



## Xmas Fun at Joe's

The next meeting will consist of an HOS Holiday party at the home of Joe & Mollye Blackburn. All food and drinks are graciously being provided by the Blackburns.

The party will also feature a progressive gift exchange: Everyone brings a wrapped, \$5 gift, and numbers are drawn by lottery. The person with the lowest number gets to select the first gift. The person with the second lowest number selects the first person's gift or an unknown one, etc., until everyone has a gift.

The party begins on Saturday night, December 19, at 7 pm. Please RSVP to the Blackburns at 524-9438, 2210 Chilton Road, Houston, TX 77019 (see map).

## Figures & Food Fulfilling

At the October meeting, Warren Ross showed slides from Brookgreen Gardens, an outdoor sculpture museum at Murrells Inlet, South Carolina. Brookgreen Gardens is the largest private sculpture garden in the United States.

Warren grouped his slides into four categories. The first was *Joy, Joy of Youth, Playfulness, Animals*. The second was *Feminine Beauty, Love*. The third was *Strength, Power, Action, Myth*, and the last was *Explicitly Serious Themes*, which included the well-known *Man Carving his Own Destiny* by Albin Polasek.

Prior to the slide presentation, everyone enjoyed a varied selection of culinary delights brought by the many attendees.

New HOS member Martha Beaudry, who also attends the OPAR study group, was welcomed; and the family of George Marklin and Mary Heinking visited from New Mexico.

## TOSC IV a Knockout

Houstonians took to the hills of Austin on the weekend of November 13, as did many other Objectivists from all over the nation, to attend the Fourth Annual Texas Objectivist Societies Conference. Attendees came from all over the country, from California to Rhode Island, and one guest traveled from Saudia Arabia.

Hans Schantz presented the first paper, "Topics in the Epistemology of Science", showing how philosophical ideas have affected the progress of science. Warren Ross then presented "A Defense of Aristotle's Theory of Motion", which corrected a historical misunderstanding of Aristotle's dynamics. Dr. Ross showed that in assessing Aristotle's work in this area, Galileo, some philosophers and numerous science writers have made the mistake of dropping historical context and, in particular, Aristotle's understandable focus on steady state as opposed to transient velocity.

After a lunch break, five workshops were offered: "Free Market Monopoly", "Introduction to Relativity and Quantum Mechanics", "Tonality in Music--An Objective Standard", "Preservation and Development of Aristotelian Thought in the Dark and Middle Ages" and "Aspects of Objective Parenting--Emotional Development."

Dinner was followed by an evening of entertainment, featuring two poetry readings, by Michael Clover and Linda Abrams, two guitar recitals, an oboe and cello duet and a dramatic reading by Alan McKendree about Davey Crockett as a congressman.

Artwork was showcased over both days, featuring paintings by Alice Ross of Houston, Jeff Phillips of Pennsylvania, Dorothy Meister of New Mexico and paintings and sculpture by Revital Brook of Austin.

Two papers were presented Sunday morning: "The Law of Identity and the Philosophy of the German Enlighten-

ment" by Steve Holmes and "Aristotle and the Defense of Freedom" by Robert Garmong.

Ronen Nakash, of the Ayn Rand Institute, presented a "Slide and Music Show", a sequence of beautiful art accompanied by Romantic music.

Two presentations completed the conference Sunday afternoon: Chris Land presented "A Theory of Humor", and Brian and Dawn Phillips presented "Philosophy and Fashion."

Conference chairman Yaron Brook closed the conference by thanking all participants and by urging early submissions for next year's conference. When asked whether the conference had been enjoyed, the audience responded with heart-felt applause.

Mr. Brook also decorated the conference rooms with photographs and posters of great art provided by *Values*, at 412 E. William Cannon Drive, #421, Austin, TX 78745.

Houston attendees were Warren Ross, Jim & Sandi Brents, J.P. Miller, Chris Land, Kirk Mashue, Dwyane Hicks, Janet Wich, Jeri Eagan and Brian & Dawn Phillips.

## Lena and the Angels

by  
J. Brian Phillips

In mid-September, a member of the Texas Railroad Commission (TRC) resigned her position, admitting that her claim of being a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of the University of Texas was a lie. Despite her admission, Guerrero remained in the race for the position she had vacated, a decision which

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prompted widespread debate.

