



The Irish Highlighter

Volume 4 : Issue 2

Seneca High School

COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2015





THE IRISH HIGHLIGHTER



Board of Education Corner

The Philosophy of Dr. Seuss.



Dr. Seuss, one of the most influential children’s authors of the 20th Century, had a profound effect on children’s education. Many of his famous quotes are applicable to education today and will be highlighted throughout the newsletter. Changes in education and in our society are never ending. The charge of the Board of Education is to make Seneca High School the best it can be. “Think and wonder, wonder and think.” – Dr. Seuss. This has been good advice as the Board has worked with the Administration, SIP Team, Faculty and Staff to make sure ALL students are prepared for their futures.

In previous newsletters, we have highlighted the Board Goals and The Seneca Way. While The Seneca Way codifies much of our school improvement efforts, it is more than a vision. The document also provides the direction for implementing a systematic improvement to the educational experience for our students. Many new opportunities have been infused in the curriculum that is available to the students of Seneca High School. A few of the initiatives will be reviewed in the newsletter, such as a new format for Freshman Orientation, Student Success Time, an Honors track, and new dual credit offerings, to name a few.

Allocating district resources efficiently has been our mantra. To that end, we have analyzed our spending habits and implemented practices that ensure funds are expended to the greatest advantage of the District. Long term financial projections, based on our current agreement with Exelon, are being prepared. The Board of Education is mindful of the fiscal responsibility that is aligned with it’s role as trustee for the community.

“You’ll be on your way up! You’ll be seeing great sights! You’ll join the high fliers who soar to high heights!” – Dr. Seuss. Congratulations to the 2015 Graduating Class of Seneca Township High School. The Board of Education wishes you great success “as you soar to great heights” in your future endeavors.

Ron Frye
Board President

	CLASS OF 2015 PROFILE	
	GRADUATION CEREMONY	
	<i>17th day of May, two thousand and fifteen</i>	
	NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN CLASS	
	106	
	PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS CONTINUING IN HIGHER EDUCATION	
	78%	
	SCHOLARSHIP AND FINANCIAL AID RECEIVED	
	Amount earned toward post-secondary education for freshman year	
	\$298,850	
	Amount earned toward post-secondary education for all four years	
	\$993,000	



"From there to here, and here to there, funny things are everywhere."



Jim Carlson

A message from the Superintendent...

To a child, time seems to move in slow motion. Parents and grandparent are agonizingly aware of the infamous child inquiry made during family trips, "Are we there yet?" For adults, however, experiences begin and end in the blink of an eye. This seems especially true as we turn out the lights on another school year. Before we officially place 2014-2015 in the archives, it is proper to take a moment to reflect on those who have contributed so very much to Seneca High School. You see, it's not the pencils, papers, policies, books, computers, or buildings that make a great school; it's the people. The following individuals/groups will be leaving us for one reason or another.

We will miss them all very much. "How did it get so late so soon? It's night before it's afternoon. December is here before it's June. My goodness how the time has flown. How did it get so late so soon?" – Dr. Seuss.

Rich Applebee – Board Member

Rich served ten years on the Seneca High School Board of Education. In that time, he served as our delegate to the Illinois Association of School Boards. We will miss Rich's valuable experience and passion for education.

Ron Jensen – Auto Teacher

Ron is a 19 year veteran of education spending 15 of those years at Seneca High School. Ron's work with Joliet Junior College set the foundation for dual credit eligibility. His expertise and assertiveness led to the completion of our new auto shop. Mr. Jensen also started and coached the first ever Seneca Irish Drag Racing team. This program is something of which Ron is very proud, and he has made a lasting impression as he leaves Seneca High School. We wish Ron and his wife, Helen, the best of luck in their retirement.

Denny Fosen – Housekeeping Staff

Denny came to Seneca High School thirteen years ago after having been retired from Caterpillar. Denny is an honest, hardworking, and reliable worker who always gave SHS his very best. Best wishes to Denny and his wife, Pattie.

Stacy Marik – School Nurse/Health Occupations Instructor

Mrs. Marik has done a remarkable job as CNA instructor and school nurse. She has elected to pursue an even more noble profession than that of an educator; she has elected to become a stay-at-home mom. We thank Stacy for her great work at SHS these last two years and wish her, her husband, Josh, and daughter, Presley, the very best.

