

NEWS

Newsletter of the
Zilker
Neighborhood
Association

OCTOBER 2010

Austin, Texas
Established 1981

South Lamar Entertainment District: How Do We Know When We've Had Enough?

ON OCTOBER 28, the Austin City Council will be considering the rezoning of the old service station on South Lamar at Mary for liquor sales (called CS-1 in city code) to accommodate a new bar. This is shaping up to be the test case for whether the City Council is going to allow South Lamar to become another entertainment district to compete with Sixth Street downtown.

The ZNA executive committee has a lot of experience dealing with the key issues in this case, most notably in our negotiations with Gibson Street Bar, Shady Grove, and the Highball to mitigate noise and parking problems. This year's crop of bar and restaurant cases along South Lamar, however, has been different. The sites on South Lamar targeted by bar investors tend to be very small, right up against homes, with no room for parking or for outdoor seating. (The business model for these bars is heavily dependent on cheap outdoor seating.) To paraphrase one of our neighbors in the South Lamar Neighborhood Association, the applicants want to pour 10 pounds of flour into a 5-pound sack. Increasingly, ZNA is being asked to compromise and help the applicant squeeze 8 pounds or 7 pounds into the 5-pound sack. In the past, we worked with owners to get the best possible project within city code, while preserving the neighbors' quality of life. Today, we are being asked to support projects that can't possibly comply with code. The ZNA executive committee needs to hear from you,

ZNA Meeting
October 25
Monday 6:30-8:45 PM
 Zilker Elementary School
 1900 Bluebonnet
 ❖ ❖ ❖
 Meet and Greet Social
 Election of Officers for 2011
 Holiday Fund Kickoff
 Rezoning South Lamar for Bars
 ACL Festival Feedback
 ❖
 Newcomers, old-timers,
 homeowners, renters,
 business neighbors
 All Welcome
 ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖

the members of ZNA, about where to draw the line.
The Site Plan
 The triangle at West Mary and 1901 S. Lamar is typical of old service stations along South Lamar, except that its traffic and parking (*Continued on p. 6*)



Vote If You Love Zilker

The general election is Tuesday, Nov. 2, 2010. Early voting begins Monday, Oct. 18, and ends Friday, Oct. 29. On Election Day,
Precinct 332 votes at Zilker Elementary School (Bluebonnet at Hether)
Precinct 462 votes at the MHMR office (1700 S. Lamar, off Collier)
Precinct 342 votes at Barton Hills Elementary (2108 Barton Hills Dr.)
 The League of Women Voters guide to the election is available at www.lwvtexas.org.

Zilker Elementary School Special Events

ZILKER ZAMBOREE

Saturday, Oct. 30, Noon-4 pm

With the arrival of cooler temperatures, it's time for Zamboree, Zilker PTA's fall carnival. This year's carnival will feature a variety of perennial favorite games and activities, such as the cake walk, along with delicious food and beverages.

Returning this year will be the 3-on-3 basketball tournament, including an adult division. Registration is only \$9 per team, but there is a 16-team maximum, so register early. For more information or to reserve your spot, please contact Julie Carrillo (carrillojl@yahoo.com).

Also returning this year will be the mystic/healing tent. If you are a skilled massage therapist, chiropractor, henna artist, or Reiki practitioner and would like to volunteer at the Healing Village, contact Akua Woolbright (akua.woolbright@wholefoods.com).

New this year will be a Halloween costume parade and a photo booth with a choice of four backgrounds.

Zilker PTA BookPeople fundraiser

Oct. 29-Nov. 8

Support reading, the local economy, and the Zilker PTA by shopping at BookPeople for one week. It's simple: during the week, Zilker families, friends, and neighbors shop at BookPeople for books and gifts. At check-out, present the Zilker BookPeople flyer (distributed through the school and on zilkerelem.org). The store will donate 20 percent of net sales to the Zilker PTA. If you forget the flyer, just say you're shopping on behalf of Zilker.