During her resignation speech, Guerrero tearfully stated: "I can only tell you that I've thought a lot and done a lot of soul-searching about how it happened, and the only thing I can say to you is perhaps you want something so much you begin to believe it is."

Guerrero is hardly alone in believing that one's wishes and desires can transform reality. That belief has been institutionalized by Pragmatism and practiced on a daily basis by politicians, the media and the public.

Pragmatism holds that truth is "what works", that reality is malleable, that principles should be discarded in pursuit of "practicality". Only the ends matter; how they are attained is not important.

If her goal was political power--which it was--then Guerrero's lie was very "practical". Her alleged degree brought her respectability and a political career. Widely regarded as a rising star in the Democratic Party, Guerrero was an understudy of Governor Ann Richards, who had appointed her to an unexpired seat on the Railroad Commission. Guerrero's ends--a political career--were attained; the fact that a lie aided in that success is not significant to the pragmatist.

Despite Guerrero wishes, reality is not malleable. It is what it is. This fact led to Guerrero's downfall.

When the issue of Guerrero's college resume was first raised, Guerrero was faced with an important decision--to admit her lie or tell another to conceal the first. She chose the latter. As the evidence of Guerrero's deceit was revealed, she responded with new lies. Each time new facts were revealed, Guerrero found it necessary to evade more of reality. Finally, she could not evade any longer--reality had not conformed to her desires.

Objectivism holds that reality is an interconnected whole--one cannot pick and choose which aspects of reality one wishes to accept. Any attempt to reject, deny or evade any fact of reality ultimately leads to a rejection, denial or evasion of all of reality. And this is precisely what happened to Lena

Guerrero.

For eight years, Guerrero had lied about her resume. For eight years, others had believed her. For eight years, in Guerrero's mind, reality had conformed to her desires. When she was first confronted with the truth, Guerrero responded that the allegation was "weird". When reality collided with her desires, reality was declared "weird".

In principle, Guerrero was doing what most politicians do. Believing they can raise living standards by imposing a minimum wage, politicians see no connection when unemployment rises. They shrug their shoulders and raise taxes to fund another jobs program. And when new problems arise from their "solution", they create another committee to issue a report recommending another program. Rejecting principles, the pragmatist denies a connection between the actions of today and the effects of tomorrow.

Pragmatism demands non-judgment and, therefore, a suspension of justice. Since principles do not exist (according to Pragmatism), there are no standards by which to judge. How does one determine whom to reward and whom to punish when truth is flexible and reality malleable? To make any definitive statement regarding knowledge, values, etc., is to imply the existence and acceptance of some standard. But the pragmatist rejects standards, and thus rejects judgement.

This, in essence, is how many have reacted to Guerrero. Some Hispanics implied that what Guerrero had done wasn't a lie. Even if she had lied, they argued, it wasn't important. She'd done a good job on the Commission and demonstrated that a college degree isn't necessary for a seat on the TRC. Besides, they usually added, she's one of us.

Governor Richards has remained supportive of her apprentice. At one fundraiser, Richards--a former alcoholic--declared that when she finds weaknesses and foibles in another person, "the greatest thing I can do for myself is love that person." At the same fundraiser, Railroad Commissioner Jim Nugent turned to the Bible: "Let him

without sin cast the first stone." We're all despicable, Nugent implied, so don't be a hypocrite and judge Lena Guerrero. Similarly, *The Houston Post* ran an article making similar implications. Interestingly, Guerrero's defenders used both subjectivism (unqualified love) and intrinsicism (the Bible) to rationalize her dishonesty.

To the pragmatist, principles are impediments to living, rather than guides. To the intrinsicist, principles are revelations from God, or the "collective consciousness", etc., which must be obeyed. To the pragmatist, Guerrero's actions were acceptable because she got the political position she desired; to the intrinsicist, Guerrero's actions were acceptable because they were no worse than what everyone else does.

Thus, while many people were busy excusing Guerrero's lies, they simultaneously ignored the enormous power vested in the TRC. This commission regulates oil and gas production, as well as intra-state trucking. This latter power creates gross inefficiencies in shipping within Texas and drives up the cost of hundreds of products and services. The same ideas which make lying irrelevant also blind people to the devastating consequences of the TRC: economic principles are just as illusory as moral principles.

