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FEBRUARY 2024

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 We are always happy to hear from you! Deadlines for submissions are the 10th of each month. Go to www.bestversionmedia.com and click "Submit Content." You may also email your thoughts, ideas, and photos to: lconner@bestversionmedia.com.

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 Are you on the association board for your community? Contact us for information on how you can submit articles, updates, reminders, events, and more to the residents. We create customized homeowners association sections at no cost to the HOA or the residents.

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Season of Love

WELCOME!

As February unfolds, we find ourselves in the heart of winter, surrounded by the serene beauty of Lake Michigan. Whether you're cozied up by the fireplace or venturing out into the frosty wonderland, we hope you feel all of the love that this magical month holds!

Inside this month's *Lakefront Living*, we get to know our neighbors Rima and Walt Binder. When they moved from Illinois to Long Beach in 2005, they'd already fallen in love with the area from regular vacations over the years, and they quickly entered a life of community service here. Are you considering a home renovation? Local resident Ginger Hollenbeck shares some tips for working with an interior designer along with your contractor. Finally, if you're looking to shake up your fitness routine, we're sharing the details behind the Crazy Legs Race Series, which has locals exploring parks of Northwest Indiana in every season and across every type of terrain!

Be sure to check out the calendar of events on page 12 for some local happenings you won't want to miss, from live music to local art and unique culinary experiences. We wish you a month filled with love, laughter, and the enduring beauty of the season.

Happy reading!

our experts

To learn more about becoming an expert contributor, contact Jody Lazar at jlazar@bestversionmedia.com 219-873-4736.



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CLUB NEWS

Dining at Pottawattomie Country Club

Looking for the perfect spot to enjoy brunch, lunch, or dinner while Long Beach Country Club undergoes renovations? Look no further—LBCC members are warmly invited to come dine at Pottawattomie Country Club! Their winter dining hours are Fridays and Saturdays from 11am to 2pm and 5pm to 7pm, as well as a tempting Sunday brunch menu from 11am to 2pm. Reservations are required; call (219) 872-8624 to reserve your table. Please leave a message with your contact information at ext. 103.

Curious to explore all that Pottawattomie Country Club has in store for 2024? Reach out to Matt Wooldridge for a personalized tour at (602) 402-3070 or via email at mwooldridge@pottcc.com. Conveniently located at 1900 Springland Ave. in Michigan City, Pottawattomie Country Club is your destination for culinary delights and more. For additional details on their programs and facilities, visit pottawattomie.com. —Lindsay Conner ●



Photos courtesy of Pottawattomie Country Club



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COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

Running Wild: The Crazy Legs Race Series



In the heart of Northern Indiana, where the spirit of adventure meets the love for physical fitness, Paul “Crazy Legs” Stofko has ignited a movement through the Crazy Legs Race Series (CLRS). Established in 2011, this race series is not your ordinary running event—it’s an exhilarating journey across all terrains and weather conditions, pushing participants to embrace the wild side of racing.

Paul, driven by a passion for promoting an active lifestyle, founded the Crazy Legs Race Series to encourage people to get physically active while exploring the hidden gems of Northwest Indiana’s parks. With a unique twist, CLRS stands out by choosing underused parks for its races, inviting participants to discover the beauty of these often-overlooked natural spaces. “These parks are true treasures, and our races allow participants to experience them in a whole new way,” Paul says.

The Crazy Legs Race Series currently boasts 13 races ranging from 5k to 50k, encompassing a blend of trails and roads. What sets CLRS apart is its commitment to promoting non-pavement/pavement races in the region. The races take place in parks or areas spanning Lake, Porter, and LaPorte counties, ensuring a diverse and captivating backdrop for every event. Proceeds from the race series are donated to non-profits including Friends of the Indiana Dunes, Outdoor Afro, Silverstray Social, and Red Feather Development Group.

At the heart of CLRS lies the ethos of fun and challenging course design in a low-key atmosphere. Participants can expect a thrilling blend of adventure and competition, making each race a unique experience. The series has become a platform for both seasoned runners and newcomers alike to push their limits and discover the joy of running in nature.

