

ST. PETER'S ABBEY NEWSLETTER

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Father Rudolph's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Joe Novecosky, visit him at the University hospital in Saskatoon.

Prior injured in gun accident

Members of St. Peter's Abbey and residents of the area were shocked when they heard that Father Rudolph Novecosky was severely injured in a gun accident in the mid-afternoon of Nov. 3, 1977.

Father Rudolph, prior at the abbey and assistant pastor at Muenster and St. Gregor, was hunting ducks north of Carmel with five other hunters, including two confreres, Fathers Edward Benning

and Florian Renneberg. As Father Rudolph was walking through tall weeds and bush with his brother Tony, the trigger of his semi-automatic shotgun got caught and the gun accidentally went off. The recoil forced the gun back and, while still in mid-air, it was triggered a second time, catching Father Rudolph in the lower spine at point-blank range.

Fortunately the hunting party had a station wagon at the scene, and Father Rudolph was rushed to St. Elizabeth hospital, Humboldt, where he received pain killers and a blood transfusion before being rushed to the University Hospital in Saskatoon for surgery. Two operations were performed in the next four hours. First the doctors

COVER

George Hunt and Brother Douglas bring home a Christmas tree for the abbey.

operated on his stomach side to determine if any major organs were damaged; then they operated on his back to take out some of the 135 lead pellets that were lodged mainly in the lower spine area. Providentially no major organs were damaged and the spinal cord was only damaged.

Father Rudolph remained in the intensive-care unit for five days before he was moved to a private room. By the end of December the deep wound was beginning to heal. He was experiencing considerable pain from nerve spasms in his legs, however. He has normal feelings in his legs down to his ankles and, at this point, only partial feeling in his feet.

He has been greatly encouraged by the many letters and cards — over 400 — and the many promises of prayers and visitors he has received. His parents, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Novacosky, have been spending the major part of each week since the accident in Saskatoon so that they can spend time with him each day. His brother Joseph and his wife Trish are also regular visitors. In addition, various members of the community have been able to visit him almost daily.

Father Rudolph has begun to take some physiotherapy treatments twice a day and hopes to sit up once the wound in his back is healed. He expects to be at the University Hospital for at least another month and a half.

Deceased brethren, relatives

Father Maurus Zabolitsky, 74, Holy Cross Abbey, Canon City, Col., died Sept. 28, after a long illness.

Father Werner (Charles) Conwell, 64, St. Vincent Archabbey, Latrobe, Penn., died Oct. 19.

Father Antony Geza Kovacs, 50, Newark Abbey, Newark, N.J., died Oct. 22.

Father Sebastian Weissenberger, 92, St. Benedict's Abbey, Atchison, Kan., died Nov. 2.

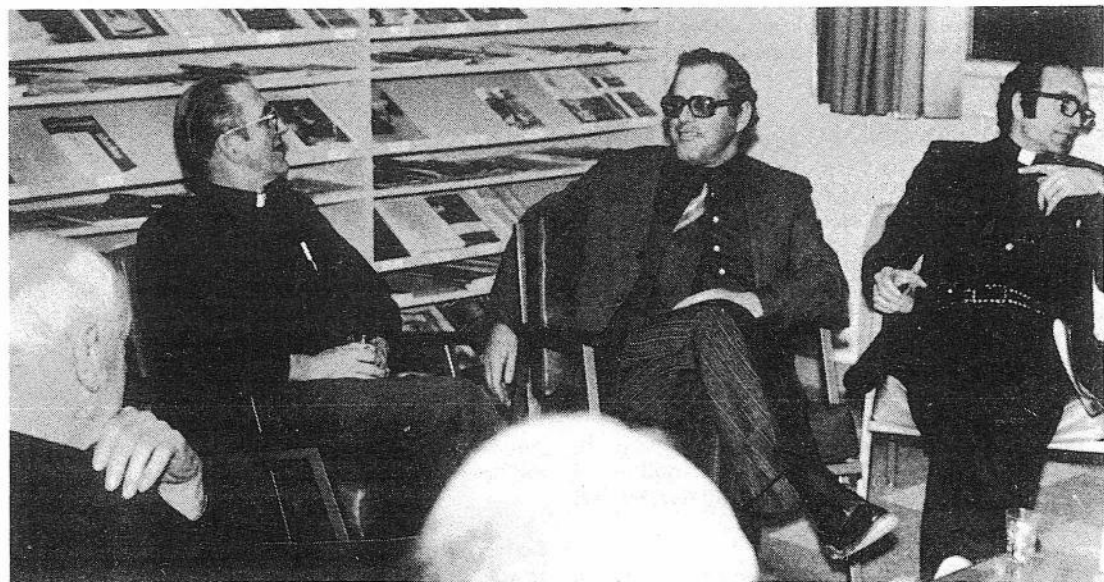
Father Cuthbert Allen, 71, Belmont Abbey, Charlotte, N.C., died Dec. 1.

