

# BROOKLYN-QUEENS NOW NEWS



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P.O.Box 350-746  
Brooklyn, NY 11235  
(718) 951-7441  
bklynqnsnow@yahoo.com  
www.brooklynqueensnow.org



## Chapter Happenings

### INSIDE:

- Feminist Art at Brooklyn Museum
- Chisholm Archives of Feminist Activism in Bklyn
- Human Trafficking Update
- Internship with Women's Rights NY
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A joyous Women's History Month! This newsletter is filled with exciting information! We have articles and action alerts and an election announcement. What else have we to report?

Culturally, we have great news about the Brooklyn Museum's Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art. Who is Sackler, anyway and why is she doing this? Ms. Magazine, in its Fall 2004 issue said: "Sackler, a Ph.D. in public history who has been active in repatriating Native American ritual objects, struck up a friendship with (Judy) Chicago in 1988, and then became one of several champions seeking a permanent home for what many regard as the feminist art movement's most iconic work. The hope is that with "The Dinner Party" as its centerpiece, the Center will draw long-awaited attention to the 1970s, an era when scores of other women were also producing important feminist artwork."

It's time again for chapter elections. This newsletter marks the official notification to our membership of the 90-day period from announcement (April 1) of elections to Election Day (July 2). Our bylaws addressing elections are provided in this issue. Many of you have been with us through the years. Step forward and help us grow the chapter and lead the way to equality for ourselves and those we love.

Our chapter has been actively pushing for an end to human trafficking. Did you know there's no state law prohibiting slavery? See our article, *Human Slavery Exists in Queens*, for details. It seems that the federal law addressing this issue requires federal agents to enforce it. The practice is too widespread to make enforcement possible. And where is it most prevalent? In Washington, DC where there's an abundance of men (lawmakers and diplomats) interested in buying the bodies of women and children! We need a *comprehensive* state law, not the flimsy slap-on-the-wrist bill proposed by State Senator Frank Padavan (SD11). Join with BQNOW and members of NOW-NYC, Equality NOW, and concerned legislators at our vigil on Thursdays at Foley Square from 12:30 to 1:15. The vigil continues until NYS outlaws slavery!

Here in the city, the decision about what machines we'll use to vote remains an issue. BQNOWers have attended and testified at hearings in favor of the selection of paper ballots and optical scanners instead of the electronic voting machines that have caused such trouble elsewhere. The bill, Resolution 131, remains stalled in the city council. There's a good chance our pressure may result in a vote in March. If the resolution doesn't pass, call Speaker Christine Quinn at 212 788-7210 and ask her to get behind Res 131.

Finally, we've had several discussions about the cervical cancer vaccine, Gardasil. As a chapter, we've debated whether it should be mandatory. Where do you stand on this? Email us at [bklynqnsnow@yahoo.com](mailto:bklynqnsnow@yahoo.com) and let us know.

## BROOKLYN-QUEENS NOW CHAPTER CALENDAR-2007

Chapter meetings take place the first Monday of the month at 7pm, unless otherwise noted. Call the numbers below for exact location and directions.



- April 9 Chapter Meeting in Sheepshead Bay. Call 347-515-1410 or 718-891-8590.  
May 7 Chapter Meeting in Midwood. Call 718-951-7441.  
May 19 NOW-NYS Council meeting in Albany. [www.nownys.org](http://www.nownys.org) for details.  
June 4 Chapter Meeting in Sheepshead Bay. Call 718-891-2490.  
July 2 Chapter Meeting & Election of Officers in Sheepshead Bay. Call 718-769-8901.  
July 13-15 National NOW Conference in Detroit, MI. [www.now.org](http://www.now.org) for details.  
August No chapter meeting.  
Sept 10 Chapter Meeting, location TBD (check our web site or call 718-951-7441.)

## FEMINIST ART FINALLY GETS A SPACE OF ITS OWN

By Diana Aquino Price

"To create one's own world in any of the arts takes courage.

—Georgia O'Keeffe

On March 23, 2007, the Brooklyn Museum ([brooklynmuseum.org](http://brooklynmuseum.org)), will open the first public space in the country dedicated to feminist works of art, The Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art.