Seniors – Graduating Class of 2015!

Students, of course, are the reason we do what we do. This year's senior class is to be commended for their hard work and dedication. We wish each and every senior the very best in his/her future. We are very proud of you!

This is just the beginning of our goodbyes to our staff. Over the next four years, we will be challenged to replace nearly one-third of our faculty. The prospects of replacing dedicated, professional, and student-centered educators, especially those who have shaped the culture of this very fine school, is a bit daunting. So while we will naturally take a moment or two to lament the loss of our friends, we will also toil to ensure those who gave so much to SHS are honored by the next generation of high-quality, passionate educators whose recruitment and selection will provide an opportunity to build upon the traditions of excellence maintained by our current staff. The challenge will be immense, but we will pursue our task with great enthusiasm. Thus, in the spirit of the great Dr. Seuss, "Today is gone. Today was fun. Tomorrow is another one."



Salutatorians: Cassidy Maierhofer, Brandon Chopp, Lauren Hickley, Jessica Clubb



Valedictorians: Jennifer Nugent, Lars Pihl, Lucas Ward



Dr. Carlson congratulates our 2015 Valedictorians.



THE IRISH HIGHLIGHTER



End of Year Highlights from Principal Marty Voiles



Marty Voiles

Hooray for Diffendoofer Day!!!

Many of you probably believe I have lost my mind. Please be careful how you respond to that statement. One of the many Dr. Seuss classic books created is titled, *Hooray for Diffendoofer Day*. This particular story is a tale that celebrates originality, difference, and uniqueness. It is a book that lends itself to the lively exploration of a place and an activity that are at the center of young people's lives: school and learning.

Why am I mentioning the back drop of this particular book? Because I am excited to share with you a new approach SHS will be taking with all freshmen students as we begin the 2015-2016 school year...kind of our version of the *Hooray for Diffendoofer Day*. The over-arching goal of our new initiative is to create an original, different and unique way to introduce all freshmen students to Seneca High School as they begin the next stage of their educational career.

Beginning Monday, August 17th, and Tuesday, August 18th, Seneca High School will require only freshmen students to attend our new orientation program. These dates are mandatory student attendance days for the Class of 2019 and will kick-off the start to their 2015-2016 school year.

During these two days of attendance, all freshmen students and staff will be participating in a variety of school wide activities covering topics important for new students to know such as building sound peer and adult relationships, discussing social/emotional issues, learning about all school extra-curricular activities (to include clubs, activities, athletics, special events, etc.) completing building tour activities, meeting staff, locating classrooms, etc. Below is a sample of the day's agenda.

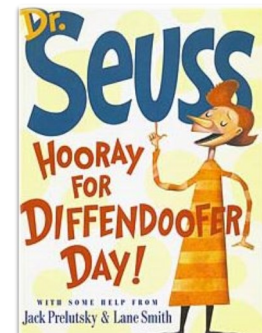
Monday, August 17th

7:30 a.m. - 7:55 a.m.	Freshmen Arrival & Breakfast
8:00 a.m. - 8:50	Scavenger Hunt – allows students to visit all portions of the building
8:50 a.m. - 9:10 a.m.	Introduction of Staff and Administration
9:10 a.m. - 11:35 a.m.	“Four Stages of Success”
11:35 a.m.	Student Dismissal
11:45 a.m.	Bus Departure Time



Tuesday, August 18th

7:55 a.m. - 8:20 a.m.	Staff & Student Breakfast
8:25 a.m. - 8:40 a.m.	Introduction to the day's activities
8:44 a.m. - 10:52 a.m.	Visit Each Class Period using the A/B Schedule
10:56 a.m. - 11:15 a.m.	Activities/Clubs/Athletics Meetings
11:20 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.	Staff & Student Lunch
12:05 p.m. - 2:35 p.m.	Guest Speaker – Mr. Ted Wiese
2:35 p.m.	Students Dismissed
2:45 p.m.	Bus Departure Time



We are extremely excited about this new adventure and hope this two-day event will provide all freshmen with a level of knowledge, building familiarity and introduction to staff that will lead to a comfortable high school transition. Our hope is to provide as powerful a punch as the message in the book, *Hooray for Diffendoofer Day!!!* Good luck freshmen and welcome to Seneca High School !!!



