



January 2024

Views from the Rockies

► *Fall Gathering Summary ... pp. 2-4*

RMSWO President’s Corner

As the twelve days of Christmas continue, I have not finished all my plans: Gifts for family and friends, cards to be sent, pies to be baked, and home to be cleaned and decorated. I am sure it is okay not to get everything done so I have forgiven myself. I am sure your lists were as busy as mine. I have been setting aside time to remember the reason for the season, Jesus’s birth, and this I did find time to do. What a joyous time of the year, but not for all. Did you stop in your scurrying and Christmas preparations to pray for those who have lost a loved one or have lost their job or perhaps are struggling to just make ends meet. I wish for everyone who reads this, joy and hope for each new day knowing Jesus is with us wherever we are and wherever we go.

A new year is here and is filled with possibilities. What are your plans and resolutions? I hope you will Save the Date for the Fall Convention to be September 20-22, 2024, in Cheyenne, Wyoming at St. Paul’s Lutheran.

If you were unable to attend the “Just Love” conference in Phoenix, AZ or the RMSWO Fall Gathering in Colorado Springs, CO you missed two wonder filled events. The “Just Love” speakers and worship services were spectacular. See some of the photos from each event in this newsletter. Check out the WomenoftheELCA.org website for more information.

***Elsie joined us at the RMSWO Fall Gathering along with a pumpkin where everyone was asked to share what they were thankful for without repeating other comments. Have you shared the activities from your women whether you used Elsie or not. Please share your stories.



Peace and Love,
 Anna

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2023 Fall Gathering Summary

If you were able to attend the RMSWO Fall Gathering in Colorado Springs you know what a wonderful event it was. If you weren't able to be there, let me give you a summary of what we did.

The event was held at the Peel House at First Lutheran. What a lovely location! This is a restored mansion with a rich history and a wonderful team who supported our event in so many ways! More about that as you read this article.

We began on Friday evening, October 6th. After a welcome from our RMSWO President, Anna Thompson, we heard from Cindy Weaver and Ralph Patrick from Family Promise. This is an organization which some of you are familiar with. (Several years ago, it was known as Interfaith Hospitality Network or IHN.) Families without homes are housed in various churches for one or two weeks at a time. This gives them a bit of stability and a safe place to sleep for at least a week at a time. The churches provide a temporary home, meals, and a place for the children to play in the evenings. The parents work or go to the day house during each day, and the children go to school, day care or to the day house with their parents.

Their goal is to give the families a hand up while they work toward a more permanent place to live. If your church isn't involved or unable to house families, consider providing a meal or two at a church that does house them. Every volunteer is appreciated!

We were blessed with evening communion worship led by Bishop Jim Gonia. His presence and his words were inspiring even if (as he admitted) he had never preached on the book of Joshua! Joshua was the successor of Moses. Our Bible



Picture 1- Susan Bolduk, #2 Tina Kvittek, #3 Group during Bible Study, #4 Bishop Jim Gonia with left Pastor Kelsey Fauser and right Pastor Stephani Shumaker, #5 Group Picture with Bishop Gonia, #6 Pastor Kelsey & Pastor Stephani – Bible Study leaders on Joshua.

theme verse was Joshua 22:5; “Take good care to observe the commandment and instruction that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you. To love the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways, to keep His commandments, and to hold fast to Him, and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul.” Bishop Gonia made sure we understood that this is encouragement, not a to-do list. We learned a lot and loved this time together in worship.

We ended Friday evening with an inspiring time of learning with Pastor Kelsey Fauser from Grace in Colorado Springs and Pastor Stephani Shumaker from Atonement in Boulder. They also admitted

that they had never preached or studied the book of Joshua. You couldn't tell that from their very interactive Bible study. This was a great study, and they were a great pastoral team presenting the information.

Saturday was a full day! The day began with Pastor Kelsey and Pastor Stephanie leading part two of the Bible study. Reading and having time to discuss five different versions of our theme verse was amazing. How different the messages and perception of them are from the International Children's Bible, The Voice, The Message, The NIV and The Jewish Orthodox Bible. This led to a very engaged discussion by the participants.

