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Canadian Off-Highway Vehicle Distributors Council Conseil Canadien des Distributeurs de Véhicules Hors Route

TIPS FOR THE ATV RIDER

INTRODUCTION

If you are about to become the owner of an all-terrain vehicle, you can look forward to lots of fun and excitement. Your ATV can master many types of off-road conditions, but it's really only as capable as you are. Proper instruction and practice are important because ATVs handle differently from other vehicles such as motorcycles and cars.

We prepared this booklet to answer your questions about ATVs and help increase your knowledge of their operation and recreational use. It will help you learn and respect the capabilities of this wonderful means of travel.

ATVs are not limited to play; they can work pretty hard too. This booklet is limited to a discussion of recreational riding. Regardless of what kind of riding you do, however, all ATV riders should read this booklet thoroughly to learn tips that may be helpful in many kinds of riding.

Know your vehicle before you begin riding. READ THE OWNER'S MANUAL SUPPLIED WITH YOUR ATV and practice riding techniques in an open area away from obstacles and other riders. Have an experienced rider assist you. Remember, ATV riding requires special skills and knowledge that must be learned over a period of time.

The information contained in this publication is offered for the benefit of those who have an interest in and ride all-terrain vehicles. The information has been compiled from publications, interviews and observations of individuals and organizations familiar with the use of ATVs. Because there are many differences in product design, riding terrain and riding styles, there may be organizations and individuals who hold differing opinions. Consult your local ATV dealers and experienced ATV riders about appropriate riding locations in your area. Although the Canadian Off-Highway Vehicle Distributors Council will continue to publish responsible viewpoints on this subject, it must disclaim specific or general liability for the views expressed herein.

The Canadian Off-Highway Vehicle Distributors Council is a national, not for profit association representing distributors of all-terrain vehicles in Canada. Supporting members are Arctic Cat Inc., Can-Am BRP., Canadian Kawasaki Motors Ltd., Honda Canada Inc., KTM, Polaris, Suzuki Canada Inc., and Yamaha Motor Canada Ltd.

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THE ALL-TERRAIN VEHICLE

Knowing all you can about your ATV and the places you can ride is the best preparation for safe and enjoyable riding. Remember, ATVs are intended for off-highway use only. Never operate an ATV on pavement. ATVs are not designed to be used on paved surfaces and may be difficult to control. ATVs are different from other vehicles. They're also different from one another in many ways:

- Handling characteristics among ATVs vary depending upon their basic design and how they are equipped.
- Some ATVs have rear brakes only, while others have brakes front and rear. Be sure to learn the recommended stopping techniques for your machine.
- There are ATVs with electric starters, kick starters and pull starters.
- There are water-cooled ATVs and air-cooled ATVs.
- Some ATV transmissions have automatic clutches; some have hand-operated clutches; and some transmissions are fully automatic. Some ATVs have a reverse gear.
- Some ATVs have solid drive axles and some have differentials.
- There are ATVs with chain drives or shaft drives.
- Some ATV throttles are controlled by twisting the hand grip, others by pushing a thumb lever next to the hand grip.
- Controls and their locations differ from one ATV model to another.

CONTROLS

Be sure you know the location and operation of all the controls your ATV may have:

- brakes;
- engine stop switch;
- throttle, shifter;
- clutch; and
- parking brake.

Learn how to find and use the controls without looking down at them. You will not have time to look for the controls when riding. If you switch to another vehicle, take the time to familiarize yourself with its controls. Control locations vary from model to model.



BE PREPARED

Sure, you're anxious to take a test run, but before you do, be sure you and your machine are ready. If you're both not ready, the results can range from embarrassment to severe injuries.

PRE-RIDE INSPECTION

Inspecting the mechanical condition of your ATV before each ride is important in order to minimize the chance of injury or being stranded, as well as to ensure long-term enjoyment of your ATV. Remember, you can ride farther in an hour than you can walk in a day. Your owner's manual will show you what to check on your particular machine. Here are the most common checks.

TIRES AND WHEELS

Sure, you're anxious to take a test run, but before you do, be sure you and your machine are ready. If you're both not ready, the results can range from embarrassment to severe injuries.