Father William (Aloysius) Goetz, 78, St. Vincent Archabbey, died Dec. 9.

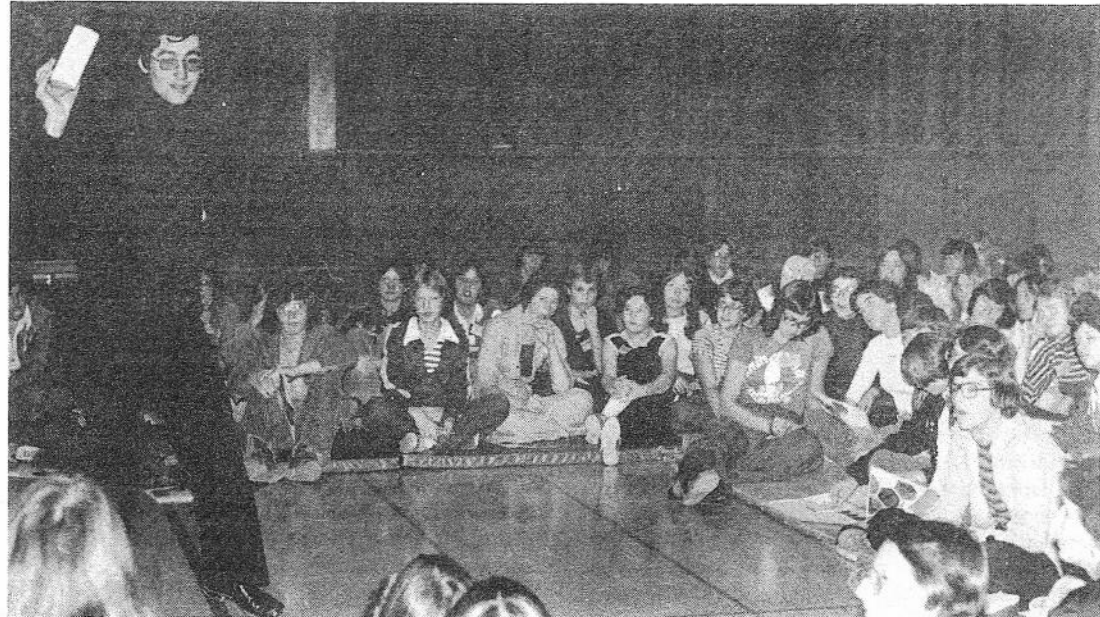
Father Arthur Soukup, 63, Assumption Abbey, Richardton, N.D., died Dec. 17, after a lingering illness characteristic of Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis.

Father Aloysius Wachter, 84, Belmont Abbey, Belmont, N.C., died on Dec. 30.

Mrs. Cecilia Weber, 82, mother of Abbot Jerome, died in Humboldt Dec. 8, a few days after suffering a stroke.



The community had a farewell get-together for Father Sylvester before he left for Death Valley.



Father John Weckend from Milestone was the main speaker at an abbacy youth conference Oct. 22-23. Almost 200 young people attended.

Personnel notes

Abbot Jerome Weber attended the annual convention of the Catholic School Trustees in Regina, Nov. 14.

Fathers Daniel Muyres and Martin Brodner and Brother Thomas Gerwing, members of the Muenster Liturgical Commission, sponsored a liturgy workshop at St. Peter's Abbey on Oct. 2. It was meant for members of parish liturgy committees in the abbacy.

Father Alphonse Ludwig was in the hospital at Spalding for five days in December to have a check up on his arthritis and severe headaches.

Father George Brodner was scheduled to go to the hospital in Humboldt, Jan. 9, for a gall stone operation and to remove a growth under his left ribs.

