



Out On Campus

A Publication of The Committee On Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Concerns

Issue #7, Spring 2005

"If I can't dance, it's not my revolution!"

Emma Goldman (1869-1940)

An Editorial from The Committee

It seems like a good time, in the wake of the November 2004 elections, to take account of recent ups and downs for LGBT Americans. Just when things seemed to be getting better; things turned worse. Same-sex marriage got on the national agenda in eleven states this past November, and in all eleven of those cases it was rejected. The majority of voters chose to define marriage in strict terms that will deny same-sex couples (and heterosexual couples who choose not to marry) medical, legal, and financial equality with other Americans.

Such decisions disappointed us: many Americans chose to vote based on the fearful pictures politicians drew of cultural disorder. They looked at us and didn't see people just like themselves. They didn't see our families; they didn't see our friends and allies; they didn't see our relationships; they didn't see our lives. They saw social chaos. They didn't see us as we are.

But what happens after the rejection, the shock, the disappointment? Once the disappointment passes, it is obvious that there is still a great deal of work to do. More than ever, we need to talk to our fellow citizens about who we are, what we feel, what we think. More than ever, we need our friends and allies—from a diversity of political and personal positions—to help get the message out.

More than ever, this moment calls for action. We must talk, argue, listen, and participate. Despite the desire we might have to withdraw, give up, or even relocate. The greatest good will come for us and for generations to come if we stay and act. People need to be reminded about compassion, about the social contract we all make to respect each other and yet see each other wholly, humanly.

What does it mean to see humanity? It means that we need to see our fellow citizens complete and they need to see us whole. We all need to recognize our common condition as human beings, our common needs and our common desires: to be-

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When the world changed, we got married

By Mildred Bates

A Wedding Announcement:

Mildred Bates and Cathy Cranston were married on May 24, 2005 in Capron Park, Attleboro, Massachusetts. This marriage was made possible by a ruling of the Supreme Judicial Court in Massachusetts, by a (non-binding) opinion by Attorney General Patrick Lynch of Rhode Island that such a marriage would be recognized here. The Marriage License was issued by the Attleboro Town Clerk's office, a group of middle-aged women bureaucrats performing a revolutionary act because they perceived it as the law, in the face of their Governor's assertions to the contrary. The license was issued after blood tests (with our phlebotomist's kisses and good wishes—it turns out her sister is a lesbian) and counseling mandated by Massachusetts about the impact of Rubella on pregnancy. All of that was rushed by our RI doctor's office since there was awareness that Massachusetts would momentarily stop issuing licenses to out of staters, which did occur. One couple was in court to waive the three day mandatory waiting period between license and marriage when someone interrupted the proceedings to state that the matter was moot: no more licenses would be issued to Rhode Islanders. They walked out unwed.

Why: That takes us to a wholly different plane. I "didn't

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The Language of Bigotry

By Dana Williams | Writer/Editor,
Tolerance.org

Drinking fountains for "whites-only" and "coloreds." Laws keeping black citizens from voting. Jim Crow statutes relegating blacks to second-class status in waiting rooms, restaurants, movie theaters and on buses.

That is the snapshot of the American South 50 years ago, the year Martin Luther King Jr.'s principles of non-violent protest found legs in the Montgomery Bus Boycott, sparking the Civil Rights Movement.

And just one year after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that separate schools are "inherently unequal" in the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, 1955 also marked a time of massive resistance to integration.

In the months and years that followed, segregationist politicians would block entry to schoolhouse doors; angry white mobs would pelt black students with eggs and epithets; and bigoted rhetoric intended to justify the continued separation of the races would become part of the American lexicon.

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- Much ado about Marriage
- "Trivial Pursuits"!
- Youth & The Elections
- Ally-ing Around
- Let's Talk About Sex: Student project requests assistance.
- And Mz. Direction sees her shadow! Six more weeks of tender sarcasm ahead!

Out On Campus is produced to further the educational mission of Rhode Island College and support all members of our community. Direct all inquiries to our email address: OutOnCampus@hotmail.com

“Revolution,” cont. from page 1

long, to be seen as real (not as a stereotype or an illusion), to be allowed to change, and to be allowed to change one’s mind. At a time like this, the times that try our patience or confidence and our hope, it is more important than ever to be patient, have confidence, and hope.

