

March 2023

24-Hour Phone 651.227.5502

Volume 59 Issue 3

STEP THREE

Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.

THIS BEAUTIFUL TRUTH

I came to AA because my husband threatened to divorce me if I didn't. I had a serious drinking problem and I believed that doctors and therapists or members of any sciencebased discipline should have the answer to my problem–not AA. I had many pre-conceived ideas and prejudices against AA, the primary one being that it was some kind of Christian cult.

I am a Muslim. I grew up in a very strict Islamic state that is governed by Islamic doctrine and antiquated regulations. I believe in the teachings of my noble religion, but like most people who claim to be religious, I talked the talk but never really listened to the message.

When I started traveling and living around the world with my husband, I enjoyed the freedoms I was offered and went too far with unnecessary rebellion, namely alcohol abuse.

I attended my first AA meeting in Europe. It was an eye and heart-opening experience for me. Walking up the steps of the community center, following the AA sign, was quite a humbling and scary feeling. I was welcomed by a sweet meeting leader and I immediately volunteered that it was my first time and I was clueless as to what I needed to do. She said, "You don't have to do anything, just share your story with us and feel very grateful that you decided to come today because you're in the right place."

The room started filling up with an interesting variety of people. Some were pretty "jazzylooking" characters, others were well-dressed businessmen and women, still others were people who looked like me. I was surprised to see such a varied collection of individuals. They looked quite joyful and relaxed. I remember thinking, I want to be happy like them.

I read the Big Book and the "Twelve and Twelve" and listened to everything I could find on the internet about AA teachings. It was all very helpful, except for the Second and Third Steps. I believed in God but couldn't accept that if I just prayed earnestly he would take away my problem. I had begged God to help me stop drinking for 10 years and it didn't work.

I argued a lot with my first sponsor about how simple and childish it seemed to me to say that if I just surrendered my will to God he would relieve me of my alcoholism. I just couldn't accept that it could be that simple. I asked her,

"What would make me not take that first drink on an airplane where nobody knew me and I wasn't answerable to anybody?"

"You have to be prepared for that situation and pray, and talk to someone before boarding

continued on page 3

 St. Paul & Suburban Area Intergroup, Inc.

 33 Wentworth Ave E, Suite 355, West St. Paul, MN 55118-3431

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 e-mail: lifeline@aastpaul.org
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 Office Hours: Monday through Friday – 9:30 AM to 5:30 PM; Closed weekends and holidays

The Lifeline is the monthly newsletter of the St. Paul and Suburban Area Intergroup, Inc. It is about, by, and for groups and members of the A.A. Fellowship. Opinions expressed herein are not to be attributed to A.A. as a whole, nor does publication of any article imply endorsement by either A.A. or St. Paul Intergroup. We welcome articles on a Step, Tradition or Concept, in addition to descriptions of personal experience. We also welcome original cartoons and drawings expressing the wry side of A.A. experience.

Please email your article to Lifeline@aastpaul.org or send it by regular mail to Lifeline Editor, St. Paul Intergroup, 33 Wentworth Ave E, Suite 355. W. St. Paul, MN 55118-3431. Materials or articles mailed to us cannot be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope. Intergroup reserves the right to edit submissions for clarity, language, length, and content that might violate A.A.'s Traditions, etc.



VOLUNTEERS WANTED ST. PAUL INTERGROUP

Planning for an April 29th Event

St. Paul Intergroup is planning our annual SPRING FLING and needs several volunteers from the AA community to help us. Please read through the opportunities to the right and sign up today. Thank you for helping Intergroup ensure newcomers see the joy and fun in AA!

But we aren't a glum lot. If newcomers could see no joy or fun in our existence, they wouldn't want it. We absolutely insist on enjoying life. – page 132, Alcoholics Anonymous We could use a strong leader to organize volunteers & coordinate with a contact on the board

People to set up at the event

Serve food or run a booth

Clean up

Shopping & Transport to the event

ST. PAUL INTERGROUP

33 Wentworth Ave #355 West St. Paul, MN 55118 651.227.5502

https://www.aastpaul.org/

altchair@aastpaul.org

that flight," she answered. I always felt that was impossible. My mind told me that no prayer or person could stop me from taking that first drink. It had to come from within, I told her. "Well, that's not AA, and I can't sponsor you if you refuse to follow the Steps," she said. That was the beginning of the end of our sponsor/sponsee relationship, although we are still good friends.

