



Channel **VOTER**

serving South Santa Barbara County

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SANTA BARBARA, INC. • 328 A East Carrillo St., Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Email: info@lwvsantabarbara.org <http://www.lwvsantabarbara.org>

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MAY COMMUNITY FORUM: The Brown Act and Open Government

Wednesday, May 16, 12:15 to 2 p.m.

Louise Lowry Davis Community Center, De La Vina & Victoria Streets

We predict sunshine for our May 16 Community Forum—sunshine in government, whatever the weather outside. Whenever we testify at a public hearing, watch a Board of Supervisors meeting, or request a copy of a local or state government document, we benefit from California's open meetings and public records laws. What do we need to know about these laws to participate most effectively in our democracy as an organization and as individual citizens? Occasionally, we need to remind our local officials that they are indeed required to conduct their business in the sunshine. When is this justified, and what is our recourse?

We are very pleased that Shane Stark, Santa Barbara County Counsel, has agreed to give us a tutorial on the Brown Act and related laws. He is a much sought-after speaker, and regularly

gives training in ethics, including the Brown Act, to public officials and members of all County Boards and Commissions.

Background: The League of Women Voters believes that democratic government depends upon the informed and active participation of its citizens and requires that governmental bodies protect the citizen's right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding open meetings, and making public records accessible.

Over 50 years ago, the Brown Act was passed to require openness in local government. The Act's purpose states:

"...The people of this State do not yield their sovereignty to the agencies which serve them.

(Continued on page 2)

MAY DISCUSSION UNITS: Gaining Visibility for Healthcare Reform

Our May Units will ramp up the visibility and message power for Santa Barbara, which is the next OneCareNow area city. Information and handouts from the April 21st OneCareNow Advocacy Training will update us on the evolving contest between rival healthcare proposals in Sacramento. To learn about the LWVC's new (4/20/2007) healthcare position, please read the inserted "Statement of Principles" in this issue of the *Channel Voter*.

Our thanks go to the many League members who held campaign signs at the March 29 Goleta OneCareNow Sidewalk Demonstration. GREAT SHOW! Rush-hour motorists responded with honks, smiles, and victory signs, and the event generated excellent television and newspaper coverage.

The Santa Barbara event, to be held on June 7, from 5 to 7 p.m., will feature a march and rally up State Street from City Hall to the County Courthouse (See Calendar, p. 8). "Talking Head" cartoon puppets showing an enlightened 2007 "Harry and Louise" will pep up the parade signs. We will create "bubble conversations" for these cartoon signs as an exercise in clarifying our personal feelings and ideas about the importance of healthcare reform.

Carole Marks, Health Care Consultant

From the President's Desk...

This is my last letter to you as president. (That is, of course, obvious). For me it is good and bad. Good, because I look forward to less responsibility. Bad, because I shall miss the responsibility and the respect people give me because I am the president of such an important organization.



Marlene was co-president for most of 2006-2007. She worked hard establishing operations during the year. Without the current board members and many non-board members who filled the vacuum left by Marlene's death, I could not have managed. I thank them all.

Your new board will be great. It is composed of both new members and experienced members, who should generate – with your help – lots of good programs and policies.

There is still more activity before the new board takes charge. The May Units and the May Community Forum are coming. The Garden Party will be on May 6, and the Annual meeting is June 9. Between these events there is still time to sign up for State Convention in Bakersfield, which will be held May 18-20.

Although your mailing crew tries to get the *Voter* out early, there are some geographic areas that seem to get it late. Please, if you can, go to our Web site, www.lwvsantabarbara.org, and read the *Voter* there. I hope to see you at these events.

I will see you at various meetings during the summer and back again in September. There will be three elections next year!

Sheila Kamhi, President

ANNUAL MEETING 2007

The Annual Meeting kit will be mailed to members early in May so that members will have time to read it before the June 9 meeting. Please call me at 682-0757 if you do not receive it early in May.

The Annual Meeting will start at 9:30 a.m. at the Goleta Holiday Inn and end around 1:30 p.m. Please come to the business meeting so that you can elect your 2007-2008 Board, review the budget, and provide suggestions and input on local program.