A rhetoric of values emerged from the election of 2004, and it threatens to take center stage for the next few years as we wrangle over values. But of course the real discussion is about how values interface with freedom and with compassion and with seeing the America as a community of diverse people. This discussion goes to the heart of what we’re doing here at Rhode Island College. And this discussion is going on and should go on. Out On Campus will continue to encourage this discussion.

But the picture is not entirely bleak: all over America children are coming out to their parents; friends are celebrating a commitment between two people; another legal barrier is being challenged; another child is growing up with two mothers or two fathers; straight allies are stepping forward to support their friends and colleagues. The truth is that change and hope are springing up all over the place.

Americans are an ornery, individualistic, self-reliant, idiosyncratic people: they don’t let rules contain how they love, how they constitute a family, how they see themselves. That won’t change anytime soon.

The quotation at the beginning of this piece by activist Emma Goldman is a reminder to all of us. The real source of our political action and our push for social change is not pain and misery, but pleasure and joy. The reason why we do things to help things get better isn’t strictly to get some pay off in the future: the struggle is the pay off. So, the dance continues.

The world will be a terrible place if you expect only terror out of it; one must insist on joy in order to allow space for it. The joy that motivates us (or any people who would stand up and take a stand) is the joy not of eventual victory, but the joy of just taking a stand. It feels good to let the world know you care deeply about something. Yes, at first one feels conspicuous, watched, singled out, but the singling out evapo-

rates when one looks at the faces of those who have joined you.

In this issue of Out on Campus we want to re-start the dance. And we hope that you will come join us. Whether gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, or an ally, we all have a stake in building a more representative, respectful, and supportive community where we can all feel at home.

Allying Around

Or

On Being an Ally

By Elizabeth H. Rowell

Recently, while viewing a PBS special on Martin Luther King and the Civil Rights Movement, I watched the allies who though few in number, were conspicuous as they marched and supported the cause. I wondered what else we allies could do now to champion LGBT rights during this critical period. Last spring’s Dialogue on Diversity Speaker, Urvashi Vaid, who spoke eloquently about gay and lesbian issues, stated several times that we would lose some battles but eventually would win. It appears that, with the current administration, we are in somewhat of a losing period. The thought of the President of the United States and a number of states advocating for an amendment that bans homosexuals from entering into legal marriages with the persons they love makes it difficult for this ally to say the Pledge of Allegiance. I usually choke up on “One nation under God, indivisible with liberty and justice for ALL. One of my teen-age sons doesn’t say these words when pledging in school and I usually quietly excuse myself sometimes with a cough or two when a pledge is announced.

However, even with our current White House shaded environment, the derogatory vocal outbursts of the “moral(?) majority”, and the recent U.S. Supreme Court rejection of hearing an appeal of a U.S. Court of Appeals decision allowing Florida to ban gays from adopting children, we allies can keep on doing things like writing our senators and representatives urging them to vote against the marriage amendment if it resurfaces and to also be more outspoken and supportive of gay rights. Both of my Connecti-

cut Senators got back to me stating that they preferred to answer personal emails rather than the one I had merely signed from an online source. After I emailed my personal opinions, both wrote to assure me that they would (and did) vote against that (despicable) amendment. We allies can continue keeping informed about world, federal, state and local news related to LGBT concerns; reading books about gay and lesbian issues many of which are available at Adam’s library; and sharing some of the gay friendly picture books that are in Adam’s Reserve section with young children so that they will realize at an early age that there are all kinds of loving families and wonderful people in this world. We can watch movies, DVDs, and TV programs that have gay and lesbian characters and/or themes and critique them with others. We can look dismayed; act horrified, and speak out when people make disparaging jokes about homosexuality. We can refrain from removing the chalking affirmations on campus. We can try to boost the morale of our LGBT friends and family members when hateful remarks and comments dampen their spirits and celebrate the joyful times they share with us.