Paul, affectionately known as “Crazy Legs,” has become a local legend, embodying the adventurous spirit of the race series. His infectious enthusiasm has inspired many to join the movement and become part of the growing CLRS community. To stay connected and informed about upcoming events, participants can follow the Crazy Legs Race Series on Facebook (@CrazyLegRaceSeries) and Instagram (@stofko121).

As the Crazy Legs Race Series continues to gain momentum, Paul and his team are steadfast in their mission to promote fitness, exploration, and a sense of community. Through rain or shine, across trails and roads, the Crazy Legs Race Series is not just a running experience—it’s a celebration of life, adventure, and the untamed spirit that thrives in the heart of Northern Indiana. —Lindsay Conner •

Photos courtesy of the Crazy Legs Race Series

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A Life of Service

· Say Hello to
· Walter and
· Rima Binder

The Binder family's story is a witness to the enduring power of love, education, and community service—a legacy that continues to unfold with each passing chapter. Rima Kasubaite Binder was born in Lithuania and made her way to the U.S. where she met her husband Walter (Walt) at the University of Illinois Chicago (when it was still at Navy Pier). Their love story unfolded over four years, a period marked by Walt's Army service.

They made their union official in 1962 in Chicago at the Nativity Blessed Virgin Mary Church in Chicago's Marquette Park community. "The church was designed and built by Lithuanian architect, Jonas Mulokas, with my uncle Vytautas Kasuba, a sculptor, designing the outdoor Madonna plaques," Rima explains. "The church remains one of our favorites. We were married there, our children were baptized there, our son was married in that church, and our grandchildren were baptized there."

The Binders are proud parents to two adult children and they have seven grandchildren. Their daughter Kristine is a teacher at a Chicago charter school with adult children of her own. She has three daughters in Chicago, all working in the city or studying higher education, a son who is an influencer in the wedding cosmetics industry, and a stepdaughter from a previous marriage. Rima and Walt's son, W. Anthony, is married to his wife Mary. Together they adopted two Lithuanian boys, now 14 and 16 years old.

Rima earned her undergraduate degree at the University of Illinois, pursued a Master's degree at Northern Illinois University, and achieved a Ph.D. from Columbus University in New Orleans. Beginning her career as a teacher in Flossmoor, Illinois, Rima later moved to Cary, Illinois, where their family built a home. She became the Director of Curriculum and Instruction and Gifted Programs in nearby Barrington, Illinois. A driving force in education, she instituted a Master's degree program in Gifted Education at Northeastern Illinois University. She's done extensive consulting for educational companies and school districts to develop assessment programs and gifted/talented programs. Walt, a retired attorney, is a graduate of Northwestern University and Illinois Institute of Technology Law School. He was in private practice until retirement.

The Binders move to Long Beach in 2005 was much anticipated; for three decades, the couple had regularly vacationed in a cottage on the lake in Union Pier and fell in love with the area. "Upon retirement, Walt's law school classmate recommended we look at homes in Long Beach," Rima says. "We found our current home on the hill close to the lake. Our agreement was one block to the golf course for Walt and one block to the lake for me!" Aside from golf and strolling on the beach, Walt enjoys Bonsai miniature trees and golf. Rima's hobbies include sewing, knitting, gardening, and reading. "I learned to sew from my mother, created most of my clothes, and modeled for a Lithuanian charity at fashion shows. I currently also belong to three book groups."

Community improvement has always been near and dear to Rima's heart. While the Binders lived in Cary, Illinois, Rima was elected to the school board and served for seven years and was president of a local women's organization. Here in Long Beach, she's found joy in planning women's golf events and chairing two leagues, serving as president of the 18 Hole League and the 9 Hole League in alternating years. She's been a member of the Notre Dame Parish Council and was elected to serve several terms on the Notre Dame School Council, having served on the Michigan City Public School Strategic Planning Committee during their

early years in Long Beach. She was invited to join the Beach Garden Club becoming its president, currently past president. Rima is currently the President of the Lithuanian University Women's Association, American Chapter and serves on the Friendship Botanic Garden Board of Directors. "I am the first vice president and chair of the Botany/Garden Design Committee working with volunteers," she adds. "I also serve on the LaPorte County Symphony Orchestra Board of Directors and am Co-Chair of the Marketing Committee."