My current sponsor, who in my eyes is a kind of Superman, has a mature and worldly knowledge of the AA principles. He heard my arguments about finding my Higher Power and pointed me to the Big Book. In the chapter "We Agnostics" Bill, our cofounder, writes: "Sometimes we had to search fearlessly but he was there. He was as much a fact as we were. We found the Great Reality deep down within us. In the last analysis it is only there that he may be found."

My sponsor also asked me to read the "Spiritual Experience" section in the back section of the Big Book. There's a line that says, "... our members find that they have tapped an unsuspected inner resource which they presently identify with their own conception of a power greater than themselves." These passages gave me all the validation I needed and all the strength I needed to surrender completely to the program. It's been one year since my last drink and I'm proud to say that I'm a very grateful member of AA.

Nobody from AA ever tried to persuade me to consider their religious beliefs or undermined my own. What my family and culture and schools failed to teach me was that if I look inside, deep within, my spirit is always trying to direct me to a simple, pure and honorable life. A life based on truth, humility and willingness, not delusions, false pride and resentments. I've learned to listen to that soft voice and believe that I deserve unconditional love.

My only responsibility in this wonderful life I've been gifted is to live it with joy–joy for my inner spirit and for the many loving spirits around me. AA taught me this lesson and gave me Twelve clear, awesome Steps to follow in order to reach this beautiful truth.

-Anonymous, Cleveland Miss, MO AA Grapevine January 2023

GOPHER STATE ROUNDUP -Hospitality Suites

Gopher State Roundup XLVIII will be held at the DoubleTree Bloomington May 26, 27 and 28, 2023. Hospitality suites are available by reservation for this event.

If your group is interested in a hospitality suite and the associated rates, please contact us at hospitalitysuitescommittee@gmail.com.

If you had a room last year you will be sent this year's application form soon.

We hope to see you there!

See pg. 8 for more information on the Gopher State roundup.

Gopher State Roundup Hospitality Suites Committee

Gopher State Roundup PO Box 390533 Minneapolis, MN 55439-2026



THIRD STEP PRAYER

God, I offer myself to Thee-to build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy Power, Thy Love, and Thy Way of life. May I do Thy will always!

-Alcoholics Anonymous, p. 63

2023 A.A. West Central Regional

Service Conference

March 3-5, 2023 Hosted by Area 41

A.A.'s Three Legacies – Our Common Solution

Conference Registration Event Registration - \$25 Price Increases to \$30 on 2/1/23

Register Online: Bit.ly/WCR23Reg Mail-In Form Below with Check by 2/15/23

Hotel Information DoubleTree Omaha Downtown 1616 Dodge St, Omaha, NE 68102

Hotel Reservation - \$119/night Online Link: Bit.ly/WCR23Hotel

Unlimited coffee pass available for \$25 - Buy a pass in advance or pay per cup at the Conference Check out www.westcentralregion.org for more information!

Friday | March 3, 2023

Past & Present Delegates Only Meetings 10:00 - 3:00pm Sharing Sessions; Lunch (On Your Own)

Events for All WCRAASC Attendees Begin			
2:30pm	Registration Opens		
3:30pm	Early Bird Meeting		
5:30pm	First Timer Orientation		
7:00pm	Welcome		
7:15 - 8:00pm	Presented by Area 40: Our Common Perils and Common Solution		
8:00 - 8:30pm Meet the Delegates 8:45 - 10:00pm General Service Conference Agenda It			

Saturday continued

11:30 - 1:00pm	Lunch (On Your Own)
1:00 - 2:00pm	General Service Conference Agenda Items
2:00 - 2:45pm	Presented by Area 36: Fostering a Thriving Three
	Legacy Culture
3:00 - 3:45pm	Breakout Sessions
4:00 - 5:30pm	General Service Conference Agenda Items
5:30 - 7:00pm	Dinner (On Your Own)
7:00 - 8:30pm	Open Speaker Meeting - Carolyn W.,
	Surrey, British Columbia
8:45-10:00pm	General Service Conference Agenda Items