- 1. Air pressure Always maintain the recommended tire pressure. Be sure that all tires are inflated to proper pressure. Check that each tire on the left of your ATV is inflated to the same pressure as the corresponding tire on the right side. Under-inflated tires may also cause wheel damage when riding over bumpy terrain. Over inflation may damage the tire. If the tires are over- or underinflated, your ATV may not steer or handle properly. To accurately measure pressure (usually around 2 to 6 psi), you'll need a low pressure gauge. Automotive tire gauges aren't accurate for this use.
- 2. Condition Check for cuts or gouges that could cause air leakage
- 3. Wheels To avoid loss of control or injury, make sure axle nuts are tightened and secured by cotter pins. Check the wheel lug nuts to be sure they're tight too. Grasp the tire at the front and rear and try to rock it on its axle to detect worn out bearings or loose nuts. There

should be no free play or slip as you rock the wheel.





CONTROLS

- Throttle and other cables Make sure the throttle moves smoothly and snaps closed with the handlebars in any position. Check throttle operation while moving the handlebars from fully left to fully right. If your ATV is equipped with an adjustable throttle limiter, check that the adjustment is securely set. Check cables and controls for damage from spill or accumulated dirt and mud which might restrict full operation.
- Brakes Do the controls operate smoothly and are the controls adjusted according to the owner's manual instructions? Are they positioned for easy reach? Your brakes are a critical part of riding and they must always be in tip-top condition.
- Foot shifter Is it firmly attached and positioned for safe operation? It shouldn't be so low that your toes are pointed down at the ground or so high that shifting is awkward.

LIGHTS AND SWITCHES

- Ignition switch (if equipped) Check the position of the switch and make sure it works properly by switching it off and on during your warm-up period.
- 2. Engine stop switch Be sure it turns off the engine.
- 3. Lights (if equipped) Be sure all lights are working.

OIL AND FUEL

- 1. Check oil level while the engine is off. Don't get stranded because you're out of oil or fuel.
- 2. Always start your ride with a full fuel tank in case you get lost.
- 3. Check for fuel or oil leaks.



CHAIN/DRIVE SHAFT AND CHASSIS

- 1. Chain Inspect your chain for proper adjustment and adequate lubrication. Check for wear.
- Drive shaft If your ATV is equipped with a drive shaft rather than a drive chain, check for oil leaks. Maintain its oil supply as outlined in your owner's manual.
- Nuts'n'bolts Rough terrain will loosen parts. Look and feel for loose parts while the engine is off. Shake handlebars, footrests, etc., before each ride and periodically check major fasteners with a wrench.

TOOL KIT

OK, now you're finished with the pre-ride inspection. And you took care of those things that looked like they might cause trouble. But what if you have a problem out on the trail?

Have you ever walked out of the woods on a dark night? It's no fun. Carrying the right tools and equipment with you when you go riding is also important to safe enjoyment of your ATV. Examine the tool kit that came with your machine. You may want to add a few spare parts – a spark plug or two, perhaps some wire and tape, maybe a headlight bulb. Plan to carry what you need for emergencies; for example, consider a good strong rope.

PERIODIC MAINTENANCE

Off-road riding is hard on your ATV, so it is especially important to perform periodic maintenance as outlined in your owner's manual. Don't risk injury or vehicle breakdown due to lack of proper maintenance.



PROTECTIVE GEAR

The nature of ATV riding demands that you wear protective clothing. Although complete protection is not possible, knowing what to wear and how to wear it can make you more comfortable when you ride and

reduce the chance of injury in case of a spill. Never operate an ATV without an approved motorcycle helmet, eye protection, boots, gloves, long pants and long-sleeved shirt or jacket.

HELMETS

Your helmet is the most important piece of protective gear for safe riding. A helmet can help prevent a serious head injury.



There are a few basic tips to keep in mind when selecting a helmet. Choose an approved helmet that meets or exceeds Standard D230 of the Canadian Standards Association or the appropriate standard of the Snell Memorial Foundation, the American National Standards Institute, or U.S. Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard 218, and bears the symbol DOT. Your helmet should fit snugly and it should be securely fastened. Full face helmets help to protect your face as well as your head. Open face helmets are lighter and cooler and should be used with mouth protection. Eye protection should be used with both types of helmet.

