



# CORNWALL CHRONICLE

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## West Cornwall Sewer Project

On November 7, the Wastewater Study Group voted to submit the final version of its report to the Board of Selectmen. Prepared by WMC Consulting Engineers, it recommends that, "at a minimum," a combined gravity and low-pressure sanitary sewer with enhanced treatment system be installed in the base area of the village. This would include Main Street, Railroad Square, and Lower River Road up to 900 feet south of the covered bridge, where the proposed treatment facility would be located.

The finding was presented at town hall on November 10 with 25 local citizens in attendance. First Selectman Gordon Ridgway made the case that the town has been losing its vibrancy as the population dwindles. He reasoned that West Cornwall must be preserved as a commercial center in order to bring more jobs and full-time residents.

WMC engineer Stephen McDonnell pointed out that basic infrastructure for sewage has been sorely deficient in West Cornwall for decades. Plots were established well before any health code existed and they are not large enough to accommodate adequate septic systems for the existing structures. The effluent is currently making

its way to the Housatonic River through a century of saturated soil. While contamination of local waterways has not yet exceeded permissible limits, the situation can only worsen.

Janet Carlson provided drawings of future potential, depicting the present layout of the village with a dozen new businesses interspersed throughout the existing buildings. Not only would higher occupancy be possible but greater output as well, particularly for those establishments that depend on water for production or services.

Regarding disruption to the town, WMC estimates it would take a year for the installation beneath the roadways of pipes connecting a new collection system in the base area leading to a 20,000-gallon tank beneath the 30'x30' footprint of the treatment facility building. After completion, sludge will have to be pumped out and hauled away two to four times a year.

Financing for the \$3.8 million project has yet to be determined. Applications for grants to offset some of the expense are being sent to state and federal agencies. Then the town leadership must consider what percentage of the balance should be paid by those direct beneficiaries who choose to connect to the new system and how much cost the rest of Cornwall will accept for necessary infrastructure as well

as an investment in their future. A formal proposal will be put to a town vote sometime in 2018. — Bill Goulet

## Planning for the Plan

Work has begun on Cornwall's Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD), mandated by the state, which must be finalized and approved by 2020.

The Planning and Zoning Commission (P&Z) is in charge of this re-examination of the town's assets and deficiencies, and of the development of strategies to help Cornwall prepare for the years to come. Citizen participation is key to discovering the collective will of the town about its future.

Probably the most sobering information is an analysis by the Connecticut Office of Policy and Management (OPM) predicting that Cornwall's population will slip to about 900 by 2040. The decline in full-time residents—the result of deaths and the continued flight of the younger generation—affects just about every facet of town activity.

It should be noted that the most critical need identified in the 2010 POCD was for more affordable housing. Circumstances conspired against this happening: the 2008 housing crisis; the Dodd-Frank legislation,