"My belief has been and is to be of service to whatever community in which I live, learning that volunteerism is not only necessary for many organizations to survive, but that it also brings personal joy and satisfaction," Rima says. Perhaps she learned this lesson from her parents, who were both professionals who served in several Lithuanian organizations and were founders of a Saturday school for Lithuanian children in the Marquette Park area. "They worked diligently to recruit the director, teachers, and find a location before the school grew to over 500 students." The school was combined with a Saturday school in the Brighton Park area of Chicago and still exists with an enrollment of over 300 students.

Rima speaks fluent Lithuanian has used her language skills to advocate for a Lithuanian family here in Michigan City for the past five years, helping them to integrate into the community. She is helping their oldest son, who has a disability, to navigate the school system before being admitted into the Indiana School for the Blind in Indianapolis as well as working with his younger brother and sisters in the Michigan City Public Schools.

Throughout her career and volunteer work, Rima has learned that sharing one's gifts with the community often gives back to herself tenfold. "I feel fortunate to meet and work with fantastic people along the way—a variety of individuals with differing personalities and talents. I encourage everyone to become a volunteer in any field with local, state, or national organizations. Volunteers are often the lifeblood of a community." ●

By Lindsay Conner

KNOW A NOTABLE NEIGHBOR? Do you know a neighbor who has a story to share? Nominate your neighbor to be featured in one of our upcoming issues! Contact us at lconner@bestversionmedia.com.

Restore Dental Arts | Excelling in Comprehensive Dental Care for Generations



The Restore Dental Arts Team



Dr. James David Weber, Dr. Jonathan Solares, and Dr. Michael Kirk

Photos provided by Restore Dental Arts

Restore Dental Arts is committed to providing comprehensive dental care with kindness, compassion, innovation, and excellence. Leveraging technology, they offer a wide range of procedures in one location, minimizing the need for external specialists and ensuring patients receive holistic care from a unified team.

The practice was originally founded as Weber Family Dentistry in 1944 by Dr. Douglas M. Weber in Michigan City. Over the years, the business evolved under the leadership of his son, Dr. Douglas W. Weber, and now his grandson, Dr. David Weber. In recent years, Dr. Michael Kirk became a partner and Dr. Jonathan Solares joined the practice. "Everyone in our office feels a strong connection to Michigan City and love our surrounding communities," Dr. Weber says. "We are all so grateful to live in such a diverse community on the shores of Lake Michigan."

What sets Restore Dental Arts apart from other dental practices is the degree to which they're comprehensive. "Today we can offer a variety of procedures in one

location, including sedation services, surgical, cosmetic, and restorative offerings," Dr. Weber says. "This largely eliminates the need for any outside specialists, allowing our patients to be cared for by one team." Other offerings include implant dentistry, All-on-X full arch rehabilitation, wisdom teeth surgery, sedation dentistry, and root canals. Restore Dental Arts focuses intensely on staying current with new technology and advancements.

Whether it's a simple single tooth restoration or a complex case involving whole mouth restoration, Restore Dental Arts delivers. "There is artistry in bringing restoration, health, and beauty to a person's smile," Dr. Kirk says. "Continuing education and a thirst for learning from our staff has allowed us to take advantage of exciting and vast advancements in the dental field. We have been able to increase our expertise and introduce new possibilities to our patients."

From the moment you walk in the door, the Restore Dental Arts team focuses on making patients feel welcome. "Whether it's our front desk team assisting with

treatment, financial, or insurance coordination, our assistants' calming chairside manner, or our hygienists' understanding and expertise, our team is always focused on making patients feel comfortable and welcome," says Practice Manager Sue Peckat. This attention to detail has drawn long-lasting relationships with families, with clients returning with their children and grandkids.