"And will you succeed? Yes you will indeed! (98 and 3/4 percent guaranteed.)"

SHS implementing significant changes for 2015-2016...

Beginning in the Fall of 2015, Seneca High School will be **adding** seven new courses to the curriculum, with five of them being dual credit classes (students earning both high school and college credit). An additional cost to the student, based upon Seneca High School and Illinois Valley Community College's dual credit arrangement, will be at the student's expense. Joliet Junior College dual credit classes are at no cost to students.

General Psychology/JJC — this new course will place an emphasis on psychological principles as they relate to daily life. Each Psychology semester is worth 3 college credit hours.

U.S. History/JJC — provides a general overview of the history of the United States, focusing on constitutional issues, the Civil War, industrialization, and immigration. Each U.S. History semester is worth 3 college credit hours .

College Algebra/IVCC – topics of study include review of fundamental algebraic operations, radicals, systems of equations, higher degree equations, inequalities, absolute value, logarithms, matrices, and the binomial theorem. College Algebra is worth 4 college credit hours .

Trigonometry/IVCC – areas of focus in this course will include the trigonometric functions and their graphs, identities, trigonometric equations, and practical applications. Trigonometry is worth 3 college credit hours.

A dual credit **Athletic PE class** (1 college credit hour) will also be offered at SHS through IVCC.

Two new Honors courses will be introduced to our English and Science offerings for the 2015-16 school year

Honors English I – this course is intended for college bound students who are willing to accept the challenge of a fast-paced and academically demanding course. Students entering this course should have already demonstrated a strong work ethic and the ability to think critically as it pertains to language and literature skills.

Honors Chemistry I – this course is intended for those students who plan on a career path in the Chemistry related field. The pacing to this course will be rapid and the curriculum content will be extended. Students will be expected to complete a variety of lab activities along with guided inquiry activities and labs.



Another new change will consist of adding thirteen minutes to the regular school day. The reason for the additional instructional minutes is to incorporate a "Student Success Time" in the middle of our school day. This additional time will allow **all** students a 30-minute intervention period to receive academic assistance. We will have specific academic centers created in our core subject areas of English, Math and Science for students to seek help as needed. Below is a copy of what our new daily schedule will look like for the 2015-2016 school year.

Seneca High School will also reduce the amount of early out Wednesday release days to two per month, with those 2:00 p.m. dismissal days occurring on the first and third Wednesday's of every month. Normal school hours with the new release time of 2:50 will be used on **non-release Wednesday afternoons.**



2015-2016 FULL DAY BELL SCHEDULE

<u>Time</u>	<u>Activity</u>	<u># Minutes</u>
7:50 – 7:55	Warning Bell to Period 1	5
7:55 – 9:15	1st Period Instruction	80
9:15 – 9:19	Passing Time	4
9:19 – 10:39	2nd Period Instruction	80
10:39 – 10:43	Passing Time	4
10:43 – 11:13	Student Success Time	30
11:13 – 11:17	Passing Time	4
11:17 – 1:07	3rd Period Instruction (Lunch Periods 1-3)	80 30
1:07 – 1:11	Passing Time	4
1:11 – 2:31	4th Period Instruction	80
2:31 – 2:35	Passing Time	4
2:35 – 2:50	Homeroom Time	15
2:50	End of Regular School Day	



THE IRISH HIGHLIGHTER



Student of the Month

DECEMBER 2014



Left to Right: Eve Odum, Rookie; Kassidy Maierhofer, Student of the Month; Sage Friese, Role Model; Brandon Chopp, Student of the Month; and (Not pictured) Ryan Fitzgerald, Most Improved.

MARCH 2015



Left to Right: Caleb Miller, Role Model; John Tezak, Most Improved; Lauren Hickle, Student of the Month; Back Row: Morgan Pifer, Rookie, and Ryan Murray, Role Model.

JANUARY 2015



Left to Right: Mathew Houchin, Student of the Month; Michael Bernhard, Role Model; Anthony Willoughby, Most Improved; Sara Cahill, Rookie.

APRIL 2015



Left to Right: Clara Ross, Student of the Month; Rachelle Townsell, Role Model; Jakub Goslin, Most Improved; and Faith Thrun, Rookie.