Father Martin Brodner, chairman of the Western Liturgical Conference, chaired the annual

meeting at Edmonton, Oct. 4-5. The main theme of the conference was "The healing sacraments".

Father Florian Renneberg attended a meeting of the Canadian Consultative Commission on Multiculturalism in Regina, Oct. 28-30.

Father Roman Schneider attended the annual meeting of the National Federation of Senates of Priests, Oct. 24-27, in Mississauga, Ont. He used the opportunity to visit friends at Divine Word in London, Ont.

Father Leo Hinz attended the annual meeting of the Canadian Canon Law Society in Toronto, Oct. 17-20. In October he was named head of the Abbey Chapel Renovations Committee, the other members being: *Fathers Andrew Britz and Damian Yaskowich and Brother Wolfgang Thiem*. The committee was asked to come up with a basic plan for renovating the chapel, by Feb. 1.

Fathers Werner Renneberg and Lawrence DeMong and Brother Bede Hubbard took part in the World Wide Marriage Encounter held at the abbey, Dec. 2-4.

Father Lawrence DeMong went to Ottawa, Dec. 12-21, to help put the grade 5 Canadian Catechism into a home program format.

Father Sylvester Vredegoor returned to Maceio, Brasil, Nov. 7, with Sister Claire Novecosky, after a three-month visit in Canada.

Father Andrew Britz preached two one-day retreats for Christian Ethics teachers from Regina, Oct. 26 and 27. On Oct. 30 he preached at all the Sunday Masses at St. Cecilia's parish, Regina, in a Prairie Messenger promotion drive. From Dec. 27-31 he preached a retreat to 60 Benedictine Sisters at St. Benedict's convent, Winnipeg.

Brother Bede Hubbard gave three talks to the Ursuline Sisters at Bruno, on their Day of Renewal, Dec. 31.

Father Peter Novecosky was named temporary

formation director in December, since Father Rudolph is in the hospital.

Brother Thomas Gerwing spent a few days in the hospital in Humboldt, Dec. 22-26, for minor surgery. He has been busy finalizing plans for the 1978 Colony Jubilee celebration and getting ready to stage the Gilbert and Sullivan operetta, *H. M. S. Pinafore*, this February, to mark the 100th anniversary of its first performance in London, May 25, 1878.

Brother Francis Fortney took sick with congested lungs in mid-December and spent two weeks in bed, before going to the University Hospital in early January for treatment of asthma.

Brother Douglas Schmidt returned to the abbey for Christmas holidays, Dec. 22. He returned to St. Anselm's College, Manchester, N.H., Jan. 5, to complete his studies for his BA degree.



Father Daniel Muyres and Brothers Oswald King, Francis Fortney and Wolfgang Thiem harvest some fish from the abbey dugout in early October.



This multi-colored Christmas display replaced the traditional crib scene in the abbey chapel this year. An accompanying card gave the following explanation: "Since the church uses the Gospel of St. Matthew this year (A), this Christmas display is based solely on his Gospel. Matthew does not mention many of the details we usually associate with the Christmas scene (found only in Luke's Gospel). In the opening verses of his Gospel, Matthew highlights Jesus' roots in the Old Testament to show how the messianic promises are fulfilled in Jesus: A genealogy of Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham." The display was made by the Special Education Class, under the direction of Sister Miriam Spenrath and Father Peter Novecosky.

Christmas news roundup

The Christmas season brought a change of pace to life at the abbey. University class exams ended on Dec. 16 and Father Andrew and Brother Wolfgang took advantage of the break to spruce up the corridor on the third floor of Michael Hall, the college building. Most of the priests at the abbey squeezed their schedules a bit tighter to help out in the parishes with pre-Christmas confession celebrations. Their liturgical duties were a little lighter this year, however, with Christmas and New Years falling on Sundays, making two fewer church services to prepare for and celebrate.

During the pre-Christmas season, Brother Stanley and Liz Saretsky were helped by Father Peter and George Hunt to mail out the September abbey newsletter to all SPC alumni and alumnae inviting them to an alumni reunion on July 9, 1978. Over 2,200 addresses had to be located, typed out, and affixed to the newsletter. And another feature of the pre-Christmas season was the introduction at the beginning of Advent of the new Antiphonal for Lauds and Vespers. This meant nightly singing practices of the new antiphons.