Philanthropy and community outreach are highly valued here. In the past, Restore Dental Arts has worked with Stepping Stone Shelter for Women, Michigan City Area Schools, and Citizens Concerned for the Homeless, Inc. in Michigan City. They run an annual coat drive, collect school supplies, and enjoy shopping for Christmas gifts for families in the community.

In the past year, this practice was fortunate to add several staff members and extend its hours to serve more patients. Restore Dental Arts looks forward to continued innovation, creative artistry, and excellent patient care. ●

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PET CORNER

Pet Available for Adoption

Offering vulnerable animals 100 years of second chances, the Michiana Humane Society has shared a photo and information on Pricilla. If she's been adopted when *Lakefront Living* arrives in your mailbox, visit www.michianapets.org to find a similar pet. We are happy to partner with MHS to bring you an adoptable pet each month. —Lindsay Conner ●

Priscilla

Submitted by Brianne Markos, Social Media & Rescue Coordinator

Priscilla wants to start the new year with a family of her own! She is currently in a foster home and here is what her foster has to say about her: "Priscilla seems to be doing well! When we leave her out with our other dog, she is not destructive and also doesn't have accidents. She has a good habit of letting us know when she has to go out. She loves to snuggle!"

Priscilla is about two years old and is spayed. She takes a couple of minutes to get to know new people but is a lovebug once she knows you! We think she'd do best with kiddos about 11ish and older. Call us at 219-872-4499 if you want to adopt this special sweetheart.



Photo credit: Brianne Markos

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shadycreekwinery.com

FEBRUARY

Tues., Feb. 20

Movie Trivia Night

@Michigan City, IN

Are you a movie buff? Put your knowledge to the test at the Michigan City Public Library for a chance to win a prize! Assemble a 2-4 person team to play; prizes will be given to the first three teams. Light refreshments will be served; registration required.

Time: 5:30pm CT | Cost: FREE | mclib.org

Sat., Feb. 24

Winter Wonderland Artisan Fair

@La Porte, IN

Head to Dunes Event Center (110 Clear Lake Blvd.) to peruse more than 40 talented vendors showcasing their creations. Explore a diverse array of artisan goods, from delectable baked treats to freshly roasted coffee, and an eclectic mix of crafts.

Time: 10am-3pm CT | Cost: FREE

michigancitylaporte.com

Sat., Feb. 24

Shelf Ice Brewfest

@Michigan City, IN

Put on your winter attire and visit the Uptown Arts District in downtown Michigan City for this outdoor beer fest! With four big tents and 40 local and regional craft breweries, homebrewers, and other surprises, this event boasts fire pits, ice sculptures, food trucks, and winter fun.

Time: noon-5pm CT

Cost: \$60 gen. admission, \$80 VIP, \$20 designated driver

theuptownartsdistrict.com

Sat., Feb. 24

Allstars Rock the Blue Chip Casino

@Michigan City, IN

Visit the Blue Chip Casino for an acoustic set by The Allstars.

Time: 4pm CT | Cost: FREE

bluechip.boydgaming.com

MARCH

Fri., Mar. 1 to Sun., Mar. 10

Ring of Fire

@La Porte, IN

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We encourage you to check event websites for admission fees, last-minute cancellations, or any other important information.

a unique musical featuring the songbook of Johnny Cash. More than two dozen classic hits including "I Walk The Line," "A Boy Named Sue," "Folsom Prison Blues," and the title tune performed by a multi-talented cast, paint a musical portrait of The Man in Black. Performances Run March 1, 2, 3, and 8, 9, 10. Call the box office at 219-362-511 for individual show tickets.

Time: Varies

Cost: Included with 4-show season ticket (\$66 adult, \$62 senior, \$50 student)
laportelittletheatreclub.com

Sat., Mar. 2

BALC Home & Lifestyle Expo

@Michigan City, IN

The Builders Association of LaPorte County's 29th Annual Home and Lifestyle Expo will be at the Blue Chip Casino Hotel Event Center. This Expo features all aspects of home ownership including home maintenance, remodeling, custom building, landscaping, finance, home furnishings as well as health, recreation, travel, and more. Vendors will exhibit the latest trends and products in today's market.

