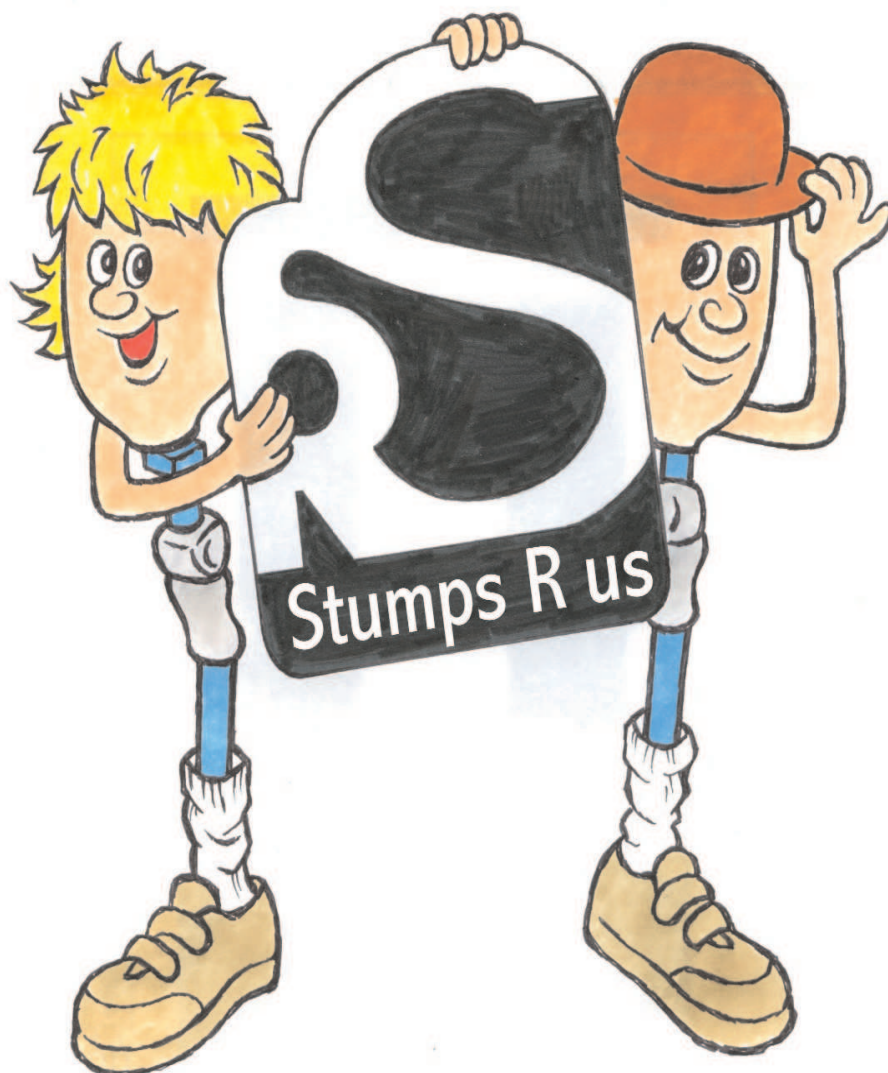




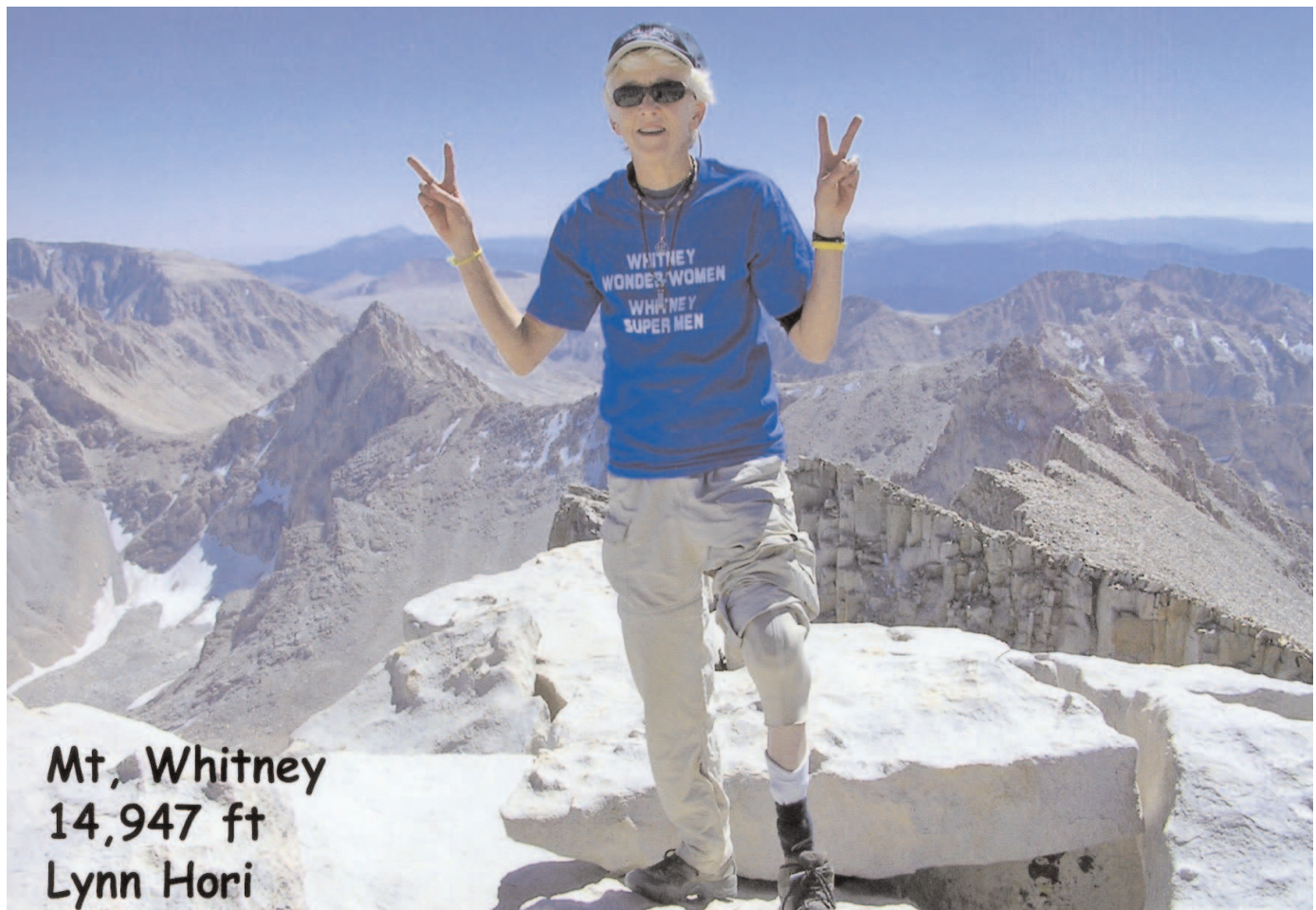
# GIMPY

SPRING 2007



**"A Whimsical Support Group of Cheerful Cripples Who Can Answer almost ANY question you might have about life without one, two, three or four limbs"**

[www.stumps.org](http://www.stumps.org)



### Life at the Top

It has always been a dream of mine to climb Mt. Whitney ever since I became an amputee after a climbing accident on a 14,000 ft mountain in Colorado. With the help and encouragement of a group of my friends and an awesome new leg made by Wayne Koniuk of San Francisco Prosthetics I was able to make it to the top!

Our group only had a one-day permit to climb Mt. Whitney so we started our climb at 5:30 am at the West Portal trailhead on the Eastern side of the sierras near the town of Lone Pine. It was not that difficult of a climb but just very, very long! The climb was twenty-two miles roundtrip with an elevation gain of 6,300 ft! We arrived at the summit around 2:00pm on an absolutely beautiful day, clear skies and a view of the sierra range. We celebrated with the others on top and then headed down the mountain and made it back to our cars around 9:00pm! It was definitely a lifetime achievement for me and now I hope to a lot more climbing and getting back on the hay wagon of life.

Ed. Note: And this was after asking her prosthetist for an adjustment because she was going for "a little walk".

