

Golden Triangle

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Obituary -- American Youth Hostels - Pittsburgh Council

The end of an era - and a long era at that! The last weekly meeting of AYH was held on June 3, 2004 to a packed house, including members dating back to the 1950s. The first weekly meeting was held in the 1930s and, except for a several-year lapse during WWII, had been held weekly ever since.

The cause of death was bankruptcy caused, in turn, by its Pittsburgh hostel on the south side. It was a Black Hole for money as it turns out, pretty much like its Ohiopyle hostel. Below is a bit of history and a biopsy.

AYH's main (and sizeable) contribution to the quality of life in this area has always been its outings program - a lively mix of hiking, bicycling, flatwater canoeing, whitewater canoeing, kayaking, caving, climbing, ski-touring, backpacking and a few others (kite-flying??), plus countless schools in many of these activities. AYH built the Baker Trail and the Rachel Carson Trail that could take one from Pittsburgh to Allegheny National Forest. AYH published numerous editions of numerous guides to hiking and canoeing in the region. Its extended trips in the summer took many of us on unforgettable trips such as backpacking on Mt. Rainier, the Olympic Rainforest, the Olympic Seashore, the North Cascades and Rocky Mtn. National Park, cycling hostel-to-hostel in New England, hut-hopping in the White Mountains, white-water canoeing and sail-canoeing on the streams and lakes of Wisconsin and countless others. No one will ever know how many multi-decade-long friendships came out of the delights, camaraderie, trials and tribulations of all those thousands of trips. Calamity Rock in the Cheat Narrows was named for a terrifying rafting episode on an AYH trip. White water canoe trips have been known to arrive, still cold and wet, back in Pittsburgh around 4 AM. There was a broken back on a bicycle descent off of Pittsburgh's Mt. Washington, and a nasty altercation between a bicycle and a pickup truck.

AYH always had its ups and downs. At times its weekly Thursday evening meetings saw people packed shoulder-to-shoulder watching slide shows of past adventures and listening to 8-10 trip leaders advertising the adventures they had planned for the weekend. At other times the organization was held together by 3-4 people struggling to get the club back on its feet. A lot was learned about the dynamics of "volunteer associations" (as such organizations are called). One example of many: A preoccupation with social aspects and beginner-oriented trips foretells an impending collapse. A focus on substantive outdoor-oriented adventures and pleasures means another growth spurt toward a membership size that tends to attract the purely socially oriented.

AYH was always a down-to-earth, low-budget operation that attracted people of like mind. Its headquarters/ meeting room was a former Mellon estate chicken coop built on the property line with the Marshal mansion (now Arts Center), apparently as a result of some sort of feud. Outings had always been profitable, even with trip fees of \$0.25 to \$1/day, canoe- and bicycle rentals of a few dollars per day, and sales of modestly-priced trail guides. This combination of profitability and frugality might well have been AYH's undoing. The several hundred thousand dollars in savings generated over the decades was perhaps too much of a temptation to the hostel-oriented faction of the club. (AYH always had an uneasy split personality.) They grabbed control of the club, abolished the Activities Board (that had always handled the day-to-day operations of the club) and sunk everything into a highly leveraged hostel. The rest is history.

Bruce E Sundquist



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Kelleys Island, Cape Henlopen and Presque Isle are just a few of the interesting and exciting places we visited last summer. Whether you are a beginner or an experienced paddler, we have a trip for you. So grab your paddle and sunscreen and we will see you on the water.

ActivityCo-Chairs Vickie 412-344-4929
 Russ 412-331-2073

See
Sierra Clubs Hikes, at end.



ROCK CLIMBING

Important Notice / Rock Climbing

We regret to inform our members that the Pittsburgh Council is no longer able to sponsor any rock climbing activities for insurance reasons. Our liability insurance is provided through the National AYH organization. After lengthy discussions with National’s insurance carrier, we have been notified that a number of activities classified as “high risk” have been excluded from our coverage effective 1 April. While National was successful in negotiating the removal of several activities (such as ice-skating and cross country skiing) from the initial list of exclusions, they were ultimately unsuccessful in being able to have rock climbing covered. While we are disappointed with this exclusion, we have no choice but to stop sponsoring all rock climbing activities. Thank you to all of the volunteers who assisted in the organization and operation of the rock climbing activity over the years. It would not have been possible without you. Discussions are underway with other activities organizations that may be able to sponsor rock climbing activities. For more information, please contact Chuck Jones at charljonz@excite.com or (412)766-4036 or Annie Jones at (412) 303-1793. Please call before 10 o'clock at night. <http://www.wpfi.org/>

While it is unfortunate that we will no longer be able to sponsor rock climbing, we would like to remind both members and non-members of the great activities that we sponsor, and encourage everyone's continued participation.