Your kit will give details of the program, speaker, and lunch choices. Please read the kit contents and send in the reservation slip provided soon.

Sheila Kamhi

THE 2007 GARDEN PARTY

Don't forget our League's Garden Party, which will be held from 2 to 4 p.m., at the QAD campus 2111 Ortega Hill Rd., in Summerland on Sunday, May 6.

A number of local officials will be in attendance as we honor Jan & Don O'Dowd and Bill & Carole Marks for their contributions to our community.



You don't need to make a reservation if you find at the last minute that you can make it.

For information phone the League office or Sheila Kamhi at 682-0757.

MAY COMMUNITY FORUM *(Continued from page 1)*

The people, in delegating authority, do not give their public servants the right to decide what is good for the people to know and what is not good for them to know. The people insist on remaining informed so that they may retain control over the instruments they have created." And the heart of the Act is stated succinctly:

"All meetings of the legislative body of a local agency shall be open and public, and all persons shall be permitted to attend any meeting of the legislative body of a local agency, except as otherwise provided in this chapter."

Similar laws require open meetings for state agencies. Access to information is protected under the Public Records Act. And with strong support from LWV, California voters passed Proposition 59 in November 2004: our state Constitution now explicitly includes a right for the public to access government information.

All of these laws provide tools for us to use in our roles as watchdogs and advocates. Come learn more about them!

Linda Phillips, First V.P., State & National Action

The Channel Voter is published eight times a year, monthly except for January, June, July, and August, by the Santa Barbara League of Women Voters, 328A E. Carrillo St., Santa Barbara, CA 93101.

ACTION ALERT PRESERVE SANTA BARBARA'S NEIGHBORHOODS

The long awaited Neighborhood Preservation Ordinance will be introduced at the May 1, 2007, 6 p.m., Santa Barbara City Council meeting. Please attend and voice your support for this ordinance. Please write, call, or e-mail your favorite city council member and tell them you want them to adopt it. This ordinance requires the votes of five city council members to pass.

This ordinance will set size limits on all two-story houses on lots with less than 15,000 square feet. The League has been working on this for over two years. The late Claudia Madsen was a strong supporter of this ordinance to preserve Santa Barbara's neighborhoods.

There is lots of opposition from realtors, architects, and private property rights groups. Please help us.

For more information or talking points, call Cathie McCammon at 966-0536 or send her an e-mail.

Cathie McCammon, Land Use Consultant

LET'S LUNCH BUNCH FOR THE UPPER STATE STREET STUDY

On Tuesday, May 8, the final decisions about the Upper State Street Study will be made at the Santa Barbara City Council. Many members have participated in this study, so the League is planning a lunch meeting before the hearing. We will meet at 12:30 p.m. at the Paradise Café, at 702 Anacapa Street, to discuss the remaining issues, and plan to go to the hearing at 2 or at 6 p.m.

The League will continue to support all the provisions of the SD-2 overlay zone, and most of them are being supported by the Planning Commission. The League has been very skeptical that one parking space per resident was workable on upper State Street, and we have raised that issue with the city council. We are also supporting 20-foot setbacks for all buildings, and a two-story height limit on the north side of State Street to protect the views of the mountains. The League has pointed out that the principal circulation problem in that area will be the number and size of condominiums that will be permitted, and no number of street alterations will reduce the resulting congestion.

GOLETA CITY COUNCIL MARCHES BOLDLY

At their April 16 meeting the new Goleta City Council initiated a number of major "fast track" changes to the city's General Plan without really analyzing any of them. They also told their staff to consolidate and bring back over 200 other changes. At some later date they indicated that they would go over them item by item, in effect rewriting the adopted General Plan.

There were many protests about this process from the packed City Hall, including from the League and the Citizens Planning Association, but that did not influence their thinking at all. Eric Onnen said that his team "had made a commitment to change the General Plan before they were elected" and they had to honor it. Who this commitment had been made to was not clear, because during their campaign these candidates always told their audiences that they favored slow growth and just wanted to "tweak" the General Plan.