Aspiring to regain this power was a woman who admits to placing her desires above facts, a woman who believes that reality is malleable to her wishes. A seat on the TRC would have given her the power to impose her wishes on the entire state.

At about the same time Guerrero's lies were being revealed, a nine-year old Houston girl--Miraida Martinez--claimed that a pair of angels were living in her backyard. Upon hearing this, thousands of people flocked to the Martinez home, hoping to be blessed and/or cured of ailments.

The fact that angels do not exist did not stop the local media from giving Miraida considerable coverage, turning her into a hero. Few, if any, members of the media questioned the veracity of her claims. Like the tailor of the emperor who wore no clothes, Miraida boldly made claims which



contradicted the sensory evidence available to everyone else.

Everyone lies, we were told, when Lena Guerrero's fraud was revealed. Children are innocent, we were told, when Miraida spotted angels in her backyard. Reality, it was implied, is whatever we want it to be.

Guerrero's claims could be disproven. Miraida's claims could not be disproven--the only evidence offered was her claim, a claim which defies Identity. The media recognized (but would not judge) the false, it could not recognize the arbitrary. Consequently, while the media uncovered Guerrero's lie, it acted as a conspirator in Miraida's.

Essentially, Lena Guerrero, Miraida Martinez and the media have one thing in common. Each has accepted the same basic idea--reality is a creation of consciousness. Guerrero "created" a college degree; Miraida "created" angels. And the media acted with complicity in both cases.

Like most Americans, Lena Guerrero and Miraida Martinez have probably never heard of John Dewey and William James. Yet, like most Americans, they have accepted the ideas advocated by these Pragmatists. Those ideas have been transmitted to the public by today's most influential intellectuals--the media.

Liars and mystics, like Lena Guerrero and Miraida Martinez, have existed since the beginning of history. The ideas dominating a given culture determined the reaction to those liars and mystics. In today's culture, Pragmatism has made the primacy of consciousness acceptable. \$

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## Book Review

### *The Microbe Hunters*

by Paul de Kruif, Harcourt Brace Jovanovitch, 1923, 337 pp.

Reviewed by Warren Ross

Despite some serious flaws, this is a marvelous book. It presents the history of bacteriology from the 17th to the

early 20th century. It tells the heroic story of the men who first learned to fight disease in a scientific way, rather than merely comforting patients or lessening their symptoms. From Anton Leeuwenhoek, the inventor of the microscope, who discovered microbes when he turned his new instrument on everything around him; to Louis Pasteur, who first conceived the germ theory of disease (i.e. that microbes were not only ubiquitous but potentially harmful to men and animals) then went on to show how to cure disease by vaccination; to Robert Koch, who first related one specific microbe to one specific disease; to David Bruce, Battista Grassi and Walter Reed, who identified the cause of sleeping sickness, malaria and yellow fever, respectively, and proved they were spread by flying insects; to Paul Ehrlich, who discovered the first antibiotic--these men had varying personalities and styles of research, but they all possessed a love for truth, a passion for healing and remarkably creative scientific intellects.

Two examples illustrate the scope of this book. Robert Koch's experiments were so flawlessly logical that he is responsible--through his four "rules"--for the essential methodological principles in the science of bacteriology. He identified the microbe that causes anthrax by meticulously searching for commonalities among the many bacteria in animals who had succumbed to the disease. He then proved that that microbe was the cause of the disease by growing it in isolation for many generations on solid culture media (a technique he discovered), then injecting those descendants of the original microbes into healthy animals, who got the disease. He applied the same approach to finding the microbes underlying tuberculosis and cholera. Koch received the 1905 Nobel Prize in medicine for his work.

Louis Pasteur did not conduct experiments as exhaustively as Koch. He combined visionary conceptualization with a few key experiments to make great leaps forward in the science of bacteriology. It was his observation of the activity of microbes in fermenta-

tion that led him to see that microbes had enormous power, and hence if that power were released in a human or animal body it could do great damage. Once this conceptualization of a vast range of observations was stated as a testable hypothesis, Pasteur proceeded to conduct a few experiments that confirmed his theory. The same methodology was at work in his discovery of vaccination. He had observed in a few cases that once an animal had had a disease, like anthrax, it no longer was susceptible to the disease. He generalized these observations to the hypothesis that a) no animal that had the disease could get it again and b) if given the disease in a mild form from which it could recover, the animal would be immune from that time on. It only took a few key experiments, including his dramatic public demonstration with 48 anthrax-infected sheep, to prove that this hypothesis was true.