Hospitals were a point of focus this Christmas.

There were daily trips to Saskatoon to see Father Rudolph during the holidays. Brother Thomas spent Christmas day in the hospital and Brother Francis was in bed at the abbey for two weeks with congested lungs, before going to the University Hospital in Saskatoon in early January. George Hunt got his finger smashed in the power stapler in the press on Dec. 9 as he was stapling the 1978 St. Peter's Colony calendars, and he had to be rushed to the doctor for attention. Earlier, Mary Smith, one of the six hermits at the abbey, was in the hospital at Humboldt, Nov. 8-29, with rheumatoid arthritis.

The abbey received some unexpected gifts at this time, too.

In October Bob Sangster came from Vancouver Island and asked to stay at the abbey and work for his room and board. His mechanical skills were tested out on a few cars and engines and he is helping Brother Oswald in the shop doing general repair work. The Prairie Messenger received a gift of \$4,000 from Our Lady of the Prairies Foundation, Saskatoon. "The fact that the trustees desired to support the Prairie Messenger," Mr. D. R. Leier wrote in an accompanying letter, "is a tribute to the essential role it plays in our prairie society. Not only is it informative, but also provocative in presenting divergent views that require and inspire the individual to analyze what is written."



Sister Isabelle Zoller, OSE, prepares a salad for Christmas dinner at the abbey.



A supper was held Dec. 16 for the university faculty and students and their parents. Eating with some parents here are Fathers Andrew Britz, principal, and James Gray.

Brother Thomas' guestmaster's diary

October was a busy month in the guest wing. First come the field rep's for continuing education, including Alvin Hergott of Melville, for a two-day conference.

Sister Charlotte Vogel, one of the hermits at the abbey, had Calgary company on Thanksgiving weekend: her brother, who teaches at the University of Calgary, and his family.

The Quakers were here that same weekend, an annual visit from them — and they're always welcome. One of their number, Joy Cohnstaedt, is the new executive director of the Saskatchewan Arts Board.

St. Thomas More College sponsored a students retreat the third weekend of October, SPC alumnus Claude Lang making the arrangements.

From Oct. 17-21, 22 ag. rep's lived in our guest facility, while taking a course in Communication and Counselling.

The fourth October weekend, we played host to 40 Christian Girls in Training (CGIT) leaders, participating in a leadership training event. We heartily enjoyed having these United Church women. They are dedicated, industrious and happy women.

On the fifth and final weekend, the Saskatoon diocese sponsored a marriage encounter at the abbey.

November was considerably less busy. A number of people attending the Christian Faith Conference (Nov. 4-6) stayed here for the duration, including the main speaker, Father Frank McNulty of Darlington, N.J. A homemakers workshop was held on Nov. 7; Rachel Friesen of the Swift Current Bible College brought a car-load of students Nov. 11-12; a group of Saskatchewan Lutheran clergy and their wives held a retreat here Nov. 14-17.

December started off with a bang: our first hosting of a World Wide Marriage Encounter (full house!) on the first weekend. Participating in it from the abbey were Fathers Werner Renneberg and Lawrence DeMong and Brother Bede Hubbard. The WWME is a development of the National



Father Peter Novacosky, CFC chairman, discusses a few details with Father Frank McNulty of Darlington, N.J., the main speaker at the Christian Faith Conference at the abbey, Nov. 4-6.

Marriage Encounter, each group having its own peculiar strengths. Couples invariably leave from a marriage encounter weekend with a strongly positive response.

The dept. of agriculture ag. rep's were resident here again for a course, Dec. 5-9.

From Dec. 18-23 four fine young men from Saskatchewan and Manitoba took part in a monastic live-in.

During the Christmas holidays, there's only an occasional visitor or two — the quietest time in many months. On the last day of the year, Dec. 31, Angela Conway of Vancouver, stopped in for an 11-day visit before visiting with friends in Regina.

Vocation report

Over the Christmas holidays, five of the rooms on the bottom floor of the abbey were cleaned up and repainted by Brothers John, Douglas, and Peter and George Hunt. The rooms are being prepared for candidates who have applied to enter the monastery and begin their six-month period of postulancy at the end of January. The candidates include Lawrence Genois, Toronto; George Hunt, Corner Brook, Nfld.; and Joe McSheffery, Bath, N.B. Another candidate is expected to join them in early August to begin the year-long period of novitiate.

