



Seasons

Marshall County Conservation Quarterly Newsletter

Volume 40, Issue 3

Fall 2025



The Challenge of Compromise

By Emily Herring, Director

Coming to a compromise is no easy task. Maybe that's why it feels so rare in today's world. By definition, compromise means no one walks away completely happy - but ideally, everyone walks away okay. That's the goal, even when it's hard to achieve.

For the past year, Marshall County has been working to find a reasonable compromise regarding windmill setbacks from county conservation areas. In that time, I've learned more about wind energy than I ever expected. That's just how I operate - I believe in thoroughly educating myself to make the most informed decisions possible, especially when it comes to our public lands.



One area of deep concern is Green Castle Recreation Area. For the last 15 years, Marshall County Conservation has worked to bring the vision of a new campground at Green Castle to life. Now, we face the possibility of that area being surrounded by industrial 650 foot tall wind turbines.

When something like this lands on your desk, there are so many factors to consider. How will it affect the people who visit our parks? What impact will it have on the wildlife? Will it bring in additional revenue for conservation projects? How will it affect nearby residents—our neighbors, with whom we work hard to maintain positive relationships? How will it affect my relationship with the Board of Supervisors, who set our budget? What about my staff, who live and work in these parks daily? What about park revenues? And how will it affect our County Conservation Board members? Is wind energy, a renewable energy, an overall net positive for society? These questions have been swirling in my mind for months. And they still haven't stopped.

The truth is, there's no perfect solution. Windmills are a divisive issue, which often come in and pit neighbor against neighbor, friend against friend, even co-worker against co-worker.

My sincere hope is that we can find a middle ground. That those in support of wind development will feel validated that renewable energy projects can continue here. And that those concerned about their proximity to public lands know that our most treasured areas are protected—buffered from noise, less

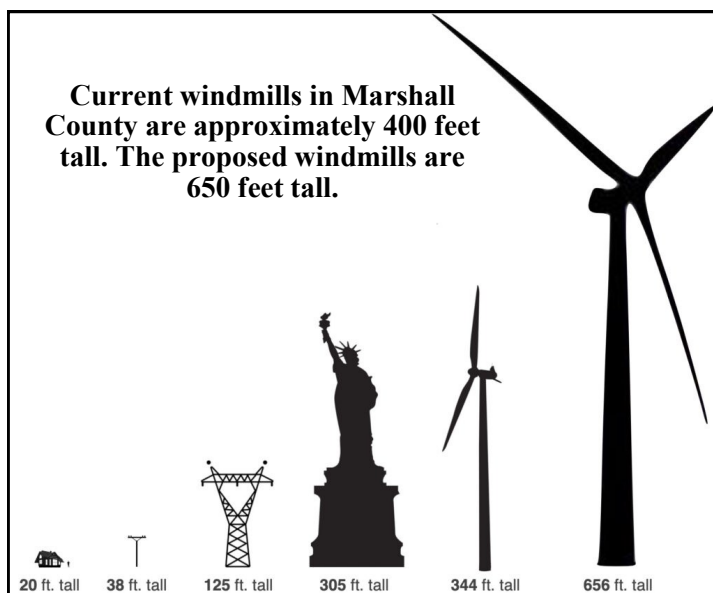
likely to disturb wildlife, and free from unnecessary light pollution at night. I understand that may sound idealistic. Maybe I do have a pie-in-the-sky vision - one where people can have honest, respectful conversations without dishonesty or self-interest. One where we treat others the way we want to be treated. One where we rise above the "my way, right now" mindset. But is that really such a bad thing to hope for?

We're living in a time of deep division. And in the end, when one side gets everything and the other is ignored, what happens? Anger. Retaliation. Polarization. Then the pendulum swings the other way. The opportunity for compromise is lost.

A board member recently said to me, "This is clearly bothering you." And he's right—it is. It's hard to have a strong belief and very little control over the outcome. Sometimes all you have is your voice—and the hope that someone is truly listening.

Protecting Marshall County Conservation areas is the purpose of my job. In Marshall County's deliberation over wind turbine setbacks at Green Castle Recreation Area, protecting our natural areas must remain a priority. While the urgency of clean energy is clear, it cannot come at the expense of the quiet, wildlife habitat, and natural beauty that define our treasured public lands. We owe it to future generations to find solutions that respect both conservation and the livelihoods of our neighbors—because truly caring about clean energy includes caring deeply about the places we protect.

