

MFA NEWSLETTER



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE MICHAUX FOREST ASSOCIATION

Editor: Steve Cassel Web Master: Deb Rosevear

Spring 2024

President's Column Deb Rosevear



Happy Spring to my friends and fellow cabin owners! We've had another fairly mild winter, but at least we had some snow this year. High winds and storms have brought down quite a few trees and unfortunately, we've had some cabins damaged.

Forestry has asked us to join a committee to help design an improved and sustainable trail system in the Mountain Creek Watershed area. They're asking key stakeholders to share ideas. I will be part of this project as will our Vice-President, David Dowling. We'll keep you up to date on the progress.

Our annual picnic & meeting this year will be at 5:30 on Saturday, June 29th at the Furnace Stack Pavilion. Please bring a dish to share with your fellow cabin owners — we'll supply all the rest of the picnic. Our guest speaker will be a game warden to talk to us about black bears in Michaux State Forest.

www.michauxforestassociation.com

We've had bears on our deck and around our cabin many times. This should be an interesting talk.

Your board is working on speeding up the dredging of Laurel Lake. We'd very much like to see the water again on the lake - not just weeds! The aquatic weeds are even invading the swimming areas now. The contractor wrapped up the survey of the lake but they cannot move forward until funding is approved for the project. We'll keep you updated as things change with this issue. The park manager is working with DCNR on the potential of treating a 1-acre section of the lake around the boat launch to help with access to other areas of the lake. Hopefully this will happen in the spring.

Also, we have a new full-time ranger in the park and his name is Alex Dale. Please welcome him if you see him. Chris Houck, our park manager, replaced the spring water spigot in the parking lot at Laurel Lake. That water source was not working at the end of the season last year. Thanks Chris! But now they have a leak somewhere and the water is discolored, so that hydrant is temporarily closed until it's fixed. I was working to get the park to use a beach cleaner that, in the past, was used to sift rocks and debris out of the sand at our beaches. Chris called DCNR Regional HQ and other park managers, and apparently that piece of equipment is no longer available. More sand will be added to the beach, but it will still be rocky at Fuller beach.

In news from Forestry, Roy tells me they're spraying to kill barberry along

Leeper Farm Rd. Spraying for Gypsy Moth will be done in various places, also. Forestry will be hosting volunteer work days through the Friends of Michaux to continue advancing the work on Hearth Tender Trail and the Bunker Hill habitat restoration site throughout the year. Dates to be advertised on Facebook.

We had complaints last year about the number of large trucks running through the park and forest on 233. This is being done by a specific trucking company. I'll be calling this company to speak with their transportation department to see if they can reroute these trucks in the summer. It's a state road, but we worry about people walking along the road going to the lakes or while hiking through the park. The noise level for cabins along Pine Grove Rd. has also increased due to these large vehicles.

A reminder again, to make sure that you check with Forestry or PGFSP if you're making any changes to your cabin or the grounds around it. Better to be safe than sorry. Don't plant flowers, shrubs, or trees unless they're native to Pennsylvania.

Let's be good stewards of our beautiful Michaux State Forest and Pine Grove Furnace State Park. See you on June 29th. *Have a Great Summer!!!*

Need to reach us?

michauxforest@gmail.com



MFA Report by Richard Baish

Greetings everyone!

The weather in the Pine Grove Furnace area has been wild and unpredictable since late January. The snow that I encountered in January was light and pretty, and really did not cause any issues at the time. But the high winds started and caused problems with power and falling limbs/tree issues. The snow on the roofs made it difficult to decipher if any punctures occurred to the cabins. February was even worse, with one storm in the middle of the month that had roads shut down in the area, some for as many as 5 days. Of course, most sites were without electricity as well. Inspections were a challenge, and it took longer than I would have liked to make my way around to all the locations. During that time, some members could access their places from different directions. They helped by notifying me (and even sending photos in some instances) as to the conditions in their "neck of the woods". That was a great assistance. Thanks to all of you who touched base with me, as with the additional information, I was able to cover my entire territory more quickly.

As February came to a close, most of the snow had melted which made my assessment of damages a bit easier.

