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PARADE EDITION

**BEST
OVERALL**

*Linstead on
the Severn*



Stars And Stripes Forever!

PAGE 13 DECORATED BIKE CONTEST

Kids with bikes, tricycles and wagons vied for the title of Best Overall, Most Original and Most Patriotic.

PAGE 29 PATRIOTIC EVENTS

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Patriotism And Creativity On Display At Independence Day Parade

By Meredith Winter

Nearly 50 years after its humble inception, the Greater Severna Park and Arnold Chamber of Commerce's Independence Day parade still offered thousands of spectators a captivating, patriotic experience with small-town USA charm this year. Families, neighbors and friends lined up along Benfield Road, Evergreen Road, Riggs Avenue, B&A Boulevard and Cypress Creek Road to watch a procession of nearly 100 festive floats, unique vehicles and talented people meander through the heart of Severna Park.

Though it was hot — that's to be expected in July — the weather was cooperative, with blue skies overhead for the beloved community event. Faithful annual spectators sporting their finest red, white and blue attire staked out their preferred viewing locations early in the morning, including Steve and Debbie Keefer, who have watched the parade from a shady spot in front of Woods Memorial Presbyterian Church for the last 13 years since relocating from Northern Virginia.

"I just like seeing the excitement of all the kids — the kids really get into

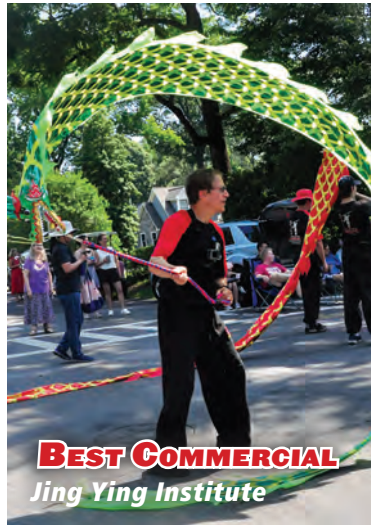
Continued on page 6



BEST THEME
Olde Severna Park Improvement Association



MOST PATRIOTIC
Nathaniel McDavitt Memorial Flag



BEST COMMERCIAL
Jing Ying Institute



BEST NONPROFIT
SPAN



BEST COMMUNITY
Round Bay

And The Winners Are!

