



CORNWALL CHRONICLE

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January Politics

Cornwall voters will face something out of the ordinary at the 2005 municipal election, a contest at the top of the ticket.

Becky Hurlburt, a full-time resident since 1996, confirmed that she will run for first selectman. "I think I'd be good at the job, and I feel the town should have a choice," she said.

Hurlburt, 42, is a member of the Board of Education and Cornwall Conservation Trust. She was formerly the art director of Viking Children's Books in New York City. Her husband Bill was a selectman in the early 1990s, and his father, Allyn, was first selectman in the 1960s.

Asked what changes she might offer, she said: "I hope to bring a different kind of energy to the job, with more communication, getting a variety of people to work with me, and possibly taking more chances."

Becky is a registered Democrat but will run as an Independent. She would appear to face a daunting task.

First Selectman Gordon Ridgway said it was "a safe assumption" that he will run for an eighth term. Although Ridgway has occasionally been opposed (most recently by Roger Kane in 2001), no challenger has come close to beating him. When informed by

Becky of her decision, Gordon said he suggested that she serve as a selectman first, a suggestion that apparently held no interest for her. "It should be an interesting race," he added, a comment echoed by Becky.

—Ed Ferman

Open Space Forever

In mid-December the preservation of much of Cream Hill Farm's active agricultural land came another step closer to being a done deal when the State Bonding Commission gave its approval. According to Charlie and Ralph Gold, the state will have purchased the development rights to some 250 acres for approximately \$1.4 million. This priceless land includes most of the open fields visible on both sides of Cream Hill Road. (About 150 acres of woodland were not included.) Charlie and Ralph are "hopeful that this step will contribute to the viability of Cream Hill Farm, maintain the beauty of Cornwall, and continue the good stewardship of the land."

At the base of Cream Hill, stretching up along Rattlesnake Road, lie some 35 acres of woodland which the Cornwall Conservation Trust recently received as a bequest from Constance Hall Gloeckner. This property is crossed by seasonal streams and links several other CCT preserves together into 62 acres of unbroken habitat.

By these thoughtful acts two large tracts are kept forever as open space—a great gift to our town.

—Maggie Cooley

Cornwall Community Gym

It's new, it's 6,000 square feet big, and it's causing excitement among all who want to use its beautiful and voluminous interior spaces. It's our Cornwall Community Gymnasium. The total space includes a performance stage with access ramp, physical education office, team room, storage area, bleachers, and bathroom. Already the basketball court has seen the boys' and girls' teams beat Kellogg and a winter concert by the CCS music department. Concerts, plays, public meetings, and gatherings requiring large spaces will be easily accommodated here.

An enthusiastic crowd at the December 19 open house responded with a standing ovation for Jim Terrall when Barbara Gold praised his work on behalf of the project. Terrall thanked his committee for their efforts in a process which "did not always go smoothly." The members: Alec Frost, John LaPorta, Sukie Hatcher, Bill Hurlburt, and