Current windmills in Marshall County are approximately 400 feet tall. The proposed windmills are 650 feet tall.





Nature Story Hour

Nature Story Hour will return next Spring, starting in May and running through the month of August.



Live and Local - Royce Johns

Thursday, September 18 at 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.
Leonard Grimes Memorial Amphitheater, Grimes Farm
2349 233rd Street, Marshalltown

Join us for a night of traditional country music with Royce Johns. Royce is a husband, father, guitar picker, and singer/songwriter. He has been pickin' and grinnin' for the last decade and has been fortunate to work with some talented singers, songwriters, and musicians. He has played with Sammy Kershaw, Sawyer Brown, Trick Pony, and many others.



Food Vendors: Clare's Tenderloins, Comal Kaxi, Lillie Mae, Most Wanted Coffee



Marshall County Conservation offices will be closed:

- Tuesday, November 11 in observance of Veteran's Day
- Thursday, November 27 and Friday, November 28 for Thanksgiving



Monarch Tagging Event

Tuesday, September 9 at 5:30 - 6:30 p.m.
Grimes Farm Shelter House
2359 233rd Street, Marshalltown
Registration Fee: Free

Join us on September 9 at the Grimes Farm Shelter House to learn about the Monarchs' remarkable migration during the fall months. The program will start at 5:30 p.m. with a short presentation about Monarchs and the tagging program. Following the program, nets will be available for families to catch Monarchs to tag. Milkweed seeds will be available to anyone who wants to plant them to help Monarchs thrive, while supplies last. No pre-registration is required, and the event is FREE!



Sunrise Hike

Tuesday, September 16, at 6:30 a.m.
Heart of Iowa Trail
209 S. Main Street, Rhodes
Registration Fee: Free
Registration Deadline: September 12 by 4:00 p.m.

Join Marshall County Conservation for a program that encourages you to start your morning with a hike through a local county area. Research has shown that people who exercise in the morning are more active throughout the day. So come for a brisk hike, bring your binoculars to look for birds, or to get some fresh air while strolling leisurely. MCCB staff will be present to answer any questions you might have.

Participants will want to dress appropriately and wear sturdy footwear. There is no charge for this event. **Register by calling 641-752-5490, emailing**



Kayaking

Tuesday, September 23 at 5:30 - 7:00 p.m.
Green Castle Recreation Area
2891 Green Castle Road, Gilman
Registration Fee: Free
Deadline: September 19 by 4:00 pm



Join us as we explore Marshall County waters with kayaks. This family-friendly event encourages participants to learn the basics of kayaking and how to be safe on Iowa's waters. There is no fee for this program; however, you must pre-register to reserve limited spots. **Register by calling 641-752-**

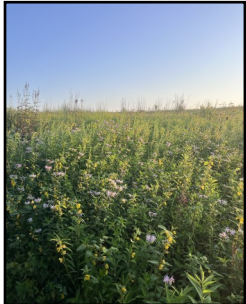
-5490, emailing mccb@marshallcountyiowa.gov, or texting only 641-758-9777.

Brown Bag Bunch

To register for Brown Bags, please call 641-752-5490, email mccb@marshallcountya.gov, or text only 641-758-9777 by the deadline of each event listed below.

September: Prairie in Bloom - A Wildflower Walk at Marietta

Tuesday, September 16 at 11:30 - 12:30 p.m.
Marietta Sand Prairie Preserve
1744 Knapp Avenue, Marshalltown
Registration Fee: Free
Registration Deadline: September 12 by 4:00 p.m.



Take a guided stroll through the prairie in full bloom during this guided walk at Marietta. Learn to identify native wildflowers, explore their ecological roles, and discover the beauty and diversity of Iowa's prairie landscape. Perfect for nature lovers, gardeners, and anyone curious about our native plants.

October: Discover Iowa's Owls

Tuesday, October 21 at 11:30 - 12:30 p.m.
Grimes Farm Conservation Center
2349 233rd Street, Marshalltown
Registration Fee: Free
Registration Deadline: October 17 by 4:00 p.m.

