that the newsletter must inform members of the death of a DSR member as well as a former member. Naomi



McCrory died on April 1, 1999. She and Henry had been married 56 years last August 28th. Naomi was an accountant and tax preparer. She still did work for a few clients. Both she and Henry were licensed pilots. They enjoyed spending time at their retreat in North Carolina several times a year. One of her greatest pleasures in the recent past was the acquisition of her 1979 silvery-blue Mercedes 450 SL dual top. She said that although it wasn't an antique yet, it would be one *someday*. Naomi was an active member of her church and will be missed by many.



Former member, William N. (Bill) Owen, Jr., died March 28, 1999. Those who were members of DSR during its early years will remember him well. He was one of the persons who signed the petition for DSR's charter. According to the obituary in the local paper he continued his membership in AACA although he had not been a DSR member for quite sometime. I was told this was due to his illness and the fact that he couldn't participate in the activities. He was also a member of the Antique Automobile and Engine Club of Mississippi and attended their May show at Point Cadet as late as last year by using his motor home and motorized Little Rascal. Mr. Owen will also be missed by a great many colleagues and friends in Mobile.

I hope that by the time you are reading this, your Editor is home and recuperating from having my persnickety gallbladder removed. The greater part ofnewsletter is being done a week early due to our trip to the two National meets in Tuscon and my surgery upon our return. The rest will be done after my surgery so if something is missing, please overlook it.

A Radio Romance

While they seem like such a natural ~ even inevitable ~ couple today, the pairing wasn't given such a great prognosis at the start. But it was a happy marriage between the automobile and radio. When the affordable car radio was first introduced in 1929, people thought of it as an expensive, even dangerous, luxury. And while the radio and the car were, separately, standard products in the 1920's, none of the giants that dominated the two industries ~ not Henry Ford, not GM's Alfred Sloan, not RCA's David Sarnoff ~ thought to combine the two. Instead, the marriage was left to a school dropout named William Lear.

He was born in 1902 in Mark Twain's hometown of Hannibal, Missouri. After leaving school in the eighth grade, he spent time tinkering with electronics and airplanes. Enamored with the emerging field of radio, he

settled in Quincy, Illinois and opened up a shop, grandly named Quincy Radio Laboratories, where he constructed primitive radios for customers.

When cranked up the car's motor and spark plugs generated a great deal of static. Another technical problem was even thornier. Because it relied on

the car's storage battery, the radio worked only when the car wasn't running. So much for listening to tunes with the wind in your hair. Instead, Lear pioneered one of the earliest and most enduring uses for the car radio: providing back-ground music for young romantics. At night, Lear would drive out to Riverview Park, and on a bluff overlooking the moonlit Mississippi he would turn off his car and crank up the radio for amorous couples. Few people were willing to pay for the privilege, however, and Lear set aside his car radios and worked on improving the kind that stayed in one place. It was a good field to be in. Radios permeated American life during the 20's ~ by 1930 they would be in almost 14 million households. Only the car industry had more promise and excitement. Some 27 million automobiles were registered by 1930, or one for every 5.3 citizens. Anyone who could combine these emerging forces would make a fortune.

Other engineers worked on developing a car radio after Lear stopped playing for parking teenagers. The

problems with the power source and engine interference were resolved; the remaining stumbling block was price. In 1929, Cadillac offered a built-in radio as a \$150 option. A Ford Model T went for less than \$300.

That's when a friend of Lear's, a Zenith engineer, dropped by his office. "They ought to make a nice radio for automobiles", the engineer said. By "nice" he meant practical and affordable. Within a few days, Lear put together a prototype using only \$22 in materials. Add in the manufacturing costs, he figured, and you could mass-produce the thing. To allow the set to be adjusted while driving, Lear ran wires to the dashboard. There, the wires linked up to two knobs, one for volume and the other for tuning. Lear's radio was also featured an illuminated window through which the driver could monitor the frequency. This "radio control device" as he

called it, became the standard for car radios and the first of 150 patents Lear would earn in a lifetime of invention. He called his radio the Motorola.

It got off to an inauspicious start. Traffic authorities opposed the mass installation of this terrible distraction. Some cities had already moved

preemptively to bar radios from taxis and other vehicles. "Music in the car might make the driver miss hearing the horn of an approaching automobile or a fire or ambulance siren" warned one critic. Meanwhile, the radio had problems of its own. A few days after Lear installed a prototype in a banker's Packard, the wires shorted and the car caught fire. In 1930, the first year of production, Lear sold only 1,000 radios. Still, the improvements kept coming. By 1934 a reliable Motorola went for just \$49.50, \$13 cheaper than GE's far inferior new product. That year, 780,000 new car radios were installed and more than half were Motorolas.