The current changes, if completed, would expedite growth of every kind—both residential and commercial. They will change most of the "shalls" to "shoulds" to provide "flexibility" in all project decisions. They have offered large property owners changes of all kinds to the rules that would control final development on their properties. Strict environmental protections that were built into all the phases of the present General Plan after three years of intensely hard work by the former city council would be removed in this new process. All of these changes, with their CEQA review, are estimated to take another three years, during which time the City of Goleta will not have its own ordinances or any Local Coastal Plan. Of course, the League will continue to follow council developments.

Connie Hannah, Sustainable Communities Director

? INTERESTED IN COASTAL ISSUES ?

Then you should know about the meeting of the Environmental Task Force of the South Central Coast Leagues on Friday, May 25. In addition to discussing activities related to offshore oil, LNG, land use, and who knows what else, we hope to hear from an invited speaker about the City of Santa Barbara's water quality program. That program includes some interesting research into the sources of creek and beach pollution. We will meet at the League office -- probably at 9:30 but check with Jean Holmes, 687-8260, to be sure.

Jean Holmes, Chair, SCC Environmental Task Force

<p>Proud to support LWV-SB Guitare Classique</p> <p>Music for special occasions, by Thomas Heck and friends</p> <p>805-687-1632</p>	
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THE LEAGUE'S LEGISLATIVE INTERVIEWS

Along with representatives of LWV Ventura County, we recently interviewed both of our state legislators.

Each year, the California League suggests several questions for these meetings, so that legislators can learn about our priorities and tell us about theirs. The questions this year reflected statewide concerns that our local members also share: health care reform; the strain on natural resources caused by population growth; approaches to balancing the budget; and redistricting reform. And there's always a final question on the legislator's personal priorities and the major upcoming issues anticipated.

Assemblymember Pedro Nava

On March 2, Connie Hannah and Linda Phillips joined two LWVVC members to interview Pedro Nava. The discussion was wide-ranging, including some issues of particular interest to each of our Leagues.

A strong supporter of universal health care coverage, Assemblyman Nava is once again a co-author of Senator Kuehl's SB 840. He sees its single payer approach as the only one that will both provide universal, comprehensive care and also control costs. He opposes mandates in some competing bills that would require purchasing individual insurance but not guarantee that the insurance would be affordable or adequate. He did note that all the proposals included some important consumer protections to prevent insurance companies from refusing to sell to people based on a prior medical condition, or charging exorbitant premiums based on their health.

On resource management, he voiced his strong support for the Williamson Act (which offers tax advantages to landowners who commit to agricultural preserves), which has protected so much farm and ranch land that he calls it "one of the most successful government programs in the state's history." Assemblyman Nava serves on the Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee, which will be working on effective implementation of the two water infrastructure bonds (Props. 1E and 84) passed last fall. He noted



Pedro Nava

that levee failure in the Sacramento Delta could lead to a long disruption of the State Water Project; among other projects, the bonds were intended to fund levee repair. On energy, he strongly supports the Million Solar Roofs (this new law to encourage solar energy took effect on January 1), wind, and other alternative forms of energy, and also strongly supports the Global Warming Solutions Act, which was passed last year. He is strongly opposed to the LNG facility proposed for offshore Ventura County, due to the air pollution it would cause.

As Chair of the Assembly Transportation Committee, he is working on measures to encourage alternative fuel vehicles, including biodiesel, to reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases and reduce our dependence on foreign oil. He also will focus on implementing the \$20 billion bond package for transportation passed by voters last fall (Prop. 1B).

Asked about the state mandate to provide a specific number of new housing units, he responded that special factors in local areas should be taken into account.

He believes that the state has a structural revenue problem. Some of the solutions include reducing tax expenditures (tax breaks), especially for wealthy corporations, making a greater effort to collect unpaid taxes (the Franchise Tax Board estimates this "tax gap" as \$6.5 billion a year), and more frequent assessment of business and corporate property (the property tax burden is being borne very heavily by post-Prop. 13 homeowners). He does not support Governor Schwarzenegger's proposals for spending cuts and fee hikes. He is particularly concerned about providing funding for education and other needed services.

He supports a proposal for a citizens' redistricting commission that reflects League priorities.

Assemblyman Nava is chair of the Joint Committee on Disaster Preparedness and Homeland Security, and has introduced several bills dealing with these issues.

