Ocean City Life-Saving Station Museum

SCUTTLEBUTT

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Another summer is drawing to a close. It's time to take a deep breath so you can go on to a busy fall and winter. But let's review what's happened since last we met.

After much planning we opened the Native American exhibit. We are indebted to the Salisbury University's Edward H. Nabb Research Center for Delmarva History and Culture for loaning us this material. Through prints, first-hand accounts and other items, the exhibit shows how area Native Americans lived and worked at the time of their first contact with Europeans. It also depicts ways in

which Native American life changed shortly thereafter, including a loss of freedom, environmental alterations, continually shrinking territory and the establishment of reservations.

The daily free summer programs held in July and August were a big hit again this year.

Children's Day on the Bay this year was a huge success. More than 500 children and adults enjoyed a beautiful day at Sunset Park. This year we included the Salisbury Zoo, the Delmarva Discovery Center, the US Coast Guard and Auxiliary, Worcester County Libraries, NASA, Rackliffe House, Pocomoke State Park, Maryland Coastal Bays, and Ocean City Mounted Police. The music of Mr. Don added a special spark. I have to say, owls, turtles, snakes, and hawks certainly do interest children and their parents. And me too to tell you the truth!

Sandy and Christine continue to bring new and exciting opportunities to the Museum. A special aquarium program held Monday through Friday is one of the latest additions to what we offer. We have so many fascinating critters - water, air and land - here on the Eastern Shore. What is it about animals?????

We continue to work on the addition to our existing building. We're awaiting word from Annapolis on some issues. Stay tuned. All good things are worth waiting for.

Coastal Style a glossy magazine on all things beachy did a wonderful article on the Museum. Here is the link - it's on page 40. <u>http://www.coastalstylemag.com/</u> We are grateful for their generosity.

Stories of experiences and memories of 'old' Ocean City are important to us. If you are interested in sharing let us know. We also are interested in business experiences - especially those that existed in the 1950s - 1980s. They may still be in operation or made an impact but are no longer in existence.

The 4th Annual Storm Warriors 5K will be held Saturday, November 11. People are already starting to register. We'd love to have you join us. Sponsors so far are: The Coffin Foundation, Humphreys Foundation, Whitman Reguardt, Quillin Foundation, Bank of Willards, OC Elks, Knights of Columbus, Seacrets, Calvin B. Taylor Bank, Long Fence, George and Lynch, Chesapeake Paving, Long Fence, Hibbard Inshore. If you know anyone involved with any of these organizations/businesses please thank them. Also, if you know of an organization, business or person who might be interested in sponsoring let us know. And please spread the word. We had 151 participants last year - would love to see that number grow.

Your membership is greatly appreciated. We couldn't continue without you. We hope you might consider a continuing membership - a monthly donation can be charged directly to your credit card. It really is painless.

Fall is in the air. There is a crispness to the mornings. Can summer be only eight months away!

Nancy Howard

President



Summer 2017

September 15

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R. BRODY SHOCKLEY WINS Hurley Memorial Scholarship



Daphne Hurley presents the George & Suzanne Hurley Memorial Scholarship to R. Brody Shockley at a ceremony held this May. Shockley's Award Wining Essay

As a lover of history, I follow a *rule of thumb*: salvage to some, historic to others, if something is saved then find out the history of the ruin.

When my family moved to the Glen Riddle subdivision I went exploring and found pieces of old fences, a graveyard and a racehorse starting gate, I followed my rule and explored. The place I call home originated around 1915 by a gentleman from Pennsylvania named Sam Riddle. He was owner of a famous horse who lived on the Riddle Farm; Man O' War. Mr. Riddle bought the horse from the famous Belmont family of Kentucky. Man O' War was a horseracing legend. He won all but one of his races and set records attracting the world's attention. He was bred and left a great lineage. Every street in the development is named from one of his descendants, including War Admiral who was a triple-crown winner

in 1938! During that time in American history horseracing was one of the largest sports in our culture. It's unique that a special role in that sport came from here in Worcester County, Maryland.

There is an old graveyard here; it sits near the old water tower, close to the ruins of the starting gate for the old horse track. Nowadays we run on the paved roads that cover that track. If you walk the water's edge you can see the ruins of the swimming corral where the horses were led into Turville Creek to bathe.