Time: 9am-5pm CT | Cost: FREE

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Fri., Mar. 8

Kenny Wayne Shepherd Band

@New Buffalo, MI

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Time: 9pm ET | Cost: \$60+

fourwindscasino.com/newbuffalo

Sat., Mar. 9

Dig the Dunes Makers Trail

@Michigan City, IN

Follow the Makers Trail to make five fun projects at different spots around town! You'll visit Lubeznik Center for the Arts, Over Yonder Dunes Gift Shop, Chesterton Art Center, and Pieces of Jayde, starting and ending at any location. Tickets must be purchased in advance.

Time: 11am-5pm CT | Cost: \$50

lubeznikcenter.org

Sat., Mar. 9

Glen Phillips of Toad the Wet Sprocket

@Three Oaks, MI

The Acorn (107 Generations Dr., Three Oaks, MI) presents California-based singer/songwriter and guitarist Glen Phillips. As lead singer and main songwriter of Toad the Wet Sprocket, Phillips helped create the band's elegant folk/pop sound with honest, introspective lyrics that forged a close bond with their fans.

Time: 8pm ET | Cost: \$40-\$65

acornlive.org

Sun., Mar. 10

Chili Cook-Off at Zorn

@Michigan City, IN

We've got some of the best chili around and YOU get to vote for your favorite. Includes samples of all chili, music, and beer tastings. Hosted Zorn Brew Works (605 E 9th St.) with cooperation from The Brewery Lodge, Joe & Freddy's, Las Mamacitas, and Third Coast Spice Café.

Time: 1-4pm CT | Cost: \$25

tinyurl.com/396x9hxx

Sat., Mar. 16

Gin Blossoms

@New Buffalo, MI

Gin Blossoms rose to fame in the 1990s with hits like "Hey Jealousy," "Found Out About You," and "Follow You Down." Hear them play new and old hits at the Silver Creek Event Center at Four Winds New Buffalo.

Time: 9pm ET | Cost: \$39+

fourwindscasino.com

Thurs., Mar. 14

Irish Wine Down Dinner

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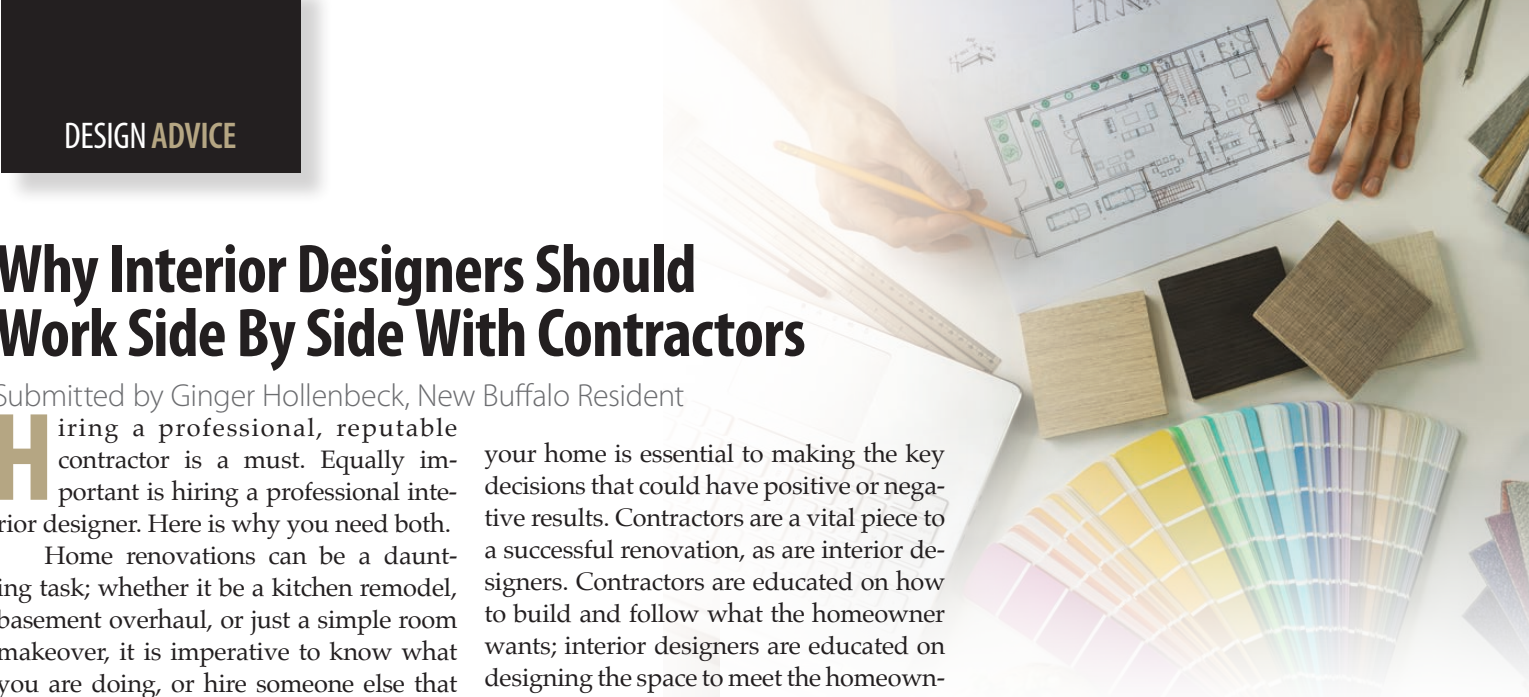
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Why Interior Designers Should Work Side By Side With Contractors