Impatient with the quotidian details of mass production and marketing, Lear tackled other inventions. In 1931 he developed a radio for use in airplanes and later created a series of breakthrough navigational devices for aviation. Still obsessed with the airplane in middle age, he built his own jet company from scratch. The first Lear jet rolledoff an assembly line in Wichita, Kansas in 1963.

(Please see Radio on Page 7)

Just for the ladies...more than you ever wanted to know about soap

Loosely defined, SOAP is a substance that when used with water, decreases surface tension in an effort to attract away unwanted substances. Even in its most archaic form, soap has probably always played a role in human history. Before soap became an intentionally produced product, it was extracted from plants like yucca, soapwort and horsetail. The need for a substance to help removed dirt, grease, foodstuffs, pitches and

bodily ex-cretions has always been a part of

the human experience.

Historical evidence shows that Egyptians bathed regularly and that they combined animal and vegetable oils with alkaline salts to create a soaplike substance for washing. Ancient Roman legend gives soap its name. Mount Sapo, where animals were sacrificed, rains washed a mixture of melted animal fats and wood ashes down into the Tiber River There, the "soapy" mixture was below. discovered to be useful for washing clothing and skin. The Roman baths were built around 312 B.C. They were luxurious and popular. It is believed that the Romans acquired the knowledge of soap from the Gauls.

Soapmakers' guilds began to spring up in Europe during the seventh century. Secrets of the trade were closely guarded. The training and promotion of craftsmen within the trade

were highly regulated. The English begain soapcrafting during the twelfth century and, unfortunately, soap was heavily taxed as a luxury item and therefore was only readily available to the rich. The English soap tax was repealed in 1853 and a boom in the soap trade coincided with a change in the social attitues toward personal cleanliness.

In Colonial America, soap was made by women producing it out of their homes seasonally. To make soap, families saved up leftover scraps of fat from meat that they had eaten during the year. They also saved the ashes from the fireplace, pouring water over them to release the lye contained in the ashes. On the day they made the soap, they first cooked the fat in a large pot over a fire for several hours until it was smooth. Then

they added the lye water and stirred for several more hours. Lastly, they would pour this mixture into wooden molds to harden. With the advent of general stores to the smaller towns, most families abandoned the hard work of soap making and purchased it at the store.

Soap was used for laundry, dish-washing and bathing, pretty much the same uses as today, but in reality very

deodrant soaps, bathe almost every day and have hot water in our homes. Back then, they generally bathed only once a week which was usually on Saturday night before church on Sunday; they bathed in a wash basin with water they had hauled from a well or creek and often the entire family used the same water.

Today, most Americans purchase soap at the grocery store where there is a wide array of choices from scented bath bars to powerful cleansers. Also, today we use soap for purposes that it would not have been used for by earlier people. For example many people lived in homes with dirt floors so that scrubbing the floor was not possible. If one of those pioneers were to visit a modern soap factory, they would be amazed. All of the manufacturing is done by machine making huge amounts daily to satisfy consumers. Although the ingredients of lard and lye are still the same, much has

changed. As a result of the scientific achievements, soap has become a popular and easy-to-obtain commodity. The marketplace was ready for variety and manufactures soon complied. Companies such as Armour soap works (now the Dial corporation) and many others paved the way for the giant soap companies we know today: Colgate-Palmolive, Proctor & Gamble, Dial, Jergens and Lever Brothers. Ivory, Lifebouy, Camay, Zest, Tone, Safeguard, Caress and other soap brand names became mass-markeded and common in the homes of most Americans. In the mid-1970's, a new era of deodrant soaps came into vogue with names like Irish Spring, Coast and Shield. Then came specialty soaps such as Neutrogena, Basis and Oil of Olay. Now, soapmaking is becoming a home craft and micro-industry.

Gulf coast car show season opens; competitors can stay busy almost every weekend

The Old South Antique Auto Club's annual show under Interstate 10 near Fort Conde kicked off the Mobile car show season on March 27. This was the thirty-seventh year for these folks to put on their show so you know that they have it all down to an exact science. As a matter of fact, a few of the competitors were babes in nappies when their parents were mapping out the first show.