Such an institution has long been needed, and NOW applauds the vision, courage, and dedication to feminism that made this "museum within a museum" for feminist art a reality. The women's movement is indebted especially to Dr. Elizabeth Sackler, who spearheaded the creation of the Center through her foundation, which was established to raise awareness of women's contributions in all areas of art and culture with a specific focus on feminist art. The Elizabeth A. Sackler Foundation has been supporting women and feminist art exhibitions across the country since its founding in 2002.

The centerpiece of the Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art will be Judy Chicago's *The Dinner Party*, an iconic masterpiece that celebrates the lives of 1,038 women, some mythical and many real, whose achievements and contributions have been ignored in mainstream historical accounts. *The Dinner Party* is a massive triangular table, measuring forty-eight feet on each side, and features thirty-nine place settings — each rendered to honor a particular woman. On the white tile

floor below the triangular table, the names of 999 women are inscribed in gold. The work highlights the dynamism, diversity, and power of women's lives. Those featured range from goddesses, queens, and saints to activists, artists, and educators — from Boudica to Eleanor of Aquitaine to Sojourner Truth to Margaret Sanger, and to many whose names are less recognizable, but whose contributions have been revolutionary and invaluable.

Like *The Dinner Party*, The Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art will be an unprecedented, powerful monument to and for women and their achievements. The unveiling of *The Dinner Party* is just one of three inaugural exhibitions that the Center will feature. Accompanying Judy Chicago's piece will be *Pharaohs, Queens, and Goddesses*, the first of a series of multimedia, biographical shows illuminating *The Dinner Party's* themes and figures. Finally, the Center will house an international survey of contemporary feminist art entitled *GlobalFeminisms*.

**Be sure to visit the Brooklyn Museum's Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art.**

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# ACTION ALERTS



Use NOW's Capwiz interactive political page (<http://www.capwiz.com/now/dbq/officials/>) to send messages to your elected officials in Washington,DC. To locate your state and city representatives go to NYPIRG at: <http://www.cmap.info/webmapping/default.asp>.

Toll free # US Capitol Switchboard: (800) 459-1887

## **PUBLIC UNIVERSITY EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION ACT** to be voted on. *Take Action!*

**Young women who need Emergency Contraception should not be denied access!**

**Bill # A00885 is currently on NYS Assembly Health Committee Agenda and may be voted on soon!**

This bill would: require every college and university of the NYS University and CUNY systems to provide emergency contraception to any student requesting it; require the widespread provision of information at such colleges and universities on the safety and availability of emergency contraception on campus; authorize the Commissioner of Health to establish a statewide emergency contraception college education and awareness program, and require such commissioner to develop informational materials relating to emergency contraception.

NOTE: The NYS Senate companion bill: S-1716 needs more sponsors. Contact your state senator to get behind this bill!

Urge the Health Committee of the NYS Assembly to send this bill to the floor for a vote and tell your legislator to vote "yes" for Bill #A00885.

## **HUMAN SLAVERY EXISTS IN QUEENS! .... And elsewhere**

New York State has no laws prohibiting slavery. Yet that's just what's occurring under our very noses here in New York. Women and young children are being lured into the sex trade business and kept there against their wills in conditions, which boggles the mind.

The term is called *Trafficking*. Trafficking is the buying and selling of women, men, or children to be used in the commercial sex industry or in various forms of labor. It may or may not involve transporting the victim across a border, but it always involves the trafficker's exercise of control over the victim. New York is widely acknowledged to be a leading entry, transit and destination point for trafficking victims. Washington, DC is #1.

The **demand for sex workers** in New York is increasing. Few women voluntarily come to NY to be prostitutes. Some are runaways. To get a supply, women from elsewhere are promised jobs as nannies, models, housekeepers, au pairs, etc. Sometimes their families are given money in exchange for future wages. Once they arrive, the trafficker confiscates their identity papers and holds them until the "debt" is worked off, often threatening to harm their families at home.

