



# THE CONDUIT

Volume 22, Issue 4

June/July 2008

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**Editor's note:** There are many photos in this issue for you to enjoy. To get a clearer view, go online to [www.arizonaaea.org/pdfs/aear/aearconduit0608.pdf](http://www.arizonaaea.org/pdfs/aear/aearconduit0608.pdf) and set the size to 200% or more.



## AEA-Retired

### Calendar of Events

- June 26-28 — NEA-Retired Annual Meeting
- July 2-6 — NEA Representative Assembly
- July 9 — AEA-Retired Executive Board Meeting
- July 10-12 — AEA Leaders' Conference

## A Celebration of AEA-Retired, 1988-2008

The 20th birthday of AEA-Retired was held at the Annual Meeting on April 24, 2008, at the Marriott in Mesa complete with balloons, presents, and cake. Eighty members came together to celebrate. The organizational business was interspersed with drawings, prizes, and auctions to benefit The Fund for Children and Public Education.

Many excellent speeches were given. Out-going President **Kathy Campbell** spoke of the great changes that have taken place in the last ten years and acknowledged people who were her mentors when she became a member of AEA-Retired, those who have retired since 1998 and become active leaders, and the "newbies" who are the "future of AEA-Retired."

The keynote speaker was Vice President of NEA, and soon to be President, **Dennis Van Roekel**, who urged us to continue working for teachers and students. Recipient of the Les Reynolds' Distinguished Senior Service Award, **Ralph Lara**, reflected on his 50 years of service to education and community.

Secretary of AEA-Retired **Julie Horwin** presented a PowerPoint Presentation on the history of AEA-Retired which included messages and good wishes from **Barbara Matteson**, President of NEA-Retired; **John Wright**, President of AEA; and **Andrew Morrill**, Vice President of AEA.

Each member who attended received a beautiful memento — a key ring with a star that said "AEA-Retired: Your Statewide Local 1988-2008." **Ann-Ji Craig Wooten**, the Annual Meeting Committee Chair, along with **Julie**

**Horwin**, Chair of the 20th Celebration Committee, both ably assisted by **Suzan Austin**, did a wonderful job of making the birthday celebration perfect for us. Thanks so much for all your hard work.



Outgoing President Kathy Campbell and incoming President Linda Somo



Suzan, Julie and Angie

## Election results: New President and Treasurer, 8 Representatives-at-large; VP and 2 representatives appointed to fill terms

Congratulations go to our newly elected President, **Linda Somo**, and Treasurer, **Jean Stephenson**. Also elected to serve for 3-year terms are **Aurora Aber**, **Suzan Austin**, **Ken**



**Frank Bing** as Vice President for a one-year term, and **Linda Thieken** and **Cindy Michels** to one-year terms as Representatives-at-Large.

**Freed**, **Gary Mehok**, **Judy Moy**, **Brenda Pierce**, **Daina Swinford**, and **Juan Zuniga**. Due to vacancies occurring as a result of Linda's and Jean's elections, Linda appointed

Photo: The 2008-2009 AEA-Retired Board of Directors and Officers pose for a group photo at the 20 year celebration.



**LEGISLATIVE UPDATE**  
BY JULIE-HORWIN,  
AEA-RETIRED LEGISLATIVE CHAIR

**Thank you for being an AEA-Retired member!**

By choosing to participate with your colleagues in *organized* action, you make AEA even more powerful. Think about it; acting together, 34,000 AEA members are a powerful force to deliver the promise of great public schools in Arizona. Because we know that politicians don't always deliver what they promise, your active engagement is needed to stop the legislature from cutting spending for public education. We also need you to convince Congress to overhaul NCLB, and to ensure that school boards cooperate with local association leaders to improve members' working conditions and, by extension, students' learning conditions.



**Julie Horwin**

you feel you can help in any way listed below, please e-mail me, Julie Horwin, at [jhorwin@mindspring.com](mailto:jhorwin@mindspring.com). I look forward to hearing from you..

- \* Make a contribution to pro-education candidates, or to the NEA or AEA Funds.
- \* Receive the AEA and NEA electronic updates and become a cyber-lobbyist.
- \* Help out your association site rep whenever possible.
- \* Sign up a new member.
- \* Write a letter to the editor.
- \* Visit the Arizona Capitol with other members and lobby your reps.
- \* Elect friends of education to school boards, the legislature, the congress, and the presidency.
- \* Help pass school overrides and bonds.
- \* Attend a campaign rally
- \* Walk with another AEA member door-to-door.