Senator Tom McClintock

Although Senator McClintock was unable to meet with us in person this year, he graciously agreed to a phone interview. Pat Shewczyk and Linda Phillips were joined by LWVVC representatives for the conference call on March 9.

Senator McClintock opposes mandates and requirements in the health care reform bills proposed, and feels that these drive up costs. He considers SB 840 similar to European socialism, and believes that the bureaucracy should not run the health care system. He has introduced legislation to allow purchase of insurance in or out of the state.

(Continued on page 5)

TEAMWORK ON IMPROVING WATER QUALITY COUNTY-WIDE

Members of the League's Water Committee have been reading the draft report entitled "Santa Barbara County Integrated Regional Water Management Plan." The report was required by Proposition 50 before grants could be allotted state-wide to improve all water quality. There will be a public hearing, at which I intend to make a few comments for our League.

We found the long report a useful document that outlines major water issues throughout Santa Barbara County. It has a lot of information in one accessible place. I often say that the fun of following water issues is that you can never know everything. (People who say that they "know all about that" always amuse me.)

Here are a few examples of what I learned from the report. I had never known that the City of Santa Barbara could get its desalination plant back on line in a year's time, and that only half of the prefiltration capacity and reverse osmosis treatment modules were sold.

The report also lists 14 rivers on the South Coast as impaired. It will be interesting to see if any state funds will come for these projects as a result of the positive vote for Proposition 50. Of course, it is a major function of all the professional staff at the different governmental entities to keep abreast of any possible funding source for a necessary project.

Pat Shewczyk, Co-Chair, Water Committee



Tom McClintock

THE LEAGUE'S LEGISLATIVE INTERVIEWS *(continued from page 4)*

He pointed out that California needs measures to accommodate increases in resource demands. In the 1960s, population growth was twice today's rate, and taxes were far lower, but we had fine schools and good infrastructure. Policy changes during the "era of limits" under Jerry Brown stopped the building of infrastructure, leading to today's problems. We need to return to the earlier policies.

Asked about California's contribution to global warming, he said he is not at all convinced that human activity contributes to it, or that it is anything new. Rather, he believes that it is a natural cycle.

Senator McClintock pointed out that he has written extensively about his strong views on the state's fiscal problems and balancing the budget. Expenses must be kept in line with revenue and population growth. But to quote a January column he wrote, "...spending is growing faster than it did under Gray Davis, the state is now running the biggest deficit in its history, and the only way it can pay its bills is because of massive borrowing carried over from 2004, contributing to a doubling of the state's debt burden in just

three years."

He feels this is irresponsible; the state had run up "credit card debt" and should pay it off first instead of increasing the state budget. He wants to restore government's right to shop around for the best price for services (including consideration of obtaining these services from the private sector). Welfare should not continue indefinitely without the recipients working, and recipients should conform with Federal law.

When we interviewed Senator McClintock in 2005, he emphasized that legislators should not pick their voters; this is a clear conflict of interest. At that time, he saw merit in establishing a citizens' commission for redistricting. Later that year, he supported the governor's redistricting proposal. During this year's interview, he stated that the details are secondary to the principle: the Legislature should not do its own redistricting.

Senator McClintock's number one personal priority for the coming year is to bring the state's finances under control. He has introduced SCA 5, "Ask Us First," a constitutional amendment that would require voter approval for most new taxes. Another top priority is to restore property rights, and he has introduced SCA 1 on eminent domain and condemnation proceedings. This amendment would forbid using eminent domain to take land for private use. Other priorities include reducing waste and fraud in government, and reducing bureaucracy. He has introduced a bill to identify, downsize, or eliminate obsolete state bureaucracies. And he says emphatically that there should be no tax increases this year.

Linda Phillips, First Vice-President, State and National Action

CALIFORNIA CAMPAIGN FOR THE CIVIC MISSION OF SCHOOLS

Recently the League of Women Voters of California signed on as a member of the California Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools. I represented the League at the coalition meeting in Sacramento recently and was encouraged and energized by the people around the table. They are committed to making change and to ensuring that adequate resources are available to provide good civics education programs in our schools. This will be a big step in preparing our young people for participation in our democratic institutions when they become adults.