FEBRUARY 2015



Left to Right: Jennifer Nugent, Student of the Month; Caelye McAndrew, Rookie; Miranda Rhoder, Rookie; Jessica Clubb, Student of the Month; (Back) Brandon Viken, Role Model; and Tristan Stach, Most Improved.

MAY 2015



Left to Right: Mali Seilheimer, Role Model; Paige Hepner, Rookie; Samantha Groth, Student of the Month; Tyson Elias, Rookie; and (Missing from photo) Jon Wilson, Most Improved.



"Don't cry because it's over. Smile because it happened."

★ 2014 2015 ★

STUDENTS OF THE YEAR

Most Improved Student

Ryan Fitzgerald

Rookie Student

Sara Cahill

Student of the Year

Rebecca Doloski

Role Model of the Year

Collin Griffin



From Mr. Coughlin's desk...

First, I would like to congratulate and extend well wishes to the Seneca High School Class of 2015. I truly wish all of you the best in achieving your future goals.

Mike Coughlin I considered myself lucky on Thursday, May 7th to be able to attend the 27th Excellence in Education Awards Banquet at Celebrations 150 Hall in Utica, IL. Each year, the LaSalle County Regional Office of Education sponsors the event. Seneca High School recognized four individuals that evening: Mr. Terry Maxwell (Science, Educator Award), Mr. Michael Doloski (English, Educator Award), Mr. Barry Buchanan (Maintenance supervisor, Support Staff Award) and Mr. William (Bill) Steep (Treasurer, Retiring Support Staff Award). Seneca High School Board of Education and Administration were proud to be able to share such a special night with the award winners and their significant others to recognize their achievements. A special moment in the evening was when Mr. Steep was recognized by Mr. Christopher Dvorak, Regional Superintendent, and all in attendance with a standing ovation for his **59 years** of service to Seneca High School. Congratulations and best wishes to all honorees.





THE IRISH HIGHLIGHTER



Notes from Steve Haines, Activities Director



Steve Haines

“Today was good, Today was fun, Tomorrow is another day!”– Dr. Seuss

There’s no better quote that could be used to describe the end of another year in the Land of the Irish. What an exciting year it was spending time with the **Class of 2015**...and a lot of fun too! The class of 2015 was a class that I will remember for their competitive spirit and their ability to have fun as they were representing Seneca High. I believe that this group of seniors has helped continue to keep the proud *Irish Spirit* that is in the hallways of old SHS. Their support of each other will be a lasting impression that I have of this class; whether it was their spirit in the stands of sporting events, or whether it was picking a teammate up after a tackle or from the wrestling mat, or rooting on the runner in complete exhaustion after completing during a cross country meet, they were always there for each other. This type of attitude will be what will helps them in their future life when finding a career and when raising a family.

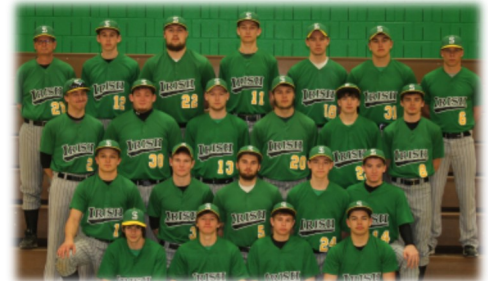
But as we take this time to reflect on the class of 2015, we are also preparing for the Class of 2019 to enter the halls of Seneca High School this Fall. As graduation signals the end for some, it signals the beginning of off-season summer workouts to prepare for the 2015-16 sports season. High school athletics has become a year-round commitment for some. In order to compete at the highest level, our athletes use much of their free time becoming better athletes. Getting ready for any sporting season means spending extra time in conditioning and strength training the mind and body of the athlete. Our coaches are also committed to their programs and to the betterment of their athletes by planning for a summer of skill development and team bonding.

Congratulations to the Boys and the Girls Track & Field teams, as well as the Girls Cross Country team who won Interstate 8 Conference titles in 2014-15. Another big congrats to the Boys and Girls Track & Field team for their outstanding performances as they were Sectional Champions in 2015. SHS had 4 boys and 14 girls qualify for IHSA State Finals in Track this year.