UPCOMING SLIDE SHOWS

Rambles For Fall 2009

September

- Oct 7** Twin Lakes Park Greensburg-bag lunch-\$3.00 car pool -Martha Raak-412-802-7266
- Oct 14** 16 Th. St. and walk to the science center for lunch and walk back-Janet Hartz-412-889-7561
- Oct 21** Squaw Run Fox Chapel-lunch at pavilion-Ed Divers-412-868-5154.
- Oct 28** Moraine State Park-Car pool \$3.00-bag lunch-Earl McCabe-412-761-1844

October

- Nov 4** Pittsburgh Zoo-picnic lunch or restaurant-Joan Roolf-412-496-4925.
- Nov 11** Homestead Library, museum, Bulgarian Club-Restaurant-Albert Farhy-412-521-8226
- Nov 18** Second stair walk of South Side Slopes-bag lunch or restaurant-Marian Fast-412-241-2109.
- Nov 25** Mystery Walk-Bag lunch or restaurant-Margaret Laske-412-421-5219

December

- Dec 2** TBA
- Dec 9** TBA
- Dec 16** Mystery hike in Greensburg followed by Christmas Party lunch at Appleby’s- \$5.00 contribution. Margaret Laske-412-421-5219
- Dec 23** Art Walk in Lawrenceville-restaurant lunch-Martha Raak 412-802-7266 and Margaret Laske-412-421-5219.
- Dec 30** Mystery Walk and restaurant lunch- Margaret Laske-412-421-5219.

Rambles begin at 10:00 AM . Meet at the parking lot of Phipps Garden Center on Shady Avenue at the corner of 5th Avenue. Carpooling is encouraged. Please pay driver about .07/mile. Picnic lunch if weather permits, otherwise go to a restaurant. Call leader if you plan to meet at trailhead. For information call Mark Le Schack at 412-271-7950 or Coordinator Billie Woodland 412-886-1603, cell phone 412-889-7048.

Trip changes will aslo be noted at hipittsburgh.org



HIKING/BACKPACKING/TRAILS

AMBLE HIKES ARE 4-6 MILES IN INTERESTING LOCATIONS AROUND PITTSBURGH. CONNIE BLACK HAS AGREED TO TAKE CALLS FROM THOSE WISHING TO LEAD AN AMBLE AS WELL AS THOSE WISHING TO GO ON AN AMBLE.

CONNIE'S PHONE NUMBER IS 412-371-1062 AND HER EMAIL IS ceblack@libcom.com

ALLEGHENY GROUP ~ SIERRA CLUB ~ OUTINGS ~ Sept. 26, 2009 - Jan. 1, 2009

* Suggested carpool fee: 7 cents/ passenger-mile + a share of tolls.

* All trips begin and end at the trailhead. Carpooling is your choice - not part of the trip.

* (Unless stated, car-miles are one-way from Monroeville.)

* For more up-to-date listings and revisions, visit <http://www.alleghenysc.org/>

* E-mail subscriptions are free. Contact Dianne Ciccarelli at Dianne.ciccarelli@hotmail.com

* All participants on Sierra Club outings must sign a standard liability waiver form at the trailhead. If you wish to read it well before you are asked to sign the form at the trailhead, go to: <http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/chapter/forms/>, or contact the Outings Department at 415-977-5528 for a hardcopy.