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JANUARY 2005

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Every Week This Month: Mondays: Teen/Adult Basketball, 7-9 P.M. CCS Gym Tuesdays: Blue Mountain Satsang, 6:30 P.M. UCC Day Room; Teen/Adult Volleyball, 7-9 P.M. CCS Gym Wednesdays: Play Group, 10-11:30 A.M. Playscape/UCC; Stretch Class, 5:30 P.M. Town Hall Thursdays: Meditation for Mothers, 1:15 P.M. UCC Day Room Saturdays: Ice Skating, 7-8 P.M. Hotchkiss School						1 New Year's Day Benefit Pancake Breakfast 9 A.M.-1 P.M. UCC Library Closed Transfer Station Closed Cornwall Taxes Due
2	3 CCS Reopens Agricultural Comm. 7:30 P.M. Town Hall Park & Rec. 7:30 P.M. W. C. Firehouse Bd. of Selectmen 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	4 Inland Wetlands* 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	5 New Wednesday Library Hours Begin: Noon-7 P.M.	6	7 ANNUAL PANCAKE BREAKFAST	8 Beginners Knitting 10:30-11:30 A.M. Library American Girl Club Noon-1:30 P.M. Library
9 Housing and Homelessness Talk 11:30 A.M. UCC†	10 Blood Pressure Screening 3-4 P.M. UCC Parish House ABC Meeting 5:30 P.M. Town Hall	11 Film: <i>The Big Sleep</i> 2 P.M. Library P&Z 7:30 P.M. Town Hall Housatonic River Comm. 7:30 P.M. CCS Library	12	13	14 Story Hour 1:15-2:15 P.M. Library	15 Deadline: February Chronicle Copy Chess Club 10-11:30 A.M. Library†
16	17 MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. BIRTHDAY (OBSERVED) HVRHS Music Club Benefit† Region One Bd. of Ed. 7 P.M. HVRHS Democratic Town Comm. 7:30 P.M. Library	18 HVRHS Music Club Benefit† Bd. of Selectmen 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	19	20 Bd. of Ed. 5 P.M. CCS Lib. Bd. of Fin. 7:30 P.M. CCS Lib. VFW Post 9856 8 P.M. W. C. Firehouse	21 Story Hour 1:15-2:15 P.M. Library	22 Beginners Knitting 10:30-11:30 A.M. Library Chess Club 10-11:30 A.M. Library†
23	24 ZBA 7:30 P.M. Town Hall*	25	26 Cornwall Vol. Fire Dept. 7:30 P.M. W. C. Firehouse Green Party 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	27	28 Story Hour 1:15-2:15 P.M. Library	29 Parenting Workshop 9 A.M.-Noon UCC† Chess Club 10-11:30 A.M. Library†
30	31					

* Check with Zoning Office—672-4957

† Details in Events and Announcements

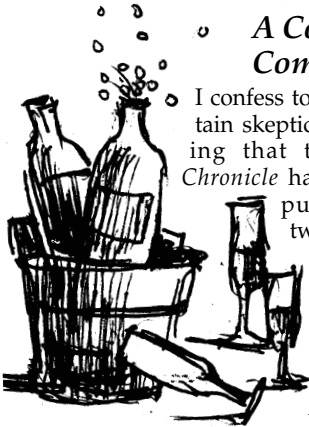
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Thalia Scoville. Other speakers included Gordon Ridgway and Will Kennedy, who thanked the town on behalf of the student body. Then, Fred Thibault, long-time advocate of a new gym, sank the first official basket (on the third try).

The Board of Education and the Board of Selectmen are working together to develop scheduling and operating procedures to ensure fair and orderly use of this community facility, subject to public approval. Here is how usage will be prioritized:

The school will have first crack, for its PE classes, basketball games and practice, concerts, dances, and other mostly daytime uses. Next, the town will be able to use it for public meetings and other events that require large seating capacity. Then Park & Rec. will run regularly scheduled programs like the current recreational basketball for grades 2 to 6. Next, the gym will be available for scheduled "open" evenings for multiple-use activities, and finally, it can be used for unscheduled events as time and space permit. All scheduling will be done through the principal's office at CCS by calling 672-6617 or by a visit. Ask for Patty.

This building, completed at long last, will undoubtedly become the activity hub of our town. The Cornwall Community Gym. Pat yourself on the back. —Phil Hart



A Cornwall Companion

I confess to feeling a certain skepticism on learning that the *Cornwall Chronicle* had seen fit to publish (between hard covers no less) an anthology of its best articles and drawings. Don't get me wrong. I've always

enjoyed the *Chronicle*, and never more so than now, when we live 2,991.6 miles away from Baird's (according to Mapquest) and even further from the dump. Cornwallians turn out not to be the most assiduous letter writers, alas, so the *Chronicle* has become our primary source of Cornwall news. (All it's missing is a gossip column.—Lib? April?) These days our local newspaper is the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and anyone who's tried to read that windy rag knows it can't hold a candle to Cornwall's *Chronicle*.

But still, an anthology?! Even the most devoted students of Cornwallia—even Jim Terrall or David Grossman—probably couldn't bear to relive the Rumsey Hall saga, or the CCS expansion saga, or—my personal favorite—the gravel-pit-on-Route 7 saga. The *Chronicle's* coverage of these stories was unbeatable, it's true, but these are some soundly sleeping dogs you definitely don't want to poke. And yet if you left out such world-historical Cornwall episodes, would

there be anything left to anthologize?