**Make a Promise You Can Deliver!**

There are many ways you can be active and influential, and each of us can do our part based on the time and energy we have to contribute. Please do what you can. Here are some suggested ideas. If

If all of us did just one of these activities, our influence could be magnified many times. Be powerful. Start today!

**ASRS fails to make changes to the retirement plan; some progress made on dealing with "return to work" rules**



**Steve Ramos, ASRS Committee Chairman**

As The Conduit goes to press, there are some legislative issues still alive in the '08 session. All major changes to the retirement plan are dead for this session. The legislature debated two separate divestment bills. Divestment in Sudan has already passed and divestment in Iran looks like it will also become law. Finally, SB 1489 would require ASRS to adopt a policy for future divestments tied to the US State Department list of "State Sponsors of Terrorism".

The ASRS has recently revised its "Policy Handbook". One policy that continues to be of concern to AEA-Retired is the "Asset Allocation" policy. This policy continues the use of a rolling 10-year average in calculating the permanent benefit increase. Most states use a 5-year "smoothing" rate.

The ASRS "Return to Work" committee made progress in talks designed to address liabilities to the fund created by retiring employees returning to work. The stakeholder groups (including AEA and AEA-Retired) have come to a tentative agreement that employers should pay a contribution rate for each returning ASRS employee. This change would assure that the retirement plan is held harmless. Discussions will continue to determine what formula will be used in calculating this new contribution rate.

In 2006-2007, AEA-Retired pushed for a study by ASRS to determine the effects of "return to work" on the fund. That study found an estimated 5,000 returning employees, creating a \$40 million liability in the retirement fund each year! AEA-Retired believe these

numbers will dramatically increase in 2008 as employers look to returning employees to help solve their budget deficits. A recent ASRS comparison of the number of new retirees by year shows the number of retirees up 10% over this time last year.

**Governor's Conference on Aging; Myth busters; Breaking the Myths of Aging**

Many different groups from around the state met at the Mesa Convention Center on May 14-16 for the Governor's Conference on Aging. AEA-R was represented by **Suzan Austin** and **Gary Mehok**. The highlight of the first day was Governor Janet Napolitano's speech in which she announced the launch of a new mature workforce job bank and Mature Worker Friendly state certification for employers. The second day Attorney General Terry Goddard discussed new scams and frauds targeting the elderly.

Sessions were presented on several program tracks: livable communities, mature workforce, falls prevention, caregiving, and cross-cutting issues in aging. Each session addressed some aspect of the conference theme of breaking myths about aging. (continued on next page)

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY LINDA SOMO

"Ours (the education community) is a world made up of beginnings without end. We begin each year with a sense of hope and possibility. We begin each day ready to awaken our students and ourselves to a greater sense of what can be." Thus wrote Dennis Van Roekel, NEA President-Elect, in a recent letter to the NEA Board of Directors. Reading his letter prompted many thoughts and feelings for me as I begin a new phase of my life as your AEA-Retired President.

While we may no longer awaken our students to what can be, we often spend each day facing beginnings of our own. Sometimes the beginnings are pleasant, such as starting a new hobby or visiting a new vacation spot. Sometimes the beginnings are heart-wrenching, like losing a loved one and learning to live a new life without the person who had meant so much to us. Whatever the "beginning", we eventually learn to change, adapt, survive, and thrive. The life lessons that we accumulated over our long working careers, and since retirement, taught us to be more flexible, even as our bodies are often becoming less so.

As I pondered my new role in our Association, it occurred to me that perhaps the most valuable service I could perform for members is to help them explore the possibilities of what could be. What could our Association look like three years from now? How could we better meet members' needs? What could our state and our country become in the future? What could public education be like? Are we audacious enough to dream of a better future and willing to work to make those dreams come true?

Within a few months we will have the opportunity to shape a new destiny for our state, our country, public education, and ourselves. With our knowledge, experience and expertise, we can help to move our state and country to a truly new beginning. Let's commit ourselves to turning our hope and our sense of possibility into an agenda for success in November and beyond.