Was the verse a reward? Was it a blessing? Was it a commandment? If you weren't there you'd need to read them to see what you think. Thanks to both knowledgeable and energetic pastors for leading us in this time of learning!

Next was a financial workshop led by Tina Kvittek. She is the assistant to the Bishop for generosity. This was very informative, and we all learned how to take a survey on our smartphones, getting immediate results about the opinions of our group.



Picture 1 – Sharon Hamilton with the donated quilt, #2 – Ruth VonMosch and Betty Anne Arner, #3 – Two donated quilts with plant, #4 – The final two quilts and a plant, #5 – The Volunteer staff from First Lutheran.

...Fall Gathering continued

There are so many financial resources out there. She said generosity is giving back to God. Also, read Psalm 116 which talks about spiritual grounding. Check out the ELCA website for resources.

After a delicious lunch, purchased by the RMSWO board utilizing the event fee, was put out as a beautiful buffet by the team at First Lutheran, we listened to Vicki Proffit, the director at Sarah's Home and Daniel Academy. She updated us on what's happening at Sarah's Home and just how much God has blessed them in getting Daniel Academy started. This will be a place for sex-trafficked young boys. It will be in the mountains, providing a place for these young boys to heal from the horrific life they have been experiencing. This is the only home of its kind in all of the United States! What a blessing to hear her presentation.

We used some of our time to put together 25 Elder boxes which became Christmas gifts for elders on reservations. One Nation Walking Together was very grateful for these donated boxes! At the same time, we were led in a session of chair yoga by Maren Felde from St. Paul's Cheyenne. If you've never tried it, it's a worthwhile way to spend about 30 minutes. Relaxing and energizing at the same time! Later we participated in a guided meditation which was just what a lot of us needed! It was calming and grounding and helped us all refocus for the rest of the evening lead by Debra Haar, treasurer of the RMSWO.

We heard from Susan Bolduc; she spoke to us about "Beyond Charity". It was very informative, and she provided us with many resources to learn more about civic engagement. Many of them are on the ELCA website.

We had another wonderful meal put out on a buffet table by the team from First Lutheran. They certainly have a way of taking the ordinary and making it extraordinary! The RMSWO board cannot thank them enough for their hard work, including setting up and cleaning after our meals!

After dinner we had drawings for handmade quilts made by the quilters at Prince of Peace (Colorado Springs), Grace (Colorado Springs), King of Kings (Pueblo), Saint Luke's (Albuquerque), and Saint Paul's (Cheyenne). We also had some gift bags and 6 beautiful fall mums that were given away.

We ended with Anna Thompson leading a discussion from a Bold Cafe resource titled "The Spirituality of Tension. If you haven't seen or heard about Bold Cafe, check it out by going to the Women of the ELCA website.

Overall, we had a busy, spirit filled weekend of gathering with women of faith. Hopefully some new friendships were formed, and hearts were filled with the love of Christ.

Can't wait to see you all at the 2024 RMSWO Convention and Gathering in Cheyenne, Wyoming! Until then, blessings and peace be yours!

*Submitted by Tammi Clawson,
a grateful RMSWO Board member.*

Remembering Katie *by Audrey Novak Riley*

We remember Katie Luther not only as Martin's wife and the mother of their six children, but also as the energetic, and effective manager of all that went on at Lutherhaus – its flocks and fields, its brewery and its boarding house – and as a bold, thoughtful, faithful woman.

Katie became a nun at the age of 16, no doubt expecting to live out her days in the convent's peaceful routine of prayer and contemplation. But years later Katie and some of her sisters learned about a new movement in the church and realized that they had to change their lives. Martin

and his friends – under great risk – smuggled the women away in the wee hours of Easter morning, 1523.

Katie Luther stood for the courage of her convictions, even in the face of the sternest opposition. That's an inspiration to all of us. And her wise management of the Luther family's resources is another inspiration. What other parts of Katie's personality and life story do you find especially inspiring? How can we be more like her? (Daily Grace, Dec. 20, 2023 Excerpted from "How does Katie Luther Inspire you?" *from May 1, 2017 blog*



Hard Conversations

At Sarah's Home we believe in reaching as many people as possible in order to educate them about trafficking in our nation. We believe that education is vital in the prevention of trafficking. Once that information has been shared, it's not uncommon that people then ask, "now what? How do I help protect the kids in my life? In my sphere of influence?" We hear you, and we want to help!