Sunday | March 5, 2023

9	Saturday March 4, 2023		7:00am	Early Bird Meeting	
7:00am	Early Bird Meeting		8:00am	Welcome	
8:00am	Welcome		8:15 - 9:00am	Presented by Area 24: Pract	-
8:15 - 10:30am General Service Conference Agenda Items			Traditions Across All Group Settings		
10:45 - 11:30am	Presented by Area 52: Using A.A.'s Literature in Carrying the Message		9:00 - 10:30am 10:30am	Past Trustee Sharing & Ask It Basket Conference Closes	
	, , , ,		Conference	Conference	Hotel

Attend In-Person or Via Zoom (Zoom link provided after registration)





Registration





To register by mail, send this portion with your check made payable to West Central Region. Mail by 2/15/23 to WCRAASC, PO Box 22145, Lincoln, NE 68542

Name:	Area: City:	State:
Home Group:	Service Position:	•
Phone:	Email:	
Do you need ASL or Spanish translation? ASL	Spanish Are you purchasing a coffee pass?	YesNo

TRADITION THREE

The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking

A COMMON DESIRE

I used to share at meetings that I worked in a heavy drinking job. I was a journalist. I stopped saying it when I heard a man say, "I work in a heavy drinking trade–I'm an undertaker." I realized then that alcoholics tend to work in heavy drinking jobs. I didn't have half a pint of beer or a gin and tonic to relax after a hard day and then catch the train home to wife and family. Once in the pub I was there till closing time.

My first AA sponsor was a self-employed building plasterer who left school at 15. My second sponsor was a milkman. My current sponsor is a retired surgeon. One of my dearest AA friends is a Catholic priest; I'm a Quaker and an agnostic. I have a precious memory of saying the Serenity Prayer with him while crossing the Sea of Galilee on a boat full of pilgrims to the Holy Land, though my understanding of the word God was nothing like his. "We are people who normally would not mix."

Oh, I'd have mixed with you all right in some sordid bar where I hoped to find understanding companionship and approval. Momentarily I did, but it was the camaraderie of the condemned. In AA we learn that we must hang together–or hang separately; that we live under a suspended death sentence, with only a daily reprieve from a fatal condition. That's the incentive and discipline that bind us together.

In Al-Anon I've heard, "You might not like us all, but you will come to love us each in a very special way." There's a story about an AA member washed up alone on a tiny desert island. Years later he is spotted from a passing liner and a lifeboat is sent to rescue him. One of the sailors greets him and says, "Why have you built those two huts on either end of your island?" The AA member, pointing, says, "That one is my home group-the other one is the meeting I don't go to." Our cofounder Bill W. once wrote, "AA will always have its traditionalists, fundamentalists and its relativists...." And in a July 1946 Grapevine article, he wrote, "So long as there is the slightest interest in sobriety, the most unmoral, the most anti-social, the most critical alcoholic may gather about him a few kindred spirits and announce to us that a new Alcoholics Anonymous group has been formed. Anti-God, anti-medicine, anti-our recovery program, even anti-each other-these rampant individuals are still an AA group if they think so."

The long form of our Third Tradition states, "Our membership ought to include all who suffer from alcoholism. Hence we may refuse none who wish to recover. Nor ought AA membership ever depend upon money or conformity. Any two or three alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an AA group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation." The directory of AA groups in Great Britain and continental Europe lists so many types of groups, but states that they are "listed on the understanding that they are nonrestrictive." No group can turn away anyone with a drinking problem-or insist on any conditions for attending, such as telling a newcomer they must find God, get a sponsor or practice the Steps. AA's many resources are freely available for anyone to use-but there are no instructions, no "you musts." There's room for us all in AA; the only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking.

Of course, I have my share of heartaches and disappointments. I'm not excused life's "slings and arrows" just because I'm sober. Happy, joyous and free 24/7/365? What an infantile delusion! As an active alcoholic I knew loneliness such as few do. In AA I found release from care, boredom and worry. Life did mean something at last. I've enjoyed the most satisfactory years of my existence and made lifelong friends in a Fellowship. We have escaped disaster together.