Plenty, it turns out. *A Cornwall Companion* is an unexpected delight. The editors—Spencer Klaw and Ed Ferman—wisely stepped over the snoozing dogs of past controversy, settling instead on pieces that capture the rhythms of Cornwall life (and wildlife), both now and then. The volume offers up a wonderful trove of Cornwall history—Phil Hart's superb entries gradually build up a detailed sepia picture of the town's agricultural heyday—and by the time Ken Keskinen's final page of doggerel has rolled around, you have a portrait of a small New England town at the end of the 20th century changing in response to muffled offstage forces, as slowly as it possibly can.

The fatal tendency of small-town journalism has always been toward nostalgia and gushy nature writing, neither of which, thankfully, the *Chronicle's* editors have ever displayed much patience for. The *Chronicle* has always preferred to traffic in fact rather than sentiment, whether the subject is rocks, gnats, black bears (these last two topics receiving easily as much ink here as all the selectmen combined) and mountain lion spottings (a subject on which Hendon Chubb steadfastly refuses to let wish get the better of verification). Facts generally prove sturdier than sentiment, which probably helps to explain why this anthology holds up as well as it does.

That said, for an expat Cornwallian like myself, reading *A Cornwall Companion*—which is to say, reading Phil Hart and Carla Bigelow, Lisa Simont and George Kittle, and all the many bylines with "Scoville" at one end or the other, is to risk a dizzying descent into homesickness. You can hear the very creak of the floorboards at Baird's in these pages, and I'm reminded just how sorely I miss the place.

—Michael Pollan

Let There Be Light?

Will Cornwall Village's 14 street lights go out on the first of this month? Well, not the most important ones. The selectmen have agreed to keep lights burning in front of the Town Hall, the Library, the churches, the Post Office, and at some intersections.

"But some side streets will be dark," said First Selectman Gordon Ridgway. That is, unless residents who want illumination agree to pay CL&P the cost (about \$10 per month) of individual street lights.

Historically this was the responsibility of the Cornwall Lighting District. Formed in the 1940s, it was never very successful in collecting its meager dues. After the '89 tornado no bills were sent out, and for the next decade or so Ginger Sullivan, CLD treasurer, paid the yearly bills (c. \$1,000) out of her own pocket. "It was my way of doing something for Cornwall," she said. When she could no longer do this the CLD was briefly rekindled, with Nan Frost as president. At a meeting in October it agreed to collect past dues and then extinguish itself.

—George Kittle

Welcome

Zoe Marie to Christine and Christopher Gillette

Good-Bye to Friends

Mary Jack
Roland Costello

Land Transfers

Lucille N. and Daniel H. Payne to Julia Randall and Andrew Cooks, 5.04 acres on Whitcomb Hill Road for \$120,000.

Arthur C. Dutton and John K. M. Dutton to Thomas K. Levine, 45.23 acres on Town Street for \$523,864.

Sixty-four Mile Walkabout

A year or so ago I set out to walk every foot of public road in Cornwall. This has turned out to be something like 64 miles, according to the road crew—but nearly double that much walking if you do it an hour at a time.

There aren't many four-mile loops in town, so that mostly I would

walk for a half an hour from wherever the car was parked and then double back. This meant slow progress, but it wasn't boring. Going in different directions gives you entirely new views of the countryside.

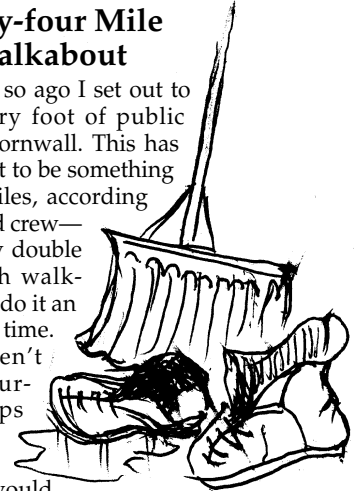
Here's some of what I saw and learned while walking the whole town, most of it twice.

On the practical side, even the longest hills—Bunker, Dibble and Great—are manageable. Just gear down enough so you don't get out of breath and you're at the top of Warren Hill before you know it.