My grandfather was raised across the road from Riddle Farm. He is old enough to remember when he was young enough to watch the horses brought to Riddle Farm by way of the railroad. He's told me stories of the unloading of the horses and how they were paraded over to the farm. It's a nice irony that I live here now and will have that story to pass to another generation one day.

The ruins of Glenn Riddle are part of a unique history of Worcester County. If you visit the community clubhouse or visit the golf course you can study and learn of the horses, the families that used to come here to purchase their thoroughbreds, the sad story of the fire that destroyed the original houses of the workers. A local artist named Pat Henry has created many images that preserve the culture of Worcester County natives. His paintings of historic Riddle Farm serve as the backdrop to the restaurant in the community. It's worth stopping in for the history lesson, the view and to look around and see some of the restored artifacts of the original barn, including the doors and windows.

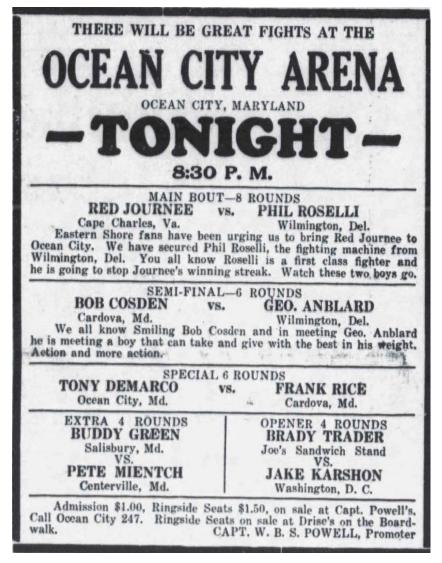
Worcester County has required Glenn Riddle's developers to preserve and protect the watershed here along with the ruins of the stables, the fence posts, and even the trees. I am happy to be a resident here and live in a place of significance to my community.

R. Brody Shockley

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THE YEAR WAS......1931 FROM THE SALISBURY TIMES

(Salisbury), Friday, August 28, 1931:



Curator's note: Boxing matches were popular summertime diversions in Ocean City from 1929 until 1936. Captain William B. S. Powell, a former mayor of Ocean City and the owner of extensive real estate holdings both on the beach as well as on the mainland, opened the Ocean City Arena in 1929. The open-air stadium, which could accommodate 2,500 fight fans, was located on the northeast corner of South 1st Street and Baltimore Avenue. Following Captain Powell's death in October, 1933, Joe Bryan, one of his business associates and the operator of a sandwich stand on the pier (where Ripley's is located today), took over as the local promoter. The final bouts at the arena were held during the July 4th holiday in 1936. The boxing arena and many of Captain Powell's other properties were put up for sale at an estate auction held on August 22, 1936. The Trimper family's Windsor Resort, Inc., bought the arena property for \$900, and eventually demolished the structure. The lot is now part of the Trimper Rides and Amusements complex.

Captain Powell's Ocean City Arena was not the first venue to host boxing matches in Ocean City. Daniel Trimper staged boxing events at his Seabright Theatre, located on the Boardwalk between South 1st Street and South Division Street, in 1899 and 1900. Other matches took place periodically at the Atlantic Casino on the Boardwalk (now Sportland) between 1901 and 1908.

A LOCAL PERSPECTIVE

THE ALASKA STAND

BY BOB GIVARZ

Unfortunately Bobby passed away before this article was to appear in the Scuttlebutt. Bob was a business leader on the Boardwalk and a dear friend to many of us. Perhaps his most important legacy was as an employer, role model and mentor to hundreds of young adults, many of them local Ocean City kids that worked for him at the "A" Stand over the years. He was a positive influence on their lives and those real life lessons will live on. We will always miss you and never forget you Bobby G!

Rick Meehan Mayor, Ocean City

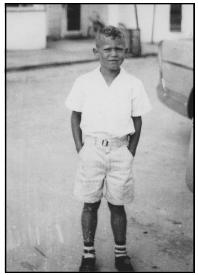
"Meet me under the Boardwalk by the pier after work and then we'll go for a swim," little 15-year-old Jerry Givarz said. "Pop will let me take a break for a few hours. Let's go!"