Sat. Sept. 26 "Summer's Over" Loop Hike at Raccoon Creek. Summer is officially over as of Tuesday, September 22. Then it's time for fall hiking and Raccoon Creek State Park is the perfect place. This is an 8-mile loop hike on the west side of Raccoon Creek State Park. We will hike the Forest Trail (one of the relatively new backpacking trails), Heron Trail, Wetlands Trail, Buckskin Trail, and eventually make our way down to the old Frankfort Mineral Springs area, a National Historic Site commemorating the location settled in 1772 by Levi and Mary Dungan and developed into a nationally famous resort during the early 1800's. This is a moderately-paced hike with frequent one-minute stops, not a race; here and there we will get our hands dirty and taste the teaberries. Plan to stay together as a group, no hikers will be left behind. Intermediate difficulty, there are some hills; temperatures should be comfortable, a few muddy spots, more if there's a recent rain. There may be a couple of stream crossings - just rock-hoppers, nothing serious. We will meet at Parkway Center Mall. Call Jim Ritchie at 412.576.0849 for more details and to confirm your arrangements.

Sun. Oct. 4 Hike - moderately strenuous and somewhat exploratory - loop hike, in the scenic Coopers Rock area, passing Ravens Rock, Coopers Rock, and Rock City, with views of the canyon of the Cheat River, seeing the historic Henry Clay Iron Furnace. \$12.50 carpool - 83 miles from Shadyside. Call Dick Pratt, 412-362-5567.

Sun. Oct. 4 Hike a fast-paced intermediate 8 miles in North Park. \$2.50 carpool - 18 miles from Shadyside. Call Judy or Don Ziegler, 412-826-0519.

Sun. Oct. 11 Hike about 6 miles around the perimeter of Boyce Park near Monroeville and Plum Boro. \$0.25 carpool - 2 miles. Call John Dern, 412-856-4642.

Sat. Oct. 17 Hike an easy 4-7-mile loop hike (depending on weather and stream conditions) near Sarver. Part of the route follows Buffalo Creek. Meet at Bob Evans Restaurant in Harmarville at 10 AM. \$2.80 carpool - 20 miles. Call Ed Divers, 412-828-5154.

Sat. Oct. 17 "Discover the Baker Trail" Fall Foliage Hike. This 8-mile shuttle hike along the shores of Crooked Creek Lake in Armstrong County will introduce you to the historical Baker Trail, a 132-mile backpacking trail that extends from Freeport in Allegheny County to Allegheny National Forest in Forest County. Our hike will start near the visitor center at Crooked Creek Lake, an Army Corps of Engineers flood control facility, and finish at Cochran's Mill, the birthplace and home turf of Nelly Bly, arguably the most famous woman to come from western Pennsylvania in the 19th century. The route takes us through Little Germany, across Elbow Run, past Sedwick's haunted cabin, over a covered footbridge installed by American Youth Hostels in the 1950's, and across Pine Run, finishing up

just past Coal Mine Spring. At the start, we will drive to set up a shuttle so we can get back to our cars. This section of the Baker Trail is ideal for viewing fall foliage - there is a lot of open space overlooking the wooded hillsides of Armstrong County. This is a moderately-paced hike with frequent one-minute stops, not a race; we will stop to visualize Nelly on the one hand wading in the creek with her bare feet and later circling the globe in 76 days as perhaps the world's most sophisticated woman. We will meet in Harmarville in the Target lot directly next to the Giant Eagle Express. Please call Jim at 412.576.0849 for further details and to confirm your arrangements.

Sat. Oct. 17 Maintenance activities on Laural Mountain Trails. Tasks will include brushing back and blazing trails, filling in wet spots, staining and reroofing the warming hut. Meet at the warming hut at 10:00 AM and finish about 3:00 PM. There will be a catered fall picnic in the downhill ski lodge after the work session. Participants must sign a document that will insure them and give them workers compensation if they are injured. Persons under 18 must be accompanied by a guardian and signed for by the guardian. Meeting times and places are subject to change, so check just before you go. \$8.50 carpool - 57 miles. Call Dave Mottorn, 724-327-7582.

Sun. Oct. 18 Easy 1.5-mile hike (2 hours) in Seldom Seen Greenway (Beechview Area). Meet at the far end of Brashear High School's parking lot at 590 Crane Ave. in Beechview at 1:30 PM. Call John or Kathy Murphy, 412-341-9367, or Bill Lawrence, 412-922-3951.