Bugs are manageable, too, if you don't mind looking silly. Button your shirt all the way up, and button the cuffs, too. Take the French Foreign Legion approach to protecting your neck: rig some sort of a neck cloth and hold it in place with a hat. Crumble small leaves and put one in each ear to keep the gnats out. If things get really bad, break a switch off a bush and wave it in front of your face. And don't stop moving.

Things I saw: A surprising number of deserted cabins, rotting away in the woods. Many more homes sitting back from the road than you notice from a car. Many, many more logging roads, trails, and overgrown paths than I expected, and much more state property. You could wander through the woods for whole days and never leave public lands. I plan to do just that, in fact, now that I've explored the paved roads.

The strange stone tower hidden off Toomey Road on Mohawk Mountain. The huge stables and paddocks sprawling like a set for *Lord of the Rings* at the foot of Mohawk's southern slope. The ancient graveyard lost in the woods along Great Hollow Road South, most of its stones fallen,



broken, and worn illegible. One I was able to make out: In memory of Harriette, beloved wife of Benjamin Doolittle, died 1842. (No relation, as far as I know.)

Endless swamps, marshes, wetlands, bogs, ponds, and streams. There is much more water hidden away in Cornwall than you ever notice driving by. No wonder the moose are coming back.

Things I didn't see at all, or very much: Snakes, turtles, small birds, and amphibians (except for salamanders, which seem to be holding their own). Automobiles serve as census takers for wildlife, and when I was a boy it was common to see all these small animals dead on our roads. But in all my recent walking I saw only one baby garden snake run over by a car, and only two small birds. On the roads alongside swamps there would be three or four dead frogs where 50 years ago there would have been a great slaughter.

Many larger animals that were seldom or never seen in the old days have come back, it is true—bears, fishers, coyotes, ravens, turkeys, buzzards, beavers, Canada geese, herons, and eagles. But the little things are disappearing.

Grasshoppers, those fat black and yellow spiders that once spun webs everywhere in the tall weeds, honeybees, butterflies, the big Luna and Io and Prometheus moths, bluebirds, goldfinches, the lumbering box turtles you sometimes used to hear scuffling through the leaves in the woods, the black-snakes sunning on the stone fences—all of these seem to be on their way out, or already gone.

—Jerry Doolittle

Cornwall's Fourth Library

Everyone knows the Cornwall Free Library. Nearly everyone knows the Hughes Memorial Library in West Cornwall. And all school kids and their parents are familiar with the CCS library. But do you know about our fourth library, the one at the Dump—pardon me, I meant to say the Transfer Station?

The library at the dump began about two years ago, when people kept leaving used books, and Dumpmaster Fred Bate III couldn't bear to see them recycled when they could just as well be re-read. Using some old bookcases and trays, he and his assistant, Steve O'Neil, set up a place where people could leave unwanted books, and those who needed a reading fix could pick them up.

It's a little less formal than the other libraries. You don't need a card. You don't even need a dump sticker. "3 books per week" reads the notice on the wall. It's the only rule, and it can be waived. And you can keep books as long as you want. The library is well organized and alphabetized, cour-



Letters to the Chronicle



JOIN THE WOMAN'S SOCIETY

The UCC Woman's Society welcomes all Cornwall women. The Society's main activity is the annual Rummage Sale. Most funds we raise help Cornwall youth seeking secondary education. We also aid local groups and respond to catastrophes world-wide.

No special skills are required, but together we represent strength and strive to succeed in our endeavors.

We meet twice a month at the Parish House, at 2 P.M. The first Thursday is usually our business meeting and the third Thursday is our social hour.

—Betty Silbert

WELCOME TO DARK ENTRY FOREST

Your neighbors in Dark Entry Forest want all Cornwallians to know that they are welcome to hike in our woods at any time during daylight hours, providing they carry our Friend of the Forest pass. Applications for a pass can be obtained by calling our new telephone number, 672-6914, by snail mail at P.O. Box 259, Cornwall Bridge, CT 06754, or by contacting us at darkentryforest@snet.net.

Hikers without passes are subject to arrest by officers of the State Police or Department of Environmental Protection who patrol the area. You have probably also noticed that the Town of Cornwall forbids parking anywhere along the roads that lead into the Forest. Have a good Winter!