As March began, I was still playing catch-up, and doing reassessment of those cabins with debris on roof-tops. Unfortunately, the gusty March winds would not allow me to focus on just those certain cabins, as the gales that blew through created their own issues all over the mountain. The widow makers that had been hanging from previous storms were coming down, and more trees were snapping and uprooting. In general, the March damages were not as severe as Feb-

ruary, and power outages were not as prominent, but they still created an additional mess. Part of the mess.... pinecones! For whatever reason, there seems to be an abundance of these cones dropping this year! I cannot count the number of times I was hit in the head by these falling tree bombs. Lol!

Regarding my inspections these past months, I tried to call/ text any cabin owner that I could determine damage was done to the structure that would need immediate attention. Many cabins might have had small limbs that dented sheds or roofs, or maybe damaged spouting, but did not compromise the structure of the cottage. I did not call all those individuals, as I did not want to cause unwarranted worries for people that have some distance to drive to visit their premises. With that being said, for those of you who have not been up for a visit to your place by the time this newsletter arrives, be advised that everyone will have clean-up and perhaps some repair work to do. And many will have to address the entrance to their site upon arrival, so one might want to bring loppers and a saw with ya on your next trip to your place.

On a final note, I am happy to say that there were no known incidents of vandalism. Several times I discovered cabins that were unsecure in ways that were not normal for that particular place. Fortunately, in conversation with any owner I talked with, we concluded it was just a case of wind or hasty retreats that had left the doors or windows from being secured.

I hope this report helps. It is just a quick summary my winter activities. As always, you can text or call me (leave a message please) with any questions or concerns. I can be reached at (717) 226-4959. Best wishes to all of you for safe travels and happy visits this spring and summer!

Michaux State Forest Report By Steve Cassel With Roy Brubaker

Here are the highlights from my conversation with Roy:

- -They are conducting a timber salvage operation in currently 600 acres along RT 233 towards Caledonia-with an additional 600 acres to come taking mostly white oak and chestnut trees that have succumbed to diseases.
- -Roy successfully secured a \$750,000 National Fish and Wildlife Grant to improve the watershed areas near Shippensburg Road and Tumbling Run. This project will allow for the planting of Savanah grass and other vegetation to attract migrating birds and other wildlife and provide a base for future plant growth.
- -The Hearth Tender Trail off of the Old Railroad Bed Road continues to have progress.
- Other trail development continues to meet the increasing need of trails for mountain and electric bikes, AT-V's and hikers. By building trails with good environmental standards, it shows good stewardship for forest use. People should not be developing their own trails in the forest.
- The staffing numbers have remained the same with 29 workers supporting the projects around the forest. About 10 of those workers are seasonal..

Maintaining the roads around the forest is a monumental task and the staff works hard to do so. It is a mountain, and many of the roads are gravel, and water does it's damage, and it's hard to keep up, but the crew is doing it's best to maintain as well as possible.

-Prescribed burns of vegetation will continue when weather permits. Schedules are developed ahead of time, but weather may dictate changes. The Hidden Letter
By Andrew Winard
Cabin owner since 1995

As we sat on the cabin porch on a warm late summer evening, her dog, Roxy, kept licking my hand, an inexplicable canine sense that something good and kind was about to happen.

Roxy's momma hadn't been to the cabin for over 35 years. Her grandparents and two other families had owned it in the '70s and '80s. As a girl she remembered resting on a bed upstairs listening to a light summer rain. She still cherishes her grandfather's watercolor of the cabin in fall. It hangs today in her teenage son's bedroom, soon to be relocated to her room when he's off to college. She remembered hiking, creek-stomping, and hunting for slag, as I suppose most kids have done for decades. It saddens her to this day that her grandparents had to sell it so many years ago. Age and finances had conspired to make maintenance of it impractical.

Two years prior to this meeting, my father had just transferred the cabin ownership to me and my wife after my parents had cared for it for 25 years. Now in his 80s and a widower for 5 years, like grandfathers before him, he knew it was time to relinquish it's care to the next generation. I went to the cabin alone one Saturday to do some maintenance work and I noticed propped against the cabin sofa was a satchel holding loose sheets of receipts, notations, and letters. One letter dated from 2008 written in neat cursive was carefully preserved in a plastic sleeve. It had been left under the front porch screen door, asking my parents if the cabin was for rent. She and her family had taken a weekend drive from their home in Maryland just to see the old place, hoping maybe someone was there. No one was. She wrote how she had been a young girl when her grandparents owned it and she was feeling nostalgic. She even hoped to bring her now 90-year-old grandfather to see the cabin just once more. The letter unfortunately had been tucked back into the satchel and forgotten, mixed in with plumbing receipts and old MFA newsletters