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Interesting Popular Science magazine article about amputees:

<http://www.popsci.com/popsci/medicine/9a21844dc34ab010vgnvcm1000004eecbccdrd.html>

## **www.Dating4Disabled.com**

Dating4Disabled.com was developed by a group of volunteers who wanted to provide more social, intellectual and romantic outlets for people with disabilities. This growing community has become a gathering place for the international special needs population, home to members from over 15 countries world-wide. It is a place for people of all nationalities, backgrounds and life-challenges to share, connect and just be heard.

The Dating4Disabled environment is welcoming and user-friendly. Advanced internet tools make for easy communication, and facilitate a convenient and fun way to create connections within the disabled community. Members can come together through forums, a dating service, private chats, and blogs, among other features, providing people with mobility issues the opportunity to fulfill their social needs from the convenience of their own home. The site has also incorporated large font options and supporting icon comments to assist the visually challenged.

The members of Dating4Disabled can network internationally in an understanding, safe and non-committal atmosphere. This unique cyberspace community facilitates an embarrassment-free opportunity for people with disabilities to express themselves, make friends, and hopefully find a partner for life, with out the pressure of uncertain face-to-face meetings. The support and understanding available in the dating4disabled family makes for an exciting new "home away from home".

Our free membership is simple and quick. In the 2 minute sign-up, people create a profile which tailors their online preferences and enables other members to know more about them and what they are looking for. One can customize their interactions by type of relationship, life-challenge, location, interests and more. All these tools and features provide an enjoyable and valuable online experience. The potential for net-working, meeting new people and creating relationships is unlimited. Dating4Disabled provides its members with the opportunity to utilize the World Wide Web for their own unique needs, and to open windows of possibility to the international disabled community.

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PISMO BEACH.....JULY 26 - They lost limbs serving our country in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Now 20 U.S. service men and women at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas, are preparing for a new mission. On August 15 the amputee war veterans will travel to Pismo Beach, California, to put on wetsuits and experience the joy of surfing.

The idea started with a Navy Petty Officer who surfed much of his life and didn't want to give it up even though he lost a leg fighting in Iraq. Petty Officer Derek McGinnis contacted Operation Comfort and suggested that surfing might be good therapy for some of the injured veterans. Operation Comfort is a non-profit group that works with wounded service men and women at Brooke Army Medical Center by engaging them in adaptive sports and other activities.

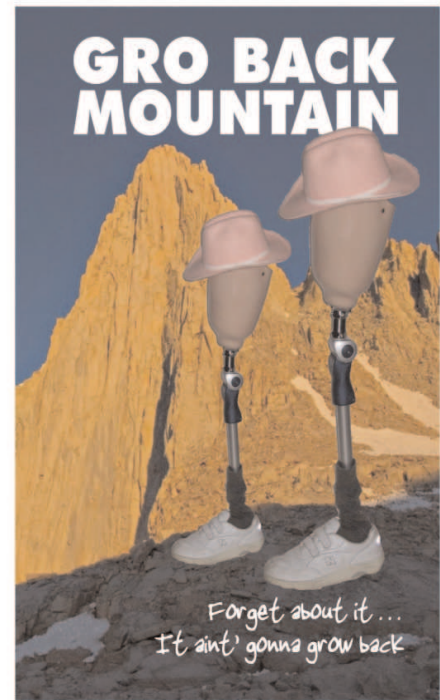
"These veterans have given so much for us," Operation Comfort Director Janis Roznowski said. "I couldn't think of a better way to lift their spirits and help them experience what is still possible."

Petty Officer McGinnis and Roznowski called Amputee Surfing Champion Rodney Roller for advice and support. Roller organized a successful surf clinic for civilian amputees in 2004 and he was quick to jump on board. "I feel so humbled by their service and their sacrifice," said Roller. "I want to help these injured veterans realize that there is life after disability." Roller soon generated a wave of support from the Pismo Beach community and the surfing industry.

Pancho's Surf Shop and North County Prosthetics are sponsoring the five-day surfing clinic. Eric McNeil's Pacific Surf School agreed to provide instruction. Billabong is supplying boards, wetsuits and volunteers. DaKine is giving out backpacks and other surf accessories for the soldiers.