If you go by the number of entries, it wasn't a very big show this year. However, if you go by warmth and hospitality, you'd need all your fingers and toes to add those up. That particular weekend was a barnburner when it came to things to do. The Old South show, the Pensacola Mustang show, the Elberta Sausage Fes-tival, the Jazzfest in P'cola, the Bienville Blast in downtown Mobile plus the wedding of a DSR couple's daughter. Whew! Makes you tired just to list it all. The Editor only knows that DSR member Eddie Anderson took Best of Show post-war and that there were a few of our club members there. Sorry that I can't tell you more.



The ponies were corralled at Pensacola's University Mall March 26-27 for the Gulf Coast Regional Mustang Club's 20th annual show. Vendor set-up and tech inspection were open from 8 A.M. - 5 P.M. on Friday and again early Saturday morning. The judging began at 12 noon and was completed when the last Mustang's hooves and teeth had been checked. A hospitality dinner was held at the Holiday Inn that evening with the awards ceremony following. The Editor understands that our very own Jerry Finley was the only competitor in that show but a some of our members who own Mustangs visited the show to have a look around.

It has been reported that this show also suffered from a lack of participation due to a National show coming later in the year in Charlotte, NC. It seems that folks are being somewhat frugal with both time and money so they can go there and either compete or have a good look at the creme de la creme. There were almost as many varieties and colors of vehicles at the sixth annual Camellia Classic open car show hosted by the Mobile Bay Mustang Club as there were flowers in Bellingrath Gardens where the



show was held. With something near 240 cars spread over the Great Lawn, the show has come back from the lower numbers of the past few years. A picture was taken of each car, which the owner could purchase later in the day, with the Bellingrath home in the background, a row of small flowering plants in the foreground and a lovely Azalea Trail Maid off to the side. This was a nice souvenir of the show if you didn't get a tee shirt.

Various kinds of entertainment went on throughout the day and there were planned activities for the younger children. For the adults, there were plenty of vehicles to look at, several different types of tasty food to partake of, a choice of soft drinks or beer in the beverage category and plenty of time to socialize with fellow hobbyists.

This time the Editor was able get a handle on the DSR members there either as competitors or visitors. Seen during the day were 2 Andersons, 2 Bogles, 2 Cammons, R. Cochran, L. Crowdus, J. Finley, 2 Francises, 2 Froehlichs, E. Grimes, C. Lyles, J. Martin, 2 Musgroves, L. Nelson, 2 Paquets, 2 Reids, F. Rettig, 2 Rowells, 2 Vaughans, 2 Wheltons, 2 Whighams and Al White. It must be noted that a fair number of these are members are both clubs. If you arrived after about 1:30 the Editor missed seeing you.

The Editor and spouse transported a 4 o'clock wedding party for the club which put a few \$\$\$ in the DSR's tin box. As a matter of fact, the father of the groom who wrote the check doubled the amount of the agreed upon contribution. He was pleased that we were at the church about a quarter hour ahead of time, had called two days prior to confirm we would be there and that we were understanding and patient while the family made extra pictures.

Afterward, it was back to the motel for some good sleeping while it rained all night long.

On leaving our motel the next morning after another Continental breakfast, we headed for Montgomery and a stop of about three hours to browse through antique shops. One of them, the Sassafras Shop, located in one of the old downtown homes, served us a really great meal at an excellent price. We were fortunate to have had our meal a little before noon because when we left, their large dining room was filling up with local people. Then, it was back on I-65 South. Now, all of you know that any DSR group can't ride from Montgomery to Mobile without a stop! We chose to stop at Priester's near Fort Deposit for ice cream. After looking through Priester's, (it's a bit like a Cracker Barrel) we headed for home and arriving in the late afternoon.

What a grand time we all had. The typical, well-known DSR fellowship abounded. Our hats are off to the Whighams for the super arrangement they made. Touring were Carl Bailey, Lycyle Crowdus, 2 Lunsford, 2 Neeses, 2 Whighams, 2 Whites and 2 Youens. If you missed this, you missed a great 3-day tour. When we were in the plantation home, the Neeses mentioned "mule days" held in April each year near Columbia, Tennessee. We had a group discussion of a Y2K tour to Columbia. Whatta ya think? Wanna go see the Tennessee mules? Melvin's been and says everyone should go at least once.

Oh, I almost forgot. I told you that three couples bought themselves new Mercedes. You can see any of them if you go by their home and look on their fireplace mantles.



An editorial "Oops!"

My apologies to Bonnie Franko for failing to give credit to her as Editor and the Genessee Valley Antique Car Society newsletter, the *Brass Lamp*, for the automobile make/model quiz in last month's issue.