Before we jump into some resources, it is important for you to hear this. The most important thing that you can do for the kids in your life is to LOVE, ENCOURAGE and SUPPORT them. Most of the resources we are going to share have a similar heartbeat which is, while these conversations are important to have, the best thing that you can do for kids in your life is to be a safe place for them. That means showing up in the little things so that when the world gets scary. Don't underestimate the importance of your presence in the lives of these kids. It matters!

It may be tempting to want to keep your kids as close as possible at all times after hearing about the realities of trafficking. But the truth is that at some point in their life, kids will encounter and interact with the world. As people of influence in their life, what will you do to help build resilience in them? Then, when they encounter something

scary, they will have the tools to know what to do. We would suggest that you talk to them. That you take the time to have some difficult and sometimes uncomfortable conversations with them. We recognize that this is an easy thing to say, but can be really intimidating to execute. That is why we want to give you resources that will empower you to feel confident in initiating these conversations.

We also understand that there are so many different angles that this subject can be approached. Depending on the age of the child, these conversations need to look different. Our hope is to give you a wide range of resources so that you can pick ones that work well for you and the kids in your life.

Resources: "The Swimsuit Lesson" – Children's book; "Good Pictures Bad Pictures" and "Good Pictures Bad Pictures Jr." Website: Shared Hope International – new online safety curriculum; A21 – prevention materials; and National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) – their program is KidSmartz.

Source: Sarah's Home and Daniel Academy Newsletter January 2024.

When it's Hard to be Thankful

November is the time of year when we focus on giving thanks for all God has given us.

But what do we do when it's really hard to give thanks? What do we do if the world around us seems to have gone mad, or if our family is tearing itself apart, or if our body or mind is betraying us: How do we give thanks to God then? How do we even acknowledge God as good?

Paul writes: "Three times I appealed to the Lord about this, that [my affliction] would leave me,

but he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness. . . . Therefore I am content. . . .for whenever I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Corinthians 12:8-9a. 10).

There it is: God's grace. Though we may be unable to defeat the troubles around us, God has promised to be there at our side, no matter what. God stands with us. God gives us the strength to endure. And for that, we can say – and mean – Thanks be to God. (Excerpted from "When it's really hard to be thankful" by Audrey Novak Riley from the November 1, 2018 blog of the Women of the ELCA.) Daily Grace posted on Nov. 22, 2023

Just Love Gathering



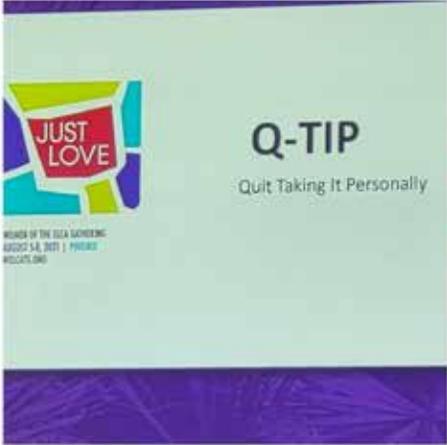
Opening Worship; #2 Women of the ELCA Staff; Just Love Choir; Just Love In-Kind Gathering Place; Some of the Quilts entered into the Quilt Competition; Just Love Vendors

More from Just Love Gathering



Speakers during the Just Love Gathering: Pat Bellingham, Dr. Kelly Sherman-Convoy, and members of the ELCA International women leaders who shared their stories from their countries and their life and work in the US.