Nearly \$37,000 is still needed for travel and housing expenses for the veterans, family members and necessary staff. If you would like to assist this effort to help amputee war veterans experience surfing, contact Janis Roznowski at [www.operationcomfort.org](http://www.operationcomfort.org) or call 512-297-8972.

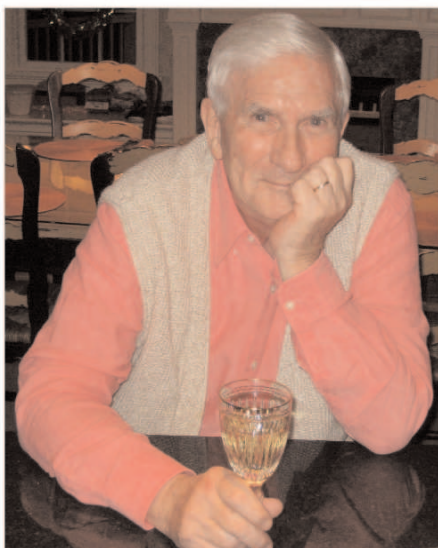




Some of Fred Schmerling's rather humorous greeting cards.

We couldn't resist publishing them since they embody the spirit of Stumps R Us with graphic precision!

Ed. Note: Fred also created our whimsical cover art, Thanks Fred!



Dear Dan,

That's me on the left. Next to making cards, that's what I do best. Drink wine.

I want to start sending more cards to you in case you might like to put them in GIMPY or make a Slide Show or whatever.

I can't send them any other way except jpegs. Are they coming through okay?

Gro Back was an all-occasion card.. so was the phantom and the others. Please let me know if they're ok and I'll keep them coming.

Fred

## 50 Reasons to be Disabled

1. Cool toys
2. Free money
3. Random guys pick you up and carry you places
4. Always the last person to be suspected of anything. (so true...)
5. Never have to wait in line at theme parks or concerts
6. Priority housing
7. Everyone thinks you're sweet and innocent (even if you're not)
8. No strangers will ever confront you because they're afraid of hurting your feelings
9. When you run over people and tell them it's an accident, they actually believe you
10. You can get people to do things like cook for you because you're in the chair
11. Never have to take the stairs
12. Hills are great fun if you have a wheelchair! (At least going downhill)
13. People always look at you like you're an inspiration
14. Double rides on all roller coasters.
15. Every time you stand up, you can freak strangers out (or get an ovation from a crowd.)
16. Enormous bathrooms.
17. Shoes are an option
18. You never have to worry about finding a place to sit
19. You end up with mad wheelie skills to impress people with
20. Time extensions on exams
21. You never have to do anything to get attention-- people are already staring
22. Never having to walk to class
23. Being able to "walk" with a use of a joystick
24. ELECTRIC WHEELCHAIRS + CROWDS = FEAR
25. Developing a high pain tolerance is never a bad thing
26. If you're slow people chalk it up to your disability instead of pure laziness
27. Burning off every calorie you eat at lunch in one trip to a non-handicapped accessible building
28. You could go out with a gaping hole in the seat of your pants and no one would notice
29. No matter what kind of crap you pull no one will ever kick you out of Bar or Club (hahahaha)
30. Your wheelchair can double as a shopping cart when you and your friends go shopping
31. Handicapped Parking
32. An excuse to use the bumpers when bowling
33. Boyfriends or Friends like giving you lots of hugs, kisses and sympathy when you fall
34. No one makes fun of you for tripping and if they say, "walk much?" you get to say no
35. People go out of their way to open doors for you
36. Going to college is a HUGE deal, if you go everyone around you is amazed
37. Parents brag about how "strong" you are
38. You always have a lap to hold stuff on
39. People part like the red sea when they see you coming
40. Being bad at sports is a given so as long as you attempt to do it people are impressed
41. You have more life experiences than most people you know
42. Handicapped seating is usually in the front
43. You can kick or hit people and claim it was a muscle spasm
44. You get some great material for stand up comedy
45. If you break something by running into it or over it no one makes you pay for it
46. You can meet the most awesome people when you have to ask strangers for help
47. You can have your friends do your hair and makeup for you
48. The media loves you!
49. Falling everyday gives you the skills to fall without injuring yourself
- 50. It just plain rocks!**