Radio

Today, Lear's first big invention constituted a \$1 billion business that everyone takes for granted. Still, entrepreneurs and corporations keep working to marry cars to other kinds of products. Cellular car phones are as common as air fresheners. New systems like GM's On-Star are deploying global-positioning technology to bring graphic directions and maps into the drivers seat. Never one to be left out of the marketplace, Bill Gates has been talking about wiring cars to give motorists access to the World Wide Web. Sound dangerous? Well, so is romance. And, as William Lear proved, romance can lead to a happy marriage.

(The preceding article is copied from *The Brass Lamp*, newsletter of the Genesee Valley Antic Car Society AACA Region, Vol. 35, No. 3, April 1998 edited at that time by Rick Tice.)



Saraland Shoney's Display by Ernic Youens

All Shoney's restaurants in this area are in the process of new plans to attract customers and increase business. Future plans are to begin a special Family Night on Tuesdays 4-9 P.M. The Saraland Shoney's led off the promotion on Tuesday, April 13 and invited the DSR to participate with eight antique vehicles on display in front of the restaurant. Sadly, only four cars showed up. For the four cars, the DSR received a donation and a free meal to the participants. Their theme, the 1950's and 1960's, will continue The Tuesday family meal for four consecutive. special includes "freebie" vegetables and free delicious hot rolls tossed to the tables, somewhat like Lambert's restaurants "throwed rolls". door prizes were given to customers periodically. At present their plans are that other Shoney's area restaurants will have something similar on Tuesdays with all the restaurants regularly changing themes. Asked if they would consider DSR displays again here or at other restaurants, I was told they would consider it which is certainly to our advantage.



Officers

President: Eddie Anderson 649-3231
Vice President: Pat Francis 342-3398
Secretary: Jane Bruton 602-8073
Treasurer: Wilma Jones 645-1499
Activities: Ed Lunsford 661-8636
Editor: Patt Paquet 661-4009
Member at Large: Cecil Pugh 342-3404
SE Divisional Tour (4/09 - 4/11 2001)
Chman: Charlie Froehlich (601)749-9935

The Sparkplug is non-profit and published for the information of our members and friends. DEEP SOUTH REGION meetings are held the fourth Thursday of each month at 7:30 P.M. in the clubhouse located at 951 Forest Hill Drive. Membership in the Antique Automobile Club of America is required to be a member of this region. Annual local dues are \$15.00 and AACA national dues are \$26.00. Views expressed in the Sparkplug are not necessarily those of the Region officers or AACA.

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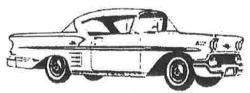
Deep South Region AACA
951 Forest Hill Drive
Mobile, Alabama
Soturday, May 8, 1999 Saturday, May 8, 1999

Food Concession

Restofied

22

1st, 2nd, 3rd Place Awards, Dash Plaques to First 100 entries, Best of Show - Pre -War and Post -War Prestige Award to Vehicle 25 years old or older scoring 95 or better out of possible 100 points.



Dash Plaques

Door Prizes

1964 1/2 - 67

Family Fun

Free to the Public



50/50 Drawing

1974 & Older***

No Alcoholic Beverages Please

Oldies Music

			Classes			
1	Model T Ford	All		12	Mustang	1968 - 74
100	Model A Ford	All		13	Thunderbird	1955 - 57
		1900 - 30	Fire	14	Thunderbird	1958 - 74
3	Production Cars		Extinguishers	15	Corvettes	1953 - 74
	Production Cars	1931 - 42	J	16		1974 & Older
	Production Cars	1946 - 54	are		British Cars	1974 & Older
	Production Cars	1955 - 59	Encouraged	17		
	Production Cars	1960 - 64		18	Imports (Not British)	
	Production Cars	1965 - 69		19	Metropolitan	All
	Production Cars	1970 - 74		20	Mopars	1974 & Older
	Trucks	1974 & Older		21	All Others	1974 & Older
0	1 rucks	17/4 of Older			75 4 . 61 - J	1074 & Older***

Mustang 11 *** This Class is for cars with stock appearance and minor modification to any or all of these three areas 1 Drive Train 3 Interior. This Class is not eligible for Prestige Award. 2 Wheel & Tires

Pre-Registration \$15 Day of Show \$18	 r Information:	Patt Paquet Eddie Anderson	334-661-4009 334-649-3231
Each Additional Vehicle. \$ 8			



2799 JAGG

Deep South Region Antique Automobile Club of America 4963 Freeway Lane Mobile, AL 36619-1716







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