More from Just Love Gathering

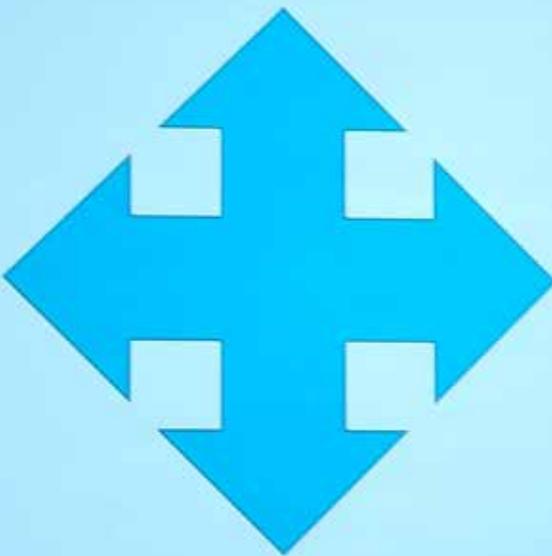


Run, walk and roll to Raise up Healthy Women and Girls; Protest in recognition of the many women whose voices could not be heard; Dr. Jacqueline Bussie; QTIP-Quit Taking it Personally; Opening reception outside convention center with music, food and dancing; Outdoor art near convention center; White Chicken Chili recipe handed out by members of the Rocky Mountain Synodical Women’s Organization at the Just Love Gathering & Convention.

RMSWO Members at "Just Love"



Who is my neighbor?



- Love Your Neighbor
- who doesn't
- Look like you
- Think like you
- Love like you
- Speak like you
- Pray like you
- Vote like you
- Love Your Neighbor
- No exceptions

Why is making a will important?

Are you one of the nearly 67% of American adults who don't have a will? Then National Make-A-Will Month, observed each August, is a perfect time to make end-of-life decisions. (And if you do have a will allow this month to serve as a reminder to review and update your will.)

Wills are not just for rich people. Everyone should have a will. If a person doesn't have a will, the state will impose a pattern of distribution of assets. That pattern may or may not be what the deceased would have wanted. That's one reason it's important to have a will. With a will, an individual decides how to distribute assets. That could be cash savings, real estate, or stocks. It could just as easily be an antique glass collection, photos and slides from three decades of vacations, or specialty tools for quilting or woodworking. What happens to digital accounts, another type of asset, can also be resolved in a will.

Having a will can also be seen as a gift to loved ones. It helps those who survive know what to do. The presence of a will has the potential, too, to stave off arguments among survivors. It's no guarantee that two grandchildren aren't going to fight over who gets the collection of troll dolls, but at least grandma's will can make it clear who she wants to inherit that special collection.

With a will, a person can plan for those in their care. A legal guardian for children can be named (is that something one would want to leave to the state to decide?) Who will care for Fluffy or Rover? That can be established in a will too.

Some people find it challenging in their lifetimes to be as generous as they would like to be. Tithing may be somewhat beyond what a person has been able to accomplish during their lifetime. But setting aside a tithe in a will to a local congregation or a church college is as simple as saying "ten percent of my estate shall go to [insert institution]."

Whether you are creating a will now or reviewing an existing one, pause this month to consider what you value and make sure those values are re-

flected in your will. If your participation in Women of the ELCA has been important throughout your lifetime, then won't you remember Women of the ELCA with a gift through your estate plan? Such a gift can help ensure that long after your life on this side of God's commonwealth is over, other women will experience the importance of the church's women's organization.

Right now, you might consider making an estate gift to **2122: Growing Katie's Fund for the next 100 years**, a campaign to raise \$1 million for Katie's Fund that is designed to support the organization into the next 100 years of mission and ministry. Go to the website for the Women of the ELCA for more information.

WHITE CHICKEN CHILI (6 Servings)

- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 3 T. olive oil
- 1 (4 oz.) can chopped green chilies Salsa
- 3 T. all-purpose flour
- 2 t. ground cumin
- 2 (15.8oz.) cans white kidney beans
- 1 (14.5oz.) can chicken broth
- 1.5 cups finely chopped cooked chicken breast
- Shredded Cheese
- Sour Cream

In large skillet, cook onion in oil for 4 minutes or until transparent. Add Chilies, add flour and cumin slowly, stir until dissolved cook and for 2 minutes.

Add beans and chicken broth; bring to a boil. stirring for 10 minutes or until thickened. Reduce heat to medium. Add chicken, cook until hot.

Garnish with cheese, sour cream and salsa if desired.

Elections, Support for Antiracism, Healing Work Feature Large — Women of the ELCA

By Cindy Novak and Elizabeth Hunter



More than 251 Women of the ELCA voting members worshipped together, conducted business and elected new officers and churchwide executive board members during the Twelfth Triennial Convention, Sept. 18-21, in Phoenix, Arizona.