And you really could walk under the Boardwalk back then. Just look at old photographs. Can you imagine how many grains of sand have been deposited to build the beach?

That was the summer of 1933. It was the year that the "Big One" hit and created the Inlet. That was the year my grandfather, Benjamin Givarz, and his wife and kids decided to operate a little food stand in Ocean City, the Alaska Stand.

Sixty-four years later, he would not recognize the boardwalk or Ocean City. At the turn of the century, the Boardwalk was removed at night and then replaced the next day,

Now we have a three-mile promenade of shops, hotels, restaurants and arcades for the thousands of people walking up and down the east coast's best ocean walkway. Tacky, yes. Honky-tonk, yes. But where else can you see hear and smell so much in such a short time.



Bob Givarz, age 8 Photo Courtesy of Leslye Givarz

Back then (pre-World War II and before the Bay Bridge was built), Ocean City and the Boardwalk were just starting to grow. Expansion from the Inlet northward progressed slowly, but surely. Fine hotels like the Atlantic, Plimhimmon and the Lankford catered to guests with fine food, good service and a cool spot to beat the summer heat.

The Boardwalk back then provided a place to walk or ride, sheltered sun-bathers from the hot, humid summers and became the place to be in OC. There were very few food places on the Boardwalk. Aside from the dining rooms in the hotels, there were Thrasher's French Fries, Joe's Restaurant, also in the Pier building, Dolle's Popcorn and then the Alaska Stand on Wicomico Street and maybe a few others. But not many.

Through the years of blood, sweat and tears, Benjamin Givarz, his wife Eunice, sons Jerry, Leon, Alan and Sid, plus daughters Ida and Sara, managed to build a business from selling chocolate covered ice cream on a stick called an Alaska (hence the name), frozen chocolate covered bananas, fresh fruit juices, hand-pattied hamburgers and hot dogs. Today the Alaska Stands provide a full range of items including breakfast, lunch, dinner and delicious desserts like funnel cake and soft ice cream.

As a kid growing up in Ocean City in the '50s and '60s, I was on the Boardwalk every day. Getting up early and helping the beach stand boys set up their long lines of umbrellas at the water's edge was routine but fun. By then, the beach downtown had grown from a few yards wide to a couple of football fields long. It was a haul carrying the 'umbees' over the hot sand.

A LOCAL PERSPECTIVE CONTINUDE

Then it was off to Marty's Playland where "Uncle Lou," the mechanic, would give me free games on the pinball machines. Pinball was only a nickel then. After wearing out my welcome there, it was across the street to Nathan Rapoport's clothespin pitch game. Throw a little brown wood doughnut over the pin and see how many coupons you could win. I would save them for that one big prize at the end of the summer.

Next, it was a stop at Dumser's Dairyland next to Dolle's, where Pete Dumser would play his melodic organ. I can still hear the strains of "Lida Rose"..."Lida Rose, I'm home again, Rose, without a sweetheart to my name." He had magic fingers and feet, always moving but never out of sync. And by then, it was time for a quick midmorning dip in the ocean before lunch at the A-Stand, and then all afternoon on the beach, swimming, playing Frisbee (we called them flying saucers), riding surf mats and just hanging out.

But as dusk fell, it was time to make some money. Selling comic books or seashells on the side of the Boardwalk at First Street where we lived was my first sales experience. My sidekick was Jeff Albright. His parents owned property on First Street (and still do) and we could get into trouble at the drop of a hat. Sifting for loose change under the Boardwalk around the arcades and some of the old hotels like the Rideau and the Roosevelt was worthwhile. But, for a kid, it could be a little spooky, especially walking around what I called the 'catacombs,' the basement areas under the hotels where the staff stayed.

The teenage years were great to spend on the Boardwalk. In the'60s the Pier Ballroom was happening. Rock and roll bands played every night. Groups like the Admirals and the Lafayettes were regulars. What a great place to dance and meet girls. And then after the dance, a walk on the boards or with a blanket, a short stay under the Boardwalk for some privacy. I know you old-timers will remember that.

The '70s saw regular and constant growth northward not just on the Boardwalk but all over Ocean City. Businesses started popping up everywhere but it wasn't just local people. Lots of Baltimoreans made Ocean City their home, and to this day not only live here but have been elected to various posts in city government.