Join us for a fascinating look at Iowa's owl species and the incredible adaptations that make them expert hunters of the night. Learn to identify local species and uncover the secrets behind their silent flight, exceptional hearing, and keen vision.



November: Chronic Wasting Disease - Iowa's Deer at Danger

Tuesday, November 18 at 11:30 - 12:30 p.m.
Grimes Farm Conservation Center
2349 233rd Street, Marshalltown
Registration Fee: Free
Registration Deadline: November 14 by 4:00 p.m.



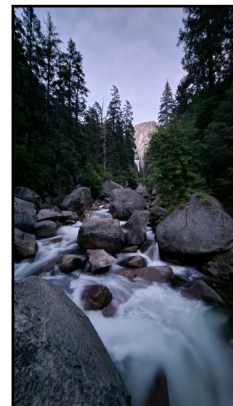
Join White-tailed Deer Biologist Jace Elliott for an in-depth look at Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD), a fatal illness affecting Iowa's Deer population. Learn how CWD spreads, its impact on Iowa's deer population, and what is being done to monitor and manage it.

Brown Bag Bunch - continued

December: California Camper Van Adventure

Thursday, December 11 at 11:30 - 12:30 p.m.
Grimes Farm Conservation Center
2349 233rd Street, Marshalltown
Registration Fee: Free
Registration Deadline: December 5 by 4:00 p.m.

Join director Emily Herring for a picture-packed tour of the Pinnacles, Kings Canyon, Sequoia, and Yosemite National Parks! Follow along on her summer camper van adventure with her family, as they explore the breathtaking landscapes of central California - plus make a few iconic stops in San Francisco along the way. Whether you're planning your national park road trip or want to live vicariously through a young family's fun (and sometimes comical) vacation, this engaging and informative program is for you!



Zombie Run

Saturday, October 18 at 6:00 p.m.
Grimes Farm
2349 233rd Street, Marshalltown
Registration Fee: Online \$35.00
Day of Registration \$45.00
Deadline: October 15 by 4:00 p.m.



The Park Apocalypse has begun, and Grimes Farm will be infested with Zombies on October 18, 2025. Put on your running shoes for this spine-tingling 5K, with registration beginning at 6:00 p.m. and a staggered race start beginning at 6:30 p.m.

Runners will brave the oncoming night and undead creatures lurking on the trails, which will try to steal their brains (also known as flags, from flag football belts). If runners cross the finish line with flags, they have avoided lively decomposition and are declared a survivor. Those with no flags - their future is not guaranteed, and they are deemed infected.

Runners can register online at Eventbrite. Online registration fee is \$35 and includes a swag item, a finisher medal, a walking "dead" taco meal, a zombie antidote (Gatorade), and a zombie cookie. Registration Deadline is October 15. Registration for the race day is welcome; however, medals, swag items, and meals are guaranteed to the first 140 registered runners. The day of race registration is \$45.

If running isn't your thing and you would like to dedicate your evening to becoming a Zombie or another volunteer role, please contact Emma Bruck at ebruck@marshallcountya.gov or 641-752-5490. Income from the Zombie Run will be put back into the trails at Grimes Farm.



Scan to Register

Homeschool Nature Adventures

Join us at the Grimes Farm Conservation Center for a nature program delivered in a flexible format specially designed for kindergarten through fourth-grade students. Programs will engage students with a story, craft, or activity and an outdoor fun component. There is no fee for this program. **To register for Nature Adventures, please call 641-752-5490, email mccb@marshallcountytia.gov, or text only 641-758-9777 by the registration deadline.**

September - Prairie Flowers

Thursday, September 18 at 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.

Grimes Farm Conservation Center

2349 233rd Street, Marshalltown

Registration Fee: Free

Registration Deadline: September 16 by 4:00 p.m.

Prairie Flower Power! Students will explore the colorful world of Iowa's native prairie flowers through hands-on activities, games, and a short hike. They'll learn how these plants grow, why they matter, and what makes a prairie special!



October - Camouflage

Thursday, October 23 at 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.

Grimes Farm Conservation Center

Registration Fee: Free

Registration Deadline: October 21 by 4:00 p.m.