Sat. Oct. 24 Hike a leisurely 4-5 miles on Laurel Mtn.. This area is off Rt. 30 past Ligonier. We'll hike along trails used for XC skiing in the winter, so there are no real steep hills. Bring your lunch, as we will stop along the trail to eat. We will meet at 9:30 at the McDonalds along Rt. 30 outside of Latrobe. We might bring a few llamas to walk with us. Inquire about a carpool from Monroeville to Latrobe if you prefer. (\$8.50 carpool - 57 miles from Monroeville) Call Diane Neely, 724-459-3012.

Sun. Oct. 25 Enjoy the middle-to-end of the fall colors with an intermediate bike trip on Ghost-Town Trail. We can do the 18 miles round-trip from Dilltown to Nanty Glo and back, stopping at the old iron furnace that's in the best condition of any in the region. If the group wishes, we can go beyond Nanty Glo. \$7 carpool - 50 miles (+\$2 per bike carried) Call Donna Allen, 412-372-2993.

Sun. Nov. 1 Hike an intermediate, fast-paced, 7-8 miles in Harrison Hills Regional Park. \$2.75 carpool - 19 miles from Harmarville. Call Judy or Don Ziegler, 412-826-0519.

Sun. Nov. 8 Details to be determined. This will be an 8-mile hike, intermediate level, within a radius of 50 miles of Pittsburgh. This time of year, the leaves are down and brown is the color of western Pennsylvania. Temperatures are cool to chilly. Please call Jim at 412.576.0849 for further details, i.e., destination, meeting place, time, etc. You can also access Pittsburgh Hiking Meetup Group online for detailed information.

Sat. Nov.14 Hike a leisurely 4-5 miles on Laurel Mtn. This area is off Rt. 30 past Ligonier. We'll hike along trails used for XC skiing in the winter, so there are no real steep hills. We will hike different trails than we hiked in October. Bring your lunch, as we will stop along the trail to eat. We will meet at 9:30 at the McDonalds along Rt. 30 outside of Latrobe. We might bring a few llamas to walk with us. Inquire about a carpool from Monroeville to Latrobe if you prefer. (\$8.50 carpool - 57 miles from Monroeville) Call Diane Neely, 724-459-3012.

Sun. Nov. 15 Hike an east 7 miles near Connellsville past Casparis Cave and the Limestone mine. Meet at Gateway Middle School in Monroeville at 10 AM. \$6.50 carpool - 40 miles. Call Ed Divers, 412-828-5154.

Sun Nov. 29 Hike an easy total of 7 miles in Keystone State Park and on nearby trails near Loyalhanna Lake. \$3.50 car-

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pool - 25 miles. Call John Dern, 412-856-4642.

Sun. Dec. 6 Hike an easy 8-mile loop between Freeport and Bagdad. Part of the walk is along Baker Trail. Meet at Bob Evans Restaurant in Harmarville at 11 AM. \$2.75 carpool - 20 miles. Call Ed Divers, 412-828-5154.

Sun. Dec. 13 Hike a fast-paced 7 miles in Deer Lakes Park (about 4 miles from Harmarville). Call Judy or Don Ziegler, 412-826-0519.

Fri. Jan. 1 NEW YEARS DAY HIKE: Start at Washington's Landing and take Three Rivers Heritage Trail to PNC Park. Return on the south side of Allegheny River to the 16th Street Bridge and back to the starting point (6 miles total). Start at 11AM at the northeast (upstream) end of Herr's Island/ Washington's Landing by the tennis courts. Explore ahead of time and find this trailhead. We will leave it by 11:10 AM so you have to find it before then! The walk takes about three hours. Call Don Gibbon, 412-362-8451.

NOTES: Ask the leader for names and phone numbers of trippers for you to arrange a car pool. Reserve at least 36 hours in advance. If you leave your phone number on the leader's answering machine, give it slowly and clearly. Notify leader to cancel your reservation. Bring lunch, rain gear, water, first-aid kit, small flashlight and extra clothes for changes in weather. If you have a cell phone, bring it along. Cell phones have saved the day on several trips when accidents have required evacuation of trippers. Sierra Clubbers planning to lead outings during 1/1/10 - 3/31/10 should contact Bruce Sundquist at 724-327-8737 orbsundquist1@windstream.net by 12/15/10.