She had signed her name, left a phone number-back then likely a landline-and her address. I thought for a moment... then dialed the number. Out of service. Did she still live in the same town 12 years later? An internet search of her name and town led me to her work email. Thankfully she worked in the public sector. I sent her an email the next morning, hoping it was her, explaining how I found her letter. Several hours later she replied, flabbergasted and delighted. I informed her that the new ownership would be thrilled to have her family stay for a weekend.

As fate would have it, it was now the spring of 2020 and a pandemic had just struck. Many were reluctant to travel anywhere at that time. We kept in touch for the next 2 years and in the summer of 2022 the circumstances seemed right to make it happen, a 3-day weekend over the 4th of July. She asked if she could also bring her mother and her sister's family, 9 in all. No problem as the cabin slept up to 16.

We met at the cabin on a Friday evening after work. We sat around the hearth, had a drink, and shared our love of this place. Her mother was pleased to see that several things had not changed since her father had owned it – the porch chairs, the indoor thermometer, and old dart holes in the wooden bathroom door. I left them after a brief tour and orientation.

Weeks after their visit, she said her husband remarked randomly one day how magnificently peaceful the place was. On a whim she texted me to see if the cabin was available on Labor Day weekend. She didn't want to seem selfish or presumptuous, but she said she would like to come again with just her husband, their 2 sons, and her mother, and could they bring their Rhodesian Ridgeback Roxy? I told her it was available that weekend and that the cabin is most certainly pet-friendly.

My wife and I met them at the cabin

third encounter if you include our initial correspondence. It has been said that when something occurs once it is a happenstance; if twice, a coincidence; and if a third time, a significance.

As we sat on the front porch enjoying drinks in the company of new friends and our shared experience of cabin life, the dog kept licking my hands. I then gave her a copy of the keys to the cabin...she cried and then she laughed and said, "This would make a great story..."

Annual picnic & meeting this year will be at 5:30 on Saturday, June 29th at the Furnace Stack Pavilion.

Just bring a dish to share!

MFA Litter Patrol 2024

Adopt a Highway Program *Year 31!*

Contact: Diane and Bob Shenk dshenk@comcast.net

2024 Dates
April 27
June 29
August 10
September 21

Watch your speed while driving through the park! Much needed enforcement has been underway!

Keep our forest and park safe.....

Important Emergency Numbers

Cook Township: 717-486-8114 Michaux District Office: 717-352-

2211

Pine Grove Furnace Office: 717-486

-7174

Met Ed/First Energy: 888-544-4877

Brightspeed: 833-692-7773

Comments from the newsletter editor: Steve Cassel

Thank you to everyone who contributed for the April addition. It is full of information. And for the first time, some of you have asked for the newsletter to be emailed to you to save postage.

I recently had the opportunity to sit down with Roy Brubaker, the district forester for the Michaux State Forest. What I thought would be a 30 minute information gathering session turned into a 2 hour chat about topics from our similar educational backgrounds to our observations about how the world is changing, but most importantly, the great work that he and his team are doing in the Michaux. He really has a great perspective and commitment for keeping our forest vibrant and sustainable. His article is on page 2.



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Friends of Pine Grove Furnace State Park

By Mary Soderberg, Vice-Chair

It has been a busy winter for the Friends of Pine Grove Furnace State Park. In January, we hosted the First Day Hike and welcomed two new members to the board, Lyle Herr and Tyler Staley. Lyle is a cabin owner and a former chair of the Michaux Forest Association and Tyler lives in Gardners and has been a regular volunteer at Fall Fest.

We then moved right into planning for our two annual fundraisers, the half-marathon and 5K trail races on the first weekend in June and Fall Fest on the third weekend of October. Our vendor sites for Fall Fest are already just about filled up! Meanwhile, we have begun to promote the online registration for our trail races at Iron Run Half-Marathon and Charcoal Challenge 5k (runsignup.com).

