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# Growing oysters for a cleaner Bay

## http://www.oystergardener.org/

## **Fall 2017**

# Oyster Float Workshop October 7, 2017 10 AM to 2 PM Aquaculture Center, VIMS in Gloucester Point

This event is a great opportunity to get oyster seed (spat), floats, devices, bags and crab pot cord. MOGs will be available to discuss with you the latest ideas in raising oysters to clean the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries and to have scrumptious eating. The TOGA Oyster Float Workshop is the first Saturday in October each year. Save the date and place: October 7 at VIMS.

No experience is necessary! For those who wish to get started raising their own oysters, this will be the best opportunity this year to get the information, materials, supplies and spat to start oyster gardening. At the TOGA education tent, you can talk with MOGs about oyster growing techniques, float types, and get your questions answered.

What you need is available here! Multiple oyster spat vendors will be on hand to deliver seed. Diploid and triploid oyster seed will be available, so please bring small coolers to store the seed while you enjoy the rest of the event. Vendors will have their supplies and equipment available for sale. TOGA will have floats and accessory tools, float components and crab pot line. TOGA will also have applications for the Virginia Chesapeake Bay License Plates; revenue from these fund the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund grants, of which TOGA is a recipient.

The TOGA pre-built floats and devices are available at this workshop. Pictures and descriptions of these products are on our website www.oystergardener.org/devices-and-designs. Please use the Registration Form to order these pre-built floats and devices so the products can

be available for you to pick-up at the workshop. Please assist TOGA by returning the Registration Form **by September 30.** The Registration Form is at the end of this newsletter and is also available on our website www.oystergardener.org/float-building-workshop-2014.

This event is TOGA's primary fund-raising activity, and all proceeds from the "Build Your Own" floats and apparel sales benefit TOGA. The TOGA VIMS Fellowship receives all proceeds from the "Pre-Built Floats and Devices." Your support and donations are appreciated.

In recent years, the pre-built floats and devices have become more popular. Last year the "Build Your Own" floats were done on workdays for prebuilt floats and was very successful with participants learning how to build four types of floats. This year the "Build Your Own" floats will be done on the workdays only. Participants will get \$10 off on each bottom cage, Taylor and flip float that they purchase and \$5 off each Downunder.

The workdays are planned for Monday, September 11; Friday, September 29; and Saturday, September 30. All workdays are at 136 Arrowhead Drive, Weems, VA 22576 starting at 10:00 AM. They include a "bring a dish" lunch. Costco large hotdogs and buns are provided. Please mark the "Build Your Own" section on the Registration Form.

All volunteers to help build floats are welcome; please let Vic Spain or Charles Yarbrough (emails on registration form) know your plans.

Charles Yarbrough, MOG

TOGA members at last year's float build

### Stratford Hall Wine and Oyster Festival September 16-17, 2017

We are less than a month away from this year's Wine and Oyster Festival. The festival will be September 16 and 17; Saturday hours will be 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. and Sunday from 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Based on comments from last year's attendees, the musical aspects of the festival have been expanded. Additional musical groups have been booked and listener space has been increased for Saturday and Sunday. Southern Bred, a popular Northern Neck band, has been booked as the featured band for Sunday.

Even if you have been before, this year promises to be the best yet. There are new wine vendors, different vendors for craft and food, and, of course, the oyster growers have been working hard to expand their offerings.

While we have a large number of volunteers, we are short of the total of 59 that we had last year. The new mid-day (11 am to 3 pm) time slot has proven to be very popular. This will enable us to meet the critical peak periods that have occurred in the past. Shucking is the only volunteer task that requires experience so feel free to use the festival as a way to try something new. Please find this year's volunteer form at

http://www.oystergardener.org/stratford-hall

We are still looking for an Education Tent coordinator for Sunday, September 17. Being the coordinator involves meeting, greeting, assisting setup for and introducing Education Tent speakers. If you are interested in volunteering to be the Education Tent coordinator on Sunday, please send Laura Todd an email (lauratodd.nc@gmail.com)

Don't forget, this event also gives our treasury a big boost. We look forward to another successful festival and encourage your participation in order to have a strong showing from TOGA.