-Anonymous, Essex (AA Grapevine ,March 2022)

THOUGHTS FROM THE BOARD

In December 1990, I was 5 months sober and, because my life was still completely unmanageable, I decided to drive from the Twin Cities to my hometown of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania for the holidays. I had every intention of returning to Minnesota after the holidays, so it was a sort of mini-geographic.

Some background: In July I had had the "moment of clarity" that made me realize that I should do something about my drinking. I was living in Minneapolis and called the Minneapolis Intergroup office and they sent me a meeting guide. After endless looking at it, I opened the guide, found a noon meeting and attended my first meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous. I started to read the Big Book and other AA resources and learned about the early history of AA in Akron, Ohio.

Five months later, on the way to Pittsburgh, I was driving on the Ohio Turnpike just south of Cleveland. Just ahead was a sign that read: I-77 Akron, Right Lane. I exited onto I-77 enroute to Akron. I thought "I'll stop at a payphone, check the phone book, call the Akron Intergroup office and ask them where the sites of early AA are; the Mayflower Hotel, the Seiberling House, Doctor Bob's house etc." I called, and the woman who answered the phone told me to drive right over to the Intergroup office and she would speak to me and let me know where the sites were. I felt like I was on a pilgrimage!

As I pulled into the parking lot, something was wrong with my car (A 1984 VW Rabbit). It was the clutch. I went into the Intergroup office and was welcomed with open arms! They were so pleased that I had made the effort to come to Akron. I told them what had happened and one of the staff told me her close friend was a mechanic. A few phone calls later, a plan was in place. My car would be towed to the friend's shop, my folks would drive over from Pittsburgh, about 90 minutes to pick me up, I would return when the car was fixed. Thank you Akron Intergroup! In the meantime, when my new friends were finished with their shifts, they took me around to "see the sights." (The Mayflower is no longer there.)

I can't tell you how important AA Intergroup was to me in my early sobriety. I am privileged to be able to serve as a Board Member-At-Large.

"I am responsible...

When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help. I want the hand of AA always to be there. And for that: I am responsible."

- Tom W.

Member-at-Large, Saint Paul Intergroup Board

Rule 62 Step & Tradition Meeting

Anniversary Meeting & Potluck June 24th, 2023

Potluck at 6PM

Speaker at 7PM

Zoom link TBD; 341 Hamline Ave South, Saint Paul, MN



Self-Support Suggestions for Groups

"Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions." The Conference-approved pamphlet: "Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix" offers the following suggestions for the distribution of group funds after group expenses have been paid:

50% St. Paul Intergroup

33 Wentworth Ave E. Suite 355 West St. Paul, MN 55118-3431

30% General Service Office

P.O. Box 2407 James A Farley Station New York, NY 10116-2407

10% Southern MN Area 36

Southern Minnesota Area Assembly P.O. Box 2812 Mpls., MN 55402-0812

10% District Committee

Ramsey County:

District 8, P.O. Box 131523 St. Paul, MN 55113

Dakota County:

District 19, P.O. Box 1466 Burnsville, MN 55337

Washington County:

District 15, P.O. Box 181 Lake Elmo, MN 55042

Ways to Financially Support Intergroup

1. VIA SQUARE

Use the camera on your phone to scan this QR code to be redirected to the SPI contribution webpage



https://square.link/u/jlF6dLuj

2. VIA CASHAPP

Contribute to SPI via CashApp ~ **\$spintergroup**

Please add SPI to your favorites and consider making regular contributions each time you make 7th Tradition contributions to other groups.

3. VIA CHECK

You are always welcome to stop by during business hours, or mail a personal or AA group check to the office at:

> Saint Paul Intergroup 33 Wentworth Ave E, Ste 355 West St. Paul, MN 55118-3431

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District Service Meetings

District 8 (Ramsey Co.) Fairview Community Center 1910 Cty. Rd B West, Rm 108 Roseville 3rd Wed., 7:00 PM Email: dist8@area36.org (for Zoom info)

District 15 (Wash. Co.) Christ Lutheran Church 11194 N. 36th St. Lake Elmo 4th Mon., 7:00 PM Email: dist15@area36.org (for Zoom info)

District 19 (Dakota Co.) Rosemount Community Center 13885 South Robert Trail Rosemount 2nd Wed., 7:00 PM dist19@area36.org Email: dist19@area36.org (for Zoom info)



LOOKING FOR A SERVICE OPPORTUNITY?