As part of preparing for the campground opening, a team of volunteers made up primarily of cabin owners have put in a combined total of more than one hundred hours splitting locally sourced wood for the Friends to sell at the campground. And, thanks to donations by both cabin owners and the Park, we have a sufficient wood supply for the entire season! Meanwhile, other volunteers have been removing fallen branches and debris from the trails and repairing trail damage caused by fallen trees.

This year, in addition to the popular walking history tours by Andre Weltman (our chair and local historian), we are pleased to announce several additional history programs sponsored by the Friends. Van Wagner will be returning on May 19 for a fun evening of music and stories about Pennsylvania history. Later this sum-

pinegrovefriends.org and Friends of Pine Grove Furnace State Park | Facebook

mer we will be bringing in Matthew Dodd for two performances of songs and stories, one about the history of railroading and another about Pennsylvania animals. These programs are free and open to all.

All the funds that the Friends raise are used to support recreation, education, and conservation in the park. Since 2010, when we were first organized, we have invested about \$350,000 back into the park for programs, equipment, and infrastructure!! Help us help the park, by renewing your membership or by becoming a member of the Friends of Pine Grove Furnace State Park. An Individual membership is only \$10 (lifetime is \$200) and a family membership is \$15 (lifetime \$300).

You can pay online at www.FriendsofPineGrove.org or pay by check (payable to PPFF, our parent organization) and mail to the Friends of Pine Grove Furnace State Park at 1100 Pine Grove Road, Gardners, PA 17324.

As always, many thanks to the members of the Michaux Forest Association for the donations and volunteer efforts that you provide to both the Friends and Pine Grove Furnace State Park!

Remembering Robert Clark Former MFA President

Robert Clark (Bob to all of us) was 86 when he died this past October. Married to Thelma, he was the father of two sons, Robert and Michael. A Marine sergeant in his early 20s, he went on to become Executive Director of The Pennsylvania Forestry Association for 14 years, President of the National Council of State Forestry Associations in 1976 and 1986, Pennsylvania Deputy Game Protector, and chair of the 2nd National Wild Turkey Federation Convention and this is only a few of his achievements. In addition, he was an author of countless books on Pennsylvania wildlife, particularly the habitat and behavior of turkeys.

As an avid turkey-hunter he pushed for a study of the turkey population's dwindling numbers on the Michaux at one point and supported the creation of a turkey habitat up the mountain. Many cabin bookshelves have autographed copies of his book, *Bob Clark's Cure for Turkey Fever*, featuring a cover with a photograph of a happy Bob Clark returning from a turkey hunt.

Bob's career centered on wildlife and the forests of Pennsylvania with a cabin on the Appalachian Trail near the park and he was president of the MFA when the Bureau of Forestry made funds available to the Michaux forest to establish ATV trails on the Michaux in 1992. The proposed trail head was directly behind a cabin, making conversation on the porch there impossible while ATVs were unloading and starting out. The proposed trail encircled 5 cabins and took over hiking areas cabin owners had been walking In addition, ATVs for years. roared down driveways and cut across cabin areas.

Deb Rosevear and I enlisted Bob's help, and he provided considerable support for relocating the trails away from cabins, enlisting the entire MFA board in the effort. We involved the Sierra Club, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, and the Audubon Society. Under Bob's leadership board members worked closely with their state senators bringing pressure to bear on relocating the trails. Forestry in Fayetteville called a meeting, and the room was packed. The ATV people alerted the media who came with cameras. State senators and representatives sent people from their offices. ATV people were present as was the entire board of the MFA. Bob spoke eloquently to the needs of cabin owners as did members of the board. At the end of the meeting, Ken Swartz, then District Forester for the Michaux, announced that he had heard the concerns and would be moving the trails to a new location. Continued on page 6

The Cabin Bookshelf

Wasteland

Author: Oliver Franklin-Wallis Review by Nancy Summers

The Parrot and the Igloo Author: David Lipsky Review by Martin Yepsy

Wasteland

The MFA has a long and proud history of supporting the State's adopt a highway Program by picking up litter along a 2 mile stretch along 233. Oliver Franklin-Wallis's book *Wasteland* is a very comprehensive report on all facets and types of waste, the history of how societies have dealt with waste and current challenges presented by the ever-increasing amount of waste humans and industry generate.