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## DECEMBER 2017

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>Every Week This Month:</b> <b>Mondays:</b> Yoga, 8:30–10 am Library; <b>Mat Squad</b> at 6:30 pm UCC; <b>Karate</b> , 6:30–7:30 pm Town Hall; <b>Men's Senior Basketball</b> 6:30–8:30 pm CCS ♦ <b>Tuesdays:</b> Zumba, 5:30–6:30 pm Library ♦ <b>Wednesdays:</b> Tai Chi, 5–7 pm Town Hall call 672-0064; <b>Stitch 'n Spin</b> , 7:15–8:30 pm UCC ♦ <b>Thursdays:</b> Pilates, 8:30–9:30 am Library; <b>Toddler Play Group</b> , 10:30–11:30 am Library; <b>Meditation</b> , 4–5 pm call Debra 672-0229; <b>Zumba</b> , 5:30–6:30 pm Library; <b>Mah Jongg</b> , 7–9 pm Library call 672-6874; <b>Adult Volleyball</b> , 7–9 pm CCS gym ♦ <b>Fridays:</b> Yoga 8:30–10 am Library ♦ <b>Sundays:</b> Yoga 9–10:30 am Library; <b>Meditation</b> , 1 pm call Debra 672-0229					1	2 ♦ Annual Christmas Fair 9:30 am–3 pm UCC ♦ Community Contra Dance 7 pm Town Hall
3 FULL	4 ♦ Diabetes Class with Anne Hummel 10:30 am–12:30 pm Library ♦ Region 1 Bd. of Ed. 6:30 pm HVRHS	5 ♦ Inland Wetlands Agency 7 pm Town Hall ♦ Board of Selectmen 7:30 pm Town Hall	6	7	8 ♦ Christmas Pageant Rehearsal 5:30 pm	9 ♦ West Cornwall Holiday Stroll 1–5 pm ♦ How the Grinch Stole Christmas, Film 4pm West Cornwall Library ♦ Annual Christmas Pageant 7:30 pm UCC
10 4thQ	11 ♦ Free Blood Pressure Clinic Noon–1 pm UCC	12 ♦ Econ. Dev. Comm. 9 am Town Hall ♦ Monthly Senior Luncheon Noon UCC Parish House ♦ West Cornwall Septic Committee 5 pm Town Hall ♦ P&Z 7 pm Library ♦ Housatonic River Commission 7:30 pm CCS	13 ♦ Senior Trip Yale Peabody Museum/ Knights of Columbus 9 am	14	15 ♦ <b>Deadline:</b> January <i>Chronicle</i> Copy	16 ♦ Cornwall In T-Shirts Opening 4–6 pm Historical Society ♦ Constance Old Artist's Reception 5 pm Library
17	18 ♦ ZBA* 7 pm Library	19 ♦ No Pilates for the rest of the month ♦ Board of Selectmen 7:30 pm Town Hall	20 ♦ Bd. of Education 4:15 pm CCS	21 ♦ Knitting Group/Hats/ Cancer Patients 10 am Library ♦ Cornwall Conservation 7 pm Library	22	23
24 ♦ Christmas Eve Services 5 & 8 pm North Cornwall Meetinghouse	25 CHRISTMAS DAY	26 ♦ Tom Walker Boxing Day Reading 4 pm North Cornwall Meetinghouse	27 ♦ Cornwall Business Assoc. 9 am Hughes Memorial Library	28	29	30
						31 NEW YEAR'S EVE

\*Check with Zoning Office—672-4957

(continued from page 1)

which tightened eligibility rules for mortgages; and CCS's continued slide in student numbers (the eighth grade graduating in 2018 has two students).

Not that Cornwall has been a silent observer during the past eight years. The Economic Development Commission, recommended in the 2010 POCD, has been vigorously promoting Cornwall in the media, and a study group has generated a proposal for a waste water/septic system to replace ancient wells and sewer arrangements in West Cornwall village. It's all about growth.

The proportion of preserved land in Cornwall has increased 65 percent in the past 30 years, to about 37 percent. Will this change affect Cornwall's need to be business-friendly and affordable for young families? Or can more protected acreage draw more people interested in hiking and biking the 47 miles of trails in town?

This is the challenge for P&Z and the five study groups we are all invited to join—natural resources, community resources, economic development, housing, and attracting younger families. Watch the *Chronicle* calendar for their meetings and for the sessions proposed by the Board of Education to explore ways of addressing the declining CCS population.

It's been said that a community's well-being is like a three-legged stool with legs representing the churches, healthcare availability, and the schools. Remove one leg and the whole thing collapses. Let's develop a plan so it won't come to that.

—Lisa L. Simont

## Traditions and Memories, Not Resolutions

Are you ready? As of December 1, there are 44,640 minutes until kisses, champagne, and other traditions welcome 2018. New Year's is, of course, a time when many resolutions are made, but even the best-intentioned are likely to be soon broken.

So, for a moment, let's not trouble ourselves with resolutions (who really wants to give up chocolate anyway?) and celebrate holiday memories and traditions.

Several Cornwallians shared memories with me. They included outdoor activities such as skiing at Mohawk and skating on Cream Hill Lake. Susan Fox and her three sisters ice skated and played in the snow, sometimes sliding onto their frozen pond, spinning around on plastic sleds. Her sister Charlotte and Denny Frost had a "fat Labrador named Thurber" who loved the plastic saucer. He'd ride it onto the ice, and then grab it with his teeth to pull it back up the hill.