Recently, some of our Irish athletes were recognized during the 2015 Honors Awards Night. It was my privilege to host this wonderful evening and to pay tribute to the following athletes for their outstanding performances during their athletic careers at Seneca High School.

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| ◆ Anna Gay Most Outstanding Female Athlete | Lexi Wilkinson |
| ◆ Gerald Hoben Most Outstanding Male Athlete | Zach Russell |
| ◆ Female Varsity Effort Scholarship | Lexi Wilkinson |
| ◆ Male Varsity Effort Scholarship | Colin Griffin |

Best wishes to the entire Class of 2015, you will be greatly missed. The summer schedule of events can be found on the school web-site (www.senecahs.org) just click on **ATHLETICS** to find the Seneca Athletics web-page.



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“You’ll miss the best things if you keep your eyes shut.”

On Saturday April 11th, the Seneca Irish softball team hosted its annual “Swing for the Cure” St. Jude’s Children’s Cancer Research tournament. Head softball coach, Dan Stecken, reported that this year’s event was a smashing success...not only on the softball diamond, but also for a special little girl from Streator. Not long ago, Coach Stecken’s daughter went to preschool with a young lady named Reagan Wednesday Kuehn. Unfortunately, Reagan started missing school and became seriously ill. She was later diagnosed with a rare form of leukemia. Due to the need of both emotional and financial support, Reagan’s family and friends came together to “Fight for Reagan” in events throughout LaSalle County, in Streator, and in other surrounding communities. During team discussions pertaining to the annual Spring tournament, Coach Stecken presented the opportunity to the softball team to not only give back to St. Jude’s and the Seneca community, but also to join in the “Fight for Reagan” and come together for one special family. Eagerly agreeing, the girls showed their finest *Irish Pride* as they exceeded any expectation possible. They not only dedicated the tournament to Reagan, but they also performed numerous acts of outreach within the community as well. Truly, the day was made magical for this young lady as she could



be seen running around the bases with the all of the participating softball players and having fun. She started the game by throwing out the ceremonial first pitch to a standing ovation. The Lady Irish helped to make the event extra special by presenting Reagan with her own game ball, an Irish Princess gift bag, and lots of time spent playing and having fun that day, and all while “Swinging for a Cure.” After the game ended, little Reagan would step-up to the plate and take a “Swing for the Cause.” She ran the bases assisted by Irish speedster Karlie Cade. Cade said about the tournament and the day: “As a team we were lucky to spend time making some unforgettable memories with Reagan. She had the whole team playing duck-duck-goose and chasing her around between games. Reagan is just like any other happy little girl, but she is fighting a much bigger battle. Helping Reagan in her fight was an amazing experience that my teammates and I will never forget.” Coach Stecken felt that all of the teams who participated in the event were generous in giving their time for such a worth while cause. Reflecting on the day, Stecken says, “As a coach, it was a pretty special moment to watch your team do something so powerful for one little girl and her family by making this day so special for someone else...for something bigger than the game.”



The Fighting Irish Wrestling coaches are sponsoring a FREE summer wrestling program that is open to all current wrestlers in the program, as well as any incoming freshmen and younger athletes entering 5th through 8th grades. The summer activities are open to any district athlete from the Mazon, Milton Pope, or Seneca grade schools that want an introduction to the sport of wrestling, or to those who want to improve on the skills they already know. This is also a great introduction for current 4th graders, who will be entering 5th grade next school year, as we now have an IESA wrestling program available at Seneca Grade School

Head Wrestling Coach Todd Yegge feels that the team showed a great improvement last season due to the hard work and dedication that the athletes put into the summer program. SHS Irish Wrestlers had an exciting conclusion to the season with a 2nd place team finish in the IHSA Regional tourney, and all of the SHS senior wrestlers qualified and advanced to the Sectional. Last season marked the fifth year in a row that SHS Wrestling brought home an all-state recipient!