BEST OVERALL

Linstead on the Severn

BEST THEME

Olde Severna Park Improvement Association

MOST PATRIOTIC

Nathaniel McDavitt Memorial Flag

BEST COMMERCIAL

① Jing Ying Institute of Kung Fu & Tai Chi

② Pedal Pushers

③ Homestead Gardens

BEST COMMUNITY

① Round Bay

② Shipley's Choice

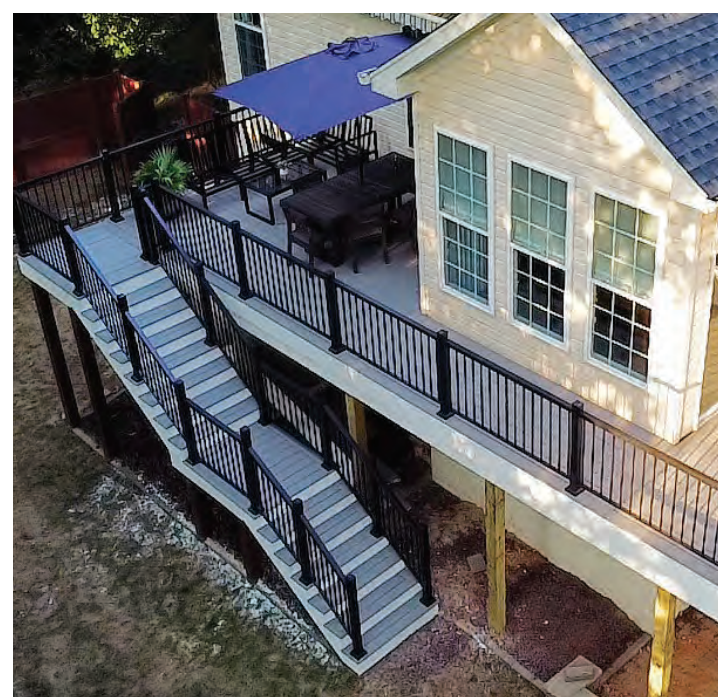
③ Severndale

BEST NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION

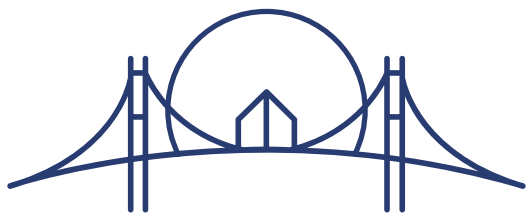
① SPAN

② Chartwell Country Club and Truckin 4 Troops

③ American Heritage Girls Troop 152



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Patriotism And Creativity On Display At Independence Day Parade

Continued from page 4

it," Steve said of the parade, noting, "We like that it's patriotic."

Debbie added, "The kids running out to get candy is cute."

There was no shortage of candy raining down on onlooking children along the parade route this year. Parade participants also gifted stickers, beach balls, water bottles, frisbees, temporary tattoos and other small treasures to smiling, flag-waving kids.

Spectator Jordan Posey shared childhood memories of attending the parade every year as she grew up in Severna Park. She would watch with her friends while her parents walked in the parade with local politicians. Now, she and her husband, Eric, also a Severna Park native, are starting their own tradition of bringing their children to the parade.

"It's exciting having kids now and reliving it through their eyes," Jordan said.

Their 5- and 1-year-old daughters watched with Mike and Diane DiBlasio's two young girls. Diane, a Millersville resident who is from Long Island, New York, shared that it was only her second year watching the parade.

With abundant creativity on display among the floats and other parade entries, this year's judges panel had their work cut out for them in selecting the winning parade participants. Communities, businesses, nonprofits, churches, clubs, first responders, service members, scouts, elected officials and others entertained the crowds with impressive craftsmanship, energetic presence and sheer talent.

Yet, when the parade concluded and the onlookers dispersed, winners were crowned victorious after much deliberation. The coveted recognition of Best Overall parade entry went to the neighborhood of Linstead on the Severn for its float that featured a gigantic patriotic whale. Community member John Velasco helped assemble the massive grinning marine mammal and explained that it



BEST COMMERCIAL
Pedal Pushers – 2nd Place



BEST COMMUNITY
Shipley's Choice – 2nd Place



BEST NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION
Chartwell Country Club – 2nd Place



had a working blowhole. "Since the blue whales are endangered, our community theme this year is conservation," he shared. "Our float is built entirely (with recycled materials, including reclaimed wood.)"

Velasco added, "The last two evenings (before the parade), the entire community came together to assemble the float, and much to the chagrin of their parents, the kids painted their hands to leave handprints all over the float."

The whale's blowhole, which Velasco explained was powered by a pneumatic valve system designed and built by Linstead community members, did not go unnoticed by the judges. "The little things really stood out," said parade judge Greg Coster, co-owner of The Big Bean. "For example, the blowhole on the whale — it was just perfect!"

Olde Severna Park Improvement Association was awarded the title of Best Theme for its float that featured an enormous crab. The honor of being named Most Patriotic went to Nathaniel McDavitt's Memorial Flag, with a massive American flag carried by dozens of participants.

Local businesses that won bragging rights in the category of Best Commercial were first-place winners Jing Ying Institute of Kung Fu & Tai Chi, with Pedal Pushers in second place and Homestead Gardens in third.

Of the many communities that banded together to fashion splendid floats, some of which included live musical performances, Round Bay came out on top as Best Community with Shipley's Choice and Severndale in second and third places. SPAN received the designation of Best Organization/Club for its display that highlighted not only the nonprofit's food distribution efforts, but also the work members do to help people in need avoid eviction. Chartwell Country Club and Truckin 4 Troops received second place, and American Heritage Girls Troop 152 took home third.