The Givarz Family donated a model of the Alaska Stand to the Museum in 1998 (Left to Right) Bob Givarz, his mother and father. Seated in front is Edgar Gaskins, Museum Society board member and builder of the model.

READER'S FORUM

Q: The recent article in *The Dispatch* about the upcoming demise of the most easterly Dumser's building was interesting and informative, but for me, it just brought about a lot of questions about the former businesses that were there, along with how that arrangement came about with the city of long ago.

The Dumser's situation leads to questions about the pier building, Souvenir City and the other building (snack bar/ restaurant) now found on the east side of the boardwalk. How long will they be there?

A: We think the best way to answer these questions is to provide brief histories of all of the structures presently situated on the east side of the boardwalk.

Before doing so, here's the background on "the Dumser's situation". The building occupied by Dumser's Dairyland at 601 South Atlantic Avenue opposite South Division Street is presently owned by Nathans Associates, a partnership of certain descendants of Nathan Rapoport, a Philadelphia amusements operator who built the first structure on that site in 1912. The land under the building is owned by the Town of Ocean City. Occupancy of the land is governed by an agreement that Mr. Rapoport executed with the town in 1966. According to the *Dispatch* article, published on August 11, "When the 1966 agreement expired last year, the Town of Ocean City asserted its ownership rights of the property and requested Nathans Associates vacate the premises. Nathans Associates then filed suit in Worcester County Circuit Court asserting the Town of Ocean City had essentially abandoned its ownership of the parcel by allowing the structure on the site for over a century." The court ruled against the partnership, and the town then issued an order for the partnership to either remove the building from the site or tear it down by December 31. The partners are preparing an appeal of the court's ruling. Dumser's only involvement in the dispute is as a lessee of Nathans Associates.

BACKGROUND

The Town of Ocean City owns all of the land east of the Boardwalk to the low water mark of the Atlantic Ocean except for two small parcels between South 1st Street and South Division Street that are owned by the Trimper family's Windsor Resort, Inc. There are ten structures located on the east side of the Boardwalk at the present time. Six of those structures are municipal facilities, two are owned by Windsor Resort, Inc., which also owns the land beneath those buildings, one (the pier) is owned by the Synepuxent Pier and Improvement Company, and the last one is the Rapoport building discussed above.

MUNICIPAL FACILITIES

The seven municipal facilities include three public restrooms (comfort stations), the Hugh T. Cropper Inlet Parking Lot, the Ocean City Life-Saving Station Museum, the boardwalk tram station located at South Division Street, and the Ocean City Firefighters Memorial located at North Division Street.

Comfort stations

The first boardwalk comfort station was built in 1954 at the east end of Worcester Street. In response to complaints from boardwalk business owners about the number of boardwalk visitors using their restrooms, the town built a second station at Caroline Street in 1966 and a third station at 9th Street in 1967. All three have been rebuilt and expanded over the years. The new Worcester Street station built in 2002 also houses on Ocean City Police sub-station on the second floor. The station at 9th Street was rebuilt in 2007, and the Caroline Street station was transformed into the Ocean City Performing Arts Stage and Comfort Station in 2014.

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READER'S FORUM CONTINUED.....

Hugh T. Cropper Inlet Parking Lot

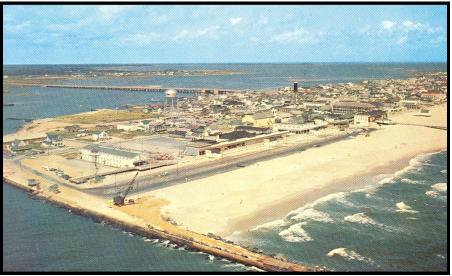
Parking has been a problem in Ocean City during the summer months since the 1920s (and still is today). The Mayor and City Council decided in 1952 to utilize part of the ever-widening beach at the south end of town to build a parking lot. An article published in *The News* (Frederick) on June 11, 1952 shared the good news for vacationers this way:

Ever looked longingly at the beach itself while driving around for a parking place at a seashore resort?

Well, Ocean City is going to let you do it.

Mayor Daniel E. Trimper announced today that a parking lot for 500 cars right on the beach will be opened next weekend. It's 1,500 feet long and 60 feet wide, made of clay rolled over the sand.