Laura Todd, Brian Wood, MOGs

# TOGA Educational Oyster Garden At Camp Kekoka Spring and Summer 2017

Early in the season, using funds available for the educational oyster garden project, we were able to acquire a small storage shed. With the volunteer help of members, it was hauled and placed at the site in April. The shed allows us to store tools needed for the project on site, and importantly, materials such as life vests, gloves, and the educational display board used when the Boys and Girls Club of the Northern Neck young oyster gardeners visit. They are partners in this project and gain hands on experience at the Camp.

Through a membership email request, we received two generous donations: Member Dennis Matt donated a 9.8 hp outboard motor and Rob and Vickie Foley donated a boat, 30 hp outboard motor, and trailer. These are used to move the shell from our floating dock as we expand the garden beyond the reach of the dock in Pittman's Cove. We very much appreciate these generous donations. Also, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation has generously continued to support the project by donating three trailer loads of oyster shell from their facility at VIMS.

In June, our regular group of Kekoka volunteers, increased by just graduated MOGs, Terry Halkyard and Brian Ingram, who refurbished the oyster spat float donated by Albert Pollard. Ken Hammond and his son Michael provided the truck and trailer with which we moved the float to the Camp Kekoka boat ramp. It was launched on Friday, June 16, with the help of Nick Ferriter's grandsons, Sam and Joel Sigal. After the launch, they helped Nick put oyster shell into the open wire cages to place in the float. On the following Monday, the half-filled cages were set in the float. Full cages would have been too heavy to handle.



Terry Halkyard, Nick Ferriter, Keith Morauske, & Madison Boyd moving the barge to disburse oyster shell

The cages were topped up the following Monday, June 26, and our experiment to see how many natural strikes we could attract began. In addition, by the end of July, we had placed 100+ bags of shell on our existing shell base to also attract strike and to compare bags with the cage method.

Despite the heat in July, each Monday, Madison Boyd usually managed to get Nick Ferriter, Terry Halyard, and Brian Ingram to haul shell from the storage bins to the floating dock, from which they were then distributed to extend the oyster base. We expect the storage bins to be emptied and all the shell distributed by the middle of August.

This year, as in the previous year, our dock at Pittman's Cove has been used to support a graduate student project at James Madison University. Matt Elder is expanding on the experiment of last year's graduate student, Jessica Madirola. She tested the oyster recruitment and survivorship on manufactured normal concrete and calcium- enriched concrete oyster shells. Matt is examining the effects magnesium in concrete substrates may have. Other bivalves, such as freshwater mussels, have shown to be healthier in water with higher magnesium ion concentrations. In return for letting him use the dock to hang his test bags, he and a fellow student have provided sweat equity in helping unload the trailers of the shell that had been donated to us and also by moving shell to the dock. Matt will be concluding his experiment in October. Early, inconclusive sampling seems to show concrete shells containing magnesium have more strike than concrete and oyster shells. He has offered to share his results with TOGA.



Spat on shell collected from the spat on shell float

The July heat wave severely restricted visits to the camp by the Boys and Girls Club oyster gardeners. As of the writing of this report, we have only had two sessions. In the first, we pulled up one of our Taylor floats. When we pull up floats, the crabs and sucker fish in them cause much distraction and

excitement. During the second session on Friday, August 4, the young gardeners pulled ten shells each out of the ten spat float cages and then two of the gardeners went with Madison Boyd in the boat to collect two shell bags from the oyster shell base. Shells from the cages as well as the bags had an encouraging number of strikes.



Young oyster gardener of the Boys and Girls Club of the Northern Neck being shown strike on shell by Nick Ferriter

Some were quite large, while others were still very small, indicating that there had been several spawns. While our sampling was totally random, our impression was that the rate of natural strike appears to be as good as that of the previous year, when we had disbursed larvae into silos lined with filter cloth.



Young oyster gardeners of the Boys and Girls Club of the Northern Neck sorting oysters

Our final project for the season will be to erect an educational display at Camp Kekoka on oysters and the benefits of oyster gardening. We have the design for the structure, but still need to work on the content. We are hoping to have it complete in time for the Bay Seafood Festival on October 21.