Over the next five months, the work that we do to elect friends of education, and of retir-

ees, can pay off in big dividends in the future. Are you willing to commit some of your time and talent to accomplish this? There will be plenty of opportunities for volunteering prior to election day. If each of us takes responsibility for doing just one thing, we can help to shape our own destiny. It could be something as simple as talking to a relative or friend about voting for the AEA / NEA recommended candidates. Or it could be something more complex like working at a candidate's phone bank, walking a neighborhood for a candidate, or distributing literature at the polls on election day. See the "Legislative Report" on page 2 of this newsletter for information, or contact me at [lasomo@orbitelcom.com](mailto:lasomo@orbitelcom.com).

As Margaret Mead said, "Never doubt the ability of a small group of dedicated people to change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." Working together, we can create a new beginning and a brighter tomorrow for us all.



President Linda Somo

Members owe a debt of gratitude to Kathy Campbell



## Members owe a debt of gratitude to Kathy Campbell

As Kathy Campbell finishes her term as president, we should all take time to thank her for moving the association forward in so many ways during her tenure.

Thank you, Madam President!

## Governor's Conference (cont'd.)

There were even opportunities to participate in chair yoga and Tai Chi.

For information on any of the session topics, contact the Division of Aging and Adult Services of the Arizona Department of Economic Security at 602-542-4446 or [www.azdes.gov/aaa](http://www.azdes.gov/aaa).

## DOVE Program

An AEA-endorsed provider since 2001

Discounts On Vehicles for Educators, Support Professionals, and Retirees



Larry Green, AEA member and former car salesman, has created a way to take the hassle out of buying a new or used vehicle. Larry does all the work, but you reap the huge savings.

Visit <http://doveprogram.org> or call Larry at 602.290.6212 or 1.800.881.3683 to get information or to request a quote.

DOVE has been providing quality service since 2001 to teachers, support professionals, and retirees.

NEW! Larry has partnered with Enterprise to provide certified, well-maintained used vehicles as part of his service. Call today.

## A Good Reason to Join AEA-Retired



Marion Pickens

Retired Board member Marion Pickens from Tucson is a long-time member of both AEA and AEA-Retired. She is a past recipient of the AEA Friend of Education Award and also served in the Arizona House of Representatives where she was a dependable vote for public education. We're lucky to have Marion's political acumen as we navigate perilous political waters in Arizona.

Thank you, Marion, for all you do.

# Photo gallery: Your AEA-Retired colleagues at work and at play

At the NEA-Retired Regional meetings, at AEA-Day at the Capitol, at AEA-Retired's 20 Year Celebration, at the IMPACT celebration for mentors and mentees, at AEA Delegate Assembly, YOUR AEA-Retired colleagues were there, representing YOU and your interests



**NEA Eastern Regional Meeting**

Top left: Representing AEA-Retired at the NEA-Retired Eastern Regional meeting in Williamsburg, Virginia were (front row) John Campbell, Barbara Matteson, (middle row) Jean Stephenson, Linda Somo, Julie Horwin, Daina Swinford, (back row) Kathy Campbell, Frank Bing, Mike Aicone; Top right: Mike Aicone, Frank Bing, John Campbell and Kathy Campbell at the pre-conference for state officers and staff; Lower left: Bob Eagan, NEA National Membership Strategy leader, and Frank Bing, AEA-Retired, presented to the pre-conference on how to utilize retirees in NEA Target of Opportunity membership recruitment grants. They repeated their presentation at the Western Regional meeting.



## AEA Lobbying Day at the Capitol



Connie Wittig and John Campbell discuss their meetings with legislators.

These are the AEA-Retired members who attended the Lobbying Day. Karen Aborne, Connie Wittig, Marion Pickens, Cindy Michels, Dick Van Dyne, Suzan Austin, Bob Bloom, Barbara Matteson, Juan Zuniga, Aurora Aber, Linda Somo, Gary Mehok, Frank Bing, Jean Stephenson, Brenda Pierce, Suellen Brahs, Susie Sommers, John Campbell (in hiding!), and Judy Moy. Missing from the photo because of legislator appointments, were Steve Ramos, Julie Horwin, and Bob Aborne.