—John Leich

RACCOONS REDUX?

One night in December I was awakened at 3 A.M. by something going bump in the night. I sprang from my bed to see what was the matter and found not eight tiny reindeer but my 30-gallon kitchen garbage can overturned, its contents strewn all over the floor, and Lamont Cranston, my black cat, growling at his door, on the other side of which sat a large, fat raccoon.

I opened the door and threw a stick at it, but it just looked at me as if to say, "Whad'ya do that for?" He appeared too big to fit through a 5" x 6" cat door, but the evidence was there. So I barricaded it and went back to bed. He made several attempts to break in, and paid two more nightly visits before giving up.

A little research told me I wasn't alone. Phil Hart said he'd lost eight chickens to raccoons, Ralph Scoville said his corn bins were full of them and that Gordon and Peter Russ had them, too. Animal Control Officer Rick Stone verified that after a hiatus of about five years, they were back. "It's round three," he said. Are they rabid? "Some are, specially the ones you see in the daytime, acting funny. Raccoons are cute, and some people like to feed them, but my advice is to stay clear of them."

I passed that along to Lamont.

—George Kittle

tesy of Lin LaPorta. (She's away on "sabbatical" until spring, and Steve says they would really welcome a volunteer librarian in her absence.)

The collection runs heavily to paperback mysteries and romances, with a fair number of Tom Clancys and the ilk. But I noticed a book by the Marquis de Sade, and an Alvin Tofler book on "megatrends," and the other day I picked up two volumes of Evelyn Waugh short novels.

All additional literary contributions are welcome. So if your shelves at home are bulging, recycle your books to the patrons of the Library at the Dump.

—David Grossman

Helping Our Kids

At their early December meeting, the selectmen announced some initiatives to prevent the harm being caused by under-age alcohol and drug abuse. These are practical steps designed to keep kids out of the hospital and out of court.

First Selectman Gordon Ridgway stressed that no one program holds the solution—

schools, parents, and the community as a whole must provide a varied menu: information on available resources for both parents and children, alternative activities and affiliations to spark young people's interest, and possible new legislation, such as a town ordinance to prohibit "host parties," where underage kids may be served alcohol.

Those who have agreed to work on these issues consist of representatives from school, parent and community groups; people with questions or ideas should call one of them: Pat Bramley, Cynthia Bianchi, Martha Bruehl, Amy Cady, Scott Cady, Dr. Fitz, Jill Gibbons, Barbara Gold, and Trevor Ives. Gordon hopes that now that the cycle of building projects is over, we can think harder about the people inside.

—Maggie Cooley

New Postmaster of 06796

West Cornwall has a new postmaster: Joy Armstrong, an 18-year veteran of the U.S. Postal Service, who has served in Winsted, her home, and more recently, Canaan.

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West Cornwall has not had a full-time postmaster since Laurie Seelig, who was postmaster from June 2003 until December 2003. Then Scott Hanlon (who died in a plane crash last fall) was acting postmaster for a short period. Nancy Schreiber, who has been filling in since, has assumed duties in Roxbury.

Joy is married and has five daughters, one son, and 11 grandchildren. She is anxious to meet all the local postal patrons and "loves hearing the bubbling brook outside the post office."
—Mark Wilson

Events & Announcements

Park & Rec. Will Sponsor/Host:

- Ice skating at Hotchkiss School Saturdays from 7 to 8 P.M., beginning January 8. Free. Skaters must wear hats.
- Teen/adult basketball, CCS gym, Mondays from 7 to 9 P.M., beginning January 3.
- Teen/adult volleyball, CCS gym, Tuesdays from 7 to 9 P.M., beginning January 4.

Missing Your Sneakers? Lost your jacket? If you left anything at one of the town's playing fields or at a Park & Rec. event, you may find it in the new Lost & Found bin in the front entry area of the Town Hall. Every few months what's left in the bin will be given to the Salvation Army. You have been warned.