Zilker PTA/BookPeople MILK AND COOKIE NIGHT: On Wednesday, Nov. 3, at 5-8 pm, Zilker PTA will host a special milk and cookie hootenanny. Children (and parents) can come to the store in their pj's to shop, eat yummy treats, and listen to special readings throughout the evening by Principal Thomson and Zilker teachers.

Seeking Mentors for Zilker Students

YOU CAN HELP out a Zilker student by becoming a mentor. Just 45 minutes once a week could make a huge difference for a neighborhood child. All you have to do is sign up with Austin Partners in Education, attend one-hour of training, and complete a simple background check. Find out more on the Web at austinpartners.org/mentoring, or contact Zilker Elementary counselor Stacey Feldman at 414-3318 (stacey.feldman@austinisd.org).



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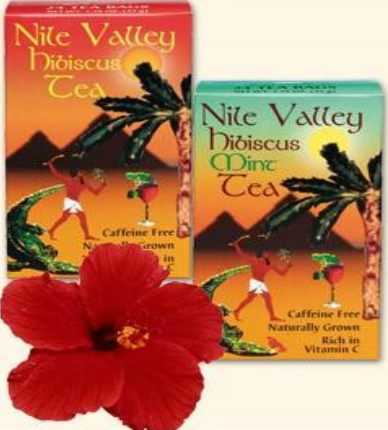
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Little Zilker Park Tree Pruning Workshop

WONDERING HOW TO CARE for your replacement trees planted through Austin Energy, TreeFolks, or other urban forest programs? This workshop is for you.

Angela Hanson, a forester with the City of Austin parks department, has kindly offered to conduct a class for Zilker residents and park volunteers interested in the pruning of small trees, with a discussion of general principles, a guided tour of specific tree maintenance problems in Little Zilker Park, and some hands-on pruning.

Meet at the tennis courts on Bluebonnet Lane (next door to the Zilker school library), Saturday, November 6, at 9 am-noon, with pruning shears. Please e-mail Gardner Sumner (ZNA parks and environment committee chair) at zltan@sbcglobal.net if you plan to attend. *Gardner Sumner*

Friends of Little Zilker Neighborhood Park

IT'S OFFICIAL. Our neighborhood park next door to Zilker School is scheduled to be rededicated as Little Zilker Neighborhood Park on October 16, following the annual fall workday. FZNP, the group established to care for the park, has also changed its name, to Friends of Little Zilker Neighborhood Park (FLZP).

To volunteer for upcoming workdays or other park projects, contact littlezilker@gmail.com.

Join the Friends of Little Zilker Neighborhood Park through the Yahoo group for FLZP@yahoogroups.com, or for more info, visit the ZNA Web site at zilkerneighborhood.org.






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Zilker Crime Watch

by Robert Walls

SOMEONE BROKE INTO MY PLACE the other day. They didn't take anything. In fact, they left a \$5 bill and a note that read, "You poor chump!"

Not everyone is as lucky as me, though. Crime is inevitable in a beautiful inner-city neighborhood like Zilker. We live here because we love it. When things go wrong we take a stand. We vote. We fight for what is right. And crime is no different. Police patrols are spread thin. There are ten police cars patrolling the fifty square miles of the Southwest Area Command (David Sector, to use the police lingo), of which Zilker is part.

So we, as a neighborhood, did what neighborhoods do: we whined; we posted on list-serve; we blamed the police department; we got mad. Then, we did what the *Zilker* neighborhood does, and is known for: we took action. We are activists at heart, tired hippies if you will. Funny how things go full circle. Now we are working *with* the police.

After researching Neighborhood Watch programs and meeting with local police and you, our neighbors, a group of residents started the Zilker Neighborhood Crime Program. This is what we found out: Crime in our neighborhood, while higher than we would like, is in line with Barton Hills and lower, much lower, than Bouldin Creek. Still unacceptable.



Listen up, Pops. You too, Doll. This is the deal. We got to watch each other's back. If you see anything that's not right, call 911. Stay in touch with the Zilker Yahoo group. Go to www.Yahogroups.com and search for "Zilker."