Why do some animals blend into their surroundings while others stand out? In this hands-on program, students will investigate the science behind camouflage, learn about different types, and explore how animals adapt to survive.



November - Nocturnal Animal

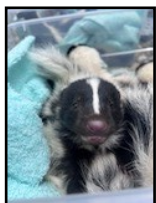
Thursday, November 6 at 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.

Grimes Farm Conservation Center

Registration Fee: Free

Registration Deadline: November 4 by 4:00 p.m.

Explore the fascinating adaptations that help nocturnal animals survive in the dark! Students will investigate how senses like night vision, echolocation, and enhanced hearing help creatures like bats, owls, and foxes thrive after sunset.



December - Animal Signs

Thursday, December 4 at 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.

Grimes Farm Conservation Center

Registration Fee: Free

Registration Deadline: December 2 by 4:00 p.m.

Students will become nature detectives as they learn to spot animal signs like tracks, scat, and nests. Through hands-on activities and exploration, they'll discover how these clues reveal who's been nearby!



Trees Forever - Stewards of the Beautiful Land

Register for the Stewards of the Beautiful Land Series by calling 641-752-5490, emailing mccb@marshallcountytia.gov or texting only 641-758-9777

Marshall County Stewards of the Beautiful Land: Tree ID Walk

Wednesday, September 10 at 5:30 - 6:30 p.m.

Grammer Grove Recreation Area

2030 127th St. Liscomb, IA

Registration Fee: Free

Registration Deadline: September 5 by 4:00 p.m.

We're talking trees! Join Iowa DNR District Forester Joe Herring for an evening walk around Grammer Grove Recreation Area looking at trees. Don't miss this chance to learn about Iowa's tree species, how to identify them, and to learn from a tree expert!

Marshall County Stewards of the Beautiful Land: Tree Planting

Thursday, October 9 at 9:00 am

Green Castle Recreation Area

2891 Green Castle Road, Gilman

Registration Fee: Free

Registration Deadline: October 7 by 4:00 p.m.

Join us for a day of environmental stewardship and hands-on conservation as we plant trees at Green Castle Recreation Area on Thursday, October 9th! Volunteers will help plant a variety of native tree species to enhance the landscape, support wildlife, and promote a healthier environment. Whether you're a seasoned conservationist or a first-time planter, all are welcome to dig in and make a lasting impact.



Chronic Wasting Disease Ambassadors

Wednesday, September 3, 10, 17 at 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Marshalltown Extension Office

2608 S 2nd Street, Marshalltown

Registration Online at <https://tinyurl.com/5mkbuyb7>

This collaborative education program between the Iowa DNR and Iowa State University Extension and Outreach that seeks to help Iowans address the challenge of Chronic Wasting Disease. The goal of the program is to develop a small, connected, and well-educated network of local leaders to effectively communicate about the management and mitigation of CWD. Graduates of the three-week training program become "ambassadors" for the science-based management of CWD. Participants can include hunters and non-hunters, community members, and anyone interested in white-tailed deer conservation and management. The program comprises about eight hours of learning and networking with ISU and DNR educators and other concerned community members.



Paste Paper Workshops

My Paste Paper Landscape Collage For Kids
Tuesday, October 21 at 4:30 - 5:30 p.m.
Grimes Farm Conservation Center
Registration Fee: Free
Registration Deadline: October 17
Ages: 8 - 12

Julie Bousum, former Marshalltown art teacher, will demonstrate how textured and colorful paste papers are made. You will choose paste papers for sky and land. Then you will add other natural details such as plants or animals to complete your small patterned landscapes! This workshop is sponsored by Arts & Culture Alliance Artist Innovation Grant.



Paste Paper Workshop: Create a Nature Collage and Take Home Your Own Paste Papers
Tuesday, October 21 at 6:30 - 9:00 p.m.
Grimes Farm Conservation Center
Registration Fee: \$10
Registration Deadline: October 17
Ages: 13+

Julie Bousum, illustrator and Amana Art Guild Workshop leader, will show examples of paste paper artwork and demonstrate how to make the colorful, textured papers. Then you will have a chance to make your own paste papers for use at home later.