There is also a special time not to wear a helmet. When stopped to talk with landowners or other people you meet on the trails, always dismount the ATV and take your helmet off. To some people your helmet is a mask and can be intimidating.



EYE PROTECTION

You must be able to see clearly in order to ride safely. An object such as a rock, branch or even a bug that hits you in the face can distract you. But if you are hit in the eyes, you can be blinded. Regular sunglasses do not provide protection on an ATV. A face shield or goggles will protect you. They should be:

- Free from scratches and shatterproof.
- Securely fastened.
- Well ventilated to prevent fogging.
- Tinted for riding on bright days, or clear for night riding. Yellow is best for overcast days.

CLOTHING

Good gloves will prevent your hands from getting sore, tired or cold, as well as offer protection in the event of a spill. Off road style gloves, available at motorcycle dealerships, provide the best combination of protection and comfort. They are also padded over the knuckles to prevent bruising. The most protective footwear is a pair of strong, over-the calf boots with low heels to prevent your feet from slipping off the footrests. Off-road style motorcycle boots offer the best protection for feet, ankles and legs. It's important to protect your skin from scratches. A long sleeved shirt or jersey and long pants are minimal requirements for rider protection. Offroad riding gear such as off-road pants with knee pads, jersey and chest/ shoulder protector provide better protection. You can look stylish and ready for action and still be well protected.



LET'S GET STARTED

Be sure to have a large, flat, open practice area, free of obstacles and hazards, to use while you learn how to ride your ATV. Take a few minutes to review the rest of the riding tips in this booklet before you start your engine.

Consult your owner's manual for the correct starting procedure.

- Check that the transmission is in NEUTRAL.
- Set PARKING BRAKE.
- Turn the FUEL valve on.
- Check that the engine stop switch is in the RUN or ON position.
- If the engine is cold, put the CHOKE in the ON position.
- · Start the engine.
- To prevent injury, always keep your feet on the footrests while riding.
- When mounting, take care not to step on the shifter.
- · Be sure the engine is sufficiently warmed up before you start riding.
- · Apply the rear brake and shift into first gear.
- Release parking brake.
- Release the rear brake and apply the throttle slowly.
- If the vehicle has a manual clutch, release it slowly. If the clutch is engaged too quickly, the ATV might move suddenly, causing you to lose control or fall off the ATV.

RUNNING THROUGH THE GEARS

See your owner's manual for instructions on shifting your model of ATV. There are several types of transmissions on ATVs. Be certain you know how to operate the transmission of the ATV you are riding.

- Always close the throttle while shifting to prevent front wheels from lifting.
- Learn the sounds of your engine so you can shift to keep the engine speed in the most efficient range.
- If your ATV has a manual clutch, learn where the engagement point is to prevent stalling and allow smooth shifting.



TURNING

ATVs with solid rear axles turn both rear wheels at the same speed. ATVs with unlocked differentials allow the rear wheels to turn at different speeds. Both types require their own special turning skills. Always check your owner's manual to determine your vehicle type.



Some tips for turning solid rear axle ATVs are:

- AT LOW SPEEDS: As you turn the handlebars in the direction of the turn, shift your body weight forward and to the outside of the turn (weight is supported on the outer footrest) while leaning your upper body in slightly. Be sure to maintain throttle through the turn. In turning, the objective is to reduce weight on the inside rear wheel by shifting your body weight.
- AT HIGHER SPEEDS: The method of turning at higher speeds is similar to turning at lower speeds. The difference is, as speed increases, you must lean your body farther towards the inside turn while keeping your weight on the outer footrest. This is to balance the higher cornering force as vehicle speed increases.
- Special Note: If your ATV starts to tip while turning, lean your upper body further into the turn while gradually reducing the throttle and making the turn wider. Never kick out your leg outside of the foot pegs!



BRAKING

Your owner's manual describes your ATV's braking system. You may have both front and rear brake or a rear brake only. Of course, your braking technique will depend upon your ATV's braking system and the type of terrain you are riding on.

Some tips for braking are:

- Release the throttle.
- Shift to a lower gear to use the engine to slow the vehicle.
- Apply both (if equipped) brakes equally.
- Avoid excessive braking while cornering.
- Apply brakes lightly on slippery surfaces.
- Shift to low gear when descending a hill and don't ride the brake for long periods.
- Special Note: If your ATV stalls while traveling uphill, do not let it roll backwards. See the section on hills on pages 12 and 13 for more details on this tricky situation. And check your owner's manual.