The coaching staff will offer the Fighting Irish Wrestling Camp for seven sessions in June which will consist of technique and some live wrestling at the conclusion of each day. The camp will be held in the SHS Wrestling room located at the Main Campus. If you are interested or have any questions please contact Coach Yegge via email: tyegge@senecahs.org. If you can only attend part of the camp then come only on the days you are available to attend. Hope to see you this summer! Coach Yegge

Summer Wrestling Camp

Dates: June 8, 9, 10, 11 & 15, 16, 17

Time: 3:00 pm to 5:30 pm

Where: SHS Wrestling Room

Cost: FREE



THE IRISH HIGHLIGHTER

Student Highlights



“Because of this class I know what I want to do when I graduate...teach!” This was a quote directly from one of the Early Childhood Education (ECE) student teachers from this year’s class. Seneca Township High School had another successful year at Kids Camp. This year, we had 23 preschoolers participate in the Seneca High Kids Camp. Thirty-one student teachers were enrolled in the ECE classes and planned activities for the preschoolers throughout the course.

The student teachers in the ECE class have taught everything from ABC’s to Earth Day to the curious preschoolers who range in age from 3 to 5 years. Other themes taught throughout the year included: America, health, sports, and even daunting dinosaurs. We have also introduced speaking Spanish language to our preschooler’s everyday. Mrs. O’Connor’s Spanish IV students plan lessons and have the opportunity to interact with the preschooler’s and teach them new Spanish vocabulary. We love hearing the preschooler’s walk out of the classroom yelling “Adios!” to their Spanish group teachers.

The ECE Administration students, who are seniors, worked extremely hard this year on earning **dual credit through IVCC** and also completed their ECE Level 1 Credential. All of this is done at the same time as they teach in the preschool classroom. These students make the schedules, contact parents and keep the classroom in running order. This is a very hard but rewarding job for these students.

The ECE program has been a career starting point for many teachers not only at Seneca Township High School, but at other schools within the area as well. Program Director, Erica Read, says, “This program is where I began my teaching career. The program is geared toward those interested in a future in teaching. Lesson planning and real-time child interaction skills are only a few proficiencies these student teachers learn in Early Childhood Education class. Through observation and daily contact with preschool age children, the students learn more than just reading from a textbook. Not all move on to become teachers, but they all take this experience with them and apply it in their future lives.”

For 2015-2016 Kids Camp registration information contact Erica Read at eread@senecahs.org.





"Oh, the Places You'll Go!"



C Paulson

SHS junior student Claudia Paulson has always had an affection for elephants. Elephant books, elephant tees, elephant earrings, just about anything with elephants on it...she liked! Her family and friends would all agree that Claudia is "crazy for elephants." Claudia, herself, always felt that something more meaningful was at the root of her fondness for the massive animals.



In recent life-changing events, Miss Paulson finally got the chance to not only fulfill her dream of seeing elephants in the wild, but she also got the chance to finally spend quality time with a very important person who was missing from her life. This past December, Claudia went on adventure of a lifetime when she traveled to Nairobi, Kenya to vacation with her recently acquainted biological father and her now newly expanded new family members.

While getting to know her father, Nathan, step-mother, Catherine, brothers, Jackson (14) & Louis (1 yr), and Grandparents, Brenda and Michael, Claudia was able to go on several African adventures that she only once dreamed about. Tours of Mount Kilimanjaro National Park, a hot air balloon safari in the Great Rift Valley at dawn, Safari camps in elephant and giraffe conservations areas, and visits to the Maasai Village, were just a few memorable highlights of Claudia's bonding time. Claudia said of her experience, "Being able to spend this time with my family was something so special to me and something that I will never forget! And, did you know that elephants feel like rocks, and that giraffes feel like horses only with really long tongues? Also, spending time with the children in the Maasai village only confirmed my desire to be able to join the Peace Corps so that I can do something more meaningful one day." The photos that Claudia took of the villagers in the red clothing won her *best in show* at a recent I-8 photo contest.

When Claudia graduates from high school she has plans to study photo journalism, and then, after college, she hopes to join the Peace Corps. Ever since she was a small child, she wanted to be able to help people in need. Claudia is thankful for her Mom, Jessica, step dad, Chad, sisters, Caroline (10) & Elizabeth (8), and her grandparents, who all supported her decision to seek out her biological father and meet her new family members. "Now that I am seventeen, I can really appreciate the value of having such a large family to help guide me into adulthood. I am so fortunate to have even more people to love and share my life with," stated Claudia. Of course, Claudia's African adventure allowed her to add even more elephant trinkets to her already large collection. But her biggest tip for anyone who might be traveling to Africa is "to wear *lots* of sunscreen!"





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