Reluctant to tell me stories that he had not yet told his children, Phill West shared memories of his mother, Becky Gold West

Williams, who brought his and other families together to pull taffy or make gingerbread houses. If Lori Blakey Welles' parents went out for New Year's Eve, she and her sister and brother were allowed to have a rare treat, TV dinners!

Everyone smiles when they recall the smells, tastes, and laughter at holiday meals. An Italian tradition observed in Steve Saccardi's family was to serve seven kinds of fish on Christmas Eve. With a grin and a grimace, Steve recalled that his job was to cut off tails of lobsters (the unsuspecting crustaceans needed to be alive at the moment of their amputation). Karen Stevens' Polish father and British mother combined their families' customs: pickled herring and pierogi on Christmas Eve and roast beef and Yorkshire pudding on Christmas. Rev. Micki Nunn-Miller told me that her family "never deviated" from serving black-eyed peas on New Year's Day, a tradition handed down from her father's childhood in the Appalachians.

In north Germany in the early '50s Elisabeth Kaestner and her family began the New Year's Eve celebration with an early dinner—carp, beet salad, and potato salad. The kids would make special doughnuts called "Berliners," and their father warmed the "Gluehwein"—red wine and spices. Elisabeth remembered melting lead in an old spoon over a candle and dropping it into cold water so that it would harden, creating a talisman for the coming year. When midnight arrived, church bells rang and firecrackers chased evil spirits away.

Lazlo Gyorsok told me of New Year's Eve in 1973 when he and a cousin, Hungarian refugees, sneaked over the border from Germany to celebrate in Paris. In a small restaurant they ate mussels and drank cheap wine. Quoting Lazlo, this was a meal that Hungarians would "never, never, never have eaten—under no circumstances."

My favorite recollection of New Year's Eve in Cornwall was one shared by Ellen Hart's mother, Joyce. Ellen devised an unusual and daring approach to greeting the New Year. Imagine the family around a small fire atop Hart Hill. Then, just before midnight, they would sled down the hill. By the time they got to the bottom they would have slid into the New Year!

It's been great fun to hear about the many memories and traditions of our Cornwall neighbors, at home and across the seas. While I was talking to Karen Stevens, she smiled wistfully as she described her mother's contagious excitement on New Year's Eve. No matter the past, she was certain that the unknown days ahead would be filled with promise and hope. So let us shun the restraints of resolutions and greet 2018 with open hearts and hope for the coming year.

—Molly Hinchman



## Welcome

Rohan Raj Gala to Radha and Raj Gala

## Congratulations

Regina Roussis and Jonathan Hurlburt  
Shannon Swann and Donald Stevenson Hedden  
Heidi Hedden and Marc Latka

## Land Transfers

Leo V. Loughhead, III and Angelina L. Reed to  
Gelah T. Penn and Stephen P. Maine, land with  
all buildings and improvements thereon at 77  
Pierce Lane, for \$435,000.

Karen Hansen and Roderic M. Cross, III, Co-  
Trustees of the Lucy Elton Cross Revocable  
Trust to David Wloch and Lorraine Jeski  
Moroch, land with improvements thereon at 87  
Mohawk Mountain Road, for \$225,000.

## A Wild & Crazy Healthcare Ride

I think it is safe to say that in the past year, following the debate about healthcare has been like being on a roller coaster, except it has NOT been the kind of thrilling ride but more like when you realize you might have a stomach virus and the ride keeps going and going.

The U.S. Congress made three attempts (and counting) to repeal the Affordable Care Act, or ObamaCare, yet the law still stands, providing essential preventative benefits and protection for those with pre-existing conditions. There are also subsidies (tax credits) for those who qualify, despite constant threats to cut the subsidies, which would be very detrimental to "affordable" care.

Insurance companies are in a tizzy, because they have no clue what to expect, so they are hiking rates. The ACA is still in the crosshairs for many (as are Medicare and Medicaid); however, taking benefits away from an estimated 30 million people is proving tough to do. The current thinking is that it will take two to three years to develop an alternative plan, so until that time, the ACA will stand.

This is important for Cornwall residents in particular. According to the Department of Social Services, Cornwall has 190 residents insured via the ACA (13 percent), a much higher percentage than Litchfield County (4 percent). Cornwall also has 241 insured via Medicaid (17 percent) and 280 via Medicare (19.5 percent), compared to 15 percent and 21 percent respectively for the county. Litchfield County has around 5 percent uninsured, which is even better than the historic low of 8 percent in the U.S.