As professors we can include relevant homosexual topics and persons in our syllabi. I do this in all of my classes and last semester the students in one course had an assignment to pick a gay friendly picture book from the Reserve collection that they might use when working with young children. Some students selected books that featured pictures of many types of families including those with two moms or dads. Others picked those with story lines where this type of family structure was more emphasized, and some chose books where the gay or lesbian parents were mentioned and shown but were not a dominant feature. One student did this assignment shortly before going to a National Association for Young Children Conference in California. When she went to a conference session on multicultural and diversity issues that broke up into small discussion groups, she informed the group that in one of her classes other forms of diversity were discussed. She shared information about the gay friendly book review assignment and then summarized Heather Has Two Mommies by Isabel Newman. Before the small group dispersed, a man who had been listening to the group said he was a principal and when she received

her degree he would like to hire her because he appreciated her comments. He gave her his card that noted he was from Cambridge, Ma. This excited future teacher related her experience to her classmates, which helped them to realize the importance of providing these materials for their young students. It also inspired this professor to write an article about some of these books to submit for publication consideration as many educators and parents don't even know about these delightful materials that could make such a critical difference for some youngsters and their families.

The struggles for liberty and justice that have included blacks, women, people with disabilities and homosexuals as well as many others need allies to support, encourage, speak up, and help in many different ways - sometimes by just being there. We might even find that we are allies for one cause and then more directly affected by another one. But whether we are in the closet or out of the closet allies, let's continue to do what we can to support our LGBT friends, family members, and issues so that we can pledge allegiance to our flag believing that it does provide these crucial rights for all.

"Bigotry," cont. from page 1

Listen to the voices:

"I want to tell you that there's not enough troops in the army to force the southern people to break down segregation and admit the Negro race into our theaters, into our swimming pools, into our homes, and into our churches."

— Strom Thurmond, former governor of South Carolina, as quoted during a 1948 presidential campaign speech.

"Almighty God created the races white, black, yellow, malay and red, and he placed them on separate continents ... The fact that he separated the races shows that he did not intend for the races to mix."

— Virginia Circuit Court Judge, Judge Leon M. Bazille, in a 1959 court opinion.

"White and Negro children in the

same schools will lead to miscegenation. Miscegenation leads to mixed marriages and mixed marriages lead to the mongrelization of the human race."

— Jackson Daily News editorial from May 17, 1954, regarding the Brown decision

'The language of bigotry'

As we celebrate the 76th anniversary of King's birth and reflect upon the movement his principles inspired, the bigoted rhetoric of half a century ago does not feel as historic as it might. It is, in fact, eerily familiar, with a new group as its target — gays and lesbians.

Replace race with gender, and substitute "gay" for "black," and the words of 1955 could very well have been heard on last fall's campaign trail, in which appeals to homophobia littered the political landscape.

"The language of bigotry is common to many different kinds of prejudice," says Keith Boykin, president of the National Black Justice Coalition, which works to counter discrimination against LGBTQ persons in communities of color. The similarities are striking:

"Homosexual conduct is, and has been, considered abhorrent, immoral, detestable, a crime against nature, and a violation of the laws of nature and of nature's God upon which this Nation and our laws are predicated ... It is an inherit evil against which children must be protected."

— Judge Roy Moore, former Alabama Supreme Court Justice, quoted in 2002

"The demand is that homosexuality be endorsed and promoted with the full power of the law. This would require us to abandon the standard of nature ... Once we abandon the standard of nature, what is to forbid us from resorting to any violation of nature that we may please? Why should we not return to slavery, if we find it convenient? Or the practices of incest or adultery or cannibalism?"

— As written in a 1989 op-ed piece from the conservative Claremont Institute

Many of today's leaders and politicians employ the same politics of fear as those of segregationists who sought to frighten citizens about the harm integration would

bring upon the nation.

"Fear is what drives most prejudice," Boykin said. "People buy into the fear that extending full rights to gays and lesbians will change the world as we know it, that it will change our perception of the world."

Driving out fear

King understood that you "can't determine your conscience by taking a public opinion poll," Boykin said. "The public has supported slavery, segregation, women not having the right to vote and discrimination against people with disabilities at one time or another."

The current anti-gay backlash, Boykin says, demonstrates America's historical reluctance to embrace changes that are inconsistent with the majority opinion. Coretta Scott King, speaking near the time of the 30th anniversary of her husband's assassination, called for continued change: "I appeal to everyone who believes in Martin Luther King's dream to make room at the table of brother- and sisterhood for lesbian and gay people." And as King himself once said, "Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that."