Klaus Boese, MOG

# Spring Wine & Oyster Fair May 20, 2017

On May 20, 2017, the Tidewater Oyster Gardeners Association (TOGA) and the Good Luck Cellars Winery teamed up to sponsor a Wine & Oyster event at the beautiful winery location on 1025 Good Luck Road, Kilmarnock, Virginia.

The fair began at noon and lasted until 4PM, and the nearby ample parking was most appreciated. Food choices included different raw and cooked bivalves from two local growers: Great Wicomico Oyster Company and Morattico Creek Oysters. Growers brought their special recipes to tempt the fairgoers.







Other scrumptious food items were made available for any non-oyster eating folks. There were also various oyster seeds (diploids and triploids) and different caging & accessories for sale. Those who wanted to learn more about oysters went to the TOGA tent and spoke at length with the many helpful Master Oyster Gardeners.

For the full vineyard experience people gathered in the comfortable Good Luck wine tasting bar and lounge where knowledgeable and friendly servers expertly kept pace with the crowd. Favorite bottles were brought out unto the large covered veranda with many tables overlooking the oyster-related fun. Congenial laughter filled the air, and the sunshiny day was perfect for this affair.



In addition to the Chesapeake Bay bivalves and Good Luck winery activities and for the benefit of the non-profit TOGA, there were many crowd-pleasing items raffled all day long.



This was such an enjoyable time and we are all looking forward to a repeat performance in October 2017.

Ann Wood, MOG

Fellow TOGA members,

If you haven't already, please join our group on Facebook, "Oyster Academy" (formerly "Oyster 101").

https://www.facebook.com/groups/Oysters101/

This group is intended to act as a community to help answer questions and figure out what works, and more importantly, what doesn't!

The group is private at the moment, but feel free to invite anyone you think would enjoy or benefit. Also, we can go beyond just discussing growing oysters; if you found an amazing new recipe...post it!:)

I look forward to seeing you all soon at the Stratford Hall Wine & Oyster Festival!

Debi Burdick, MOG

### **Camp LUCEE**

(Longwood University Camp for Environmental Exploration)

Longwood University and Westmoreland County Public Schools (WCPS) have collaborated for the past two years in offering a day camp for rising 4th-6th graders at Longwood's Hull Springs Farm, located just outside Montross.



**Hull Springs Farm** 

The camp, tagged LUCEE (Longwood University Camp for Environmental Exploration), pairs Longwood students with certified teachers from WCPS to lead the 8-day camp.

This year's curriculum was developed by Longwood Liberal Studies major Taylor Banty and focused on sparking a child's interest in science "naturally." The lesson plans featured hands-on demonstrations and activities, mostly outside of the classroom, in the midst of Hull Springs' bounty of natural and cultural assets. Approximately sixty children from the Westmoreland County Public School District were engaged in the camp, which offered an environmentally-focused, educational supplement to the summer.

For the past two summers, volunteers from TOGA have provided a live oyster demonstration showing how oysters work to clean the waters of Virginia. The children were all very interested in holding the live oysters and discovering other creatures living in the tanks with them, including an American eel and juvenile blue crab, as well as barnacles and other small creatures that live on the oysters and hide among their shells.

This year's session on oysters was conducted by two of TOGA's newest Master Oyster Gardeners, Barrett Nicks, a 2017 Longwood graduate, and Joey Marshburn, a rising sophomore at Longwood, majoring in environmental sciences.

Other highlights of the camp included Hull Springs nature walks featuring indigenous species; a demonstration on beekeeping by Thomas Wyszynski, using both an inactive hive and a sealed demonstration hive; field trips to Westmoreland State Park; and a presentation by Jon Bachman, public events manager of nearby Stratford Hall, on how science works through the use of fossils.

Hull Springs Farm was bequeathed to the Longwood University Foundation by Mary Farley Ames Lee, a 1938 alumna of Longwood College. The property is used as a "living laboratory," and features a wide variety of outdoor "classrooms" providing education through experience.

Barrett Nicks, MOG; Sherry Swinson, Hull Springs Farm Executive Director; Laura Todd, MOG

### **Check out the TOGA Store**

For your convenience and enjoyment, TOGA has arranged for Port and Company to sell TOGA logo merchandise directly to you online. TOGA takes no income from your online purchases. You are buying directly from the vendor. Enjoy!





https://oystergardeners.qbstores.com/home.html

### The Intertidal Effect

VIMS now grows out many of its research oyster in an intertidal system. That is, the cages are set at a height above average low tide so that they are exposed to air for several hours a day. This minimizes fouling and nuisance critters like Polydora, and oysters seem to thrive in the intertidal zone.