Wasteland is replete with statistics and vivid descriptions of the extent and variety of waste – defined by what we throw away and also what we carelessly discard. Waste encompasses everything from ordinary household trash and garbage, to worn out electronic products, old clothing, nuclear waste, and the toxins in the ground from old and new landfills and industrial and mining pollution.

Wasteland's focus is global especially in the U.S., U.K., India, Ghana and southeast Asia. For instance, the author visits a land fill in New Delhi which is over 200 feet high, the sewer system of London (which provided a historic lesson in how environmental toxins and sewage have caused illness and epidemics), incinerators, nuclear waste reprocessing facilities, and recycling plants for plastics and e-waste (the fastest growing waste in the world).

There are many ethical and practical issues posed in *Wasteland* such as the issue of green washing, zero waste/circular economy goals, how much waste is actually recycled and is it economically worth it.

In the end Franklin-Wallis admits that no matter how efficient we are some waste is inevitable. He concludes that limiting our waste – "buying less stuff" - among other suggestions, and recycling as much as

we can is probably the best advice for sustainable living. Most sobering of all is the reality that the toxins and waste we leave behind in the ground, air, water, and space will have untold impact on both the planet and future generations.

Franklin-Wallis, Oliver. *Wasteland*, New York, N.Y.: Hachette Books, 2023

The Parrot and the Igloo

MFA old timers may remember when former Park manager Bill Rosevear held a Winter Festival at Pine Grove. Among the activities was an ice cutting demonstration at Laurel Lake. I can still see the one-two foot block of ice cut from the lake. Year after year the lack of substantial ice in our area and worse yet melting glaciers in the Arctic, is one of the most prominent signs of global warming. Already this winter has been declared Central Pennsylvania's wettest and warmest on record.

The Parrot and The Igloo by David Lipsky documents the story and evidence for global warming, which is now considered settled science. But it wasn't always this way. The book details the concerted efforts by various industries (such as coal and refineries) and their well-paid scientists to debunk global warming using the very same tactics that cigarette makers used to question the dangers of smoking: endless calls for more research. These tactics delayed by decades necessary public health measures to discourage smoking and in the case of global warming, confuse the public on the need to take global warming seriously. As the book details, researchers suspected that global warming was occurring a century ago, but it took the last few decades to gather the definitive data to firmly support the contention that human-caused CO2 emissions are seriously harming the planet. The bigger problem even today is to maintain the public's focus on the issue when more immediate challenges and concerns compete for attention. And beyond this is the reality that although global warming is a serious threat to humanity and the planet there are no parrots at the North Pole yet and snow storms (and igloos) still occur where they always have. This book includes

many stories of persons who changed the 19th and 20th centuries with their inventions (such as Edison) and equally colorful stories of global warming deniers who were significant influencers in their day. Overall, *The Parrot and the Igloo* is well-documented, informative, and entertaining, and vividly recounts the long-convoluted history of the climate change debate.

Lipsky, David. *The Parrot and the Igloo*, New York, N.Y.: WW Norton and Co., 2023

Robert Clark, cont.

That is how the parking lot on Piney Mountain came to be and why the trails do not encircle any cabins. Bob was instrumental in making that happen.

Following this success, Bob played a crucial role in bringing women on the MFA board in leadership positions. Until that time the board was comprised of male cabin owners with few exceptions. As a result of these changes and successes the board took on more issues related to cabin ownership on state land.

Bob could call in a couple of Barred owls on a summer evening and was known for his wildlife presentations at the MFA annual meetings. Sometimes he would describe the rattlesnake he saw as being as big as his arm and the next time as big as his thigh. He loved stories of wildlife and participated in the banding each year at his cabin of the little Saw-whet owls. He was always glad to see you, starting in the middle of the conversation when he did. You had to do a mental summersault to catch up. For years he was with us at the annual picnics reading the pledge to new members of the board. The organization benefited enormously from his commitment to the MFA, his knowledge of the forest, and his wonderful stories. His warmth and humor will be missed by all of us.

Written by Nancy Summers

What's Cooking in Cooke Issues Around the Neighborhood



By Andre Weltman Twp. Planning Committee

As a reminder, Cooke Township ordinances, resolutions and other information are available on the Township's website www.cooketwp.org. Questions may be emailed to cooketwp@kuhncom.net.