Pasteur of all the microbe hunters was the perfect integration of scientist and healer. He once said, in response to the idea that there are two incompatible kinds of science, pure and applied, "There are not two different kinds of science; there is science and there are the applications of science." Whenever he discovered a new fact of nature, he immediately wanted to apply it. He did not stay in the laboratory and leave it to others to apply his theories. He went out, first into the wine fields and silk orchards and pastures of France, and later into the sick wards of hospitals, to apply his theories to actual cases. His work contributed to commercial improvements in France as well as to medicine.

Like any beginning science, bacteriology had many unknowns, and it took incredible tenacity to uncover the intricacies of how bacteria affect men and their domestic animals and to identify the regularities in those processes. It took Pasteur three years to devise a method for attenuating the strength of the virus that causes rabies, and then to develop a method of dosing humans that would cure the disease. Nowhere was this tenacity more evident than in the work of Paul Ehrlich, who spent nearly eight years hunting for a "magic



bullet", which is a compound that would kill bacteria but not harm men (today we call them antibiotics). In his laboratory, he experimented with over six hundred compounds of arsenic and benzene before he developed the first such antibiotic, salvarsan, which was a treatment for syphilis.

Microbe hunting was far from being a safe profession. The men who hunted microbes were continuously in danger of being infected with the very microbes they were attempting to identify, isolate and destroy. These men travelled to the most filth-infested corners of the globe--to India, North Africa, the jungles of Uganda--to engage in research. Some microbe hunters died. The Frenchman, Thuillier, died of cholera while studying its causes in the 1882 Egyptian epidemic. The American, Jesse Lazear, while studying yellow fever in Cuba, died after being bitten by an infected mosquito. Some of the microbe hunters used themselves as subjects in the first human tests of their theories. The risks these men took in the search for cures were not taken altruistically (despite what the author occasionally claims). They were taken in a grim determination to win back the earth for man from the microbes that made his life impossible.

*The Microbe Hunters* is marred by two flaws. More important of these is author de Kruif's acceptance of a number of dichotomies stemming from the mind-body dichotomy. For example, he believes that there is a conflict between the search for truth and the passion to heal, based on a few journalistic examples of men who jumped to conclusions, and attempted to apply methods before they were fully proven by experiment, in a desire to save human lives. de Kruif expresses many times throughout the book his view that the passion to heal will interfere with a man's objectivity. Similarly, de Kruif believes that a man's ambition will necessarily interfere with his objectivity to the point where de Kruif praises men who don't seem to have any ambition but are "only searchers" after truth. In some places, de Kruif's interpretation of what truth means is an intrinsic one, in which Truth (his capi-

talization) is seen as devoid of emotion, cold, disconnected from an individual's worldly values. Thus when he encounters a man, like Pasteur, who had this-worldly ambitions as well as the desire to discover new scientific truths, de Kruif overemphasizes certain mistakes the individual makes, attributes them to his ambitions and even in some cases blames the individual for failures that are natural in the progress of science and healing. de Kruif says at one point about Pasteur that he was burdened by a "crown of thorns that madmen wear whose dream it is to change a world in the little seventy years they are allowed to live."

Aside from a few altruistic remarks, which become particularly contemptible in the chapter on Walter Reed and yellow fever, and besides one or two comments implying that the law of causality is a "prejudice," the other flaw in the book is its style. It is written in a somewhat juvenile style, as though the audience is intended to be teenagers, and young ones at that (although the subject matter is certainly most appropriate for adults). Among other things, the book is written with lots of exclamation points, as if the reader needed special motivation about the subject matter over and above the life-or-death heroism implicit in just telling the story. One can get used to this, although it is definitely annoying.

