



The

NATURALISTS' CLUB

NEWSLETTER

Springfield Science Museum at the Quadrangle, Springfield, Massachusetts

October to December Calendar of Events

OCTOBER

- 13 Saturday Let's Go for a Bike Ride on the Manhan Rail Trail, *Easthampton*
- 17 Wednesday OCTOBER MEETING: Restoration of the American Chestnut
- 20 Saturday Paddle in Stockbridge Bowl, *Stockbridge*
- 27 Saturday Quabbin Hike, *New Salem*

NOVEMBER

- 3 Saturday Appalachian Trail Series: Ice Gulch, *Monterey*
- 18 Sunday Hiking the Holyoke Range, *Amherst*
- 25 Sunday A Peaked Mountain Hike – Hike Away Your Thanksgiving Dinner, *Monson*
- 28 Wednesday NOVEMBER MEETING*: Friends or Foes? The Truth about Spiders

DECEMBER

- 1 Saturday Appalachian Trail Series: Benedict Pond & The Ledges, *Monterey*
- 8 Saturday Annual Late Fall Hike at the Quabbin, *Belchertown*
- 8 Saturday Celebrate an 1887 Victorian Christmas, *Woodstock, Connecticut*
- 15 Saturday An Evening with Naturalists, *Hampden*
- 19 Wednesday DECEMBER HOLIDAY MEETING*

*N.B. Our November meeting will occur on the fourth (not third!) Wednesday.

I would rather sit on a pumpkin, and have it all
to myself, than be crowded on a velvet cushion.
~ Henry David Thoreau

NATURALIST'S CORNER



Every spear of grass – the frames, limbs, organs,
of men and women, and all that concerns them,
All these to me are unspeakably perfect miracles.
~ Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass*

Leaves of Grass and Every Other Plant

I must have been infused by the spirit of Walt Whitman this summer. I've recently become quite fascinated by leaves. Although his collection of poems, *Leaves of Grass*, is not about leaves at all, but about the joys and musings of being human, his *Poem of Perfect Miracles* resonates with me.

Now comes the season we say goodbye to deciduous leaves. Of course, we will continue to see evergreen leaves throughout winter. The noticeable differences between evergreen and deciduous leaves only scratch the surface of the marvelous diversity of leaves in nature. There are hairy leaves, huge leaves, tiny leaves, juicy leaves, leaves underwater, leaves underground, leaves that are spines, leaves that make tree trunks, even flattened stems that look like and act like leaves. What's more, most all share a common function — photosynthesis. So why in the world are there so many different leaves? Environment has a lot to do with it.

I took the opportunity to do a lot of traveling this year: to Costa Rica with the Naturalists' Club and to Hawaii to bag my 50th state. Banana "trees" grow in both places. In Costa Rica I learned that the "trunk" of the banana plant is not woody at all. It is actually made up of a very dense collection of leaves compacted into a pseudostem, or false stem making the banana plant the largest herbaceous flowering plant in the world.

Water, whether too much or too little, is a primary driving force for many differences in plant leaves. In Costa Rica I learned that a pointed tip is common in leaves from the tropics. Called a drip edge, it ushers away excess water after plentiful and frequent rains. Many plant leaves in drier areas have hairs, some to the point of being fuzzy. Some leaf hairs serve to dissuade munching insects. Other leaves have hairs that trap small quantities of water, reducing the humidity differential between the inside of the leaf and the outside environment.

In Joshua Tree National Park, where the Colorado Desert (a portion of the Sonoran Desert) meets the Mojave Desert, Teddy Bear Cactus, Hedgehog Cactus, and other cacti abound. They are replete with spines, which are actually extremely modified leaves. Spines arise from growth areas called areoles, a unique characteristic of the cactus family. Cacti don't have leaves at all but carry out the job of photosynthesis through their massive succulent stems.

Native only to the Mojave Desert is the weird and wonderful Joshua Tree. It is not a tree at all but rather the largest member of the *Yucca* genus. It does indeed have leaves: needle sharp 5 to 9-inch long stiff, fibrous, icepick-shaped leaves. I have yet to see a more unpalatable leaf.