You can apply this technique by harnessing your floats or cages so they will remain above the low tide elevation. The Downunder that TOGA makes for our Float Workshop works well for this purpose.



(photo by Keith Morauske, MOG)

The Downunder also handles wave action well as demonstrated by the video- Downunder by Keith Morauske, MOG found at <a href="http://www.oystergardener.org/devices-and-designs">http://www.oystergardener.org/devices-and-designs</a>

The one caution is to be sure to lower the cages as deep as practical in the very cold winter spells. You do not want your oysters to freeze in air, and fouling is minimal in the winter anyway.

Vic Spain, MOG

- Q. Why don't oysters give to charity?
- A. Because they're shellfish.

### Middle Peninsula Spring Oyster Fair

The 2017 Middle Peninsula Spring Oyster Fair was held May 6, 2017, at the Gwynn's Island Civic Center. Approximately 80 TOGA members and other members of the community attended. For the first hour, vendor sales of spat and oyster-gardening equipment were brisk.



The program was introduced by TOGA President Terry Lewis who also gave a summary of ongoing activities and upcoming events.

The educational program led by Terry, Jackie Partin, and Vic Spain included:

- An update on oyster restoration (what works and what does not) based on input from retired VMRC oyster expert Dr. Jim Wesson. Also, a discussion was held on what we can do to help restore wild oysters.
- Explanation of infertile triploids, selected diploids and native oysters and how they should be used.
- News ideas on oyster gardening.
- TOGA displays completed and inprogress.
- Preview of the Master Oyster Gardening Training Course held in June 2017.
- Basic oyster gardening for newcomers.
- Demonstrations of equipment.

The program slide show can be downloaded at <a href="http://www.oystergardener.org/spring-fairs">http://www.oystergardener.org/spring-fairs</a>.

Vic Spain, MOG

#### **2017 Dues**

If you received this newsletter in the mail, please check the year by your name on the address label. If it is 2016 or earlier, then 2017 dues are now due (unless you have paid in the last few weeks). If you believe there is an error, please contact Vic Spain at vicspain@rocketmail.com or 804-642-6764. Annual membership is \$15 (per family).

Please use the form below to update your membership. You may also use it simply to update your information. It is important that your address and email address are correct as that is our primary way of communicating with members. You may also share this membership form with a friend.

#### Members...

- •Receive newsletters with the latest oyster gardening information
- Participate in educational events sponsored by TOGA
- Learn about innovations in oyster gardening techniques
- •Benefit from the expertise of hundreds of others interested in growing oysters

Membership is \$15.00 for one year, individual or family. This ensures that you will receive regular newsletters and notices of upcoming events.

Please fill out the membership form below and send to TOGA, PO Box 2463, Gloucester, VA 23061 with a check for \$15.00 membership dues, payable to TOGA. If you want, you can make an additional donation to support TOGA's educational activities. You may include it in the same check.

# MIDDLE SCHOOL WRTIING CONTEST

The Tidewater Oyster Gardeners Association is continuing the Annual Youth Writing Competition to tell the story of oysters in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.

The competition is open to all Virginia Middle School students. Home-schooled students are welcome to enter.

### Middle School Writing Contest!!!



"Consider the Oyster"

\$150, \$100, \$50 cash prizes plus outdoor oyster gear for winners

For details check out www.oystergardener.org



Prizes will be \$150, \$100, and \$50 for first, second and third place, respectively. There will also be gear from outdoor sports businesses and supporting members of TOGA. Winners will be announced and awards presented at the Tidewater Oyster Gardeners Association annual membership meeting at the Virginia Institute of Marine Sciences in January. The winners' parents, mentors, or teachers will be guests of TOGA for the presentation event. The winning entries will be read by the students at the awards program.

Participants are encouraged to submit their entries in a Microsoft WORD, PDF or similar electronic text file because the three top winners will be published on the TOGA Web site and may be in other publications or web sites. However, mailed- in entries are acceptable.