Other Outdoors Clubs

Butler Outdoors Club

BOC runs the same sorts of trips as Allegheny Group. Contact Dave Adams, 724-453-1685 DaveEAdams@aol.com or Bob Tait, 724-287-3382 BobTait@zbzoom.net or visit <http://www.butleroutdoorclub.com> Some trips by BOC and North Country Trails Assn. (NCTA) are listed below.

WISSAHICKON NATURE CLUB: If you enjoy nature lore, look into the meetings and field trips of Wissahickon Nature Club. They meet every other Thursday at 7 PM (except June-August) at Fern Hollow Nature Center, 1901 Glen Mitchell Road, Sewickley, PA 15143 (412)741-6136 <http://www.fernhollownaturecenter.org> Contact Chuck Tague, 412-488-8760 or 432 Olympia Road, Pittsburgh 15219

Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania

BSWP offers field trips in spring, summer and fall to look at and learn about the enormous variety of plant life that western Pa. offers. Everyone is welcome on field trips; amateurs, professionals, non-members, and anyone who is curious about the natural world. Trips are often at a leisurely pace, but may require hiking and traveling through wet/muddy areas. For information, e-mail your address for sample newsletter and membership information to mousemapper@verizon.net, or call Loree at 724-872-5232.

WPW (Western Pennsylvania Wheelmen) Bicycle Club

Home Page: <http://wpwbikeclub.org> Ride Hotline: 412-422-2234 Various length and difficulty rides scheduled each weekend and some during the week. Monthly meeting usually the 2nd Monday at 8pm at the Frick Environmental center on Beechwood Blvd in Squirrel Hill. See home page for details.

Moraine Sailing Club

MSC offers sailing opportunities for new and experienced sailors at Lake Arthur in Moraine State Park. They have an active education program for all ages, numerous sailing related social events, Day Sailing at Lake Arthur, and a very active sailboat racing program. For more information see the MSC Web Page at www.morainesailingclub.org or contact Chris Neuwirth 412-441-5590, email to: cmn@andrew.cmu.edu

WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA FIELD INSTITUTE -- TRIPS

For information on WPFI events, contact Sean Brady sbrady@wpfi.org 412-255-0564 or visit <http://www.wpfi.org/> All events open to the public. Fridays, Noon-12:50 PM Nature Walks starting in Market Square, Downtown Pittsburgh, Cost: Free

Outside Adventure Learning of Western Pennsylvania

Outside Adventures 2002 Paddling Schedule
Call 724-230-0237 or 412-968-0310 for information or to sign up for any event.
www.outsideadventures.org or www.outsideadventures@Yahoo.com
More outings continuously offered. Call for Updates: 724-230-0237 or 412-968-0310.
Outside Adventures Sea-Kayaking Program "Sea-Kayaking Taught From Scratch"
Outside Adventure Learning of Western Pa. is a non-profit educational organization committed to introducing individuals to safe and enjoyable recreational outdoor pursuits. The sea-kayaking program specializes in teaching all levels of sea-kayaking skills and organizing trips from our evening introductory classes for new paddlers up to advanced expedition tours. Outside Adventures welcomes participation from individuals, families, youth organizations and outings clubs. Sea-kayaks, or touring kayaks are versatile, fun, human-powered watercraft that enables us to do all these things and more. They are sleek and fast, more efficient than canoes, more comfortable and stable than whitewater kayaks, have hatches to swallow loads of gear, and steerable rudders that enable even beginners to control the boat with ease.



CANOEING

Activity Co-chairs: Paul Henry (724) 347-3282
Brian McBane (724) 443-8972



SAILING

The AYH no longer owns its own sailboats or runs trips but Bob Zavos will help coordinate sailing interests with other area organizations. The Moraine Sailing Club (MSC) is the largest local sailing group. Most activities are on Lake Arthur in Moraine State Park which is about 35 miles North of Pittsburgh. They offer education, social events and run a youth summer sail camp. They also have a large racing program and sponsor a Community Sailing Program for people without their own sailboats. They help organize/publicize Cruising Trips, but do not officially sponsor them. More information is on their website at www.morainesailingclub.org. Big boat sailors may want to check out the Erie Yacht Club: www.erieyachtclub.org or the Erie Bayfront Center for Marine studies: www.goerie.com/bcms