Up on the top of the dry side of Haleakala on the island of Maui grows a beautiful silvery plant, native to Hawaii and endemic to Haleakala, called Silversword. It is aptly named. I wonder why its leaves are not a chloroplast-rich green? The roseate formation of leaves on this plant serves many functions in the desert. The leaves are spikey and so keep most grazing herbivores at bay. The leaves are also fortified with a thick cuticle that prevents water loss, furry such that they catch drifting moisture from passing clouds, and pointed upward, thereby directing condensing moisture down to the base of the plant. Finally, their silvery color reflects the intense, heat-generating sunlight. Ingenious. Haleakala is one of the first National Parks to be enclosed by a fence in order to protect Silversword and other amazing plants from nibbling by wild goats, rooting by wild hogs, trampling by cattle and other threats from introduced troublemakers.

On the island of Kauai I was introduced to a tree called Koa. Humanity is the introduced troublemaker here who, in seeking its exquisitely beautiful and useful wood and creating pastureland for cattle, has drastically diminished the population of large Koa trees. There are still youngsters around, but the huge mature specimens prized for dugout canoes are extremely rare. What I thought were sickle-shaped leaves are actually flattened branches, green with chloroplasts. Hundreds litter the floor below each tree. I found only one on such a tree sprouting petioles of tiny, oppositely arranged leaves. Apparently, the majority of the food-making is done by these tough, compressed leaf-like branches, themselves.

This summer, I've also had occasion to take a few canoe trips back home on familiar territory. Most paddles were with Naturalists' Club members. Here I am getting to know leaves dealing with a problem opposite that facing desert plants – too much water. Since they are surrounded by water, submerged plants have no need for waxy cuticles that typically coat evergreen leaves to prevent desiccation. Nor do underwater leaves sport stomata, openings through which terrestrial leaves exchange gases. Gases and nutrients infuse directly into plant tissues from the surrounding waters. Land-bound leaves sport stomata mainly on their lower surface in order to reduce loss of water vapor. In contrast, floating leaves, like white water lily and duckweed, have stomata primarily on the top surface as that is the only surface exposed to the air. Leaves of aquatic plants also house large air spaces allowing the leaf to float on top of the water or hover near the surface where sunlight is readily available.

No matter where they are found, plants develop leaves to meet the rigors of their particular environment. For example, on your next hike in the woods, notice that leaves of many species of broad-leafed trees are larger on small saplings than on adult trees. When a tree towers over others in the canopy, leaves tend to be smaller to reduce transpiration because the tree doesn't have to compete for light anymore. I invite you to contemplate these "unspeakably perfect miracles" on your frequent hikes outdoors.

~ Nancy Condon

Let's Go for a Bike Ride on the Manhan Rail Trail,

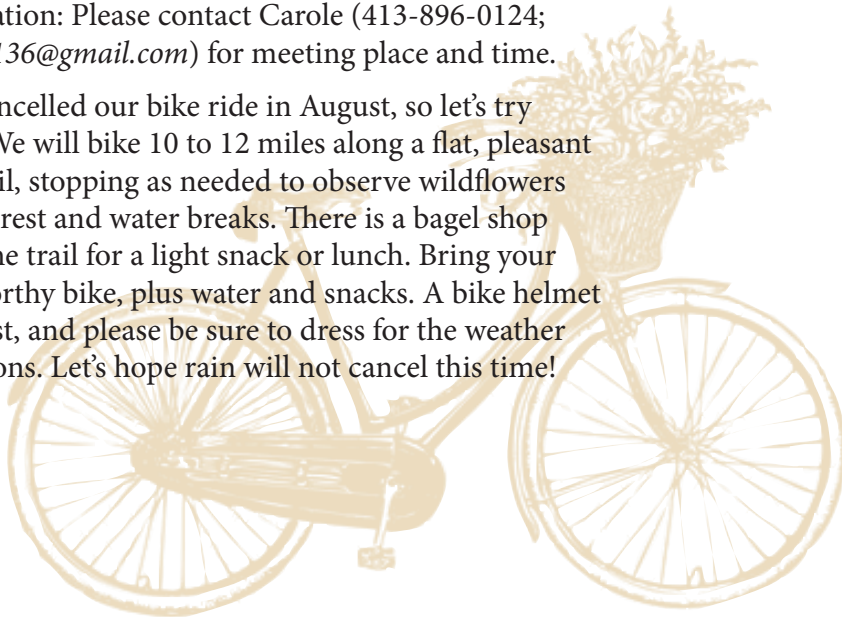
Easthampton

Saturday, October 13

Leader: Carole Dupont

Registration: Please contact Carole (413-896-0124; carole0136@gmail.com) for meeting place and time.