Whenever you pick up one of the "free" papers... the Village Voice, local dailies, etc., do you wonder how these papers stay "free" to the public? They rely on advertisers. One major source of revenue is the ads, which promote massage parlors, "escort" services, etc. Look at the back pages of New York Magazine for more examples.

**WHAT CAN YOU DO?** There are federal laws on the books, which make this practice a crime, but federal laws are only enforceable by federal agents. NYC police have no guidelines and too often arrest the woman for prostitution and merely fine the trafficker. What we need is a state law, which punishes those who procure and which provides protection and services for their victims. For the past two years we've tried to get strong anti-trafficking laws on the books in NY. Legislators have proposed weak laws, which do not address the problem. They must hear from us. We must tell them it is urgently important to

*continued on Page 6*

## BROOKLYN-QUEENS NOW BY LAWS

### ARTICLE IX ELECTIONS

Elections shall be held every two years.

- A. Nominations for Officers:** Ninety (90) days prior to the time set for the elections, the Chapter shall mail a notice to the membership that nominations for officers are open. The notice shall contain the qualifications for each office and a description of the duties and responsibilities of that office and the date, time and place for the election. Any Chapter member may nominate a member including her/himself for office. Nominations must be mailed to the chapter Secretary postmarked no later than sixty (60) days prior to the election date. The names of the qualified nominees shall be mailed to the membership at least thirty (30) days prior to the date of the election.
- B Election of Officers:**
1. Officers shall be elected by the General Membership at the designated chapter meeting.
  2. Only those who have been chapter members for at least four months shall be eligible to vote in the general election.
  3. Voting by proxy is prohibited.
  4. Members must be present to vote. Any member having a physical disability and unable to attend the election meeting may contact a chapter officer for a mail-in ballot at least 10 days in advance.
  5. Candidates must receive a simple majority of the votes cast to be elected.
- C. Vacancies:** In the event of a vacancy in the office of the President, the Vice-President shall immediately assume the office of the President. In the event of the vacancy of another elected office, the Executive Board shall elect a replacement. Any replacement elected must meet the qualifications as stated in these bylaws.
- D. Transition:**  
Newly elected officers shall assume office thirty (30) days after the election. All members of the Executive Board and committee chairs shall transfer all records and documents to their successors in office within thirty (30) days of the election.  
Should a position become vacant, then records and documents should be sent to the central office or to the President.

### ARTICLE VIII - Elected Officers

- A. The following are the elected officers: President, Vice-President, Treasurer, and Secretary.**

**1 & 2. President and Vice-President** are the most responsible positions in the Chapter. Their duties include but are not limited to:

- acting as official spokespersons for the Chapter
- being knowledgeable and currently informed about National, State, and Chapter policies, goals and procedures
- helping to develop Chapter programs and goals.
- focusing the Chapter on its overall goals and purposes;
- preparing an annual report of the chapter's actions and events
- delegating tasks
- acting as resource persons
- preparing agenda and chairing meetings (chairing may be delegated to give others this experience)

**3. Treasurer:** Keeps Chapter accounts and prepares Chapter budget after consulting the Executive Board. Prepares financial section of annual reports to National. Is responsible for processing dues payments with the Membership Chair. Provides a report at each Chapter meeting.

**4. Secretary:** Circulates a sign-in sheet at all Chapter meetings. Takes minutes at Chapter/General meetings and at meetings of the Executive Board, and when necessary. Minutes should be simple, consisting of brief descriptions of decisions made. Minutes should be reported to the regular meeting or summarized in the Newsletter. Keeps official record of the Chapter including copies of letters sent in the name of the Chapter. Prepares an annual report of the Chapter's actions and events.

- B. Qualifications for Officer:** Member of Chapter for one year, has attended at least 50% of all chapter meetings held in the preceeding year and actively involved within the work of the Chapter.