Joining Greg Coster on the judges panel were his wife and Big Bean co-owner Christie Coster, Jonathan Katz and Dianna Lancione of the Severna Park Voice, Jason LaBarge of LaBarge Financial, and state delegate Rachel Muñoz of Muñoz Estates and Trusts.

"I grew up here, so it was such an honor to judge the parade this year and to have three generations with my parents, my husband and I, and my children here," Muñoz said. "It was amazing. I loved it!"

Her parting sentiments likely reflect the way many parade participants and spectators felt as they disassembled their floats and packed up their lawn chairs to head home and celebrate the remainder of their Fourth of July holiday.

Next year will mark half a century since the Severna Park Independence Day parade first inspired onlookers with a sense of pride in country and community, and with any luck, the 2025 parade could be the town's biggest and best celebration of freedom yet.

Zach Sparks contributed to this story. ■

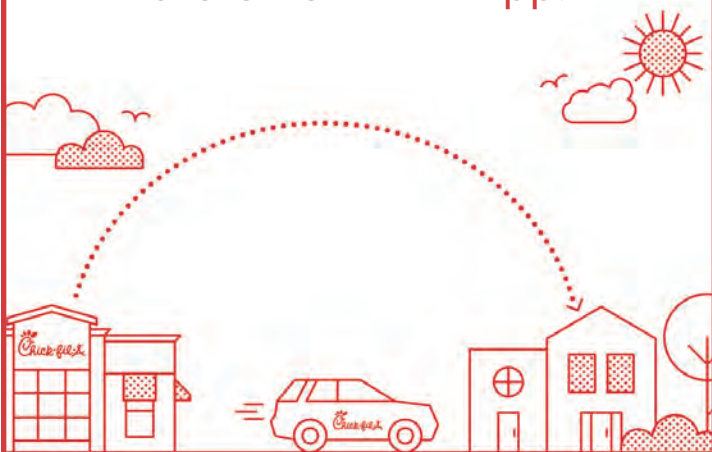






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Decorated Bike Contest Brings Out The Best Designs

By Zach Sparks

zach@severnaparkvoice.com

During the Greater Severna Park and Arnold Chamber of Commerce's decorated bike contest, Lola Rice was going for gold. The 9-year-old chose a theme that celebrated an international pastime, a move that paid off with her winning the title of Best Overall.

"We're trying to make (the bike) for the USA Olympics because I like gymnastics," she said, adding that she was proud of her first-place finish. "It feels really good."

Judges chose their favorite bikes, tricycles and wagons, awarding prizes to winners and runners-up for three categories: Best Overall, Most Original and Most Patriotic. This year marked the first time the Best Overall category was included, as it replaced Most Beautiful.

After declaring that this year featured some of the best designs that judge Colette Barnes has seen in her roughly 11 years of coordinating the contest, winners were announced.

Lola's entry featured the iconic Olympics rings and star-shaped balloons to go with red, white and blue tinsel garland.

Emma Matsumoto, also 9 years old, earned the Most Patriotic honor.

"We put tape, more tape, pinwheels, flags, paper, streamers and more tape on the bike," Emma said, referring to the help her parents provided.

Even the kids who did not win were glad to have the opportunity. One of those kids

Continued on page 14



BEST OVERALL

After winning Most Beautiful entry in last year's contest, Lola Rice won Best Overall with her Olympics-themed bike in the 2024 event.

MOST PATRIOTIC

After her red, white and blue bike took first place for Most Patriotic, Emma Matsumoto turned onto Riggs Avenue with the other contestants to participate in the parade.



MOST ORIGINAL

Reyna Laningham adorned her bike with pink decorations, earning her the prize of Most Original.



And The Winners Are!

BEST OVERALL

- ① Lola Rice
- ② Charlotte Schey
- ③ Oliver Bark

MOST PATRIOTIC

- ① Emma Matsumoto
- ② Ben Matsumoto
- ③ Hunter Johnson-Balthrop

MOST ORIGINAL

- ① Reyna Laningham
- ② Ava Paisley
- ③ Olivia Russell

Decorated Bike Contest Brings Out The Best Designs

Continued from page 13

was returning participant Kellen Mays, a 13-year-old who was eager to ride his bike on Holly Avenue and show off his community spirit.