TOWNSHIP MONTHLY SUPER-VISOR MEETINGS

Please feel free to attend Board of Supervisors meetings, usually held the first Tuesday of each month at 7:30 P.M. at the Township building. Check for schedule changes on our website or on the bulletin board outside the Township building front door at 1700 Centerville Road, Newville PA 17241

Due to the PA "Sunshine Law," we must post public meeting agendas online at least 24 hours in advance.

STREET ADDRESS NUMBERS

Imagine the scenario. Your cabin is on fire. A passerby notices and tries to call 911 or tell a park ranger. "What address?" they ask. The stranger has no idea: there's no number along the cabin driveway, or it's too hard to see, or even the wrong number. Or, you are having a sudden medical problem, and your houseguest tries to help... "What address?" Another scenario: a correct address was communicated to emergency responders. They arrive in the area and start looking for 123 address on XYZ Lane. They've never been there before, it's dark and raining, and they waste precious time trying to find an unmarked location. Having a number sign is also a Cooke Township legal requirement. Ordinance 97-1 requires all houses and cabins to post a reflective street number three inches high so that emergency vehicles can easily find the address.

Also, there's a lot of cross-coverage in our rural area so the responding crew may not come from a nearby fire company. Your DCNR-assigned leased campsite number, such as 1C345, has no meaning with respect to 911 calls, and in fact if you use the "1C" number it may add to confusion. Finally, keep in mind your cute cabin name has no meaning to 911 responders.

Cooke Township is now reviewing the street number situation partly because of new efforts by Cumberland County to enhance emergency response. Certain cabin owners will receive letters in the coming months reminding them about the need to post numbers.

Reflective signs are available from the Penn Township Volunteer Fire Dept. as a public service. Contact Pam Sheaffer at 717-776-7557. Proof of Township residence or ownership is required. The first sign is free, any additional signs will be \$10.00 each.

The problem is quite real in our remote rural corner of the mountains.

UTILITY SAFETY

We'd like to remind you never to approach downed power and telephone lines. Just because a wire is on the ground doesn't mean it's not carrying enough current to kill you. This is even true of phone lines, which are the lower ones on the poles with black insulation: sometimes people assume that because of the black insulation, phone lines are not dangerous like electric wires. This is not true! If an accidental cross-connection exists between a phone line and power lines (which typically are the two wires higher up on the pole), the outside of the phone line can carry lethal current on the supporting wire wrap that spirals around it. Always consider phone lines to be just like electric wires.

When utility wires are pushed downward by trees and branches but not completely severed, some types of wires can be under enormous tension—like a giant slingshot. Never take it upon yourself to cut even a small obstruction hanging onto a line. Please note that for these same reasons, our Township's road crew is not able to cut anything hanging

onto any utility line. It's a job for the power or phone company only. If you are driving and utility lines fall onto the vehicle, DO NOT GET OUT. In an emergency, call 911. If not an emergency, for downed power lines call 888-544-4877; for phone wires, 800-201-4099. To navigate the annoying phone systems, keep saying "wires down" or similar phrases until you reach a live person. If you're not sure what to do, stay away and call 911.

ROADS NOT MAINTAINED BY OUR TOWNSHIP

Please note that Cooke Township only repairs and maintains Township roads. Other roads in Cookemainly those servicing cabinsbelong to either the State Park or State Forest. Note that the major thoroughfares (Route 233-Centerville Road and Pine Grove Road) belong to PENNDOT, not Cooke Township.

TIDBITS

- Spongy Moth (formerly Gypsy Moth) spraying: In late April or May, DCNR will be spraying portions of the forest to reduce the population of these invasive pests which are contributing to the death of oak and other trees across the mountain. If you want more information on the spray program, which uses "Mimic 2LV" an insect growth regulator designed to attack the problem as specifically as possible while minimizing damage to native species, please contact DCNR.
- Road work: In 2024 our focus will be seal-coating paved sections along Michaux Road, Michaux Oaks, and a short section nearby along Ridge Road.
- Fire bans signs: On those rare occasions that emergency fire bans are required in Cooke, we try to notify everyone as best we can. There could be signs along the roads entering the Township announcing that open fires are not permitted. We also have an (incomplete) list of cabin owner emails. If you would like to receive notifications, please send your name, cabin address and email address to cooketwp@kuhncom.net.



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