A variety of paste papers will be provided for you to create a finished collage featuring a nature scene from a photo or your imagination. Beginner or expert, you will be successful with this ready-to-frame 11 x 14" collage! This workshop is sponsored by Arts & Culture Alliance Artist Innovation Grant.



Needle Felting Program

Thursday, November 13 **5:30 - 7:00 p.m.**
Grimes Farm Conservation Center
Registration Fee: \$45.00
Registration Deadline: November 6 by 4:00 p.m.

Join us for a fun and creative 1.5-hour class led by fiber artist Bonnie Ohrt, where you'll learn the basics of needle felting using three unique types of wool: alpaca, sheep's wool, and llama fiber. Bonnie will guide you step-by-step in creating your own personalized Christmas stocking. Choose from a variety of inspiring class examples or bring your own ideas to life—no experience necessary!



What's Included:

- A *Starter Kit* (included in the \$45 fee) with all materials needed to complete your stocking
- Extra wool to take home for future projects
- Hands-on instruction using different fibers and felting tools

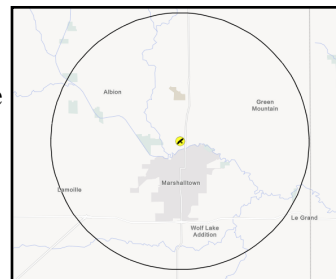
All materials are provided, bring your creativity!

Whether you're new to fiber arts or a seasoned crafter, this workshop offers a fun and relaxed way to explore a new artistic skill while creating something festive and one-of-a-kind.

Christmas Bird Count

Thursday, December 18 All Day
Throughout Marshall County Christmas Bird Area
(See Below Image)
Registration Fee: FREE
Registration Deadline: December 16 by 4:00 p.m.

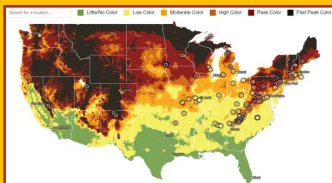
For over 125 years, the Audubon Society has held Christmas Bird Counts across the United States. Data gathered from these counts is used to understand bird populations. During the Christmas Bird Count, groups are assigned an area that covers a 15-mile radius; they record as many different birds as possible. The species and numbers are then compiled, sent to the Audubon Society, and documented. The count must happen around Christmas, and groups must pick a specific day for 24 hours to record birds. The date we have selected is December 18. We have multiple bird experts and have divided the quadrant into sections. There are several ways to participate in a birding day. 1. If you are an expert, you can help lead a group. 2. Even if you don't know birds, you can join an expert and learn about birds along the way. 3. If you have bird feeders at your home, you can watch and record the birds that come to your feeders. You do not have to dedicate 24 hours. You can give as much time as you want. **If you are interested in joining us for the bird count on December 18, please get in touch with Emily Herring at 641-752-5490 or eherring@marshallcountytia.gov by December 16 at 4:00 p.m.** The map below shows you the regions we will be covering. This includes the towns of Marshalltown, Albion, Green Mountain, and Laurel.



Explore Fall

Looking to see fall colors in Iowa? Explore Fall has an interactive Fall Foliage Map that shows what areas are in peak color. Are you traveling to another state, you can also view other states' foliage or locate a specific location.

For more information visit:
<https://www.explorefall.com>



Star Gazing with the Amateur Astronomers of Central Iowa

Use of New Smart Telescopes

Friday, September 12 at 8:00 p.m.

Dean Memorial Observatory, Green Castle Recreation Area

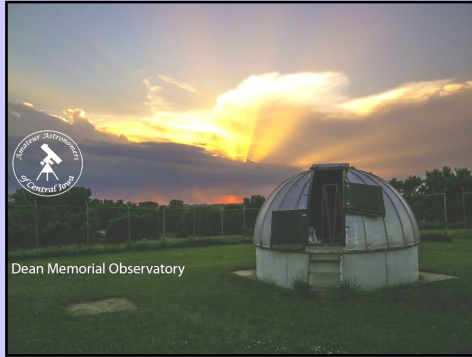
Small totally automated telescopes that can find their way around the sky and take pictures can be purchased for as little as \$500.00. We will have one present to demonstrate its use as well as some images to show off its amazing capabilities.