George Hunt has been at the abbey already since mid-November when he and Russell Turcotte of Saskatoon came for a monastic live-in, Nov. 20-27. Another live-in from Dec. 18-23 attracted another four interested young men: Robert Askewe of Winnipeg, John Mock of Regina, and John Kwok and Stephen Penna of Saskatoon. The

live-ins had been advertised in the seven Catholic newspapers across Canada. Not everyone was able to come at that time and other interested men came at other times: Robin Terry of Victoria, B.C., in mid-November, Patrick Onofrio of Ville LaSalle, Que., in mid-December, and Joseph McSheffery in early January.

During the live-ins the young men got a taste of monastic life by following the regular schedule of the monks and participating in their work and prayer. Classes were also given each morning by various members of the community. These included: "Introduction" by Father Peter Novcosky, "Prophetic aspects of monasticism" by Brother Bede Hubbard, "St. Benedict, St. Peter's" by Abbot Jerome Weber, "Benedictine spirituality and prayer" by Father Andrew Britz, and "Benedictine formation" by Father Peter Novcosky.



These young men came to the abbey this fall to live in with the monks and experience monastic life first hand. They are, from left: George Hunt from Corner Brook, Nfld., Robert Askewe from Winnipeg, John Kwok from Saskatoon, Stephen Penna from Saskatoon, and John Mock from Regina.

75 years ago — the decision to move

On Dec. 22, 1902, 75 years ago, the members of Cluny Priory, near Wetaug, Ill., formally decided to transfer the monastic community from there to Saskatchewan. This decision to come to Saskatchewan (where the community was renamed St. Peter's) followed the death of Prior Oswald Moosemueller on Jan. 10, 1901, and the appointment of Father Alfred Mayer of St. John's Abbey, Collegeville, Minn., as the new superior of Cluny Priory.

The following excerpts, taken from an early document written by Father Peter Windschiegl, describes the circumstances that led to the decision by the monks to come to Canada. It is reprinted with the permission of St. Peter's Abbey Archives.

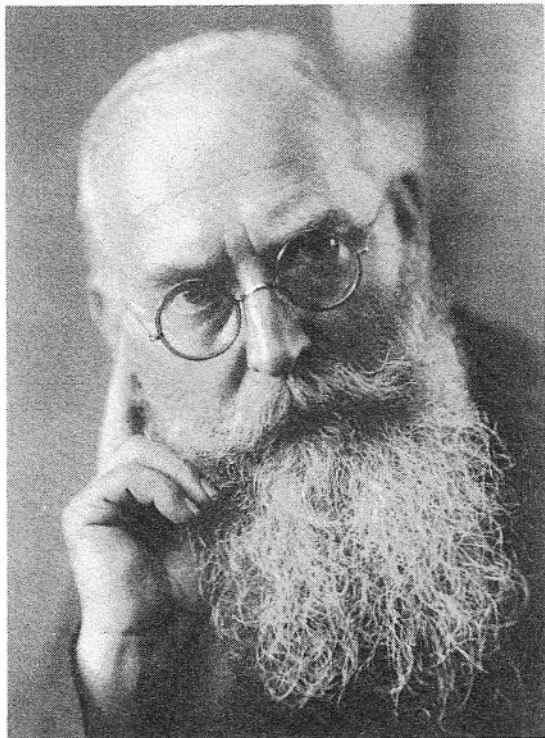
Soon after his arrival at Cluny (July 2, 1901), Prior Alfred realized that the southern part of Illinois was not a suitable place for a monastery. One of the scourges most dreaded in that part of the country was malaria fever. The income of the farm was insufficient to provide the necessary means for the upkeep of a monastery of some size. Besides, the bishop of Bellville looked with disfavor upon the idea that the Benedictines of Cluny should found or have charge of parishes in his diocese. Hence there was no real future for the place, no room for expansion.

Therefore, the only course open to the community was to depart, to give up Cluny and to transfer the monastery to some other place more adapted and provided with a better future. With this in view, diverse plans were under consideration. The plan of transferring the monastery to Long Island in the state of New York appealed, indeed, to all of the members, as did the plan of moving to California. But a foundation in either of these places would have involved such an immense expenditure of money as would have been for the community impossible to raise.