Jackie Jacobberger, President, LWVC

GREAT AMERICAN WRITE-IN COMING THIS SUMMER

On August 25, from 1-3 p.m., the Pro-Choice Coalition will once again sponsor the Great American Write-In at the Faulkner Gallery in the downtown library. A description of a write-in is in order. This is an event, open to the public, sponsored by the approximately 30 member organizations of the Pro-Choice Coalition who come together to write and/or sign letters to our legislators on topics related to Choice and other women's issues important to the coalition members. In addition to the letters provided for visitors and members to sign, it will be possible to compose your own letter. The Pro-Choice Coalition will be responsible for mailing the letters.

There are also light refreshments, creative displays and lots and lots of networking and visiting. Please plan to drop by and join the fun.

Sheila Kamhi President

Solicitation of Stories for Storybank

The League of Women Voters is a place where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement – your work has demonstrated this, and sharing your story can inspire others to join in. We hope that you will help us collect stories about our League's victories, the achievements of our fellow members, and your own personal experiences as a League member.

Tips on Writing Your Story:

- Keep writing style simple & as easy to read as possible
 - Use short words & sentences (not more than 25 words)
 - Write short paragraphs (not more than 60 words)
 - Use the active voice and a conversational style
 - Avoid slang and colloquialisms
 - Sequence main points in a logical manner
 - Make your sub-points clearly respond to the main point.
- Every League member has a story to tell! LWVUS has received many inspiring stories of League members making a difference in their communities, fighting for important issues, and leading the charge to create lasting change.

The LWV Storybank was created as an outlet for members to express their passion about the League. This is our League's call for your personal League stories. You may submit your own story at www.lwv.org/storybank. Visit the Storybank Web page or email storybank@lwv.org for more information. You may also send your story to Joanie Jones who will collect our local League stories.

Here is Roselyn Gadd's (LWV Trumbull County, Ohio) story:

It seems like just yesterday that I was sitting in a local bookstore/coffee shop for hours on end. I would give the local news a quick read and then go to the fashion and personality magazines to devour the latest celebrity gossip. If a state representative walked by my table, I wouldn't have known them. Worse yet, on a visit to Washington D.C., a page had to tell me the names of my senators. I was virtually invisible and no one knew my name. Things changed for me when a local LWV president asked me to come to a meeting and take some digital photos with my new camera. I submitted them to a local paper and in the following months the papers were printing my photos on the front page with by-lines. Digital photos and publicity for the League became so important that the LWV in a neighboring county soon asked me to do their publicity. This opened many new doors. . . .



Dr. David Lawrence, Attorney Cristi Michelon, and Judge Zel Canter (ret.) were the featured speakers at the April Community Forum on "An Independent Judiciary."

Photo credit: Tom Heck

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IN MEMORIUM

We are sad to report that Claudia Madsen, a long time League member, died suddenly Sunday morning, April 15. She was an ardent activist involved in Santa Barbara City land use policies.

ABOUT STATE CONVENTION IN 1938

Yes, you read that right: The Santa Barbara League sent delegates to the state convention for the first time in 1938, an event that was covered in a News-Press article under the headline, "LEGISLATIVE QUESTIONS LAID BEFORE WOMEN VOTERS LEAGUE." In the excerpt below, you can see something of what has, and has not, changed!

Federal aid to education; selection, printing, and financing of textbooks and educational facilities for children of migratory labor will lead the problems to be considered for legislative action by the California League of Women Voters at its state convention in Pasadena next week, according to Miss Janet Pierpont Rogers of Burlingame. Miss Rogers, former president and legislative chairman of the peninsular league [sic], spoke last night at a meeting of the recently formed Santa Barbara league in the public library.

She also discussed in some detail the proposed program

of work for the California league for 1938-1939, in which, she said today, the following questions will receive emphasis:

- 1. Integrated federal, state, and county public welfare agencies to promote effective administration of relief.*
- 2. A state plan for improvement of probation in California.*
- 3. Retention and enactment of good juvenile legislation.*
- 4. Child labor.*
- 5. Improved educational facilities for migratory labor.*

Much interest is shown by the members here in a plan that might lead to a school of instruction for voters, to be held one month before the November election, it was said yesterday by Miss Winifred M. Frye, president of the local branch.