Rain cancelled our bike ride in August, so let's try again. We will bike 10 to 12 miles along a flat, pleasant bike trail, stopping as needed to observe wildflowers and for rest and water breaks. There is a bagel shop along the trail for a light snack or lunch. Bring your trail-worthy bike, plus water and snacks. A bike helmet is a must, and please be sure to dress for the weather conditions. Let's hope rain will not cancel this time!



The frost performs its secret ministry,
Unhelped by any wind. ~ Samuel Coleridge

ANNOUNCEMENT

2019 – Preparing for the Naturalists' Club 50th Anniversary

Naturalists' Club members have been exploring and enjoying the outdoors for almost 50 years. The Board has already begun envisioning our big celebration, to take place next fall. If you have any ideas on how the Club should celebrate, please let one of the Board members or officers know!

Restoration of the Great American Chestnut

Wednesday, October 17, starting at 7 p.m.

Tolman Auditorium, Springfield Science Museum

Speakers: Lois and Denis Melican



The American Chestnut tree was a keystone forest species throughout the eastern United States. An imported pathogen killed nearly 4 billion of these trees between 1904 and 1950. In this evening's program, we will learn of the chestnut's history, why this tree was so important, and of the amazing strides The American Chestnut Foundation (TACF) has taken to restore the species. You can also find out about opportunities to join TACF's citizen-scientist programs and do your part to bring this iconic tree back to our forests.

Our speakers, Lois and Denis Melican are retired from the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, Division of State Parks. Lois was a Regional Interpretive Coordinator; Denis was a Park Supervisor. They have been members of The American Chestnut Foundation since 2002. In 2003, they helped plant the first chestnut-breeding orchard. Lois is currently President of TACF's Massachusetts and Rhode Island Chapter.

A Paddle in the Stockbridge Bowl, Stockbridge

Saturday, October 20, from 9a.m. to 2p.m.

Leaders: Tom & Nancy Condon

Registration: Please contact Nancy (413-297-0778; spiderwoman@russellma.net)

Meeting Place: Big Y parking lot at the intersection of Route 20 and 102 at Exit 1 of the Mass Pike, Lee.

You have probably been to Tanglewood and looked down the hill to see a beautiful pond in the valley. That 372-acre pond is called Lake Mahkeenac or The Stockbridge Bowl. Our paddle will begin at the boat ramp just off Route 183. We will meander along the 6 miles of shoreline enjoying views of the surrounding mountains, elegant homes, and the native flora and fauna. The pond is very beautiful and a boat ramp inspector works to keep it that way. Some nearby lakes have been infested with Zebra Mussels and other exotics, so if you bring your own boat, please wash it well before you come. A wash station with a mild bleach mix is also available on site. Call Tom or Nancy to rent a boat (or seat) from a Southwick scout group at just \$10 per seat. So grab a partner, or let us know and we'll find you one, and join us for this early fall paddle. Bring lunch, binoculars, and plenty of water.



Listen! The wind is rising, and the air is wild with leaves,
We have had our summer evenings, now for October
eves! ~ *Humbert Wolfe*



The tints of autumn...a mighty flower garden
blossoming under the spell of the enchanter, frost.
~ *John Greenleaf Whittier*

Quabbin Hike, New Salem

Saturday, October 27, starting at 10 a.m.

Leaders: Dave and Suzy Gallup (413-525-4697)

Registration: Please call Dave and Suzy.

Meeting Place: CVS Plaza near the junction of Routes 9 and 202, Belchertown

Join us for a wonderful October hike at the northwestern side of Quabbin (Gates 25-26), one of the area's most beautiful locations. From this northern edge of the reservoir, one can look across the calm water and spot a string of small islands. We will make a loop along an old road through mixed hardwood forest, enjoying the wonderful October foliage. After the hike, we can go into New Salem — a wonderful little village that looks just as it did in the 19th century. From town, we will have the option to take a second, brief hike to some beautiful vistas that you will love! Bring a lunch or snack. The main hike is about 3 miles. Rain cancels.