# THE SHIRLEY CHISHOLM ARCHIVE OF WOMEN'S POLITICAL ACTIVISM from 1945 to the PRESENT

by Barbara Winslow

The Shirley Chisholm Archive of Brooklyn Women's Activism will be a repository of women's grassroots social activism in Brooklyn since 1945 and ongoing in the present. In the spirit of Chisholm's legacy as a path breaking community and political activist, the archive, housed in Brooklyn College, Chisholm's alma mater, will also follow the many paths she pioneered, by including materials representing the wide range of women's grassroots activism throughout the borough. The archive will collect documents and other materials, including oral histories, from people who knew or worked with Chisholm, as well as from the extraordinary diversity of women's activist organizations in Brooklyn since 1945. Housed in Brooklyn College's library, it will be a resource for K-12 students, college students, community activists, public policy experts, scholars, and the general public; the archive will expand our understanding of women's place in history and of the significance and consequence of social activism itself.

This archive will not be a Shirley Chisholm archive *per se*. Most of her materials are already housed in other libraries. Rather, it will be an archival collection of social justice activism that she supported, organized and led. Chisholm's political activism is grounded in the Brooklyn community. After graduating in 1947 from Brooklyn College, she participated in educational, religious, immigrant, community, and political and social organizations. In 1964, she was elected to the New York State Assembly and then in 1968 was the first African American woman elected to Congress from Brooklyn's twelfth congressional district. At the time of her election, her district was 70% female, and highly organized. Her activism embodied almost every aspect of women's lives: home, church, community, school, health, higher education, internationalism, connections to the life she led still continues to reflect the diversity of women's experiences in Brooklyn. Brooklyn continues to be a vibrant community of women's organizations, galvanized by the revival of feminism, and enriched by the diversity of women's lives.

The Chisholm Archive will compile primary source materials—never before available—that will be invaluable for a wide range of disciplines, including women's studies, political science, history, oral history, and African American studies. In addition, the website will make these materials available not only to scholars but also to teachers, public historians, K-12 students, college students, community activists, public policy

experts, and the general public. In this way the archive will expand our understanding of women's place in history and of the significance and consequence of social activism itself.

Chisholm herself represented the Brooklyn experience. Born in the U.S. of immigrant parents, she lived in the Caribbean as a child, returned to Brooklyn as a teenager, and graduated in 1947 from Brooklyn College. Immediately she plunged into activism with a variety of educational, religious, immigrant, community, political, and social organizations. In 1964, she was elected to the New York State Assembly and in 1968 was the first African American woman elected to Congress (from Brooklyn's twelfth congressional district). At the time, her district was 70 percent female, and highly organized. A founding member of the National Organization for Women, Chisholm's activism embodied almost every aspect of her constituents' lives: home, church, community, school, health, higher education, internationalism, connections to the Caribbean community, labor, and civil and women's rights. This activism continues today, reflecting the multiplicity of women's experiences in Brooklyn, galvanized by the revival of feminism, and enriched by the diversity of women's lives.

There is no scholarly biography of Shirley Chisholm, nor any comprehensive study of Brooklyn women's activism. This project is the first effort to bring together materials that could be used for a Chisholm biography or a comprehensive history of Brooklyn women's activism. The only work on post-1945 Brooklyn women's activism is work in progress by Professor Julie Gallagher (Antioch College): *Women of Action, In Action: The New Politics of Black Women in New York City, 1944-1972*. Her study documents a generation of black women who came to politics during the 1940s and 1950s in New York City, exploring their pursuits of power vis-à-vis the state and how race, gender and the structure of the state itself shaped and often limited outcomes. Articles on specific aspects of women's protest, especially during the 1960s and 1970s, mention Brooklyn women's activism, but none focus on it separately. See for example, *Community Activism and Feminist Politics*, (ed) Nancy Naples, Routledge, 1997, London, and *Commonsense and a Little Fire*:

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**Chisholm Archive**  
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*Women and Working Class Politics in the United States*, Annelise Orleck, UNC Press, 1995, Chapel Hill, NC.

The Chisholm archive will therefore provide researchers access to previously unknown source materials that will bring Brooklyn women's activism out of obscurity and into the public eye.

If anyone of you knew Chisholm, worked with Chisholm, have artifacts in your home or would like to be interviewed please contact Barbara Winslow at [bwpurplewins@cs.com](mailto:bwpurplewins@cs.com).