The parking fee, collected by lot attendants, was 25 cents per day. The lot was an immediate success, prompting the town to widen it to 100 feet in 1953 and install parking meters. Naturally, the parking fee was raised as well. The rate was increased to 25 cents an hour, or for \$1 you could park for up to 12 hours. The lot has been expanded further since 1953 to where it now can accommodate 1.200 cars and also serve as a venue for major events such as SpringFest and SunFest. The parking meters were removed in 2000 and replaced with a ticketing system. Each parking space contributes an average of \$2,000 annually to the town budget.



Ocean City Life-Saving Station Museum

The Inlet Parking Lot, looking northwest, circa 1955

The former U.S. Life-Saving Service/Coast Guard station building, which stood at Caroline Street on the Boardwalk for more than 80 years, was moved to its present location on the east side of the Boardwalk at South 2nd Street in December 1977. The town acted to save the historic structure from demolition after new owners acquired the lot on Caroline Street. The station building was refurbished inside and out in order to take on its new role as the town's museum, preserving and displaying the history of the Life-Saving Service and the Ocean City area. The Ocean City Life-Saving Station Museum was formally dedicated on December 25, 1978.

Boardwalk tram station

The boardwalk tram station at South 1st Street was completed in 2004. The station includes a waiting area for passengers, a ticket office and a control center on the second floor.

Ocean City Firefighters Memorial

The Ocean City Firefighters Memorial is located at the foot of North Division Street. The 2,500 square foot site, featuring a six-foot tall statue of a firefighter, was dedicated on September 11, 2006.

READER'S FORUM CONTINUED

WINDSOR RESORT BUILDINGS



The Trimper family erected two buildings on the east side of the Boardwalk between South 1^{st} Street and South Division Street opposite their amusements around 1916. The buildings were reportedly used for storage at that time. Later on, various games and boardwalk treats were purveyed at those locations.

The present structures were both built in 1966. The building closest to South 1st Street (711 South Atlantic Avenue) has been the home of Souvenir City since the 1970s. The other building to the north of Souvenir City (709 South Atlantic Avenue) has had a number of occupants, including House of Pasta, Burger King, Davey Jones' Locker, and most recently Kohr Bros.

Aerial photograph looking north from the Coast Guard tower on the boardwalk at South 2nd Street, circa 1965

There were no official protests about the two buildings until Nathan Rapoport requested approval in 1966 to build a new two-story structure on the site he had occupied at South Division Street since 1912. Rapoport's request prompted Councilman Clifford Shuey to push the City Council to approve a franchise tax on all buildings that sat east of the Board-walk. Rapoport signed an agreement with the town at that time but Windsor Resort, the company the Trimper family formed in 1936 to hold their amusement properties, declined to do so.

There the matter lay until 1983 when former Councilman George Feehley "sparked a heated debate" at a City Council meeting in July "concerning two parcels of boardwalk property developed by the council president [Granville Trimper, a grandson of Daniel Trimper]." The council demanded that Windsor Resort remove the two buildings. The company rebuffed the demand, which led to the town filing suit against the company in 1985. The court issued an opinion in August 1986 in favor of the town, but the Maryland Court of Appeals reversed that decision in June of 1987, giving Windsor Resort clear title to the land.

THE PIER (SYNEPUXENT PIER AND IMPROVEMENT COMPANY)

The pier building is the largest structure located east of the Boardwalk. The Ocean City Pier and Improvement Company, a group of Worcester County businessmen, built the first pier, which opened in the summer of 1907. That structure burned down on December 30, 1925 in a fire that also destroyed the Atlantic Hotel, the Seaside Hotel, Dolle's Candyland and part of the Boardwalk. The loss was not insured. The company was unable or unwilling to finance the construction of a new building, and sold its franchise to two Baltimore investors in 1926. A new group of investors, headed by Salisbury attorney Clarence W. Whealton, Dr. Charles W. Purnell, owner of the Atlantic Hotel, Frank W. Truitt, cashier of The Bank of Ocean City, Ralph R. Dennis, Ocean City store owner, and Dr. Frank Townsend, organized The Synepuxent Pier and Improvement Company in 1927. The company obtained the franchise and built a new pier that opened in 1929. The franchise for use of the land beneath the pier was initially set to expire in 15 years, but the term was later changed to 50 years.