## **Carl Brashear was first black U.S. Navy diver**

RICHMOND, Virginia (AP) July 25th, 2006 -- Carl M. Brashear, the first black U.S. Navy diver who was portrayed by Cuba Gooding Jr. in the 2000 film "Men of Honor," died Tuesday. He was 75. Brashear died at the Naval Medical Center Portsmouth of respiratory and heart failure, the medical center said.

Brashear retired from the Navy in 1979 after more than 30 years of service. He was the first Navy diver to be restored to full active duty as an amputee, the result of a leg injury he sustained during a salvage operation. "The African-American community lost a great leader today in Carl Brashear," Gooding said of the man he played alongside Robert DeNiro, who was Brashear's roughneck training officer in "Men of Honor." "His impact to us as a people and all races will be felt for many decades to come."

In 1966 Brashear was assigned to recover a hydrogen bomb that dropped into waters off of Spain when two U.S. Air Force planes collided. During the mission Brashear was struck below his left knee by a pipe that the crew was using to hoist the bomb out of the water. Brashear was airlifted to a naval hospital where the bottom of his left leg was amputated to avoid gangrene. It later was replaced with a prosthetic leg. The Navy was ready to retire Brashear from active duty, but he soon began a grueling training program that included diving, running and calisthenics.

"Sometimes I would come back from a run, and my artificial leg would have a puddle of blood from my stump. I wouldn't go to sick bay because they would have taken me out of the program," Brashear said in 2002 when he was inducted into the Gallery of Great Black Kentuckians.

"Instead, I'd go hide somewhere and soak my leg in a bucket of hot water with salt in it -- that's an old remedy I learned growing up."

Brashear faced an uphill battle when he joined the Navy in 1948 at the age of 17, not long after the U.S. military desegregated. "I went to the Army office, and they weren't too friendly," Brashear said in 2002. "But the Navy recruiter was a lot nicer. Looking back, I was placed in my calling." Brashear, the son of poor sharecroppers in Sonora, Kentucky, quickly decided after boot camp that he wanted to become a deep-sea diver. "Growing up on a farm in Kentucky, I always dreamed of doing something challenging," he said. "When I saw the divers for the first time, I knew it was just what I wanted."

Brashear's health started to deteriorate about three years ago, but that he had experienced problems ever since the amputation. Brashear married childhood friend Junetta Wilcox in 1952 and had four children -- Shazanta, DaWayne, Phillip and Patrick -- before their divorce in 1978. He later married Hattie R. Elam and Jeanette A. Brundage.

## **Amputees Across America Finishes Cycle Trip**

The Ertl Amputees Across America trio finished their 58-day, 3,500-mile journey July 31 at Vero Beach, Florida. The riders started off from Tustin, California, June 5.

This is the fifth year for the epic trek across America, as the three amputees bring hope and inspiration to thousands of persons with disabilities. The three riders--Joe Sapere, 65; Gary Summers, 52; and Amber "AJ" Johnson, 29--visited over 26 rehabilitation hospitals, predominantly HealthSouth hospitals.

In partnership with HealthSouth Corporation, based in Birmingham, Alabama and Ohio Willow Wood, Mt. Sterling, Ohio, Sapere founded Amputees Across America. His goal, Sapere said, is to demonstrate that life gets better despite amputation. Each year two other riders join Sapere for the bicycling and skydiving trip.

Sapere, a colonel in the US Air Force, retired in 1989 and began a second career in elementary school teaching. An avid skydiver and cyclist, Sapere lost a leg below the knee in a skydiving accident, but after ten months of rehab, he returned to the sport. He includes some skydives in each year's Amputees Across America trip.

Gary Summers, a left transfemoral amputee, lost his leg in a motorcycle accident. A.J. Johnson's ankles were crushed in a car wreck when she was 17. One of the ankles became so painful that the goal of being a normal active young adult seemed lost. Johnson decided to request the amputation of her foot and ankle via an Ertl-type amputation, and has since regained much more mobility and enjoyment of life.