*Barbara Winslow*  
*School of Education and Women's Studies Program*  
*Brooklyn College of the City University of New York*

**Slavery Exists in Queens**  
*continued from Page 3*

pass strong anti-trafficking laws as the first order of business in 2007.

A strong law would:

1. **Define trafficking** with reference to the kinds of fraud, deception and coercion used by traffickers on the victims.
2. Create **strong penalties** for traffickers.
3. **Address those who patronize** the sex industry. They create the demand that makes the industry so profitable.
4. Clarify existing law on **sex tourism** to stop operators from doing business in New York.
5. **Create remedies** for the victims: allow them to collect restitution and damages from the traffickers.
6. **Provide services** to assist victims in rehabilitating their lives.

Write to your NY State Senator. Urge her/him **not** to support the weak bill (sponsored by Senator Padavan) S78, **but instead to support an amended version of Senator Sabini's bill S 1650.**

Join us **every Thursday at 12:30 at Foley Square** in Manhattan, where we stand vigil until New York makes human trafficking illegal.

**SUCCESS: AN INTERNSHIP  
with WOMEN'S RIGHTS NY**

Rachelle Suissa, Chair-Young Feminists Task Force

As part of the requirements for my internship in Women's Studies, I have to perform 10 hours of service a week at an organization devoted to women's rights. I chose to work with Women's Rights NY, a law firm based in New York City that deals with cases of employment discrimination for women. This include sexual harassment, and discrimination because of: pregnancy, disability, and age. The number of pregnancy discrimination cases has risen, despite the strides women have made in the recent years.

As an intern, I am required to do a lot of office work. I handle intakes from potential clients and attorneys and investigators in contact with the firm. On occasion, an attorney might ask me to sit in on a consultation with a client who has come in for an interview. I've heard complaints of sexual harassment and retaliation from hotel industry worker. I've listened to and questioned a worker in a fast food restaurant who claims she was sexually assaulted by the manager when she came to work one day. Her story was sad, but being able to listen and help was a good experience. It made me believe that I can reach out to women who are in distress and in need of someone to listen.

Among my other duties, I am expected to draft demand and rebuttal letters and Equal Employment Opportunity Commission charges for the lawyers of the defendants as well as other attorneys and investigators who work for the EEOC. It can take several weeks to draft a letter deemed acceptable by the attorneys in the office. It is a good writing exercise because it requires a high degree of formality, good grammar, and proper syntax in writing.

I enjoy working with Women's Rights NY because they are a progressive firm dedicated to the empowerment of women in the workforce. They have a strong goal and are the only law firm dedicated to women's rights within the country. I look forward to completing my internship with this progressive organization

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NOW is the time.  
Keep up the good work!

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### THE GENERATION AFTER

*Dedicated to ensuring that the Holocaust is not forgotten,  
repeated, or inflicted upon any other people.*

We support women's rights which is part of the  
struggle against tyranny and inhumanity

### MATILDA JOSELYN GAGE (1826-1898)

by Ronald R. Grube, PhD

"Usually a footnote to the more familiar names in the suffrage movement, Gage arguably was intellectually superior to almost all in understanding the wide range of sociological, economic, and especially historical aspects of women's issues, while most suffragists concerned themselves primarily with the immediately political.

The daughter of a cultured mother and a physician father with liberal views that included feminism, Matilda Joselyn was given an education well beyond that usually afforded women in her era. Nonetheless, after her schooling at Clinton Liberal Institute in upstate New York, she married at eighteen and went on to bear five children to her merchant husband. Despite these home obligations and shyness so severe that few heard her initial speech, Gage participated in her first women's rights convention when she was only twenty-six.

Two years later, in 1854, she was vacationing at a fashionable hotel in Saratoga, New York, when Susan B. Anthony appeared in the resort town. Things were not going well for Anthony, who was attempting to take advantage of Saratoga's crowds for a meeting on women's rights; she had hired a hall, but had no speakers lined up, had lost her purse to a thief, and was in debt for the advertisements she was distributing. To Anthony's great joy, Gage agreed to overcome her terror of public speaking; at least in part because of the addition of the stylish Mrs. Gage to the agenda, the meeting turned out to be a rousing success. From then on, Gage was involved in almost every women's rights effort.