Friday, October 10 at 7:00 p.m.

Dean Memorial Observatory, Green Castle Recreation Area

A tour of the constellations of Fall. October nights can be cool, but put on a sweatshirt and extra jacket and join us for an enjoyable night under dark fall skies as we say goodbye to the constellations of Summer and greet the constellations of Fall at the Dean Memorial Observatory in Green Castle Recreation Area.

For more information,
contact Jim Bonser at (641)
751-8744.



PARK APOCALYPSE ZOMBIE RUN

OCTOBER 18, 2025

REGISTRATION 6:00 P.M.

RACE STARTS 6:30 P.M.

VOLUNTEER???

If running is not your thing and you would like to sacrifice your brain and evening and become a Zombie on the trail or another volunteer, please contact

Emma Bruck at

ebrucka@marshallcountyiia.gov

or at 641-752-5490. Income made from the Zombie Run will be put back into the trails at the Grimes Farm.

**REGISTRATION
ONLINE AT
EVENTBRITE
REGISTRATION FEE
OF \$35 INCLUDES:
SWAG ITEM
MEDAL
MEAL
DAY OF
REGISTRATION \$45**

For more information about the
Zombie Run check out page 3 of
this newsletter.

TRIVIA NIGHT FUNDRAISER



FRIENDS OF
MARSHALL COUNTY
CONSERVATION

NOV
14

GRIMES FARM & CONSERVATION CENTER

NOVEMBER 14 6:00 P.M.

JOIN US FOR A NIGHT OF
TRIVIA, SILENT AUCTION
ITEMS, FOOD FROM
PITCHFORK, WINE FROM
MADISON COUNTY
WINERY, AND DESSERT
FROM BAKERY 146

\$10/PERSON
TEAMS OF 1 - 6

TO REGISTER SCAN THE
QR CODE OR CALL
641-752-5490
LIMITED SPOTS!



PROCEEDS
FROM THE
TRIVIA NIGHT
GO TOWARDS
THE PURCHASE
OF NEW BISON
AT GREEN
CASTLE.

Photo Contest

Now is a great time to get out
and capture some beautiful images!

All entries are due by midnight
Saturday, January 31, 2026!

Categories include Scenic (Natural Resources),
Native Wildlife, Native Plants, Open Nature, and
Outdoor Recreation.

For contest details, call
(641)752-5490 or visit
www.marshallcountytia.gov.
Click on Departments, then
Conservation Board, and
then Annual Photo Contest.
Winners of each category
will receive a \$25 gift card.



Monarchs Wanted:

We are looking for Monarchs to tag. If you
get large groups of Monarchs roosting in
your trees, please call us at 641-752-5490
or text only 641-758-9777.

*THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO
HELPED MAKE PEOPLE IN THE PARK
A HUGE SUCCESS! THANK YOU TO
OUR DONOR THEISEN'S. ALSO,
THANK YOU TO ALL WHO
PARTICIPATED IN THE SEARCH FOR
LEGO PEOPLE.*



SEASONS

Marshall County Conservation Board
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Marshalltown, IA 50158
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Thank You

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Playscape Flower Beds: The Marshalltown Garden Club

Park Maintenance: Evans McWilliams, Emerson, Lennox, Marc Pedersen, Dr. Sarah Derry, Denny Bruck

People in the Park: Theisen's

Green Castle Grand Opening: Katie Fink, Ken Lyons, Case Hegerman, Marvis Drew, Bren Lee, Jeff Kooser, Tina and Danny Nelson, Brad Rahmiller

Donations: Bill Helgan Memorial, Mechdyne, Thrivent, Governor's STEM Council - Extern

Newsletter Editing: Bren Lee

If we inadvertently missed someone, our thanks to you also.



Help us keep costs down and save resources. If you would like to receive the newsletter electronically rather than having it mailed, please send an email to mccb@marshallcountya.gov. Also the electronic version is in color!

MARSHALL COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD

2349 233rd Street, Marshalltown, IA 50158
(641) 752-5490
mccb@marshallcountya.gov
www.marshallcountya.gov

Nature Center Hours

Monday - Friday 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

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Emma Bruck

Jeremiah Manken

Tyler Renze

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