Healthcare has been a priority in Connecticut, which took an early leadership position on the issue. It was one of the first five states to expand Medicaid, and did so early, even before the January 1, 2014 availability. The state was also exploring the creation of a single-payer program, "SustiNet," which basically expanded the

state insurance program to all Connecticut residents. SustiNet was tabled, however, when the ACA was approved, but as one might expect, the discussions are happening again. There have also been conversations around creating a universal healthcare plan, like "Medicare E." Many minds are at work from government, academia, and non-profits, all coming together to craft a state health insurance program, should the ACA be dismantled. The bottom line is that it is in our state mandates, Section 38a-1051, that "healthcare is a human right and a priority of the State."

If the ACA, Medicaid, or Medicare are impacted by acts of Congress, it will be even more critical for actions at the state level. Maine could provide insight into how this might work, where Medicaid was expanded through a ballot initiative rather than the legislature, allowing voters to decide, instead of forcing them to take a ride.

—Janet Carlson Sanders

### Cornwall Briefs

• **The Election:** Unopposed Democrat First Selectman Gordon Ridgway won a 14<sup>th</sup> two-year term. He will be joined by incumbent Richard Bramley (D) and Priscilla Pavel (R), replacing Heidi Kearns who chose not to run again.

In several contested races, incumbent Dave Cadwell (D) and Catherine Tatge (D) were re-elected and Emilie Pryor (R) was elected to the Board of Ed. They are joined by newcomer Marina Kotchoubey (D). The Board of Assessment Appeals will consist of Dave Samson (D), Pam Longwell (D), and Roger Kane (R).

There was a long list of unopposed candidates: John Green (D), Treasurer; David Hubbard (D) and Joe Pryor (R) were elected to the Board of Finance; Darilyn Woods (D) and K.C. Baird (R) elected as Board of Finance alternates; Jill Cutler and Anna Timell, both Democrats, to the Planning & Zoning Commission; Amy Worthington Cady (D) and Ian Elwell (R), Zoning Board of Appeals.

There were two veteran candidates so beloved that both parties nominated them: Town Clerk Vera Dinneen and Tax Collector Jean Bouteiller.

The turnout was small, only 422 people voted, and Vera D., as usual, got the most votes, 329 Dems and 91 Republicans for a total of 415 (it's that bowl of goodies that sits on her desk!)

• **Vacancies:** There are a number of unfilled slots on various town commissions and committees, including the Conservation Commish, the Economic Development Commish, Planning and Zoning, Inland Wetlands, Park and Rec, and the Senior Committee. Anyone interested in being appointed should contact the selectmen's office at 672-4959.

• **Parish House Lunch:** Once again the good folks of UCC hosted an Election Day luncheon and once again it deliciously consisted of a choice of five soups, plus a beef chili cooked up by Pastor Micki and a vegetarian chili by that bravest of men, Jerry Blakey. The soups were the work of Margaret Kane (broccoli cheddar), Pat Blakey (corn chowder), Lori Welles (ginger squash), Catherine Tatge (mulligatawny), and Barb Gold (potato bacon). There were also brownies from Audrey Ferman and carrot cake baked by Margaret Kane. Donations produced \$444 for the town's Food & Fuel Bank.

• **Just Learned:** James and Idella Shepard, owners of the Cornwall Country Market, have purchased the Pottery Store building in West Cornwall and plan to turn it into rental space for interested businesses.

—John Miller



### CVFD Activity Report

- 11 medical calls
- 3 mutual aid requests to neighboring towns for structure fires
- 1 tree on wires
- 2 motor vehicle accidents
- 2 false alarms

**Safety Tip of the Month:** Prepare the family car for winter travel—check the condition of tires, have an extra flashlight, and something warm like a fleece or wool blanket.

### The Nice List

Our town's various boards, committees, and volunteer organizations spend the year working tirelessly for the community, so we thought we'd give back by sharing the needs and hopes they have for 2018. Perhaps our generous readers can help grant some wishes (ahem, please note the *Chronicle's* own modest appeal). At any rate, we offer a glimpse of what visions dance alongside sugarplums in their heads.