Become a St. Paul Intergroup Night Owl If you are interested - Contact:

Nightowl@aastpaul.org to schedule training.

St. Paul Intergroup Office 33 Wentworth Ave E, Suite 355 West St. Paul, MN 55118-3431 To RSVP - please call 651-227-5502

2023 Intergroup Board of Directors

Advisor to the Board (non voting)

Chairperson	Eliot W.
Alternate Chairperson	Renee B.
Secretary	Kelly K.
Treasurer	Bill C.
Alternate Treasurer	Gerry L.
2023 Member-At-Large	Tom W.
2023 Member-At-Large	Angie T.
2024 Member-At-Large	
2024 Member-At-Large	Mary U.
Office Manager	Noah L-C
Web Servant (non voting)	Jonathan L.
Night Owl Coordinator (non voting	g) Rachel P.

Special Skills Needed

THE SAINT PAUL INTERGROUP OFFICE

is interested in expanding our volunteer base to include people skilled in the following:

- graphic design
- office administration
- retail sales
- human resources/training
- event coordination
- communications
- contract law or legal language

For more information or to volunteer your time, please email altchair@aastpaul.org or call the office at 651-227-5502

Her new Technicolor World

When I came into AA, I didn't want to hear anything about God. I had trusted in a loving God growing up, but my father left my mother when he was drinking, and it was very painful for the entire family. Shortly after he took off, my mother sat me down on the cooler in our laundry room and told me about her hopelessness. I remember it as if it happened yesterday. She cried, which I had never seen her do before, and said, "I'll never have someone to love me again." As a devout Catholic, she didn't believe in divorce or remarrying, and she still loved my father dearly. It was then that I gave up on God.

At the end of my own drinking I was trying to go to church, which I used to love. I would sit and cry during the entire mass. I was very deep into my alcoholism. I was a delinquent mother, wife, daughter, friend, coworker and employee. I had no ability to interact with the world and was living in isolation, fear and depression. I was drinking vodka on a nightly basis, and it had stopped working. I thought my children and husband would be better off without me. I had shelves of self-help books, had been going to therapists for years, and was a compulsive exerciser and a workaholic. I thought God had failed me.

When I got sober and first came upon the sentence in the Big Book, "Each individual, in the personal stories, describes in his own language and from his own point of view the way he established his relationship with God," I misread it. I thought it said that each individual describes the way he stopped drinking, not "the way he established his relationship with God." What this statement was saying was that once I established a relationship with a Higher Power by working the Twelve Steps, then my drinking problem would be solved.

One day I recognized myself in one of the personal stories in the Big Book. It said, "There is nothing worse than a confused psychiatrist." That was exactly what I was: a psychiatrist by profession and now sober for four years, yet I was still depressed. I thought this was as good as life got. At the beginning of my sobriety, while living in Germany, I was listening to a woman named Karen G. on a speaker tape. I laughed and identified for the first time in my life. Four years later I found her tape again, popped it in, and again belly-laughed as I hadn't done in a long time. I called the tape company and asked if there was some way I could get her phone number. They checked with her and sent it to me.

I called Karen every day for a week, but I started to get angry that she hadn't called back. What kind of an AA was she? But she did call me back a few days later; she'd been out of town. She said she couldn't sponsor me, but I told her I was desperate. She asked to hear my story. When I mentioned my profession, it turned out she was a successful nurse. I'm sure she thought, I better sponsor this chick or she is going to go and kill herself.