Appalachian Trail Series: Ice Gulch, Monterey

Saturday, November 3, from 9a.m. to 3p.m.

Leaders: Tom & Nancy Condon

Registration: Please contact Nancy (413-297-0778; spiderwoman@russellma.net)

Meeting Place: Blandford Post Office, Route 23, Blandford

In 1925, Benton MacKaye, founder of the Appalachian Trail idea saw the hiking route as an escape from the evils of modern life, and its construction as an opportunity for people to engage in volunteer service toward a common cause. Come join us for a series of

hikes over the next few months to explore some of our favorite places along the Appalachian Trail here in Massachusetts. All hikes will run between 3 and 5 miles and be of low to moderate difficulty.

Ice Gulch requires a moderate climb from Route 23 in Monterey — about 500 vertical feet in 2 miles; our round trip will be 4 miles. We start on county roads and pass Lake Buel, before ascending the shoulder of Warner Mountain. In places, this section can get rocky, so wear good boots and bring along a walking stick for balance. It's a yo-yo hike, so we will return by the same route.

Ice Gulch was created by the weathering and erosion of a small peak, essentially cutting a long narrow groove through the peak. This deep, narrow gash in the landscape is often the coolest area in the summer, and the most shaded spots can hold ice well into spring. Because of this unique geology and ensuing microclimate, more northern plants populate these forests than elsewhere in the area. Come explore with us! Bring along a lunch, plenty of water, and dress for the weather — remember it will be cooler here than the weatherman will suggest for the Pioneer Valley.

Hiking the Holyoke Range, Amherst

Sunday, November 18, starting at 10:30 a.m.

Leaders: Dave and Suzy Gallup

Registration: Please call Dave at 413-525-4697.

Meeting Place: Notch Visitors' Center, Route 116, in Amherst

We will be hiking the New England Trail to the top of Mt. Norwottuck, the highest mountain on the Holyoke Range. Along the way, we will discuss local

geology and forests. After lunch on the summit of Norwottuck, we will hike to the "horse caves". There we will trace the steps of Daniel Shays. Legend proclaims that, in 1787, Shays escaped to the horse caves on the range after an ill-fated attempt to raid the Springfield Armory. From the horse caves, we will connect to the Robert Frost Trail on our way back to the Visitors' Center. We suggest that participants read about Shays' Rebellion (we recommend the entry at www.encyclopedia.com) and bring a favorite Robert Frost poem to read. Please wear sturdy footwear and bring a snack/lunch and water. This is a 3-mile, moderately strenuous hike.

A Peaked Mountain Hike – Hike Away Your Thanksgiving Dinner (say goodbye to the pie),

Monson

Saturday, November 25 starting at 10 a.m.

Leaders: Dave and Suzy Gallup (413-525-4697)

Meeting Place: Burlington Coat Factory at the shopping mall, Allen and Cooley Streets, in Springfield

Join us for a hike and walk off those Thanksgiving dinner calories! We'll hike to the summit of Peaked Mountain with its incredible vistas of the valley below. From the summit, you can see Mt. Monadnock in New Hampshire! This is a moderately strenuous hike. Bring a lunch and plenty of water. Sturdy hiking shoes are recommended, and do not forget your binoculars! Rain cancels.



Thanksgiving is an emotional holiday.

People travel thousands of miles to be with people they only see once a year. And then discover once a year is way too often. ~ Johnny Carson

NOV.
Meeting

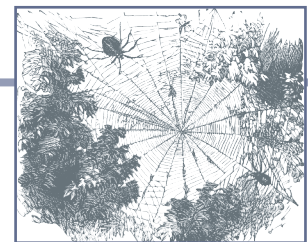
Friends or Foes? The Truth about Spiders

Wednesday, November 28, starting at 7 p.m.

(note that November meeting is one week later than usual!)

Tolman Auditorium, Springfield Science Museum

Speaker: Dr. Lauren DiCarlo



Dr. Lauren DiCarlo, a restoration ecologist within the Environmental Science Department at Westfield State University, grew up next to Acadia National Park. As a child who spent a lot of time outdoors, she was terrified of spiders (all of them) until she studied abroad in Costa Rica and was assigned a research project focusing on golden orb weavers. Observing the unique orb weaver behavior was entrancing and she was instantly hooked on spiders, delving into any information available. So much so, that she recently finished a doctorate that focused on the impact grassland restoration has on beneficial invertebrates (spiders included). In addition to her research that focuses on restoration, she seeks to educate the public on the amazing benefits of spiders.