The plan of joining the Benedictines in Colorado was discarded as soon as it had been proposed. Finally, a very acceptable plan was presented, a plan, which, in the course of events, led to the definite transferring of the Cluny Priory to Saskatchewan in the Dominion of Canada and the second beginning of St. Peter's Abbey . . .

(During this time, Father Bruno Doerfler of St. John's Abbey made two exploration trips to Western Canada, beginning them respectively on Aug. 12 and Sept. 17, 1902. St. John's then decided to take pastoral responsibility for the new St. Peter's Colony. Father Peter's report continues:)

In the meantime St. John's Abbey, knowing the



Prior Peter Windschiegl (1879-1960), long-time editor of the *St. Peter's Bote* and author of *Fifty Golden Years*.

difficulties with which the Priory of Cluny had to cope, tendered to Prior Alfred and his community the offer of the new mission fields they had acquired in Canada. Prior Alfred delighted at this offer, hastily convoked a chapter of his capitulars to convene at the rectory of the Assumption church, St. Paul, Minn., Dec. 22, 1902 . . . The result of the chapter, as was to be expected, was that the

kind offer of Abbot Peter Engel was gratefully and unanimously accepted. Without delay, Prior Alfred, accompanied by Father Bruno, set out on Jan. 4, 1903, to inspect the new colony . . .

The name of Cluny Priory was dropped and in its stead the community adopted the name of St. Peter's Monastery, in honor of Abbot Peter of St. John's. Prior Alfred made another inspection trip to Canada Feb. 25, 1903. A third trip was undertaken by him April 13, 1903.

May 12, 1903 was the date set for the departure from the United States of the first contingent of the Cluny community that had for this purpose been assembled at St. John's Abbey for their new sphere of labor in Canada. This band of Benedictine colonizers consisted of Prior Alfred Mayer, Father John Balfrey, Father Meinrad Seifermann, a member of St. John's Abbey . . . , Father Rudolph Palm, a deacon, Brother Adolf Steiger, Brother Bruno Fuchs, a novice, and Mr. Alois Gleissner, a Brother candidate. All arrived safely at Rosthern May 14 in the evening. The next day they set out from Rosthern and made their way amid countless difficulties to the new colony . . . The land selected for St. Peter's Monastery was finally reached on Ascension Day, shortly before noon, May 21, 1903. Despite the fatigue of the weary and worn-out travellers, the tent was hastily erected and Prior Alfred celebrated the first Mass on the monastery grounds.



Bob Sangster came to the abbey in October after living on Vancouver Island for five years. He has put his mechanical skill to work repairing some cars and trucks at the abbey.

Plans for celebrating 75th anniversary

Readers of the newsletter will be interested in the 75th birthday celebration of St. Peter's Colony, set for July 1978. The principal celebrations will be from July 9-23, with the highlights on July 16 and 23.

On July 16, the abbacy of St. Peter's and thousands of visitors will assemble on Mount Carmel in pilgrimage to Our Lady's shrine and together will thank God for his continuing care of his people. The bishops of Saskatchewan, Abbot John Eidenschink of St. John's Abbey, Collegeville, Minn., and Archabbot Egbert Donovan of St. Vincent Archabbey, Latrobe, Penn. (founding abbey of Cluny Priory), will be attending this celebration. The Jubilee Committee is erecting a plaque on the mount, giving the principal dates in its history and noting its donation to the abbacy by

John Bunko on July 22, 1921.

On July 23 the "colony" will mount a civic celebration on the grounds of St. Peter's Abbey. It will consist of a parade; greetings by a variety of civic leaders, including both federal and provincial cabinet ministers, and by Abbot Martin Burne, abbot-president of the American Cassinese Federation; the hon. G. Porteous, lieutenant governor of Saskatchewan; a gymnastics display by the children of the Humboldt school unit; a draft horse show; an outdoor concert with Yevshan dancers and the Dumptrucks; fireworks; and a bonfire with a sing-around. In early August the RCMP Musical Ride will be featured at the abbey grounds. And on Feb. 10, 11 and 12, the St. Peter's Community Players are staging H. M. S. Pinafore on the occasion of its centennial.



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