While we have made great strides in driving out the racist hate that tainted American life during King's lifetime, we have a long way to go in driving out the anti-gay rhetoric and homophobia that plague us today.

This essay originally appeared on Tolerance.org, the news and activism Web site of the Southern Poverty Law Center in Montgomery, Alabama."

Out On The Web?

Thanks to the support of the Unity Center and their website, Out On Campus has a space on the net! Check out the Unity Center site for more info.

[Http://www.ric.edu/unitycenter/](http://www.ric.edu/unitycenter/)



The Truth about the Youth

By Lisa Middleton

In the days immediately following the 2004 presidential election, many mainstream news organizations ran stories addressing the apathy of young voters. Articles like “The Youth Vote: It Didn’t Rock” in USA Today¹ and “Young Voters Don’t Live Up to Hype Surrounding Turnout” from the Dallas Morning News² illustrate concerns about young voters’ apathy. Even Hunter S. Thompson contributed his opinion on the 2004 youth vote (or lack thereof). In an interview with the Aspen Daily News, Thompson claimed the election was “another failure of the youth” and that “we rocked the vote all right. Those little bastards betrayed us again.”³

On the surface, the data seems to support these accounts and reinforce the notion that younger voters care more about Playstations and partying than about presidential politics. Seventeen percent of voters in the 2004 election were aged 18 to 29- exactly the same percentage that voted in the 2000 election. The catch? Voter turnout was up overall, keeping the proportion of young voters the same. What is more significant is that 20.9 million young voters cast a ballot in the 2004 election, up 4.6 million (28%) from the 2000 election. These 20.9 million youths represent 51.9% of the total population of individuals in their age bracket, making it the first time a majority of young people came out to vote and the largest number of youth voters since 1972, the first year that 18-year-olds were allowed to vote. Now that rocks.

Besides the fact that political participation amongst young people is a positive thing in itself, why are young voters so important to those of us concerned with things like human rights, universal health care, and the environment? Because they are the only age group that voted, and voted overwhelmingly, for John Kerry. According to the Associated Press, 54 percent of 18 to 29-year-olds voted for Kerry, as opposed to 44 percent for Bush. This indicates a marked change from the 2000 presidential election in which 48% of younger voters cast their ballot for Al Gore and 46% for George W. Bush. On the issue of gay marriage, 41% favor gay marriage as compared to 25% of all other voters, and even more young voters favor civil unions. When asked to label themselves, voters under 30 were seven percentage points less likely to label themselves as conservative and twelve percentage points more likely to label themselves as liberal than older voters were.⁴

All of us know the significance of having George W. Bush in office for four more years. The proposed Federal Marriage Amendment, an ongoing war in Iraq, serious threats to women’s reproductive freedoms and countless other offenses were back to greet us on November 3rd. But America’s youth made a bold statement to the country’s leaders about their feelings; they told them it was time for change. While this change did not happen in the White House this time, change has already occurred in the sentiments of the people poised to become the country’s next leaders. So don’t worry- the kids are all right.

¹ http://www.usatoday.com/news/opinion/2004-11-03-youth-vote-vanderkam_x.htm

² http://www.kansas.com/mld/kansas/news/special_packages/election2004/10084901.htm

³ http://www.aspendailynews.com/Search_Articles/view_search_article.cfm?OrderNumber=9156

⁴ http://www.civicyouth.org/PopUps/Release_1824final.pdf

“Married,” cont. from page 1

believe in marriage.” I thought marriage was a wholly unredeemable patriarchal institution for the oppression of women. Well... that was before I worked on behalf of older lesbians and gay men with Senior Action in a Gay Environment and realized many of our problems with the economic situation of our elders would be solved had they been able to marry. I was against marriage before my own civil rights became an issue: when I got my first print out of anticipated benefits from the Social Security Administration (that starts to happen to you around 50) and realized that the columns on spousal benefits (widow, disability) would never apply to my partner and I no matter how long we’d be together even though we had contributed as much as any other citizen. I was against marriage... before we became parents and the whole concept of family became a new and different thing, the importance to a child of knowing her parents’ bond is unassailable.