She told me to get a sponsee within two weeks, start writing on the First Step, and call her every single day no matter what. I had never called anyone every day–sponsor or not–but she knew this would deepen my relationship with God. She told me to read two pages of the Big Book every day. She would ask me, "How are you with your Higher Power?" Even after going through the Steps twice, I still didn't have a personal relationship with him. Karen told me to go to every meeting and listen for how people talked about God. I was shocked when I heard how often God was mentioned at meetings. I had been blocking it out because I was so angry with him.

Around that time I started taking a beautiful coastal drive every morning. Slowly I began to see God in nature, then in every face in every meeting, then in my family and friends. God was everywhere. The world slowly opened up; I soon came out of isolation. I started attending a Bible study group at my church and rebuilt my trust and joy in God and life. Gray turned to technicolor. I came to love and appreciate my husband and sons more. I became an active member of AA and started carrying a message of hope. God had removed my depression. Talk about a miracle.

My dad eventually did make it to AA about a year after he left my mom. He now has 29 years sober. After 10 years' sobriety, he and my mother reunited and are currently each other's best friend. My dad, who had been an atheist, now talks frequently about his Higher Power and faith. I joke with him that if he got any more spiritual he'd float right out the top of AA. It's a miracle we have the relationship that we do today. For many years I hated him and blamed him for all the pain he'd caused. Now we giggle and laugh and go to AA meetings together. We'll go to the local burger joint drive-through, and if he really feels like splurging, we do a fancier place.

The Big Book says that "we have been rocketed into a fourth dimension of existence." I have been. By working the Steps, I regained a relationship with God and can feel his presence throughout my day. I've been sober now for nine and a half years and have an amazing, blessed life.

I've always separated my profession from my recovery, and I do not substitute my service in AA with my work as a psychiatrist. I now have a way of life that solves all my problems, not just my alcoholism. I've been to meetings all over the world and have friends all over Europe and the U.S. It is comforting to know AA will always be there for me, and because of the Traditions, hopefully it will be here for generations to come.

-Karen J., Portland, OR AA Grapevine October 2013



There is a NEW PO Box for mailing your contributions in to the General Service Office in New York.

General Service Office Post Office Box 2407 James A Farley Station New York, NY 10116-2407

Be sure to use this address for ALL *contributions*. Use the Box 459 address for only for general correspondence.



The following groups, members and Faithful Fiver members made the above services possible:

- Children of Chaos Plus
- Clay City AA
- Como Park BB
- Defiant Brats West End Club
- Eagan Tuesday Nighters
- Farmington Wed BB
- Fourth Dimension
- Friday Nite 12x12 By The BookHampden Park Group
- Hole in the Doughnut Group
- Hope Group Lakeville
- Hugo Group
- Island Lake Group
- Jumpstart 12 & 12
- Main Idea
- Maplewood Groups
- New Brighton BB
- Next Right Thing

- Old TimersOld Timers
- Rally Point AA
- River Rats
- Rosemount Groups
- Roseville Wed Night
- Saturday AA Afton
- Saturday Morning Serenity Group
- Shoreview 12 x 12
- Sisters of Serenity
- Summit HillThere's a Better Way
- Third Tradition Northfield
- Uptown Group
- Valley Creek Thursday Night
- Wednesday Night Men's 12 x 12
- Woodbury Primary Purpose
- Wood

- 35 A.A. Groups contributed \$ 5,578
- 19 Faithful Fivers contributed \$ 430
- 17 Digital Contributions \$1075

Thank You So Very Huch!

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St. Paul & Suburban Area Intergroup 33 Wentworth Ave E Suite 355 West St. Paul, MN 55118-3431

Change Service Requested



Please let us know a month in advance if your address changes. It saves us the cost of return postage and enables you to get each issue of The Lifeline. Our mailing permit does not provide for mail forwarding. THANK YOU!



St. Paul Intergroup Individual Contribution Enrollment Form

Your Intergroup strives to be self-supporting, and with your personal support we can continue to carry our vital message of Hope and Recovery to all who need and want it. Your contribution entitles you to a one-year subscription to the Lifeline. Contributions may be made annually, bi-annually, quarterly, or monthly. Please consider becoming one of our *Faithful Fivers (\$5.00/month), Terrific Tenners (\$10.00/month), or Fantastic Fifteeners &\$15.00/month).*

3. Choose a Payment Method:		
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