Appalachian Trail Series:

Benedict Pond & The Ledges, Monterey

Saturday, December 1, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Leaders: Tom & Nancy Condon

Registration: Please contact Nancy (413-297-0778; spiderwoman@russellma.net)

Meeting Place: Blandford Post Office, Route 23, Blandford

Beartown State Forest in Monterey has two unique geologic features: Benedict Pond and the Ledges. We'll start our hike along the shores of the 35-acre Benedict Pond, a glacial remnant. Although most of the trail around the lake is relatively level, there will be places where a good pair of boots and a set of walking sticks will be most beneficial. The pond is home to herons, chickadees, and beavers.

When we reach the south end of the pond, we'll intercept the Appalachian Trail and take a short, moderate climb to an area known as the Ledges which offers exceptional views of the western Berkshires. Our hike will take us back down the hill, then around the pond back to where we started. Total hiking distance is about 3 miles with an elevation gain of about 400 feet.

Bring along lunch, water, and dress for the weather. Snow spikes are always a good idea at this time of year, so throw them in if you have a pair!

Annual Late Fall Hike at the Quabbin, Belchertown

Saturday, December 8, starting at 10 a.m.

Leaders: Dave and Suzy Gallup (413-525-4697)

Registration: Please call Dave and Suzy.

Meeting Place: CVS Plaza, near junction of Routes 9 and 202 in Belchertown.

It is that time of the year again, folks! Our destination is Gate 13 or 15, which takes us on a wonderful hike with great views of the northern section of the Quabbin – lots of stone walls and farm sites. There is some chance we will see eagles and hear loons! Previously, we've seen moose tracks on the Quabbin's sandy beaches. This is a great hike in one of the most beautiful areas to explore. Bring your lunch, hot drinks, and binoculars. Dress appropriately for the weather and wear sturdy hiking boots. Rain cancels.



December's wintery breath is already clouding the pond, frosting the pane, obscuring summer's memory.

~ John Geddes

Celebrate an 1887 Victorian Christmas

at Roseland Cottage, Woodstock, Connecticut

Date: Saturday December 8, 2018

Leader: Carole Dupont

Registration: Please contact Carole (413-896-0124; carole0136@gmail.com) to register, and for meeting place and time.

We will step back in time and visit the beautiful Roseland Cottage, festively decorated for the Christmas holidays and inspired by the Bowen family memoir "The Christmas of 1887". The Bowens were a wealthy Brooklyn NY. family who spent summers and holidays in Woodstock Connecticut at their rose-colored, Gothic Revival style mansion. Strong advocates for abolishing slavery, they entertained four US presidents and other recognized figures over the years. Tours will be conducted by costumed guides.



An Evening with Naturalists, Hampden

Saturday December 15, starting at 7 p.m.

Hostess: Sonya Vickers

Registration: Please call Sonya for directions (413-566-3406).

Every year we gather together to renew friendships and share what we have seen and learned in the past year. The hearth will be warm against the December winds and there will be desserts and refreshments to share, so let us know if you would like to bring something. Directions will be provided when you call to register. The registration list will be used to notify everyone if extreme weather cancels the event.



What good is the warmth of summer, without the cold of winter to give it sweetness? ~ John Greenleaf Whittier


**DEC.
Meeting**
HOLIDAY MEETING

Wednesday, December 19, starting at 7 p.m.
 Springfield Science Museum, Tolman Auditorium
 Presenters: You!
 Emcee: Nancy Condon (413-297-0778)

Our annual holiday meeting is an opportunity for you to share your most memorable and interesting nature and travel experiences with other club members. Have you visited someplace you would recommend to others? Do you have photos of Naturalists' Club events from this past year? We want to hear from you. Show us some of the highlights, by way of slides, PowerPoint, or photo album. Presentations may be no longer than 10 minutes in length. Please call Nancy to get on the roster for presentations.