#### Mike Croft, CCS Principal

- Health, happiness, and learning for the children of Cornwall.
- A smooth and collaborative budget process.
- Books as holiday presents for Cornwall children.
- Wisdom and energy for the Board of Education, school staff, and the community to tackle the issue of declining school enrollment.

#### Members of the Board of Education

- Work with the community to find creative ways to increase enrollment.
- More books and more babies!

#### John Guenther, President, The Little Guild of St. Francis

- I'd like to see the next generation become more involved in leading the organizations

# Letter to the Chronicle

### CORNWALL CLEAN-UP

*Cornwallians of all ages came together on September 23 for a town-wide "Clean-Up/Green-Up Day." An overwhelming turnout—52!—meant adding an "Invasive Plant/Weed-Out" to the day's activities.*

*After muffins and tea at the Cornwall Library the volunteers collected trash along Cream Hill Road and the Housatonic River, and pulled weeds and invasive plants from the garden by the covered bridge and around the Cornwall Library.*

*Returning to the library the volunteers then grabbed shovels and planted 300 daffodil bulbs around the library...all without disturbing the lawn!*

*The event finished with a tasty picnic in the library's community room, including just-pressed apple cider. While volunteers were tired and feeling great for what they accomplished, one last activity ensued—the awarding of prizes. The big winners were each given a "Daffodil Watering Gun" and all five winners promised to return next spring and use them to water the daffodils!*

*The event sponsors, led by the Cornwall Conservation Trust, thanked all the volunteers for making Cornwall cleaner, less weedy, and greener (actually yellower next spring)!*

—Gary Steinkohl and Casey Cook  
Co-leaders of the "Clean-Up/Green-Up Day"

vital to the well-being and future of our community.

• More Cornwallians discover the secret to physical fitness—walking Little Guild dogs. And perhaps walking one or two of them home!

#### Cornwall Child Center

• Tax-deductible donations! Monetary gifts can be mailed to the center at 8 Cream Hill Road, West Cornwall, CT 06796 or online at [cornwallchildcenter.org/donate](http://cornwallchildcenter.org/donate).

#### Lisa L. Simont, President, Cornwall Historical Society

• That the historical society could be a part of the planning effort for Cornwall's future by keeping things in context. CHS is dedicated to engaging with the community and describing our mutual history.

#### Dave Colbert, Planning & Zoning

- 1st (realistic): A productive year working on the new town plan.
- 2nd (fanciful): A mixed-income agrihood (Google it).

#### Gordon Ridgway, First Selectman

• Comprehensive effort(s) to attract more young people to town.

• (semi-humorous) A craft brewery (hop yard on the town green).

#### Janet Carlson Sanders, Chair, Economic Development Commission

• Lead the region in growing local

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businesses while being innovative and open minded in attracting entrepreneurs and their families to our town.

- Put Cornwall on the map as a locally sourced culinary destination where there are 1,000 ways in nature to work off the calories.

- Light a fire in our younger townspeople to step up and run for offices and take leadership positions in town.

#### Cornwall Housing Corporation

- A candidate for governor as dedicated to affordable housing as Malloy.

- Six acres of nice flat land with great percs on which to build tiny houses.

- An imaginative rental scheme providing housing for caretakers, school children, firemen, EMS responders, and municipal commission members. Win-win.

- Return of the \$2,500 septic system.

- Some generous bequests without the donors actually leaving us.

—compiled by Jacque Schiller

## Events & Announcements

Also: check our Facebook page for event reminders and Cornwall updates

**Annual Christmas Fair** at UCC, Saturday, December 2, from 9:30 A.M. to 3 P.M. Decorations, bake sale, luncheon, children's shopping, raffle, and take your holiday photos.

**Cornwall Contra Dance:** Saturday, December 2, at town hall. Dancing will commence at 7 P.M. with calling by special guest Bob Livingston and music by Still, the Homegrown Band. All ages and left feet welcome; no partner necessary. Donations requested. For more information go to motherhouse.us or call Jane at 672-6101.

#### At the Cornwall Library

Diabetes Course: Monday, December 4, at the library, from 10:30 A.M. to 12:30 P.M. Free.