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NOW**

P.O. Box 350-746  
Brooklyn, NY 11235  
Phone: 718-951-7441  
Fax: 718-263-7638

E-Mail: [bklynqnsnow@yahoo.com](mailto:bklynqnsnow@yahoo.com)  
or [shranz@optonline.net](mailto:shranz@optonline.net)

**BROOKLYN-QUEENS NOW  
LEADERSHIP CONTACT NUMBERS**

(718)-

President: Shirley Ranz 769-8901  
Vice President/Secretary: Sherry Rogers 263-7638  
Treasurer: Constance Pigozzi 331-1137  
Membership: Judith Ebert 951-7441  
Legislative: Julie Kirshner 769-9607  
Young Feminists: Rachele Suissa [rs8333on@pace.edu](mailto:rs8333on@pace.edu)

**ABOUT OUR ORGANIZATION**

**OUR CORE ISSUES:**

- Reproductive Rights
- Passage of the ERA
- Equal Economic Opportunity
- Stopping Violence against Women
- Ending Discrimination based on gender or sexual orientation

Our activities focus on the political, legislative and educational arenas.

Use NOW's Capwiz interactive political page (<http://www.capwiz.com/now/dbq/officials/>) to send messages to your elected officials in Washington, DC.

To locate your state and city representatives go to NYPIRG at:

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**visit our web site: [www.brooklynqueensnow.org](http://www.brooklynqueensnow.org)**

**MATILDA JOSELYN GAGE - continued from Page 7 Copyright 2001 by Ronald R. Grube**

She was a founder of the National Woman Suffrage Association in 1869, as well as of the New York State Woman Suffrage Association, and served in various offices in each, including the presidency. She not only cast a ballot in 1872, but was the sole woman to join the speaking campaign that Anthony organized in response to her arrest for testing the Fifteenth Amendment – despite Gage's distaste for oratory; she made sixteen speeches in less than a month. In 1875, she testified before congressional committees on behalf of suffrage, and in 1880, she attended the national conventions of the Democratic, Republican, and Greenback Parties to lobby the male delegates to include suffrage in their platforms.

It was in her writing, however, that Gage exercised the most influence. She was a contributor to the NWSA's Revolution from its 1869 beginning, and she soon developed a special expertise in women's history. Her early works included "Woman as Inventor" (1870) and "Woman's Rights Catechism" (1871), and in 1876, she was a principal author of the "Declaration of the Rights of Women" that was read at the centennial celebration of American independence.

Expanding her historical interests in 1880, Gage published a defense of Civil War figure Anna Ella Carroll, and the following year, she began working with Anthony and Ida Husted Harper on what would eventually be published as the first three volumes of the "History of Woman Suffrage." Finally, in 1890, she issued her own declaration of independence, even from her friends in the women's movement, with the "Dangers of the Hour." A summary of views she had developed in four decades of work for women, Gage made it clear that she had advanced far beyond most in radical feminist thought.

She did not mellow with age, as Anthony had. Her major work, written when she was sixty-seven, was "Woman, Church and State" (1893). A militant book even by today's standards, it was an attack on Christianity as one of the chief sources of female oppression. . . . As could be expected, Gage's book – which was widely read – shocked the thousands of suffragists who were also active in the Women's Christian Temperance Union. The sad result was that she was almost entirely dropped by the leadership of the women's movement – even by Elizabeth Cady Stanton, whose "Women's Bible," published two years later, promulgated many of the same views.

Gage had formed her own Woman's National Liberal Union in 1890, when the NWSA merged with the more conservative American Woman Suffrage Association over her objections. She retained the Union's presidency until her death eight years later, but it never grew beyond a minimal membership. Though she was pessimistic about the condition of women as the Gay Nineties brought increasing artificiality and the women's movement stalled into annual meetings marked more by nostalgia than political action, Matilda Joselyn Gage never gave up her efforts. She wrote a speech for the fiftieth anniversary of the first women's rights convention even as she lay dying.

National Organization for Women  
Brooklyn-Queens Chapter  
P.O.Box 350-746  
Brooklyn, NY 11235

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