How I Read Our Wedding Announcement

My partner of 21 years and I, co-mothers for 15 years of our daughter, me and the woman I love, were joined in legal marriage performed by a minister before witnesses. Not by a Justice of the Peace, because she backed out the day before in fear of losing her commission for marrying out of states. We got married in a public space, outdoors, in the spring, lushly green (with mosquitoes!), unafraid of public reaction. How did we do this? By closing our eyes and jumping in. In love and high spirits. With open eyes, pushing through our fear and others’ doubts and social obstacles. Spurred by the carry over of joy and celebration from May 17, the first day anyone lesbian or gay could marry legally in a state in the U.S., when we accompanied friends and strangers in their applications for licenses to marry. Attendants: our daughter and, on the spur of the moment, because we didn’t know until hours before that we really would get the license, friends and colleagues as happy as we were.

Why? Being able to say, as I did above, “the woman I love:” a revolution in the long history of a “love that dare not speak its name.” Being able to be in a public space, really, legally, as a couple without fear of arrest: the long history of being banned from public life, changed.

Benefits so far: The best party I’ve ever been to, our celebration with coworkers, friends, neighbors and relatives on the blue moon, July 31. I had no idea I could feel completely and wholly myself in a community setting. I had no memory of freedom that grand and had not realized the cage I had been in, the bars were so close as to be invisible. I’m still flying. And no election or poll has brought me down. No, not even knowing our marriage in Massachusetts has unclear legal status in RI and that no one will have Social Security benefits until our marriages are federally recognized. It is a start for marriage equality, which I now feel is a start for social and psychological empowerment. And I think opponents are right: it is revolutionary.

When we got married, the world changed.



TRIVIAL PURSUITS??

Same Sex Marriage Rights in the West

by Ellen Bigler

- [1] Name the Western nation that that was the first to institute legislation granting registered same-sex partners the same rights as married couples, and the decade the legislation passed.
- [2] Name the country that became the first to offer full civil marriage rights to gay couples in 2001.
- [3] Name the Spanish-speaking country that approved a draft law in 2004 that will legalize homosexual marriage and give gays and lesbians full status as parents, enabling them to adopt children.
- [4] Name the North American nation whose Supreme Court ruled same-sex marriages constitutional, and whose military forces are implementing a policy that directs military chaplains to solemnize marriages for gay or lesbian military personnel.
- [5] Name the North American nation where several states still have laws on their books banning sex between consenting adults of the same gender---though the Supreme Court ruled in 2003 that such a ban violates the nation's Constitution and can not be enforced under federal law.

ANSWERS to "TRIVIAL PURSUITS?":

- [1] **Denmark** was the first country to institute legislation granting registered same-sex partners identical rights to married couples in 1989. If you said **Norway, Sweden, or Iceland**, they enacted similar legislation in 1996. **Finland** followed suit in 2002. **Germany** allows same sex couples to register for life partnerships since 2001, but only gives couples the same inheritance and tenants' rights as heterosexual married couples. **France** since 1999 allows a civil contract that gives some right to cohabiting couples, but not the full rights of marriage, in particular in relation to taxes, inheritance and adoption. In **Britain** a civil partnerships bill will come into effect this year, offering registered same-sex couples similar rights and responsibilities to married couples, in areas including pensions, property, social security, housing, tenancies and employment. **New Zealand's** parliament in 2004 passed legislation to recognize civil unions between gay couples.
- [2] **The Netherlands** was the first to offer full civil marriage rights to gay couples in 2001. **Belgium** allowed gay marriages in 2003.
- [3] **Spain's** Socialist government approved a draft law in 2004 that will legalize homosexual marriage and give gays and lesbians full status as parents, enabling them to adopt.
- [4] In December 2004 **Canada's** Supreme Court declared same-sex marriages constitutional, giving Parliament the go-ahead to legalize gay marriage nationally. (Stay tuned for Parliament's decision, as they are back in session on January 31.) Seven of the 10 provinces and one territory, together encompassing approximately 85% of Canada's population, recognize the rights of same-sex couples to marry. The Canadian Forces are implementing a policy that directs military chaplains to solemnize marriages for gay or lesbian military personnel (or, if they choose not to for religious reasons, find another member of the clergy to conduct the ceremony). These relationships are accorded the same status in terms of military family support and benefits as those granted to common-law couples and married couples.
- [5] If you said the **U.S.A.**, you're right on the money. This is the same nation that in 1967 still had laws on the books in 16 states prohibiting and punishing "interracial" marriages; that year the U.S. Supreme Court finally declared such laws unconstitutional. In November 2004 voters in many states passed amendments to their state constitutions that defined marriage as being only the union of a man and a woman. Meanwhile President George W. Bush pledges to support a constitutional amendment outlawing gay marriage. Apparently his induction ceremony speech on spreading freedom and liberty worldwide does not extend to a significant portion of Americans at home, who are denied rights granted to heterosexual married couples.