Why? We are close to major thoroughfares, so criminals can get in and out easily—Barton Springs to Mopac, Lamar to Ben White, boom, out of here—nothing we can do about that. But we can do something about *this*. Research shows that criminals like easy targets, from unlocked cars to unlocked homes, open garage doors, no lights on at night, and no visible crime watch program in existence.

To be sure, there are already organized blocks of crime prevention in Zilker, most notably the Ashby-Garner-Collier Neighborhood Watch set up by 65 proactive neighbors more than a year ago. Neighbors on Jessie and Josephine have organized as well. On Ann Arbor (one of the longest-running Neighborhood Watch blocks), neighbors had a very nice Night Out party early this month, as did the South Zilker folks by Barton Skyway and the neighbors on Garner and Collier. We are simply following their lead, and even template, in some ways. So this is what we are doing:

- We are setting up more blocks like theirs, except we are calling them pods, and helping pod captains organize their own blocks.

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- We are supporting these pods by patrolling the entire neighborhood in cars, on foot, and on bikes, what we like to call the Full Monte. Envision, if you will, Mr. Rogers' neighbors, on bikes, on patrol. Get yourself a dorky sweater and cruise, baby! Or you can buy a Zilker Neighborhood Watch tee shirt to wear while you jog. We also have cool bike signs, for free! (Sorry, dog walkers. We don't have doggie vests, yet.)
- We are discussing street signs. We have a survey for your input in this matter. Go to the Web site zilkerneighborhood.org and click on the Neighborhood Watch icon.

Basically, we are having fun and meeting new friends in the process. We are keeping our neighborhood safe *now*, so we don't have to take it back later. To patrol, or to get help organizing your block, or simply to make a donation and buy a tee shirt, contact one of the coordinators listed below.

So get on board and have some fun, because not everyone is as lucky as me.

LIVE MUSIC is back!



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2 Crime Watch Team

Robert Walls

Patrol Coordinator

robosouth@yahoo.com

922-5051

Ole Olesen

Pod Coordinator

ole@oleasutin.com

663-5776

Connie Temple

Coordinator Coordinator

connie.temple@gmail.com

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(Continued from p. 1) problems are even worse. For instance, two of the three driveways on South Lamar and the first driveway on Mary are within or adjacent to the intersection at Mary. If the city enforces its street design standards, those driveways will have to be closed. That means access will be limited to the driveways closest to the building, reducing the space available for parking.

The applicant has produced a "conceptual" parking plan for the proposed bar, showing 19 spaces. It can be seen on the city Web site (www.ci.austin.tx.us) in the backup material for the City Council agenda of September 23, under item 115 (by October 22, it should be posted with the council agenda for October 28). Thanks to city staff's review of similar offsite parking plans for the Black Sheep Lodge (see July *ZNews*), we know that most of these spaces do not meet code. For example, 4 spaces back directly onto West Mary, which is not permitted, and 5 or 6 would have to back into the South Lamar sidewalk and bus stop. The plan does not address other requirements (such as dumpster placement), but it is clear that the bar proposal could not pass the site

plan review required for a cocktail lounge conditional use permit.

The Zoning Decision

In Austin, unfortunately, zoning decisions are separate from site plan approvals. The City Council is not inclined to deny an upzoning because a specific project seems inappropriate. Real estate speculators expect to get their zoning first and then let someone else work out the messy site plan details later, when the neighbors aren't paying attention. This site is unusual, however, in that it has a history of land-use policy recommendations that argue against upzoning, based on the city's accepted zoning principles.

According to the city code's description of CS-1, the zoning has "operating characteristics or traffic service requirements that are incompatible with residential environments." This area between the railroad tracks and South Lamar already has significant residential uses, and over the last ten years, ZNA has supported city zoning decisions and planning policies to encourage more residential uses along with less intense commercial uses. To the east of this property, along West Mary, are the Bouldin Creek Apartments with 43 units, next to that is a townhouse complex, and next to that are single-family residences. On the north side of West Mary, along Evergreen, is the historic mill, which includes a lovely old single-family residence and historic outbuildings that have been converted to apartments. The east side of Evergreen is occupied by residences and is zoned SF-3 for most of the block. Most of the west side of Evergreen is zoned GR or CS with a mixed use or VMU overlay and numerous conditional overlays, carefully negotiated over the years to encourage residential uses and compatible small businesses, such as apartments above offices and studios.