"I have a flag in the back, so it waves in the air for patriotism," he said. "And I have bells."

After winning Most Patriotic last year, Ava Paisley arrived with a new entry, a wagon carrying an inflatable blue bird.

"This is a blow-up, and it has a necklace, pinwheels, a duck and a hat," said Ava, who also brought another animal: her miniature stuffed dog.

While most kids were thrilled to be part of the friendly competition, there was no mistaking their goal: a trophy. Before taking runner-up for Most Original, Ava reflected on her success in the 2023 contest.

"The prize for that was my favorite part," Ava said.

The decorated bike contest was sponsored by Lean On Dee.

Ava Paisley took second place in the Most Original category.



Brothers Cameron (left) and William Kelly were excited to participate in the 2024 parade.



Best Overall runner-up Charlotte Schey (left) participated in the contest with her brother, Oliver.



(L-R) Hailey, Jackson and Cameron Howard decked out their wheels and handlebars with USA gear.



Third place in the Most Patriotic category went to Hunter Johnson-Balthrop, who reminded everyone of their civic duty.



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Severna Park Elks 2482 Showcases New Flag Retirement Box

The Severna Park Elks Lodge 2482 unveiled its new flag retirement box with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on June 20.

The flag retirement box, a community service project initiated by the Severna Park Elks Lodge, provides a respectful and dignified means for community members to dispose of worn, tattered and damaged American flags. The box will be accessible to the public year-round, ensuring that all flags are retired with the honor they deserve.

"We are honored to offer this service to our community," said Andre Denault, Exalted Ruler of Severna Park Elks 2482. "The flag retirement box not only represents our commitment to patriotism but also our dedication to providing meaningful services to our neighbors."

The ribbon-cutting ceremony

featured brief remarks from the Greater Severna Park and Arnold Chamber of Commerce, local dignitaries and members of the Elks Lodge, followed by a demonstration on the proper way to retire a flag.

The flag retirement box will be permanently located at the front entrance of the Elks Lodge and available for use at any time. Elks members also plan to install at least three more flag retirement boxes throughout the community.

The Severna Park Elks Lodge 2482, part of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, is dedicated to community service, veterans' support, and promoting American values. The lodge offers a range of programs and activities aimed at fostering fellowship and giving back to the community. ■



The flag retirement box will be located at the front entrance of the Elks Lodge and available for use at any time.

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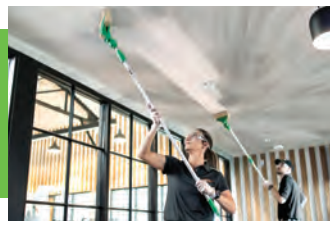
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Liz and Jim League were the parade's primary organizers.

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- Alison Jessie, Greater Severna Park and Arnold Chamber of Commerce
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In 1791, George Washington entrusted a crew to help him reach Annapolis via the Severn River.

The first president of the United States spent an unfortunate evening on the Severn River, and possibly, on Round Bay.

This anecdote was printed in Ron Chernow's 2011 book "Washington: A Life" and shared by Severna Park resident Bill Chadwick.

According to his diaries, Washington sailed down the Severn River the night of March 20, 1791.

As Chernow wrote, "The succession of horrors started with the sail down the Severn River in Maryland. Washington had borrowed a large boat manned by an incompetent crew, and in the course of a dark, stormy night, with 'constant lightning and tremendous thunder,' the boat ran aground twice. The befuddled crew had no notion where they were. All the while, the president lay curled in a bunk

below decks, so cramped he could not fully stretch out. The nightmare ended with the boat's arrival at Annapolis, where Washington was installed in the familiar comfort of George Mann's tavern."

While Round Bay was not mentioned in the diary entry, it is a likely place for the boat to run aground.

Washington was in Annapolis to officiate a meeting of property owners in Georgetown and Carrollsbury who were competing to have government buildings for the new federal district erected on their land. In a pleasant surprise, Washington informed the groups that the 10-mile-square district would encompass land in both domains.