PARKING

When parking your ATV you should:

- Shift to neutral and set the parking brake, or shift into low gear if you don't have a parking brake.
- Avoid parking on an incline.







READING TERRAIN

You have to know the land you're riding on and what your machine will do in order to get the most out of the ride. Choose the place you ride. Use existing trails. Stay away from terrain where you really don't belong, like dangerous slopes and impassable swamps. Watch carefully for sharp bumps, holes, ruts, or obstacles. An expert rider stays out of trouble not simply by handling the machine well, but by being smart enough to be constantly alert for hazards. Learn to read the trail as you ride – an expert rider looks well ahead on the trail, knows what's coming and is prepared to react long before he or she gets there.

Never operate an ATV at excessive speeds. Travel at a speed that is proper for the terrain, visibility conditions and your experience. Always be careful when operating an ATV, especially when approaching hills, turns, and obstacles, and when operating on unfamiliar terrain. Here are some basic riding strategies you can use for different types of terrain. By learning them and practicing them, you will increase the pleasure of riding your ATV.



CLIMBING A HILL

Remember:

- Some hills are too steep for your abilities. Use common sense.
- Some hills are too steep for your ATV regardless of your abilities.
- Never ride past your limit of vision; if you can't see what is on the other side of the crest of a hill, slow down until you get a clear view.



When approaching a hill you should:

- Keep both feet firmly on footrests.
- Shift the ATV into a low gear and speed up BEFORE ascending a hill.
- For small hills, shift your body weight forward by sliding forward on the seat. For steep hills, stand on footrests and lean well over the front wheels in order to shift as much weight forward as possible.
- If the hill is steep and you must downshift to prevent stalling, shift quickly and smoothly. Also, don't forget to close the throttle while shifting. This will prevent the front wheels from lifting.
- If you don't have enough power to continue uphill, but you have forward momentum and enough space to turn around safely, turn around before you lose speed and then proceed downhill.



- If you are riding up a hill and you lose forward momentum, apply the parking brake before you roll backwards, and dismount to the uphill side. Turn the handlebars fully to the left and, as you stand uphill, grasp the handlebars so that you can operate the brake lever with your right hand. Release the parking brake and pump the rear brake to let the ATV roll backwards and sideways to the hill. Turn the handlebars downhill. Let the ATV roll forward so that the ATV is pointing downhill. Reset the parking brake, remount the ATV from the uphill side, keeping as much weight uphill as possible. Ride the ATV downhill, keeping your weight at the rear. (Consult your owner's manual for directions specific to your ATV.) This should work on most hills, but on a steep hill, remounting is extremely difficult. In this situation, concentrate on keeping as much weight uphill as possible.
- If your ATV is not designed to accomplish these directions, consult your owner's manual for instructions for turning on a hill.
- Special Note: Do not let your ATV roll backwards on a hill. If your ATV has a front brake, you can try to stop the ATV using the front brake only. Move your body weight forward and use the front brake to slow the ATV to a stop. If the front brake does not slow the ATV, dismount to the side immediately. Do not attempt to back down a hill using the rear brakes. Use of the rear brake could cause the ATV to roll over backwards.





DESCENDING A HILL

When descending a hill you should:

- Keep both feet firmly on the footrests.
- Point the vehicle directly downhill.
- Transfer your weight to the rear.
- Shift the transmission into low gear and descend with the throttle closed.
- · Apply brakes to reduce speed.



TRAVERSING A SLOPE

Traversing a slope is tricky business. Use caution and avoid traversing slopes where there is slippery or very bumpy terrain. Follow these basic suggestions:

- Keep both feet firmly on the footrests.
- Lean uphill. You may want to put weight on the downhill footrest to increase traction, but most importantly, lean your upper body into the hill and steer slightly uphill.
- When riding on soft terrain, gently turn your wheels slightly uphill to keep the vehicle on a straight line across the hill.
- If the ATV begins to tip, turn the front wheels downhill if the terrain allows you to.
 If the terrain prohibits your turning downhill, dismount on the uphill side immediately.