Cornwall Community Birthday Calendar has been resurrected by The Cornwall Foundation. The 2005 edition can be picked up at the Library, the West Cornwall Market, CCS, the Wandering Moose Cafe, and the Berkshire Country Store. No charge. If you would like to add birthdays or anniversaries to the 2006 calendar, please e-mail Annie Kosciusko at townhill@optonline.net.



2005

The New Year is still in diapers, and who knows what it has planned for us? We resolve to bring you all the Cornwall news, good or bad, as long as you do your part and keep us going with your donations. Happy New Year!

Senior Citizens Survey: The selectmen and Social Services Director are preparing an updated survey of seniors' needs and preferences—the first since 1998. The results will help create programs and services that seniors find most helpful and interesting. The survey will also add to a winter storm emergency call list. If you have suggestions for the survey, which will be in the February *Chronicle*, call Jill Gibbons, 672-2603.

Art in Cornwall: At the National Iron Bank, Karin Smith's digitally enhanced photos remain until January 15, then Harry Colley will exhibit his photographs through mid-February.

At the Library, Jane Bevans' oil paintings and Debbie Jones' Christmas ornaments will continue until January 15. Beginning January 17, Kathy Good's ethereal landscapes will be shown on the walls, while the case will display Ilisha Helfman's incredibly detailed pop-up dollhouse, which includes 45 hidden animals.

January finds two galleries taking a breather. The Outsiders Gallery is closed for renovations, opening next month with taller ceilings to accommodate larger works. The gallery at the Wish House is also quiet while Bianca Griggs deals with the retail side of her business.

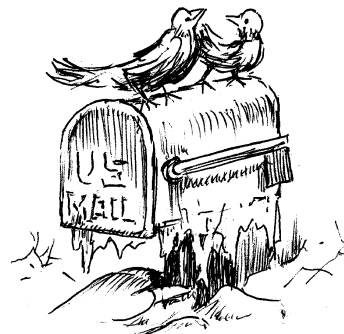
A Cornwall Companion: Copies are still available for \$20 at the Library or by mail from the *Chronicle* (add \$4 postage). Questions? Call the Potters, 672-6191.

Elevator at UCC! Those who have trouble with stairs may now use the chair lift through the rear door of UCC to go up to the Sanctuary or down to the Day Room. Access to the main floor of the Parish House is via the ramp into the Big Room. All rest rooms in both buildings are accessible. Questions? Call the church office, 672-6480.

HVRHS Music Club presents two nights of old fashioned "diner" music and food—Blue Plate Specials and doo-wop sounds—at the Wandering Moose to raise money for their performances in England this spring. Two seatings: January 17 and 18 at 5:30 and 7:30 P.M. \$15 adults/\$8 kids under 12. For reservations call 318-0107 (local number).

Housing and Homelessness: Melinda Harvey, Director of Housing for NW CT YMCA, will speak on Sunday, January 9, 11:30 A.M. at the United Church of Christ. All are welcome. Call Pat Blakey, 672-6516, for details.

Positive Discipline will be the topic of a workshop hosted by the Christian Education Committee of the UCC on Saturday, January 29, from 9 A.M. to noon at the Parish House. It is offered by the Housatonic Youth Service Bureau, with Jill Gibbons facilitating. Parents, teachers, child care providers, and interested adults are invited to attend. Child care will be provided by UCC's Youth Group with pre-registration; call 672-6840.



Sam Waterston Benefit Performance: To benefit the Cornwall Consolidated School Fund for Excellence and the Cornwall Library, Sam Waterston will read a treasury of letters at 3 P.M. on Sunday, February 6 at the CCS gym. He will be joined by a mystery celebrity. Reserved seats are \$60, and general admission is \$30. Please send checks made out to the "CCS Educational Trust Fund" to the Library, P.O. Box 126, Cornwall, CT 06753.

Spanish Enrichment at CCC, Session II: An after-school program at the Cornwall Child Center on Monday afternoons, from January 24 through March 21, with the emphasis on artists and their work. Call Pam Brehm at the Center (672-6989) for enrollment details. The CCC would be grateful for the donation of any bilingual books, audio tapes, or CDs.

Chess Club is Back! Saturdays starting January 15, at 10 A.M. at the Library. Questions? Call Scott Cady, 672-0143.

CORNWALL CHRONICLE

JANUARY ISSUE

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