News-Press, September 28, 1938

CHECK OUR WEBSITE

Do you want to check on the date of your discussion unit before your *Voter* has arrived? Would you like to know more about the topics we are discussing? The current and last month's issues of the *Channel Voter* are on your website, <http://www.lwvsantabarbra.org>. There is an additional listing for the calendar, along with references for the current topic, if available. Here are several references for the April water unit:

(1) The Public Policy Institute of California (<http://www.ppic.org/main/about.asp>);

(2) Two very relevant books, even though they were published in the 1980s:

- *Troubled water: The poisoning of America's drinking water, how government and industry allowed it to happen, and what you can do to ensure a safe supply in the home* by Jonathan King; and
- *Battling the inland sea : American political culture, public policy, and the Sacramento Valley, 1850-1986* by Robert Kelley.

Lesley Alexander, Webmaster

If you know someone who might be interested in the League, please pass along this application:

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP in the LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS, SANTA BARBARA

Here's my annual membership dues of \$60*

Name _____

Second member in same household \$30

Address _____

Student \$30

_____ Zip _____

Please send me more information about League

Phone _____ Fax _____

I can't join right now; here is my contribution of
\$_____ to support the League.

E-mail _____

Make check payable to: League of Women Voters of Santa Barbara, 328 A E. Carrillo St, Santa Barbara, CA 93101

**Discounted dues are available for special circumstances. Contract Joanie Jones - 683-1937.*

CALENDAR - MAY 2007

Discussion Units: New Healthcare Reform Campaign

- 1 **Tuesday** **Dinner Unit:** 5:30 p.m. Madam Lu's Café, 3542 State St. Contact: Margaret Roff, 685-4839.
- 2 **Wednesday** **Carpinteria Unit:** 12:30-2 p.m. Singing Springs Condominiums Recreation Room, 5455 8th St., Carpinteria. Contact: Barbara Godley, 969-9942. Salad potluck luncheon.
- 2 **Wednesday** **Evening Unit:** 7:30 p.m. Home of Pat Shewczyk, 5044 Walnut Park Dr., 964-7506.
- 6 **Sunday** **Garden Party:** 2-4 p.m. QAD Campus, 2111 Ortega Hill Road, in Summerland.
- 8 **Tuesday** **Immigration Study Committee:** 1 p.m. Samarkand Retirement Community. Call Jessica Dean, 898-0240.
- 9 **Wednesday** **Afternoon Unit:** 2 p.m. Maravilla Clubhouse, 5486 Calle Real, between Patterson and Kellogg. Contact: Marjorie Nefstead, 964-0886.
- 11 **Friday** **Board Meeting:** 10 a.m., League office, 328 E. Carrillo, Suite A. Open to all members.
- 16 **Wednesday** **Community Forum:** "The Brown Act and Open Government" 12:15-2 p.m. Our featured speaker will be Shane Stark, Santa Barbara City Counsel. Louise Lowry Davis Center, corner of De La Vina and Victoria Streets. Brown bag lunch. Cookies and drinks provided.
- 17-20 **Wed-Sun** **2007 State Convention:** "Rally in the Valley" in Bakersfield.
- 25 **Friday** **SCC Environmental Task Force:** 9:30 a.m. (confirm time – 687-8260), League office. Visitors welcome.

LOOKING AHEAD TO SUMMER

- Thurs., June 7** **OneCareNow Santa Barbara MARCH AND RALLY** for "The Universal Health Care Act of 2007" (Kuehl bill, CA SB840): Meet at De La Guerra Plaza at 5:00 p.m. and march to the Court House for a short rally. For more information, call Carole Marks at 682-1228.
- Sat., June 9** **Annual Meeting 2007:** 9:30-1:30, Holiday Inn, 5650 Calle Real, Goleta
- Sat., August 25** **The Great American Write-in:** 1-3 p.m., Faulkner Gallery, S.B. Central Library. See article on p. 6.



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The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. If you would like to join the local League, call the League office at 965-2422.

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