Submitted by Ginger Hollenbeck, New Buffalo Resident

Hiring a professional, reputable contractor is a must. Equally important is hiring a professional interior designer. Here is why you need both.

Home renovations can be a daunting task; whether it be a kitchen remodel, basement overhaul, or just a simple room makeover, it is imperative to know what you are doing, or hire someone else that



Hollenbeck

knows what they are doing. The upfront costs may be a turn-off, but the long-term outcome will be well worth every penny.

So, let's say you want to remodel your bathroom. Who do you call?

Well of course it would be a contractor, right? Wrong. An interior designer? No. Don't get me wrong, contractors and designers are important aspects to a remodel or renovation, but without the help of each other, it just won't be the best that it can be.

Understanding what you want in

your home is essential to making the key decisions that could have positive or negative results. Contractors are a vital piece to a successful renovation, as are interior designers. Contractors are educated on how to build and follow what the homeowner wants; interior designers are educated on designing the space to meet the homeowners needs and wants. It takes a special kind of person to be able to walk into a room and visualize a new space; designers have that skill, but not all contractors do.

Contractors and interior designers can merge their skills to produce an exquisite space. Interior designers hold the capability to be with you through every step and oversee the project as it takes off, flows steady, and finishes. Contractors, on the other hand, are good at getting the job done. This is where a designer's aid comes into play. Designers are aware of what looks aesthetically appealing to the eye; contractors, on the other hand, are more interested in getting the job done, which may result in overlooking some of the important aspects to the design.

A costly mistake among renova-

tions is a lack of communication between homeowner, contractor, and designer. The homeowner's wants and needs should be the number one concern by professionals who are hired to complete the renovation. In order to have a successful renovation, the contractor and designer must communicate; a lack of communication may result in exceeding the budget due to a light that was put in the design, but found later on that there was an obstruction which prevented it from being installed.

The next time you think about taking on a renovation project, consider working with a contractor and interior designer. Contact me at (269) 405-2142 or visit casabelladesign.com with any questions. ●



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Thank you Mom (Micky Gallas)! The best way to be successful is to learn from successful people. Thank you for teaching me this business, the right way. I learn something new from you each and every day. I am blessed to learn from the best.

Lastly, thank you to my wife, Bridgette, and daughter, Griffin. This is a long hour, impromptu schedule, 24/7/365 career. Your constant support, understanding, and encouragement means more than you'll ever know. I couldn't do this without you!

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