Gary Mehok, Julie Horwin, Bob Bloom and Dick Van Dyne outside the Senate Building (above)

Below: Wayne Diehl, Gary Mehok, John Campbell, Brenda Pierce, and Susie Sommers recruit a member for 2035 (smile!)



Center: Barbara Matteson, Marion Pickens, (both Tucson) Cindy Michels, (Yuma) Frank Bing, (Chandler) and Juan Zuniga (Tucson) share some final thoughts. The consensus was that it was a positive, productive day.

# Photos from the AEA-Retired 20 year Celebration; IMPACT celebration candid; East Valley Chapter meeting photos



*Annual Meeting photos to the left*

Top: The meeting room was festively decorated, even including a balloon arch over the podium; Middle: Erstwhile auctioneer Ken Freed helps to raise a record amount for the NEA Fund; Bottom: Dorothy Rowley, (left) was given special recognition for her great contributions to AEA-Retired. Dorothy's quilts, which we auction, have raised thousands of dollars in the last six years. Here. President-elect Linda Somo presents Dorothy with flowers.



*Annual meeting photos to the right*

From top to bottom: Top and Middle: The AEA-Retired leaders who have been serving for the past few years, and those who are currently serving, and (bottom) the leaders who represent the future of AEA-Retired. (Suggestion- View these pictures online at [www.arizonaea.org/pdfs/aear/aearconduit0608.pdf](http://www.arizonaea.org/pdfs/aear/aearconduit0608.pdf) and increase the size to 200% or higher to get a clearer view of all these leaders.)



*East Valley Chapter meeting, May 13  
Mesa Bank Building*



## *IMPACT Celebration*



Left and below: Mentors and mentees from the AEA-Retired IMPACT program gathered for a celebration on April 23 at the Mesa Marriott. A good time was had by all.



Above and right: East Valley Chapter meetings generally draw 25-35 members. They get a great view from the floor to ceiling window on the 8th floor of the Mesa Bank Building. Get more info on the back page of this Conduit.



## AEA-Retired: News and Views You Can Use

### Intergenerational mentoring program celebrates another successful year

AZ IMPACT, Arizona Intergenerational Program Attracting and Connecting Teachers, held its end-of-the-year celebration on April 23 at the Mesa Marriott, the evening before our 20 year meeting and party. Fifty retirees and mentees from the Phoenix, Tucson, Yuma, and First Five groups enjoyed icebreakers, prizes, dinner and the opportunity to share successes. Chairperson **Paula Grigsby** shared a PowerPoint Presentation on the highlights of this year's program. AEA President **John Wright** stopped by during the celebration to congratulate everyone on a successful and to express his support for the continuation of IMPACT. (see photos on page 5)



### DVDs of the AEA-Retired 20 Year History slide show are available

We were treated to a slide show (power point) at the 20 year celebration which showed highlights of our association from its beginning to now. If you'd like a copy, they are available for \$5, to cover the cost of disks and postage. Contact Julie Horwin at [jhorwin@mindspring.com](mailto:jhorwin@mindspring.com) to have a copy sent to your home.

### Ralph Lara 4<sup>th</sup> Recipient of Prestigious Award

The Les Reynolds Distinguished Senior Service Award was presented to **Ralph Lara** at the AEA-Retired Annual Meeting on April 24, 2008 in Mesa. Ralph was accompanied to the ceremony by his wife **Rosa** and his three daughters, **Sylvia, Cynthia, and Michelle**. (photo below)



Ralph has been an active member of NEA, chairing the NEA Chicano-Hispanic Caucus, and AEA, chairing the Minority Affairs Committee, before joining AEA-Retired and serving as vice-president and Elections Committee Chair.

Active in his Clifton community and his church, Ralph also was inducted into the Golden Circle, an organization that was created by the U of A to recognize College of Education alumni for fifty years of service in education.

Ralph was nominated by his longtime friend and colleague, **Wayne Diehl**.

Ralph epitomizes what this award honors: service to education, community, and association.

**Ralph and Rosa, and nominator Wayne Diehl**



The Prescott Chapter of AEA-Retired held its May meeting at the home of Ann Myers (bottom right). Steve Ramos, Gary Mehok and Frank Bing gave a presentation on ASRS and current legislation affecting retirement and public education.