For more information go to http://www.oystergardener.org/youth-writingcontest.

TOGA Membership Form Please Print Legibly								
Please enclose dues (\$15 per year per family) Return to TOGA, PO Box 2463, Gloucester, VA 23061								
Amount submitted \$	Comment_							
New member or	_Renewal	Additional Donation						
Name								
Mailing Address								
City, State, and Zip								
Phone	Email							
Body of water where oysters ar	re grown							

# Master Oyster Gardener (MOG) Course 2017

The MOG Course this year was once again highly successful. Eighteen people graduated, almost all of them having had a great deal of experience in oyster gardening prior to the course. MOG's are an integral part of carrying out TOGA's mission to educate interested citizens on oyster aquaculture techniques and to promote oyster gardening.



TOGA & VIMS MOG Class of 2017

This year a number of new faculty participated in the program. Although Dr. Stan Allen was unable to take part in the Course, his very capable Assistant Director, Dr. Jessica Small, gave excellent presentations, and the Hatchery lab was a much-enjoyed experience. The same was true of the sections on Oyster Biology and identification of predators, pests and other critters.

Many presentations throughout the two days concentrated particularly on how the main topics were related to oyster gardening, and the place of oyster gardening in the big picture was stressed.

Dr. Jim Wesson talked about how to choose oyster spat for individual gardens and emphasized the importance of different populations of oysters that have grown in different bodies of water. A particularly difficult problem for gardeners who are interested in oyster restoration in the Bay has been obtaining reproductive spat that are appropriate for their particular growing area. Jim emphasized that one should try as much as possible to obtain spat that are spawned from wild oysters growing naturally in the area of the bay with similar

salinity as the garden where the spat will be planted. Of particular concern would be diploid spat from selected strains that have been developed for commercial aquaculture. If selected strains of oysters are moved to these spots, they may introduce genetic material not normally found in the local oysters which could be harmful to the population. He said that it is better to just plant triploids in years that local spat cannot be obtained. The possibility of collecting local oysters that have set on pilings and rocks was introduced, but Dr. Wesson said that unless you have a lot of spare float space, they would take up too much room.

New MOGS were encouraged to try to arrange availability of a variety of oyster spat spawned from local waters. While this isn't the primary goal of the commercial hatcheries, they are beginning to spawn these wild oysters for restoration projects and for their own use in making triploids. Several of the new MOGs were interested in taking on this challenge and will work to make low, moderate and higher salinity local spat options available at TOGA events, such as the TOGA Fall Float Workshop. Stay tuned for more information on these preferred options.



Once again, the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, and in particular, Karen Hudson, professionally planned and executed the two-day course with great expertise. We are greatly appreciative of this collaboration.

Jackie Partin, MOG

Our newsletter and many of our activities are funded by the sale of **Chesapeake Bay license** plates



http://dmv.virginia.gov/exec/vehicle/splates/info.asp?idnm=CB

### Calendar of Events – Fall 2017

Contact the Event Coordinator if you would like to participate

### <u>September</u>

- 11th Work day for Float Building Event Coordinator: Charles Yarbrough, caspery@verizon.net. 136 Arrowhead Drive, Weems, VA 22576 starting at 10:00am
- \*16th & 17th Stratford Hall W&O Tasting, Laura Todd, lauratodd.nc@gmail.com, Brian Wood, awood45858@aol.com
- **24<sup>th</sup> Northern Neck Land Conservancy Boots and BBQ -** Event Coordinator: Klaus Boese, *Kjboese@starpower.net* Juggs Farmhouse along the Rappahannock River on Sabine Hall Farm in Warsaw VA., **1**-4pm.
- 29th & 30th Work days for Float Building Event Coordinator: Charles Yarbrough, caspery@verizon.net. 136 Arrowhead Drive, Weems, VA 22576 starting at 10:00am
- 29th & 30th Guinea Jubilee-Event Coordinator: Terry Lewis, Iewistmn@msn.com Abingdon Ruritan Club, Guinea Road, Gloucester, 3pm-6pm Fri. and 9am-5pm Sat.