The voting body elected Myrna Wells-Ulland, Phoenix, Arizona (Grand Canyon Synodical Women's Organization), as president shown above.

"Women of the ELCA is a wonderful organization," said Myrna Wells-Ulland, elected on the fourth ballot as the organization's president for the 2023-2026 triennium. "I love the things we do [and] all of the initiatives we have. I know they are challenging. . . I am really excited about the capabilities we have for this next triennium. [In Hebrew], *hineni* means 'Here I am, Lord. You called me. Use me. So I'm going to close with that. *Hineni.*'"

Other officers elected are: Lorie Garcia, Corpus Cristi, Texas (SW Texas SWO), vice president; Gwen Edwards, Bellevue, Nebraska (Nebraska SWO), secretary; and Jennifer Armstrong-Schaefer, Latrobe, Pennsylvania (SW PA SWO), treasurer.

Those elected to serve on the churchwide executive board are: Jean Pishaw, Forest Grove, Oregon (Oregon SWO); Maria Lokensgard, St. Peter Minnesota (SW MN SWO); Jennifer Ackerman, Elyria, Ohio (NE Ohio SWO); Julia Sabella, Hillsborough Township, New Jersey (NJ SWO); Sheena Foster, Silver Spring, Maryland (Metro Washington DC SWO); Anna Jetson, Spring Grove, Minnesota (NE IA SWO) ; Tracy Williams, Long Beach, California (SW CA SWO); Yma Mulero, Carolina, Puerto Rico (Caribbean SWO); Ginger Cutrell, Manchester, Tennessee (SE SWO); Joyce Brooks, Detroit, Michigan (SE MI SWO); Merrily Burmeister, Bemidji, Minnesota (E NDSWO). Officers and churchwide executive board members will serve the 2023-2026 term.

It was the first time the convention had met in person in six years, after many changes wrought by the pandemic. As executive director Linda Post Bushkofsky told voting members in her report, "Few things remain the same . . . The pandemic and all that it brought caused us to focus, with laser precision, on what really matters. It caused us to try different ways of being together in community."

. . . . The Holy Spirit is pushing and pulling us forward. Some of us are jumping on board, moving into the future. [Others} of us won't be making that journey, resisting the reality of where we are going. But the good news is, that the journey has begun. . . . We are a big, beautiful, flawed community, created in the image of God, [living] as disciples of Jesus."

(See more on the Women of the ELCA website).

What is Your Offering?

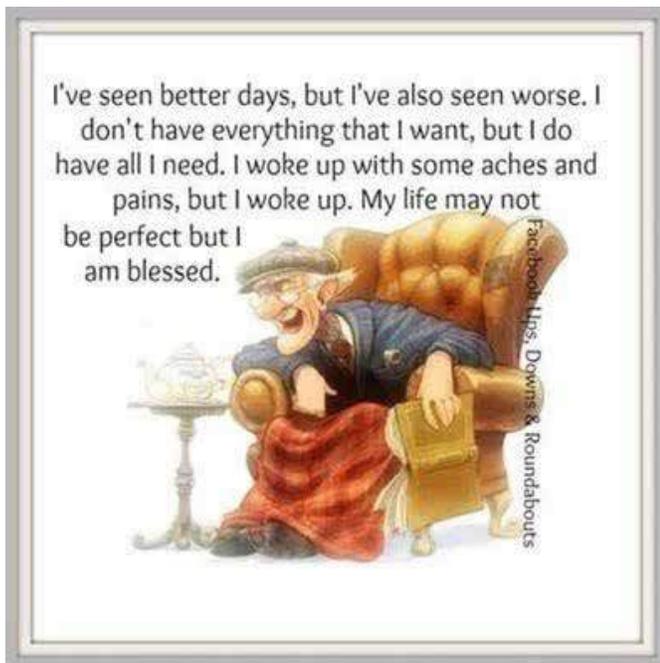
How do you imagine the three wise men decided on those particular gifts to offer? Do you suppose these were the usual baby presents (“Come, come, Balthasar, everyone brings myrrh to a baby shower.”) or do you think the wise men decided what their offerings would be after much thought, prayer and discussion together?