Moraine Preservations Fund (MPF), is looking for volunteers to help with the 50 passenger pontoon boat which they run on Lake Arthur in the Summer. It is used for scientific hands-on field trips for students and summer and fall tours for the public. They are looking for people interested in becoming volunteer mates and captains. You will need to have a boater's safety class, which you may already have taken or is easily available locally. To be a mate you must be 16 and 18 to be a captain. The boat training is given by experienced MPF captains, and you will be tested and licensed by the Fish and Boat Commission. The times and amount of time you would volunteer is completely by your choice. Even limited help is appreciated. If you have questions or would like to sign up, please contact Ruth Roperti at 724 843 7046, or email: missionmorain@zoominternet.net

The 6th annual **Lake Arthur Regatta is scheduled for August 14 & 15**. This is one of the largest water and boating related activities in the area. Mark your calendars and look for more information later in the season on the MSC Website or the Butler County site: www.visit-butler-county-pennsylvania-pa.com/

**Baker Trail and Rachel Carson Trail
Trail Maintenance Opportunities for 2006**

The Pittsburgh Council, American Youth Hostels, conceived and built the Baker Trail in the late 1940's and dedicated the Trail in 1950. It was built by returning war veterans who envisioned a network of "youth hostels" along the Trail where the youth of the world could find safe, inexpensive shelter while touring rural America on foot. Today the Trail is 141 miles long and extends from Freeport, PA to the Allegheny National Forest, and traverses Cook Forest State Park, several State Game Lands, Kittanning State Forest, the Mahoning and Crooked Creek Army Corps of Engineers projects, and several local recreation facilities. All AYH members are asked to spend one day a year helping us maintain the Trail. The Baker Trail is 100% volunteer-supported. We use no Federal, State, or Local government funding. Right now the trail needs AYH members who would like to participate in trail crew maintenance activities. Please contact Steve Mentzer SGMentzer@TrueCommerce.com

Adopt-a-Trail Volunteers needed. We also need volunteers to become trail stewards who are willing to adopt a 3-5 mile long section of the Baker Trail. Trail stewards will be independently responsible to work on their section of the trail on their own schedule. Responsibilities include painting yellow blazes on the trail once a year, picking up debris and trash off the treadway, and trimming vegetation away from blazes. Optional skills include chain saw work, shelter repair (we have 10 overnight shelters on the trail that require yearly maintenance—adopt a shelter as your own personal project) and/or you can build bridges, sidehill supports, benches, and other trail amenities. Regardless of the level of your effort, you would be expected to walk your trail section twice a year, preferably once in the spring (April, May) and once in the fall (September, October). All expenses for supplies-paint, brushes, etc.-are reimbursed.

Pennsylvania State Parks
Reservations & Information

Call Toll Free
1-888-PA-PARKS

Reserve up to 11 months in advance
Cabins - Pavilions - Camping

Mastercard www.dcnr.state.pa.us Visa

Baker Trail/Rachel Carson Trail Resources

Rachel Carson Trail website: www.rachelcarsontrail.org; **this website has information about the Rachel Carson Trail, the Baker Trail, and the Rachel Carson Trail Challenge.**
Baker Trail website: www.geocities.com/bakertrailpa; **this website has some abbreviated information concerning the Baker Trail.**
Hostelling International website: <http://trfn.clpgh.org/ayh/>; **general information about the BT/RCT sponsor organization.**
Keystone Trails Association: <http://www.kta-hike.org/>; **has information about all Pennsylvania hiking trails**
“Guide to the Rachel Carson Trail”; this is a trail guide, with topographic maps, and some interpretive information about the 34-mile long trail, available from HI-Pittsburgh for under \$10, including postage and handling. Call 412-431-4910 to order.
“Baker Trail Guide Book”; a trail guide with topographic maps, and interpretive information about the 141-mile long Baker Trail. Available from HI-Pittsburgh for under \$10, including postage and handling. Call 412-431-4910 to order.

*******HIKER ALERTS*******Current hiker alerts for both the Rachel Carson Trail and the Baker Trail may be found at www.rachelcarsontrail.com.

STUDENT TRAVEL
AYH cards here!

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118 Meyran Ave.
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