The president followed the meeting by taking a week's respite at Mount Vernon. ■

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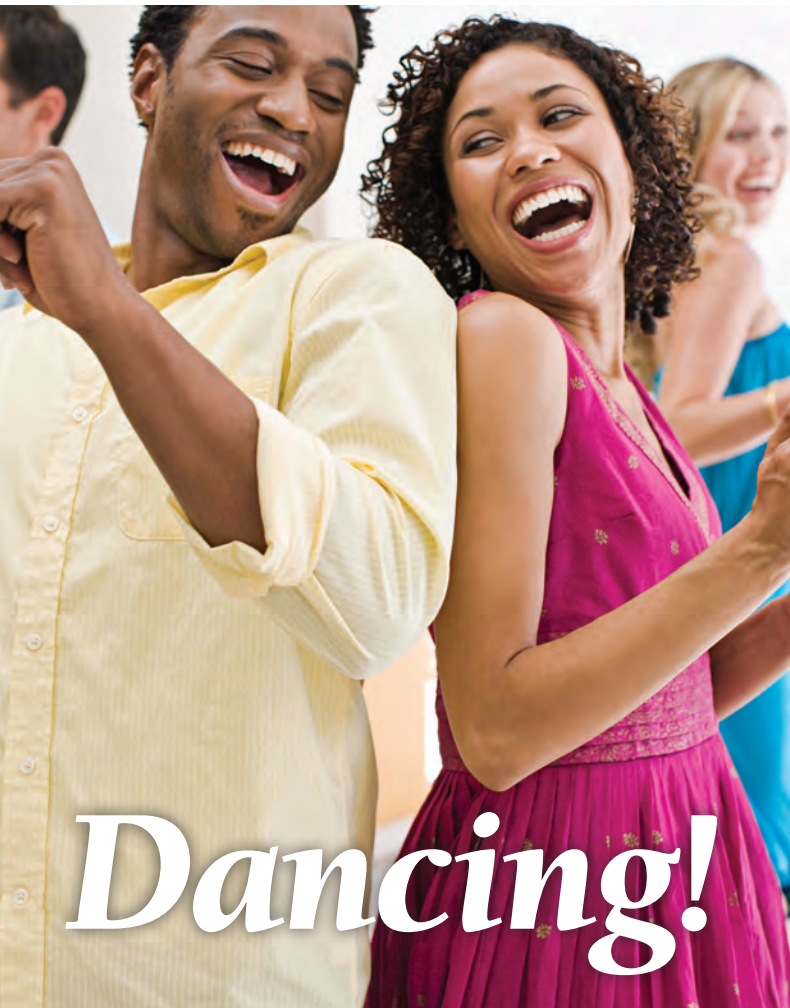
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During Revolutionary London Town, visitors can meet a colonial Marine or militia member, enjoy crafts and games, and talk with costumed historic interpreters.

Patriotic Events Around The County

Fourth of July is over, but summer and fall are filled with several opportunities to celebrate patriotism and learn about U.S. history.

Naval Academy Band Performances

*Annapolis City Dock
Dock Street, Annapolis
July 9, 16, 23 and 30 at 7:30pm*

Several of the United States Naval Academy Band ensembles will perform in downtown Annapolis on Tuesdays in July. On July 9, the Blues & Gold will entertain audiences with classic blues and blues-infused music. The following week, the Bravo Zulu Brass Band will perform a contemporary New Orleans-style street band concert, and on July 23, the brass ensemble perform a variety of traditional and contemporary works. Rounding out the month, the Superintendent's Combo will present a varied program of jazz, classics from the swing era, and newer works.

All Naval Academy Band concerts are free and open to the public. Tickets are not required. For more information, go to www.usna.edu/usnaband.

Revolutionary London Town

*London Town and Gardens
839 Londontown Road,
Edgewater
July 13-14 from 10:00am-4:00pm*

Historic London Town and Gardens has programming year-round for families, adults and seniors. Its signature event, though, is Revolutionary London Town, which explores what independence meant for the people of London Town in 1776. Meet a colonial Marine or militia member, enjoy crafts and games, and talk with costumed historic interpreters to learn about life on the brink of revolution.