RIDING THROUGH WATER

Your ATV is equipped to handle riding in water but some precautions must be taken:

When riding through water you should:

- Keep both feet firmly on the footrests.
- Never ford any stream with deep water because your tires may float, making it difficult to maintain control.
- Choose a course through a stream where both banks have a gradual incline. Try to cross at a known ford, or where you personally know it is safe.
- Proceed at a slow steady speed to avoid submerged obstacles and slippery rocks.
- Dry the brakes after crossing by applying light pressure to them while riding until they return to normal power.
- Avoid water crossings where you may cause damage to stream beds, or erosion to the banks of the stream.





IN THE WINTER

ATVs are fun in the snow. But you have to learn to pick your snow conditions and riding area. On firm snow you can have a great time, and cause no problems. In soft snow, under the wrong conditions, your ride can be a disaster. Wallowing through snowdrifts where you practically have to carry your ATV is not fun. What's more, careless winter driving can spoil things for you and everyone else. Snowmobilers get pretty upset, and rightfully so, when ATVs spoil carefully groomed trails. Landowners get upset when they have given permission for snowmobile trails and find others on them. You can prevent these problems. Choose snow conditions carefully. Know who owns the land you ride on. Get to know your local snowmobilers. Contact your local ATV club. If there are snowmobile clubs in your area, get to know them too. By working together, you can help preserve riding opportunities. Remember that private land opened for snowmobiling in winter may be cropland that is off limits the rest of the year.



EXPANDING YOUR HORIZONS

How do you find good places to ride? You can start by talking to your dealer. Where do other customers ride? Who owns the land? Where are the regulations for use? ATV clubs provide a way of working together to find good riding. If you're working on your own, topographic maps can be a good way to find open land with dirt roads or trails. Find out who owns it, and whether they mind you using it. You can develop a network of riding areas this way.



KNOW THE LAWS

The laws and regulations that control how and where you use your ATV are important. They help to keep you out of trouble; they help keep the sport healthy by controlling less responsible riders; they help to protect the land you ride on and the people who own it. Dealers and ATV clubs can often provide you with a summary of local laws, or direct you to the appropriate municipal or provincial officials, or others who will be glad to help you.

YOU AND THE REST OF THE WORLD

There's one fundamental factor that controls your ATV riding – access to land. Developing and maintaining those riding opportunities means getting along with the rest of the world:

private landowners, public land managers, and people you meet on the trails. The better you get along with these people, the easier it will be to find and keep good riding areas.

Mostly it takes common courtesy and consideration. Here are a few hints for getting along with people and keeping your riding areas open:

- Know who owns the land you are using. Get permission if you need it. Stay on marked trails if they are provided.
- Obey closure signs. They're posted for a reason.
- Always leave gates and fences as you found them.
- Use courtesy when you meet others on the trails. Pull off and give right of way to horseback riders or hikers. It is best to shut off the engine whenever you are near horses – a panicked horse is a danger to you and its rider.





YOU AND MOTHER NATURE

Riding behavior that harms the land is self-defeating and irresponsible. Learn to protect and preserve your riding areas.

- Obtain a Travel Map from the Forest Service, or regulations from other public land agencies. Learn the rules and follow them.
- Keep your ATV quiet. Don't make your exhaust system nosier

 there is nothing people dislike more than a loud off-highway
 vehicle. Keep your spark arrester in place.
- Avoid running over young trees, shrubs, and grasses damaging or killing them.
- Stay off soft, wet roads and trails readily torn up by vehicles (particularly during hunting seasons). Repairing the damage is expensive.
- Travel around meadows, steep hillsides, or stream banks and lakeshores easily scarred by churning wheels.
- Resist the urge to pioneer a new road or trail, or to cut across a switchback.
- Stay away from wild animals that are rearing young or suffering from food shortage. Stress can sap scarce energy reserves.
- Obey gate closures and regulatory signs. Vandalism costs tax dollars.
- Stay out of wilderness areas. They're closed to all vehicles. Know where the boundaries are.
- Get permission to travel across private land. Respect landowner rights.
- Future opportunities for exciting travel with your ATV are in your hands.





CASI ATV RiderCoursesm

Supported by the COHV, this is an intensive half day course presented by Canadian AQCC Safety Institute (CASI) certified instructors and is available to riders across Canada. The course provides skill-enhancing, hands-on training based on proven, field-tested techniques.