What about you? When you offer a gift, is it “the usual” – the same two, five, or ten dollars you’ve always put into the basket – or is your gift the product of thoughtful, prayerful discussion and decision?

We know something is “the usual” when it would feel a little odd to do something new. But doing something new is what God is all about; God makes all things new (Revelation 21:5).

This year, let’s put away “the usual” and do something new. Let’s prayerfully discuss and decide together what our offerings should be, just as the Magi did before they gave so generously to the infant Christ.

Excerpted from “How much thought do you put into a gift?” by Audrey Novak Riley December 29, 2018. Daily Grace – January 3, 2024



Hoarfrost Trees



Relax!

So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation. (Genesis 2:3).

In the busyness of life and in taking care of others, where do we find time for ourselves? If we don’t put ourselves first every now and then, we will soon experience burnout and we won’t be useful to anyone.

As Genesis 2:3 states, on the seventh day God rested. If God thought it important to rest then

why do we feel it necessary to be actively involved in something 24/7?

Monday evenings are usually my “me time.” After coming home from work, I have the house to myself. I get a chance to watch TV (uninterrupted), talk on the phone or just sit back and do nothing. While three hours alone doesn’t seem like much, you’d be surprised in the difference it makes.

How do you find time to relax? (Excerpted from “Rest” by Deborah Calvert from the September 25, 2014 blog of the Women of the ELCA. Daily Grace post October 28, 2023.

2022-2024 Rocky Mountain Synodical Women's Organization Board

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How To Sign Up For The RMS e-Connection by e-mail

By Susan Mitchell

We encourage every woman in the Rocky Mountain Synod to sign up to receive the weekly Synod Newsletter called e-Connection. It is sent out every Wednesday to your e-mail address, and it contains articles and pictures about many things in our lives together as Lutherans living in the states that make up the Rocky Mountain Synod.

Once a quarter, e-Connection will have an article about the current issue of our *Views from the Rockies*—the newsletter of the RMS Women’s Organization. You will be directed to the Synod website, which is where *Views* issues will be available. You may read them online, and also print a copy for your personal use. Ask your church office to print the *Views* for you if you do not have access to the website.

Please sign up as follows:

1. On your computer, go to the Rocky Mountain Synod website by putting this URL into your

browser: <https://www.rmselca.org/faithformation/RockyMountainSynodicalWomensOrganization>

2. On the home page, scroll down to the bottom, and in the middle of the page you will see: Subscribe to e-mail Newsletter. Below that line is a yellow rectangle that says e-mail List. Simply click on the yellow rectangle! This takes you to a page that asks for your e-mail Address, your first & last name, and to check a box stating if you are a Pastor, Associate in Ministry, Diaconal Minister, or Deaconess. Below this you should check the box that states: “I wish to receive e-Connection each week.”
3. Finally, click on the bottom bar that says “Sign Up.” That’s it! Remember, this is a free subscription to the synod e-mail weekly newsletter. You will receive notice of new issues of our *Views from the Rockies* newsletters from the synod’s e-Connection e-mail.

About Views from the Rockies



The “Views” is written/circulated by the Rocky Mountain Synodical Women’s Organization, Women of the ELCA, and provides information about programs and projects.

NOTE: Articles for the Views are to be sent to anna498.at@gmail.com by the 12th of January, 12th of April, 12th of July, 12th of August and 12th of November.

There are no longer printed copies of “Views from the Rockies.” Each church and all individuals may now download and/or print FREE COPIES from the Rocky Mountain Synod website. To access the website and get the newsletter, go to www.rmselca.org/faithformation/RockyMountainSynodicalWomensOrganization.

If you would like to receive the Views newsletter in your personal e-mail, please send an e-mail to anna498.at@gmail.com with the subject line “Add me.” You will be added to the e-mail list and receive all future newsletters and e-mail blasts

from the RMSWO Board. Your e-mail address will not be shared with any other organization.

The website of the Rocky Mountain Synodical Women’s Organization has not only this newsletter but more information about what is going on now, what has happened in the past, and what to look to in the future. We will keep new, interesting information highlighted on the web.

RMSWO Website: www.rmselca.org/women

**Mission:
To mobilize
women to act
boldly on
their faith in
Jesus Christ**

ROCKY MOUNTAIN SYNOD

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