In August 2004, the Zoning and Platting Commission recommended that the entire block of Evergreen, including the triangle at 1901 South Lamar, be downzoned to general retail with a mixed use overlay (GR-MU). This was in response to a staff recommendation that the block should be allowed to redevelop "with mixed use providing additional office, retail commercial, and residential uses in this heavily traveled area."

This area was also carefully studied when ZNA developed its Vertical Mixed Use plan three years ago. We found the triangle property to be particularly inappropriate for any more-intense devel-

ACL Festival Wrap Up

AFTER EVERY AUSTIN CITY LIMITS Music Festival, the city parks department holds what has come to be known as the wrap meeting. It provides a chance for the nearby neighborhoods to get together with the promoter and city staff to share notes on the logistics of that year's festival and to document them as a team, before preparations begin for the next festival. The promoter of the festival, C3, has put a big effort into working with the neighborhoods, but they need to hear from us.

To participate effectively, however, ZNA needs to hear from you. ZNA has several ways for you to let us know what worked and what didn't this year. You can post your comments on the Zilker Yahoo group (zilker@yahoo.com), e-mail me directly (steve_mcguire@yahoo.com), or attend the ZNA general meeting on Monday, Oct. 25.

Steve McGuire

opment or parking reductions, and so removed it from the VMU overlay, which the City Council adopted.

A Vision for South Lamar

For the last decade, there has been wide agreement that many low-traffic businesses could make use of that space, but the new investors contend that a bar is the only reasonable use. There are already two CS-1 properties across Lamar (the Horseshoe Lounge and Sazon), plus four adjacent restaurants with liquor licenses, for a total of six bars and restaurants struggling with traffic and parking problems at this intersection. Yet the bar investors are telling City Council that South Lamar is underserved, in terms of liquor sales.

Do you agree? Should ZNA reject this rezoning request or try to work with the investors? Please attend the ZNA general meeting on October 25 and help us refine our vision for South Lamar Boulevard.

Lorraine Atherton

The Right Fit

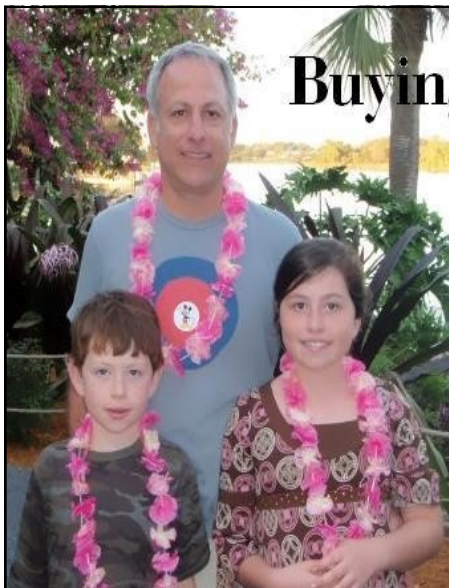
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OMV Agreement at Opa's

After meeting with a city facilitator, the owners of Opa's at 2050 S. Lamar agreed to sound mitigation and reduced hours for their outdoor music. As a result, ZNA and the adjacent homeowner withdrew their appeals of the outdoor music permit. As part of the agreement, ZNA encourages anyone who has concerns about noise at Opa's to call the restaurant first at 326-8742 and ask to speak with Spiros or Jackie Karamalegos, Jim Leverett, or Steve Reyna.



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Who Are Santa's Helpers? Our Zilker Neighbors! *by Barbara Cossie*

AS WE WATCH THE HOLIDAY decorations going up in the stores, and the toys being set out on the shelves, most of us can think back to our childhood Christmases. The smell of an evergreen tree covered in tinsel, the twinkle of the lights, the colors of wrapping paper and bows on the presents under the tree, and the taste of that delicious dinner that Mom prepared. Yes, many of us remember that time with fondness, and we try to recreate that holiday spirit for our own families.