### October

- \*7th Float Workshop Event Coordinator: Charles Yarbrough, caspery@verizon.net, VIMS Gloucester Point, 10am-2pm
- **\*TBD Half Shell Oyster Tasting -**Event Coordinator: Brian Wood, *awood45858@aol.com* Good Luck Cellars, Kilmarnock, 11am-4pm

### November

- **2nd Urbanna Oyster Festival -** Event Coordinator: Lou Castagnola, *clouis710@cox.net* Urbanna, 8am-2pm
- **18th Taste of Fall -** Event Coordinator: Ben Smith, Ben\_Smith@verizon.net Tides Inn, Irvington, 11am-5pm
- **20**<sup>th</sup> Newsletter Deadline Editors: Kathy Haurand, kathaurand@aol.com & Vic Spain, vicspain@rocketmail.com

#### <u>December</u>

## Happy Holidays

### January 2018

\*13th - Annual Meeting - Event Coordinator: Terry Lewis, lewistmn@msn.com, VIMS Gloucester Point, 2pm-4pm

These fall and winter events are planned as of this printing. Please check for updates at our online calendar-

http://www.localendar.com/public/MikeSanders and at the Major Annual Events Page at http://www.oystergardener.org/. Also, look for our MailChimp emails to all TOGA members.

(\* indicates a major TOGA-sponsored or co-sponsored event).

### **Newsletter News**

Kathy Haurand has volunteered to assist Vic Spain with the editing of the TOGA newsletter. The newsletter is published 3 times a year and is mailed to all TOGA members. Full color copies of this and past newsletters may be seen on the website at http://www.oystergardener.org/newletters

The deadline for the next newsletter is November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2017. Any TOGA member who wishes to submit an article for the newsletter may do so prior to the deadline date. Articles will be printed as space allows. Email to either Vic Spain at *vicspain@rocketmail.com* and/or Kathy Haurand at *kathaurand@aol.com* 

We hope that you enjoy the new Newsletter layout. Feedback, both positive and negative, will be appreciated. You may contact either Vic or Kathy with your thoughts.

Happy Oystering!!

Kathy Haurand, MOG



### 2017 Stratford Hall Wine and Oyster Festival September 16 and 17, 2017

Please email completed form to <a href="mailto:lauratodd.nc@gmail.com">lauratodd.nc@gmail.com</a>

Name:	
Email:	
Telephone:	
Mailing Address:	
#3: T –Shirt size (shirts an	Mid-day (11 am to 3 pm) Afternoon (12 pm to 5 pm)
A Don't care B Ticketing C TOGA booth D Education tent	E Shucking F Grower tent (non-shucking) G Other (specify):

Please use this space to list or comment on anything you wish that you feel will enable you to have the best volunteer experience possible. (ie. Person or people you would like to work with, time you wish to have lunch break, special requirements you may have, etc.)

Please feel free to email Laura Todd at <u>lauratodd.nc@gmail.com</u> with any questions you may have.





Scenes from 2016 Strafford Hall Event

## Oyster Float Workshop Registration Form

The Hatchery at VIMS in Gloucester Point 10AM to 2PM, Saturday, October 7th, 2017

Please mail this Registration Form to TOGA, P.O. Box 2463, Gloucester, VA 23061 Or email this Registration Form to vicspain@rocketmail.com or caspery@verizon.net

Name:					
Email:					
Telephone:					
Mailing Address:					
9	ation Form MUST BE R e sufficient materials av			•	
	Pre-Built Flo	oats an	d Devices		
\$110 \$95 \$65 \$55 \$45	Taylor Float, no Top Flip Float Bottom Cage Downunder  ats, devices will be collected		\$75 \$45 \$50 *shucker tab	Top for Taylor Float Shucker Table* Bender 42 inch Bender 50 inch le will be unpainted	oat
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	e or more TOGA workday nber 11 <sup>th</sup> Friday, Se ems, VA 22576				
(quantity	y) Taylor Float with Top at \$100 y) Flip Floats at \$55 per float y) Downunders at \$40 per float	per float		ity) Taylor floats at \$85 per fity) Bottom Cages at \$45 per	
	orkshop, or workdays, ple Or contact Charles Yarbro com			-	at
New MOGS: P	articipation in these wo	rkdays (	count towar	ds your volunteer ho	urs!

PO Box 2463 Gloucester, VA 23061

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