Score of 4-5 right: You are a person who is very knowledgeable about human rights issues globally, including those of gays and lesbians. Or maybe you researched and wrote a paper on gay marriage for one of your General Education or FNED 346 classes at RIC.

Score of 2-3 right: You pay attention to human rights issues and read the New York Times for pleasure. You probably have out gay or lesbian friends who keep you posted on gay marriage issues. You will want to read the *Out on Campus* newsletter from now on too.

Score of 0-1 right: You're in the (mal-informed) majority. You aren't aware that several Western countries have taken steps to ensure that their gay and lesbian citizens receive the same entitlements and rights as heterosexual citizens. And you probably didn't realize how far behind the U.S. is in doing so.

Sources (accessed 1/23/2005):

<http://newsvote.bbc.co.uk/mpapps/pagetools/print/news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/4081999.stm>,
<http://www.samesexmarriage.ca/advocacy/mil190105.htm>; and to compare Canada and the U.S.,
http://writ.news.findlaw.com/scripts/printer_friendly.pl?page=/grossman/20041214.html

Straight Talk From Mz. Direction

Mz. Direction is the loving child of a dancing queen and a well known television personality. Her advice is by no means the final word on a topic in any other world but her own. She speaks from her heart and recently collagened lips. Holding a degree from the school of hard knocks, Mz. Direction will do her best to answer your "queeries."



Dear Mz. Direction,
What's the deal with Groundhog Day?

Yours truly,
Phil

My dear Phil,

Groundhog day is a "cute" tradition involving men in top hats, an ornery groundhog, his shadow, and lazy weather people! How dare they use one of nature's creatures to do for them what the latest Doppler 100000 computer can. It is cruel I tell you! Mz. Direction is righteously indignant over this and may even protest the tradition outside her local news channel as soon as her chinchilla overcoat is back from the cleaner.

Dear Mz. Direction,

I am minister in Boston who is performing his first same-gender wedding ceremony in a month and have a concern. Who is the Bride and who is the Groom? Do I pronounce them Man and Man, Groom and Groom, Man and He-Wife? I do not want to hurt anyone's feelings especially David and Stephen. Help me, please!

Yours truly,
Reverend Tongue Tied

My dear Reverend TT,

What you are experiencing is the after effects of the movement designed to promote cultural sensitivity that eventually became distorted into the often demonized "political correctness." It seems to me that we went from not caring at all about how our words could affect another person to the current status quo of not saying anything unless you are 100% sure you will not offend anyone. I do have the ultimate cure for this "Verbal Paralysis"... simply ask David and Stephen what they would like you to say. It seems to me that any minister worth his salt is going to make sure that the couple he is marrying is aware of all parts of the ceremony. Bring them into this dialogue and you will have no problems. More than likely this is an issue that they have thought of too and are not sure how to broach the subject with you. We are walking into new territory here and it is best to do it side by side and hand in hand instead of alone afraid to offend.

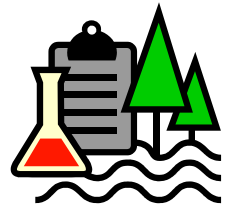
Safe Zone Program Is Coming!



6

"LET'S TALK ABOUT SEX"

Student seeking submissions for internship project called Sex in Perspective, about healthy sexuality, and sex education. Jasmine Robb, a senior at RIC is being supervised by Lesley Bogad, faculty advisor on this project. For more info go to:
www.livejournal.com/users/sexperspective.



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