Some parents in our neighborhood do not have the means to give their children that kind of holiday. This is where the Zilker Neighborhood Association and our neighbors step in. Now in its twelfth year of service to our community, the ZNA Holiday Families Program has provided toys, clothes, and food to several needy families each year: single mothers with several children to keep fed and clothed, a father just out of work, parents with a medically fragile child. All these folks are struggling just to keep food on the table and the lights on. With our help, eight families from Zilker Elementary School will enjoy a visit from Santa's elves this Christmas.

Here is what you can do to make their holidays a little brighter. If you feel blessed this year, please consider sharing your blessings with our Zilker families in need. Use the form below to sign



ZNA Holiday Families Program Volunteer Sign Up 2010

Yes, I want to help make the holidays happier for eight Zilker families.

Name: _____

E-mail: _____ Address: _____

Phone: _____

- I would like to purchase a gift from a family's gift list. Please contact me when the lists arrive.
- I would like to donate money to the ZNA Holiday Families Program.
- I have enclosed a check for \$_____

Please make checks payable to Zilker Neighborhood Association and mail with this form to:
 ZNA Holiday Families Program, 1818 Treadwell, Austin, TX 78704

BECOME A ZNA MEMBER TODAY

Membership is open to Zilker residents (renters or homeowners) 18 years old or older. Annual dues are \$7 per person. Additional contributions are welcome. (Many couples pay \$25.)

Name: _____ E-mail: _____

Name: _____ E-mail: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

Dues: _____ Contribution for ZNA general fund: _____

Please make checks payable to Zilker Neighborhood Association and mail with this form to:
 ZNA Memberships, 1818 Treadwell St., Austin, TX 78704

up to help, or volunteer in person at the ZNA general meeting on Monday, October 25. You can make a financial donation in any amount, or purchase items from a family's wish list (which will be provided through the counselor at Zilker Elementary). All money collected will go toward the ZNA Holiday Families Program. Gift cards in any amount from Target, Walgreens, HEB, and other nearby businesses and food donations are welcome, too.

Help make your neighbors' holiday season a whole lot brighter this year. Write your check today (payable to ZNA) and mail it to 1818 Treadwell St., Austin, TX 78704. (Don't forget to put "Holiday Families Program" on the memo line.) If you would like to purchase gifts from a wish list or donate an item, call Barbara at 326-1222 (daytime only). The wish lists should be available by December 1.

Thank you for sharing and caring for your neighbors again this year. The ZNA Holiday Families Program is a project that our neighborhood can be most proud to support. And, *you* are the reason that it has continued for 12 wonderful years!

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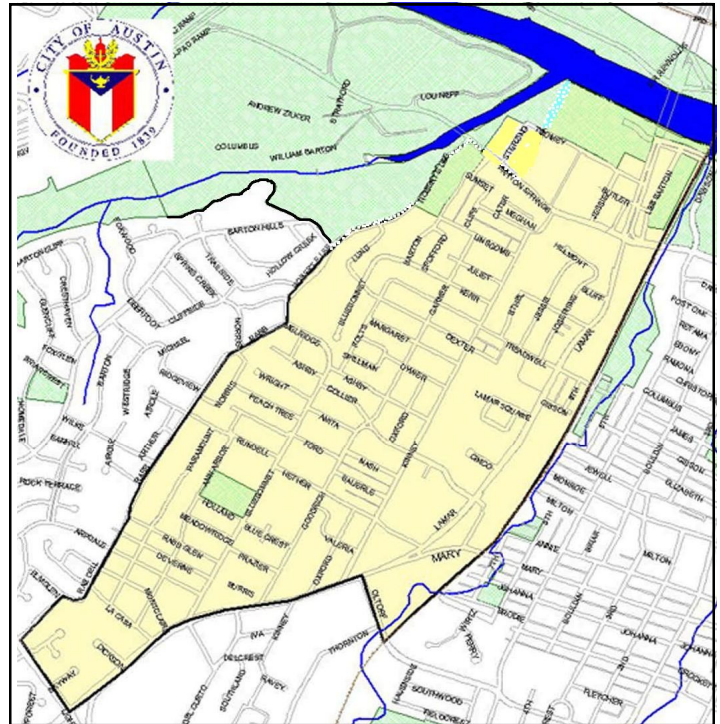
Election of 2011 ZNA Officers

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE of the Zilker Neighborhood Association is delighted to nominate Andy Elder as ZNA president for 2011. Andy believes that "it is critical to engage with the neighborhood on a variety of levels," and one way he hopes to do that is through "an annual survey of neighborhood priorities and interests." Andy has served as ZNA treasurer for five years, so we will be searching for his replacement in that office.