Winter Hours: The Cornwall Library is open Tuesdays from noon to 5 P.M., Wednesdays from noon to 6 P.M., Thursdays from noon to 5 P.M., Fridays from noon to 6 P.M.,

## Gifts of the Season

Keep the *Chronicle* going in all its manifestations: check the insert for details.

Saturdays from 10 A.M. to 3 P.M., and Sundays from noon to 3 P.M. Closed Mondays.

The Knitting Group will be knitting hats for cancer patients on Thursday, December 21, at the library, 10 A.M.

#### Art in Cornwall

Sally Van Doren's multi-media show continues through December 9 at the Cornwall Library.

Artist's reception for Constance Old on December 16 at 5 P.M. Her work will be on display at the Cornwall Library from December 13 through January 28.

The Toll House Gallery will continue to showcase the work of Donald Bracken, Lennart Swede Ahrstrom, and Scott Zuckerman, in addition to a new collection by Susan Rand through December. Monday through Friday, from 9 A.M. to 5 P.M. and Saturdays, from 10 A.M. to 4 P.M. Private showings on request.

Susan Hellmann's exhibit "Simply Cornwall" will continue at the Souterrain Gallery through December. Thursday through Saturday, from 11 A.M. to 5 P.M.

**West Cornwall Holiday Stroll:** Saturday December 9, from 1 to 5 P.M. Family-friendly activities from ornament making with elf Joe Brien of Lost Arts to llama walking. At the Souterrain Gallery, Santa will oversee operations and pose for pictures. Other highlights include adult spirits, gluehwein, eggnog, music, and munchies at the Wish House, Bain Real Estate, and Ian Ingersoll's. One lucky raffle winner will receive dinner for four at Pearly's Farmhouse Café. The West Cornwall Library will screen the original Dr. Seuss's *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* at 4 P.M.

**Christmas Pageant:** Saturday, December 9, at 7:30 P.M. (snow date Sunday, December 10) at the UCC Village Meeting House on Bolton Hill Road. Traditional readings and carols will culminate with the giving of "white gifts." Please bring a toy wrapped in white paper to donate to children in need. Refreshments following the pageant in the Parish House. Interested in taking part? You MUST attend rehearsal at 5:30 P.M. on Friday, December 8. For more information call Jane Prentice at 672-6101.

#### Senior Events

Blood Pressure Clinic: Monday, December 11, from noon to 1 P.M. in the UCC Day Room. Contact VNA Northwest at 860-567-6000 or vnanw.org.

Monthly Luncheon: Tuesday, December

12, noon at the UCC Parish House. Cost is \$8/per person for a buffet lunch. RSVP to Jen Markow at 672-4071 or prcornwall@gmail.com.

Senior trip to the Yale Peabody and Knights of Columbus museums in New Haven on Wednesday, December 13. Leaving from the UCC Parish House at 9 A.M. Cost: \$9 plus lunch. Please RSVP by December 8. Space is limited. Contact Jen Markow.

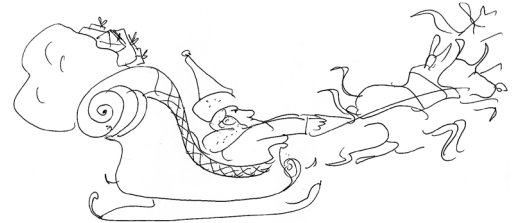
#### Cornwall Historical Society

"Cornwall in T-Shirts," Saturday, December 16, from 4 to 6 P.M. Celebrate the season with a reception and unveiling of a new winter exhibit.

**Christmas Eve Candlelight Services:** 5 P.M. and 8 P.M. at North Cornwall Meeting-house.

**Boxing Day Reading:** Tuesday, December 26, at 4 P.M. at the North Cornwall Meeting-house. Tom Walker will read from Ernest Hemingway's hunting and fishing stories.

**New Year's Day Pancake Breakfast** will be held in the UCC parish house from 9 A.M. to noon. Buttermilk pancakes, sausage, Cornwall maple syrup, orange juice, coffee, cocoa, and tea will be served. Donations will benefit the church outreach programs. Everyone is welcome.



## CORNWALL CHRONICLE

[cornwallchronicle.org](http://cornwallchronicle.org)

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