Sponsors for the event included gold sponsor HealthSouth Corporation; silver sponsors Ohio Willow Wood, the Barr Foundation, Boca Raton, Florida; and Alabama Artificial Limb and Orthopedic Service Inc., Montgomery, Alabama.

The host support group was the Alabama Association for the Physically Challenged. The riders are consumer advocates for the Ertl amputation surgical procedure ([www.ertlreconstruction.com](http://www.ertlreconstruction.com)) and rode bicycles manufactured by Bacchetta, St. Petersburg, Florida ([www.bacchettabikes.com](http://www.bacchettabikes.com)). A grant from the Jonathan M. Houy Memorial Fund helped support the ride, and other boosters and supporters also helped make this year's ride a success.

For more information about the 2006 Amputees Across America trip, including day-by-day accounts of their adventures, laced with humor, visit [www.amputeesacrossamerica.com](http://www.amputeesacrossamerica.com)

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## From The Mountain Mail By Jason Starr

Derrick Harden said he was once deathly afraid of water sports, but Tuesday, he braved four miles of the Arkansas River from Big Bend to downtown Salida in a kayak. Surviving a roadside attack in Iraq will change one's perspective on danger, he said. "I'm kind of glad it happened," Harden said of the explosion and ensuing fire-fight that cost him the lower part of his right leg, and leaving him with bullet wounds in his left leg and left arm. "A lot of good has come out of it."

He came to Salida with nine other injured soldiers for a kayak clinic organized by the nonprofit Team River Runner group. The organization from Washington, D.C., works directly with wounded veterans of the Afghanistan and Iraq wars recovering at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. The goal is to promote healing through kayaking. For Harden, the Team River Runner experience has meant more than learning how roll a kayak and run rapids. The group has been a source of mental and emotional strength. "They embrace your injury and try to help you past it," he said. "They try to show you what you can do instead of you thinking about what you can't do."

Joe Mornini, a special education teacher from the D.C. area, started the program in 2004. He received an OK from the army and began teaching weekly kayak roll sessions in the Walter Reed pool. The program has helped nearly 100 injured war veterans and expanded last year to include occasional trips to the Potomac River.

"The idea is to get them trained so they can get out of the hospital and on the river," said Team River Runner instructor Eric Johnson. "If they have the desire we can get them into a boat and make it happen." The Colorado excursion is the largest undertaking to date by the group. After two days in Salida, the trip continued on the Colorado River near Glenwood Springs.

Participants warmed up at the Salida whitewater park Monday then ran the stretch from Big Bend Tuesday morning. They hope to return next summer, perhaps a few days earlier, to participate in some of the FIBArk events, Mornini said. FIBArk competitor Jason Beakes remained in Salida after FIBArk events last weekend to coach the disabled kayakers this week. Kayaking, he said, is the perfect sport for leg amputees and others with lower body injuries. Generally, they can paddle and roll their kayaks like any able-bodied participant.

"The experience of all our participants in this sport is very close to what other people have," Beakes said. "A lot of other sports, the way they participate in it looks and feels a lot different than someone who is able-bodied."

Other popular sports for disabled athletes - snow skiing, bicycling (using a hand-crank to pedal) and water skiing - require major equipment modifications to accommodate people with limited or no use of their lower extremities. Kayaking is different because it relies mostly on shoulder, arm, back and abdominal muscles, all of which most leg amputees have full use. "None of the injuries they have will prevent them from enjoying the sport at a high level," Beakes said. (See photo on next page...)

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Derrick Harden, who lost his lower right leg in January while serving with the U.S. Army in Iraq, makes his way from the Salida boat ramp to the kayak park Tuesday. Harden was part of a kayaking clinic for disabled war veterans organized by Team River Runner of Washington, D.C.

Photo by Jason Starr

Please send any stories, photos, or ideas for publication to:

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# GIMPY

"A nonprofit organization dedicated to aiding and uniting slightly inconvenienced people around the world"

**[www.stumps.org](http://www.stumps.org)**

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