ZNA will elect its officers for 2011 at the October 25 general meeting. The slate of nominees so far is:

- President:* Andy Elder
- First Vice President:* Richard Gravois
- Second Vice President:* Open
- Secretary:* Ryan Stryker
- Treasurer:* Open
- ANC Delegate:* Open
- Z-News Editor:* Lorraine Atherton
- Social Chair:* Open

As you can see, besides the treasurer, we are looking for a new vice president, an Austin Neighborhoods Council delegate, and a social chair. Our bylaws allow the executive committee to accept nominations up to a week before the fall meeting, so you have until Monday, Oct. 18, to volunteer to serve (or to nominate someone else). Call any of the executive committee members listed on the back of this newsletter, or e-mail ZilkerNA@austin.rr.com.



The boundaries of ZNA include Zilker Park on the west and extend to the railroad tracks on the east. The southern boundary is Barton Skyway. The northern boundary is the lake.

ZNA still needs neighbors to chair the membership committee and the zoning committee. In the past, VPs or other elected officers have filled those posts, but election is not required. If you want to get involved but do not want to stand for an elected office, we are happy to help you find just the right unelected job. If you are serious about local politics and enjoy meetings and

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Who does ZNA represent? Directly: The membership of our association (more than 200, as of last spring), which is open only to residents within ZNA's boundaries. Indirectly: A larger cross-section through neighbor-to-neighbor discussions and circulation of more than 2800 newsletters.

How does the ZNA Executive Committee arrive at a position on an issue? It considers several factors, starting with the association's bylaws. Depending on the issue, the committee may consider the ZNA neighborhood planning survey of 2004, the City of Austin neighborhood planning survey from 2005, specific ZNews surveys, input gathered from discussions and resolutions adopted at our quarterly meetings, discussion on the list serve and e-mail input from neighbors, and political consultation with boards and commissions and City Council.

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policy discussions, you could be an ANC delegate or alternate.

The following neighbors have agreed to serve on the executive committee in unelected positions:

- Holiday Family Program* coordinator: Barbara Cossie
- Z-News* advertising coordinator: Dave Piper
- Parks and Environment* committee chair: Gardner Sumner
- Sound* committee chair: Bill Neale
- ACL Festival* representative: Steve McGuire

For ZNA bylaws and other info, visit zilkerneighborhood.org.



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E-mail: ZilkerNA@austin.rr.com
Editor: Lorraine Atherton, 447-7681
Ad Sales: Dave Piper, 916-9636
Distribution: Fontaine Maverick

2010 Executive Committee of ZNA

Elected Officers:

President: Richard Gravois, 441-3430
1st VP: Bobby Rigney, 471-3758
2nd VP: Open
Secretary: Ryan Stryker, 431-4245
Treasurer: Andy Elder, 428-9180
Social Chair: Open
ANC Delegate: Open
ZNews Editor: Lorraine Atherton, 447-7681

About the Zilker Neighborhood Association

ZNA holds general meetings the fourth or fifth Monday of February, April, July, and October, at Zilker Elementary School. The Executive Committee meets at 7 PM the first Monday of each month, usually at Artz Rib House.

Our Purpose: To improve the quality of life in the neighborhood in matters of land use, environmental protection, public services, consumer protection, preservation of the historic and unique character of the community; to provide support in other matters of neighborhood concern; and to promote and participate in the civic life of the city.

Committee Chairs:

Holiday Family Program: Barbara Cossie, 447-4437
ZNews Advertising: Dave Piper, 916-9636
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