### AEA-R member Sharon Doyle recipient of Tempe Outstanding Community Leadership Award

2005 TUHSD retiree Sharon Doyle was chosen by Tempe Leadership to receive an award that "recognizes outstanding leadership achievements and service that contribute to improving the quality of life in Tempe."

Doyle hasn't let retirement slow her down even a little. She currently serves on 16 different committees and organizations and is a member of the East Valley Chapter of AEA-Retired. She is the president of the Tempe High School District Education Foundation, and is vice-president of the Tempe Impact Education Foundation.

Congratulations, Sharon.

### Small world, isn't it?

In the last issue of The Conduit, we ran an article about retired member **Larry Wittig** being recognized by the Arizona Music Educators' Association with the **William Richardson Retired Music Educator Service Award**. Larry was contacted by **Sally Rosen** from Sierra Vista, who will join the ranks of AEA-Retired this year. Sally told him that William Richardson was her father, but that she had no idea that there was an award which bore his name!

It seems that Sally had gone online to get some info about AEA-Retired and went to the **Conduit** link. When she noticed Connie's name, she read on because they've known each other for years. That's how she found out about the award. She says she gave her brother, Bill, Jr., a hard time about not letting her know about the award. Bill, Jr., was also very active in AMEA and AEA in the Tempe HS district.

Sally added that it was, "Dad's activism that caused me to join AEA in 1969 when I first started teaching. He taught me that if you join, you participate, so I started out as building rep, AEA delegate, secretary, local president, and AEA Board member."

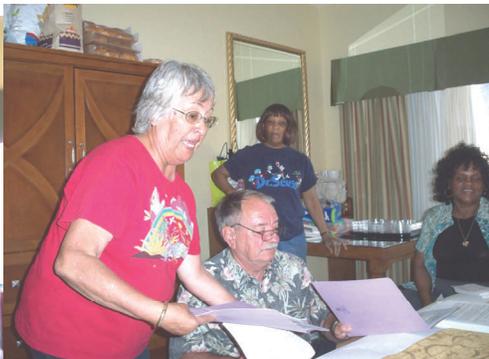
Sally has also expressed an interest in initiating an AEA-Retired Chapter in Sierra Vista next year, so if you live in the SE part of the state, we hope you'll be active.



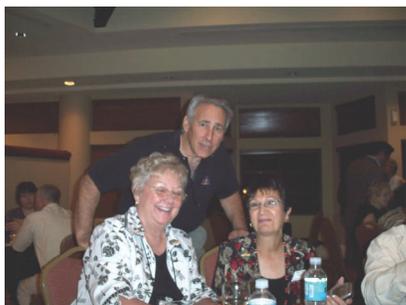
### Attention all cruisers!

If you are going on AEA-Retired's fall cruise to New England/Canada, please contact Denise Carrig at 602-241-3931 ASAP for air and insurance options.

# Delegate Assembly– April 25-26, Mesa Marriott



AEA-Retired members gathered the day before the Annual Meeting to do preparations for packets, food, drawing prizes, etc. Pictured, left are Aurora Aber, John Campbell, Julie Horwin, AnnJi Craig-Wooten and Helen Arnold. Pictured right are Aurora Aber, John Campbell, Frieda Baker, and Helen Arnold.



Ken Freed chats with Kathy Campbell and Linda Somo at the IMPACT celebration



AEA-Retired members participated fully in Delegate Assembly business. A highlight of the convention was when AEA-Retired, spearheaded by Steve Ramos and Linda Somo, saw several of their Resolutions' amendments pass. The resolutions will allow AEA to work effectively with ASRS and the legislature to improve Return to Work legislation next year.



AEA-Retired legislative chair Julie Horwin shares a light moment with NEA President-Elect Dennis Van Roekel from PVEA.



We're nothing if not resourceful. When delegates Jean Stephenson, Daina Swinford and Paula De Batista found it a little cool in the hall, they discovered a new use for their hotel bedspread!



AEA-Retired was well-represented at the AEA Awards Banquet front row; Rosa and Ralph Lara, Mary Bishop, middle row; Aurora Aber, Linda Somo, Jean Stephenson, Helen Arnold, Julie Horwin, back row; Cindy Michels, Wayne Diehl, Marion Pickens, Frank Bing, John and Kathy Campbell. Ralph was the recipient of the AEA-Retired Les Reynolds Award, (see article previous page).