Food trucks will be onsite, including Kona Ice of Annapolis (Saturday and Sunday), Salt and Pepper BBQ (Saturday) and Smash Up Burgers (Sunday).

No preregistration is required. For more information, go to www.historiclondontown.org.

U.S. Navy Band Cruisers Concert

*Glen Burnie Town Center
101 Crain Highway North,
Glen Burnie
July 27 from 7:30pm-9:00pm*

The Glen Burnie Summer Concert Series will include a free performance by the United States Navy Band Cruisers at the Glen Burnie Town Center pavilion in late July. The Cruisers are the Navy's premier popular music group featuring eight performers who play music from a variety of genres including jazz, rhythm and blues, classic rock, contemporary, pop and some of their own original tunes as well. Their concerts are for all ages, and they strive to entertain veterans, families, individuals and people interested in joining the Navy.

For more information, go to www.navyband.navy.mil or view the Glen Burnie Improvement Association Facebook page.

9/11 Heroes Run

*Navy-Marine Corps
Stadium
550 Taylor Avenue,
Annapolis
September 15 at 11:00am*

Hosted by the Travis Manion Foundation, the annual 9/11 Heroes Run is a 5K that invites community members to honor the heroes of 9/11 and the service members who served in the wars that followed. The Travis Manion Foundation exists to "empower veterans and families of fallen heroes to develop character in future generations." The foundation was inspired by First Lieutenant Travis Manion, of the United States Marine Corps, who made the ultimate sacrifice for the safety of his patrol in 2007.

To learn more or register for the event, go to www.travismanion.org.

Kids Q&A



Photo by Lauren Cowin

Book club members at Severna Park Tutoring and Educational Advocacy took a moment to share what they love most about summer.

The annual Fourth of July parade is one of many ways to celebrate summer. We asked the book club at Severna Park Tutoring and Educational Advocacy about their favorite summer traditions.

Summer is fun because I get to go to the playground a lot and go on the swings with my friends.

Adelaide M.

A tradition in my family is that each kid goes to sleepaway camp where we spend our whole day outside.

Bella V.

My favorite thing to do in the summer is take a trip on our boat. I love to go to the pool too.

Caitlyn M.

Summer swim team is always so much fun. The meets are a blast and taco in a bag is my favorite!

Carley O.

Going to water parks is my favorite tradition. I really like the giant slides!

Colson G.

In the summer, we have time to go on fun vacations like traveling to Mexico!

Declan S.

Each year, we go to a beach house in New Jersey, and everyone comes including our family from California. We have a lot of summer birthdays, and it is great to celebrate them together.

Ellie V.

I love the crab feast my family hosts on the Fourth of July!

Jane M.

Every year, we go to the Outer Banks with our entire family. We have a great time at the beach, in the hot tub, and on the hammock.

Jaxon M.

I love celebrating my birthday in the summer. We go out to dinner and have a party.

Justus G.

Playing in my club lacrosse tournaments in the summer is fun.

Liam O.

My favorite summer tradition is going to soccer camp.

Lola A.

The best thing about the summer is going to the pool with my friends and swimming a lot.

Maddie F.

In the summer, I play all kinds of sports like lacrosse, football and swim team.

Patrick F.



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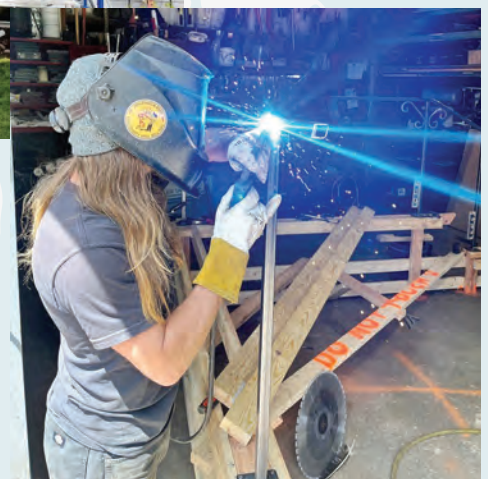
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