In summary, *The Microbe Hunters* is an excellent book if read with a critical attitude toward the author's own mistaken views on the relation between reason and emotion. *The Microbe Hunters* is science presented as science ought to be presented, integrated around an important fundamental theme--that scientific knowledge is the means to preserving human life. The book is really a series of case studies illustrating the principle that reason is man's means of survival. (Also, no one can read this book and honestly retain the view that using animals in experimentation is of only marginal value in medicine.) For these reasons, *The Microbe Hunters* will be both enjoyable and inspirational to those who respect science and hold man's life as the highest value. \$



### San Antonio Light--7/16/92

Environmentalist Lanny Sinkin asserts that chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), used in

air-conditioning, irreparably deplete the protective stratospheric ozone layer over Antarctica. CFC manufacture and use predominates in the North, therefore, CFC-caused depletion is impossible.

Even the environmentalists admit that chlorine directly interferes with ozone regeneration, not CFCs. CFC production has peaked at 1.1 million tons or 750,000 tons of chlorine annually. It's highly unlikely the CFC breakdown supplies the chlorine. Climatologist Professor Robert Pease has shown that few CFCs can reach the stratosphere past the rain barrier.

About 300 million tons of chlorine (sodium chloride) from hurricanes and ocean water evaporation reach the stratosphere annually. Ocean water surrounds Antarctica.

In remote locations, annually, 100 active volcanoes, on the average, release into the stratosphere millions of tons of chlorine and sulfur that interfere with ozone regeneration as hydrogen chloride and sulfuric acid. On Ross Island, Antarctica, Mount Erebus's volcanic eruptions, for the last century, have ejected 1,000 tons of hydrogen chloride gas into stratosphere daily (National Geographic, April 1990).

Natural activities account for the ozone's fluctuations. No scientific evidence exist to implicate man's puny industrial activity in any loss of stratospheric ozone. John W. Beason

### San Antonio Light--6/9/92

Adopting worldwide limits on carbon dioxide emissions, to control the hypothetical greenhouse effect and global warming, comes from believing computer programs call General Circulation Models (GCMs). GCMs aren't scale models of the Earth but are calculating devices focusing only on carbon dioxide and ignoring the total context of other atmospheric influences on global temperature.



Stephen Schneider's GCM assumes the Earth's weather is always still and dry. Significant heat loss occurs in his model only by radiation like a space heater. Greenhouse gases block this heat loss. Says Schneider in *Discover Magazine*, October 1987, regarding his hypothesis, "We have to offer up scary scenarios, make simplified, dramatic statements, and make little mention of any doubts we may have."

Most influences on the Earth's climate are still unknown. The modelers use the same data that cannot even predict next week's weather.

Convective cooling, through dampness and wind-chill, leads to heat losses greater than radiation alone.

As greenhouse gases increase temperature, more water evaporates, forming clouds and water vapor. Due to the warming, winds increase which increases the convective transport of heat away from the Earth. A negative feedback loop results. The warmer the Earth gets the more the wind will cool it off. Says Lindzen, "Many oceanographers and atmospheric scientists working on climate share the view that the present global-warming hypothesis is a largely political issue without scientific basis." *John W. Beason, San Antonio*

**Houston Chronicle--10/5/92** Lena Guerrero claims to hold a degree from UT and is forced to resign her seat on the Railroad Commission when her lie is revealed. A nine-year-old girl claims to see angels in her backyard and becomes a local hero.

Guerrero's claim, for which some evidence existed, could be disproven; the nine-year-old girl's claim, for which no evidence existed, could not. Both claims resulted from the belief that one's wishes can change or create reality.

Each wanted something--Guerrero a degree, the nine-year-old girl to see angels--so badly that each convinced herself it actually existed. Guerrero got what she deserved. Unfortunately, the nine-year-old girl was encouraged to indulge in her delusion by the thousands who visited her house.

*J. Brian Phillips*

**SW Advocate--10/22/92**

Lane Anderson's shrill letter to

The Advocate of October 8 is a good example of the dishonesty characteristic of the environmentalists, Anderson's protests notwithstanding. In fact, mainstream environmentalists are notorious for producing bad science to justify their political agenda of controlling and/or eliminating human technology.

Anderson tells us that corporations consider people as "disposable" and are therefore dumping carcinogens on us daily in pursuit of evil profits. While such rhetoric by Marxists has been discredited, it seems to find fertile fields when reapplied to the task of sacrificing human liberty to nature.