This year we will continue a fun and successful book exchange event with the "Good Read" table. If you have enjoyed a good book and would recommend it to a friend, bring it in. For those willing to loan a book out to other club members, identification tags will be supplied so loaner and borrower can swap contact information. You may also just display a book that you enjoyed, without the option to loan. Either way, look through your library and try to bring at least one title to display. Bring a holiday dessert to share during the social hour so we can enjoy dessert while discussing intriguing books with other club members.

Events at Laughing Brook

Please call Laughing Brook at (413) 584-3009 or visit massaudubon.org for further information on these events.

Nature Festival at Laughing Brook, Easthampton
Saturday, October 13

Celebrate the wonders of nature with walks, stories, live animals, crafts, and games. Autumn's crisp air and changing leaves make it a fantastic time to enjoy a hike along the sanctuary's trails. Search for signs of wildlife, listen for birds, and watch chipmunks and squirrels gathering nuts in preparation for winter. Wildlife rehabilitator Tom Ricardi will provide a live birds of prey demonstration at 11:00 a.m. We'll have stories written by Thornton Burgess, the naturalist and author who lived at Laughing Brook, as well as face painting and fascinating facts about insects. Call Arcadia at (413) 584-3009 for the exact times of hikes and presentations at Laughing Brook.

Intro to Digital Photography at Laughing Brook

Sponsored by Connecticut River Valley Sanctuaries and Laughing Brook Wildlife Sanctuary
 Saturdays, November 4 and 18, from 1 to 4 p.m.
 Location: Laughing Brook Wildlife Sanctuary, Hampden
 Instructor: Kevin Kopchynski, photographer & naturalist
 Adult Members: \$25 Nonmembers: \$30

Learn the basics of nature photography just in time to photograph the beauty of the Connecticut River

Valley! We will discuss best practices for capturing an image, understanding exposure and focus, and using both manual and automatic exposure settings. Both digital and film users can benefit from this instruction, though when discussing equipment we will concentrate on digital photography and the special opportunities and challenges it offers. After the first session, participants are encouraged to take photos for review at the second session.

Instructions and Directions: Please meet at the Melville Room, Hampden Town Hall, 625 Main Street, Hampden. Park in the back of the building and enter via the back door. Please bring your camera and user manual.

Additional November Events**Fall Chrysanthemum Show at Smith College, Northampton**

Saturday, November 3 to Sunday, November 18
 Daily from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; open until 8 p.m. on Fridays

The Fall Chrysanthemum Show will showcase blooms in a variety of shapes and colors. The Fall Mum Show has been a popular college and community tradition since the early 1900s and showcases the hybridizing experiments of Smith's horticulture class. The public gets a chance to vote on their favorites. Suggested donation is \$5.

MEMBERSHIP

The fall of the year is the time to renew Club membership. Members who have opted for the electronic newsletter will receive an email indicating membership status. Members who receive the paper newsletter and have '18 - '19 (or later) on the mailing label are paid up for (at least) the current year; a '17 - '18 label indicates that renewal is now due.

To establish or renew membership, please send information/payment to:

Dave Lovejoy
The Naturalists' Club
Department of Biology
Westfield State University
Westfield, MA 01086

If your address and contact information have not changed, the form below need not be completed. But please do email us so that we can add your electronic address to our records. And let us know if you'd like to switch to our electronic edition. Thank you!

MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

\$15 per year for Individual
or Family Membership
\$25 per year for Supporting Membership
\$50 per year for Sustaining Membership
\$300 for Lifetime Membership

Renew your membership

Name _____

Address _____

Phone Number _____

Email _____

Do you opt for electronic delivery of the Naturalists' Club Newsletter? Yes _____ No _____

Requests for programs/trips: Please send information per the above to: Club Treasurer, Dave Lovejoy, Department of Biology, Westfield State University, Westfield, MA 01086



The NATURALISTS' CLUB was founded in 1969 for the purpose of actively promoting knowledge, appreciation, and preservation of our natural environment.

It is an all-volunteer non-profit organization.

Education is a main focus of The NATURALISTS' CLUB.

Programming, with an emphasis on local natural history, is designed to create camaraderie among people of diverse interests through experiences deepening their appreciation of nature.

Activities are geared to acquaint the layperson with the natural world, mostly through field trips. Monthly meetings are held at the Science Museum at the

Quadrangle in Springfield, Mass. Most field trips and programs are free.

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