READER'S FORUM CONTINUED

In 1955 a group of investors, headed by James A. Grazier of Whaleyville, approached the town with a proposal to build a new pier. The envisioned project, called "Pleasurama", was a mammoth 3-story steel and aluminum building that was to stretch from Philadelphia Avenue eastward into the ocean. The plans included a 75-room hotel, indoor and outdoor restaurants, a 5,000-person capacity convention hall, a swimming pool and even a heliport, with a projected cost of \$5 million (\$45 million in today's dollars). The group first requested approval to build its new pier at 18th Street, but the City Council turned that plan down. A second proposed site at 24th Street was also rejected. The group then entered into an option agreement with the Synepuxent Pier and Improvement Company to buy the existing pier, which would be replaced with "Pleasurama". The effort collapsed in 1957 after the project failed to attract sufficient investor capital.

The Town of Ocean City had the option to buy the pier building when the initial franchise term expired in 1979, but the appraised value of \$3.4 million was more than the town could afford. The town opted instead to renew the franchise with the Synepuxent Pier and Improvement Company in a controversial deal that gave the company another 50-year term to operate its pier on city-owned land. The new deal also increased the fees the company was required to pay. At the expiration of the current franchise on March 31, 2029, the town will take ownership of the pier building, with the company retaining ownership of the rides and other amusements located on the pier.

ENDNOTES

We would be remiss not to mention one other structure that no longer exists on the east side of the Boardwalk. Some readers will no doubt remember the bandstand on the beach at Somerset Street. The town built the first bandstand in 1927. Frank Sacca, the owner of the Adelphia Restaurant and Apartments on Baltimore Avenue at Dorchester Street and an accomplished musician, conducted the Ocean City Band in weekly concerts at the boardwalk venue. Sacca was instrumental, so to speak, in persuading the City Council to approve construction of a new bandstand and bandshell in 1950. The structure fell into disuse in the mid-1960s and was torn down in 1969.

We should also mention one other proposed project east of the Boardwalk that never materialized. In 1964 the Mayor and City Council granted a franchise to the Shore Development Corporation to construct a convention hall on the east side of



Bandstand on the beach at Somerset Street, circa 1960

the inlet parking lot. The hall would have fronted 600 feet along the beach, nearly the length of two city blocks, with facilities to accommodate 2,500 persons. The plan fell through due to a lack of funding.

We welcome all questions about Ocean City and U.S. Life-Saving Service history, and we'll try our best to provide answers. Please direct your inquiries to <u>curator@museum.org</u>.

WELCOME ABOARD NEW MEMBERS!

The President and Board of Directors take great pleasure in welcoming the following new members:

<u>FAMILY</u>

Shawn Nave Columbia, Maryland

<u>INDIVIDUAL</u>

Anne Janac Arnold, Maryland

Phil Wohlfort Fallston, Maryland



OCEAN CITY Life-Saving Station MUSEUM

The Times and Tides of Ocean City, Maryland

813 S. Atlantic Avenue Boardwalk at the Inlet Ocean City, MD 21842

Phone: 410-289-4991

E-mail: curator@ocmuseum.org

CURATOR'S CORNER

We have had an extremely busy summer and feel a great satisfaction in knowing that we have truly made a difference in the lives of so many visitors.

Since fall is the time of year when things slow down a bit and residents have a little more free time, we try to offer more programs and events for the local community. Check out the upcoming events listed below. If you would like more information, please call us at (410) 289-4991 or email me Sandy@ocmuseum.org.

- Archives & Artifacts—Changing monthly exhibit beginning in September
- Little Learners Program-2nd & 4th Mondays- September through May
- Smithsonian Magazine Day–Saturday, September 23rd
- Local's Appreciation Week October 26th~ 31st
- Dead of Night Paranormal Investigation—Saturday, October 28th
- Storm Warriors 5K—Saturday, November 11th
- Holiday Open House Sunday, December 3rd

I would personally like to thank all of the volunteers, civic organizations, and visitors that participated in our 7th Annual Children's Day on the Bay. Because of your support (and perfect weather) it was our most successful Children's Day yet! Enjoy the photographs below of the event held on August 6th at Sunset Park in Downtown Ocean City.



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