In fact, it is environmentalists who consider humanity dispensable, with their leaders actually wishing for the right mass-killing virus to come along in order to protect "mother earth" from the existence of man. Nature is held to be intrinsically valuable, while man, who must re-arrange his background to provide for his survival, is therefore evil by his nature.

Yes, any private or governmental entity should be held accountable for any actual harm, but no person of good will should ally himself with a movement which sees man as inherently evil.

Industry is the application of man's mind to the crucial task of human survival. If industry does not stand up for the right to produce material values for consumption, and thereby earn profit, we will all be poorer, economically and politically. *Dwyane Hicks*  
*Member of Houston Objectivism Society*

**Houston Chronicle--11/5/92**

In the Metropolitan section of the Nov 2 Chronicle, reporter John Williams informed us of three petition efforts taking place on election day. Two of those efforts are led by Clymer Wright and Barry Klein, described in the article, respectively, as an arch-conservative and a zealot.

I have yet to encounter in any newspaper the term arch-liberal, and I doubt if I will see a liberal described as a zealot. But if this were to happen, I would still object to such ad hominem attacks serving as substitute for a description of the individual's position. I'm sure that if a person's political views are unreasonable, the reporter

will have no trouble documenting it for the reader's consideration.

*Dwyane Hicks*

**Houston Chronicle--11/22/92**

Jay Karahan (*Outlook*, 11/17/92) deplores the straight-ticket voting which ousted Judge John H. Kyles from the 208th District Court. I would remind Karahan that Judge Kyles was one of many candidates, that researching the characteristics of various candidates is not a convenient task for a voter and that endorsement from often pragmatic institutions does not provide any guarantee for supporting one's principles in voting.

In this context, the busy voter has primarily only one indication of the candidate's status: political affiliation. To be a Republican or a Democrat is not the result of an arbitrary decision, despite the somewhat mixed principles of both parties. Particularly for a candidate, party affiliation is a weighty projection of one's view of the proper role of government.

Democrats are predominantly statist, ever seeking an expansion of the authority of government while furthering the decline of individual rights. And this policy is justified, in part, by ascribing "rights" to people only in regard to their group identity, based on race, sex, sexual "lifestyle", economic "class", etc.

In addition, Democrats predominantly view rights as services and products owed to those who lack them by those who brought about the existence of such products. Thus, the producers of goods are deprived of their liberty in the name of securing "rights".

Unfortunately, Republican principle is not as clear-cut, particularly with the infusion of Religious Right principles, which advocate censorship and implicit state ownership of a woman's body. But historically, and to some degree today, the Republican Party is the party of freedom.

Judge Kyles is responsible for recognizing these differences when he chooses party affiliation. And Karahan, as "a lifelong conservative Republican", would do well by working to give voters a clear choice by making the Republican Party more consistent in its advocacy of individual rights.

*Dwyane Hicks*



## Announcements

\$ The Houston Property Rights Association is collecting signatures for a referendum on zoning. Thirteen thousand signatures of the twenty thousand required have been collected thus far. The petition nullifies any existing plan and requires any proposed plan to be submitted to the voters six month's prior to an election on it.

\$ The Pacific Northwest Objectivist Conference debuts in March next year, featuring three days of courses taught by Richard M. Salsman, Gary Hull and Andrew Bernstein. Tuition for the three-day option is \$275 if registration is made prior to December 15. For an application and further information, contact Warren Ross at 468-2256.

\$ HOS is distributing a bumper sticker to those who will display it at a cost of \$3. It features "Reason, the Highest Virtue/Ayn Rand was Right" plus an American flag with thirteen stars. It will be available at the December party.

\$ If your travels take you to Austin on a weekend, you might be interested in visiting Dan Fordyce's house, where *Vaules* displays its art, and various movies are shown, followed by discussion. For a schedule, call Yaron Brook at (512)447-5992 or Dan Fordyce at (512)280-8450.

### The Adventures of Al Truist and Friends

by Dawn Phillips and Dwyane Hicks



*I'll be there, soon, but first I have to finish making this tape-to-tape copy of a Peikoff speech.*

*Don't you have a problem with that? I'm sure it's copyrighted. Which one is it?*

*No, I'm sure he wouldn't mind...and it's just for my personal use. Let me see...it was something I was interested in. Oh, yea, it's "Why One Should Act on Principle."*

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