An ATV Rider Course is also available for children under the age of 16, whose parents permit them to ride ATVs.

Call 1-888-613-2722 or visit: www.atvquad.ca.

Parents, Youngsters & All-Terrain Vehicles

An educational booklet called "Parents, Youngsters & All-Terrain Vehicles" designed specifically to assist parents in determining if their youngster is ready to ride ATVs is available free of charge. It also provides important safety information and tips on learning to ride.



Ride Safe, Ride Smart



This educational DVD is packed with valuable information on how to ride like an experienced professional regardless of your age or skill level. Available at no cost from the Canadian Off-Highway Vehicle Distributors Council (COHV) at www.cohv.ca or email: safety@cohv.ca.

For more information on all-terrain vehicle rider safety and the Canadian Off-Highway Vehicle Distributors Council go to:



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Here are a few more tips to help make your ATV riding safe and enjoyable:

- Never operate an ATV without proper instruction. Take a training course. Contact COHV for more information.
- Use antenna flags in hilly areas and wear bright clothing to be more visible.
- Use maps and a compass if you are riding in an unfamiliar area. Make a mental note of landmarks; you may need them if you are stranded. If you are lost at night, do not move around. You will waste valuable fuel that you can use to ride to safety in the daylight.
- Carry a first-aid pack and vehicle-repair kit with you.
- Never allow a child under 16 years old to operate an ATV without adult supervision. Children need to be observed carefully because not all children have the strength, size, skills or judgment needed to operate an ATV safely.
- Watch out for thin ice which may be camouflaged by snow.
- Never operate an ATV on a public road, even a dirt or gravel one, because you may not be able to avoid colliding with other vehicles. Also, operating an ATV on public roads is most likely against the law.
- Always tell someone where you're going and when you expect to return.
- Never follow directly behind another rider because this restricts your visibility.
- Never carry a passenger on an ATV. Carrying a passenger may upset the balance of the ATV and may cause it to go out of control.
- Never consume alcohol or drugs before or while operating an ATV since this could seriously affect your judgement, cause you to react more slowly, affect your balance and perception, and result in an accident.
- Never lend your ATV to anyone who has not taken a training course or has not been driving an ATV for at least a year.



SAFE RIDING PRACTICES

Previously, youth-model ATVs were produced in just two categories, Y-6 and Y-12 and were tied to specific engine displacement up to 90cc. These classifications and engine size limitations worked for some younger riders but were less helpful to older and bigger riders, resulting in some 14 and 15 year olds choosing to ride adult-model ATVs.

The new standard provides more flexibility: youth-model ATVs are designed for varying ages, with differing speed limitations and parental controls for the different categories:

Y-6+ designed for riders aged 6 and older with adult supervision; comes from the factory set with maximum speed of 16 km/h (10 mph), can be adjusted by parents up to a maximum speed 24 km/h (15 mph).

Y-10+ designed for riders aged 10 and older with adult supervision; comes from the factory set with a maximum speed of 24 km/h (15 mph), can be adjusted by parent up to maximum speed 48 km/h (30 mph).

Y-12+ designed for riders aged 12 and older with adult supervision; comes from the factory set with a maximum speed of 24 km/h (15 mph), can be adjusted by parent up to a maximum speed 48 km/h (30 mph).

designed for riders aged 14 and older with adult supervision, and riders 16 and older without supervision; comes from the factory set with a maximum speed of 32 km/h (20 mph), can be adjusted by parent to maximum speed of 48 km/h (30 mph) or 61 km/h (38 mph).



ATV Safe Rider Code

- Know Your Operator's Manual
- Check the ATV Before You Ride
- Wear Your Helmet
- Protect Your Eyes and Body
- Get Qualified Training
- Ride Off-Road Only, Never on Public Roads
- Ride With Others Never Alone
- Ride Within Your Skills
- Carry No Passengers
- Respect Riding Area Rules
- Keep Noise Levels Low
- Ride Straight No Alcohol or Other Drugs
- Preserve the Environment
- Be Courteous to All You Meet
- Lend Your ATV to Skilled Riders Only
- Always Supervise Youngsters

PLEASE RIDE SAFELY AND RESPONSIBLY.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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