Marion Pickens tutors Frank Bing on legislative issues.



Delegates relax at day's end at AEA-Retired "Happy Hour".



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- Linda Somo      President
- Frank Bing      V. Pres.
- Julie Horwin    Secretary
- Jean Stephenson   Treasurer
- Conduit** co-editors
- Suzan Austin    Frank Bing

# Chapter News

Chapters are an attempt to bring AEA-Retired closer to members. All AEA-Retired members are eligible to join a chapter where they worked or currently live. Meetings usually include an information program, business meeting, lunch or dinner, and time for socializing with friends and colleagues. The 2007-2008 Chair of the Chapters Task Force is **Gary Mehok**. Anyone interested in forming a new chapter can contact Gary at LO-JO40@cox.net. *We would love to have chapters in the northern part of the state and in the southeastern part of the state. Currently, our northernmost chapter is in Prescott Valley and our closest chapter to the SE corner of the state is Tucson.*

**Glendale Chapter:** At the May 8 meeting members enjoyed an informative report from John Hartzell, AEA Communications Director, on legislative issues and AEA positions. The Glendale Chapter continues to meet 4 times a year to inform our members about issues that affect seniors and public schools. Our meetings are held at 4 pm at Ironworks Restaurant at Bellair Golf Course, 17233 N. 45th Avenue, (1/4 mile north of Bell Road at the Bellair Golf Course). All retired teachers who live in Peoria, Glendale, Sun City and Youngtown are invited to stop by and enjoy good company, good information and a good meal if they wish to purchase one. If you would like to participate in our community efforts, please bring an unwrapped non-stuffed toy for our Andrea's Closet donation. Our fall meetings will be Sept 11 and Nov.13. For information contact **Susie Sommer** at 623-931-6209 or [ssommer114@aol.com](mailto:ssommer114@aol.com).

**Mesa / East Valley Chapter:** At the meeting on May 14 the guest speaker was Joe Yuhas from the Coalition for Solutions Through Higher Education. Meetings are held regularly at 11:00 am on the 8th floor of the Mesa Bank Building, 63 E. Main St. For information on the fall meeting, contact **Phyllis Swan** at (480) 926-2878 or [lcswan@cox.net](mailto:lcswan@cox.net).

**Tucson Chapter:** The April meeting was rescheduled for May 7 at the AEA Southern Region office, 6873 N. Oracle Road. The program was entitled "Come What May." The next meeting will be August 13. Contact **Aurora Aber** at [TheAbers@cox.net](mailto:TheAbers@cox.net) or 520-721-7547 for more information.

**Phoenix Chapter:** The last meeting of the year was May 15 at 10:30 am at the Hometown Buffet on the southwest corner of 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Bethany Home Road. Mark Rosin spoke about reverse mortgage benefits. Old cell phones and eye glasses were collected for the Lions Club, teddy bears for the police department, and empty pill bottles for the homeless shelter. For information contact **Frank Sacco** at 602-279-5196 or [fsacco1@cox.net](mailto:fsacco1@cox.net).

**White Mountain Chapter:** For information about joining this chapter, contact **Paula Grigsby** (Overgaard) at 928-535-4353 ([pkgrigsby@frontiernet.net](mailto:pkgrigsby@frontiernet.net)).

**Prescott Chapter:** There was a meeting on May 7, 2008, at 11:00 am at the home of **Ann Myers**. **Steve Ramos**, **Frank Bing** and **Gary Mehok** gave a presentation on ASRS and legislation. To join this chapter contact **Helga Krantz** at 928-776-4314 or [bcdhelga@gmail.com](mailto:bcdhelga@gmail.com).

**Yuma Chapter:** Please contact **Bernadette Presloid** at 928-782-7691 or [dettep@juno.com](mailto:dettep@juno.com) if you are interested in joining this chapter.

**Paradise Valley/ Scottsdale Chapter:** There was a meeting on May 21 at the Quilted Bear from 4-6 pm. **Steve Ramos** spoke on ASRS matters. Contact **Linda Thieken** 602-996-4398 or **Julie Horwin** 480-419-0332 for information on this chapter.

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