

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2023

TODAY'S WOMAN 2023

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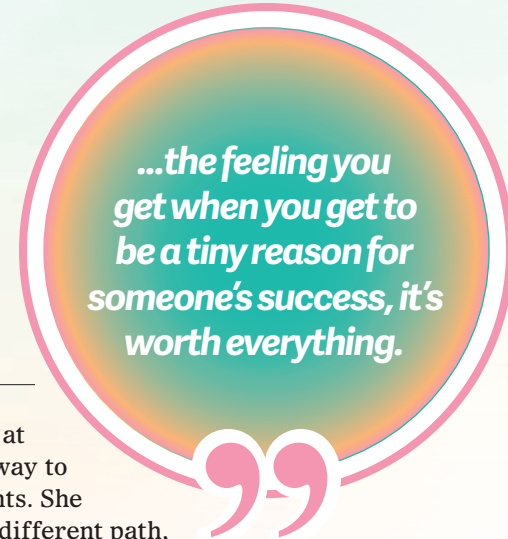
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IT ALL ADDS UP...

Kcee Reichert

By Deanna Moore
news@bolivarmonews.com



...the feeling you get when you get to be a tiny reason for someone's success, it's worth everything.

Kcee Reichert is a high school math teacher at Bolivar High School. She has developed a way to make math and school fun for many students. She didn't go into teaching until after taking a different path, but eventually realized her true love was math and being able to pass that along to others led her to becoming a teacher.

What inspired you to be a teacher?

I tutored at OTC while I was in college pursuing a different career path. One of my math teachers would sometimes help in the tutoring center and he said that I would be a great teacher. He said I had a way of adapting to whomever I was tutoring and explaining things where they understood what I was saying. He convinced me that I had a gift. The rest is...well, math. :)

Who has been the biggest influence in your life and why?

Bar none...my mother. Even though I only had her for 15 years, her voice is who I hear cheering me on and/or advising me. She was a fantastic mother, a hard worker, and the most loyal friend a person could have. Who wouldn't want to be just like that?

What do you consider the most challenging part of teaching?

It's definitely not the kids!! They are the best reason to show up everyday. I am not the best at the boring part of teaching. I enjoy teaching the kids, but the days when we are there, but the kids are not...that's the most challenging part.

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SCAN ME





If you had not become a teacher, what path would you have followed?

I worked 11-years in pharmacy before becoming a mathematics teacher. I could easily see myself in the medical field. I love helping people so a job like a physician or nurse practitioner would be right up my alley.

What is one of your funniest teaching experiences?

When I first started teaching, my new classroom contained everything I needed, including a phone. I noticed the little red light on the phone, but I assumed it was indicating that the power was on...since it was plugged into the outlet too. I think it was the end of October when a co-worker pointed to the light on the phone and said, "Voicemails, I hate 'em." I wanted to quit and never return. Instead, I answered the 900 voicemails I had been racking up since August. Oops.



What advice would you give someone wanting to pursue a career in teaching?

Teaching is not for the faint of heart. You worry about being a good teacher, you worry about your students, way beyond working hours and content. You spend an enormous amount of time investing in your job because it matters to so many kids. But the feeling you get when you get to be a tiny reason for someone's success, it's worth everything.

If you could time travel, would you travel forward to when or backward to when? And why?

Backward. I'm scared to go forward. There are several decades I would love to experience, but the ones where I got to relive my childhood with my mom and sister would be the time I wanted to live in the most.

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Not Pictured: Donna Aasby, Ginger Muller, Joanna Cook, Michelle Grover, Delaney Vote



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FRIENDS '74 Sisters

FOR LIFE

By Linda Simmons
news@bolivarmonews.com

When six little girls started first-grade at Fair Play school in 1962 they would never have thought about what they would be doing – together – in 2023! How could they have known that the bond they were forming in first grade would continue to grow until graduation in 1974 and then get stronger and never fade, all the way into 2023. Karren Pickering Bruce, Vicki Ellison Sterling, Becky Hornbeck Meyerpeter, Mary Anne Snodgrass Courtney, Rona Dickerson Counts and Karel Mitchell Jeffries are not

just friends, they are the “74 Sisters” and no amount of time or distance can change that.

All through their school years these friends were working and playing together and they all agree that having their mothers and grandmothers help them with class parties and events was one reason they all stayed so close and active.

While they all had their activities that they were involved in — cheerleading, basketball, softball, volleyball, high school musicals — they were always there to cheer each other on and have each other's backs.

They managed to raise funds to help cover their senior trip to Disney World and to Atlanta to watch Hank Aaron play for the Atlanta Braves.



WE THANK YOU...

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For Engaging Us
For Supporting Us*



Front Row: Left to Right: Melissa Burks, Missy Grant, Mary Ritter, Becky Jones

Back Row: Left to Right: Cindy Davidson, Makayla Walker, Deanna Moore, Pam Rice, Linda Simmons



Amanda Orrell

Bolivar Herald-Free Press

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Left to right. Front row. Dixie Richardson. Katie Thomas. Bylinda Edwards. Back row. Left to right. Jill Reynolds. Jenny Walker. Dr Shay Sechler. Dr Lane Nutt. Cheryl Nutt. Not pictured, Kim Christiansen and Ashlyn Hughes.

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After graduating in 1974 the girls all went their own way, with jobs, college, getting married, moving away, but even then they stayed in close contact with each other. Raising their families and going through life's many changes — birth of children, losing family members — keeping in touch was always very important to them.

And the memories they have made on their annual "Girls Trip" is what will always give them reason to laugh and poke fun at each other. They always travel together, in the same vehicle, that's what makes the memories even more fun to remember. Traveling to Gulf Shores, Savannah, Tennessee, South Carolina, Hannibal, Oklahoma — every trip has memories that will last a lifetime and always make them laugh.

The bond these girls have is very true and special. Proof of that has to be recognized by the memory they shared from Rona's wedding on Sept. 28, 2018. All five were in the wedding party, and the wedding was in a creek. Not on the creek bank, but IN Bear Creek. A beautiful setting with the wedding party all in white and so happy for their friend. That is until the snakes decided to join the party, that gave them all reason to question how strong that friendship bond really was! But they stuck together and the wedding took place — and they are all still friends and able to laugh about it today!

In 2013 Karren Bruce was diagnosed with breast cancer and had surgery. That is when the 'sisters' were there through it all, doing everything they could to help Karren during this ordeal. Even taking care of her store during a busy Christmas open house event. That has been nearly 10 years ago and now they still come and help out each Christmas during that busy time.

So, those little girls in 1962 are now getting ready to celebrate their 50th class reunion soon and they have not let time nor distance change their hearts — they were best friends then and they are best friends now — "Nevermore 74".



How could they have known that the bond they were forming in first grade would continue to grow ...all the way into 2023.



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"IT WAS A

Dakotah Lear & Chayla Hughes

By Linda Simmons
news@bolivarmone.com

Dakotah Lear and Chayla Hughes have been friends for somewhere in the vicinity of eight-years. They became friends through mutual friends and Dakotah's brother and sister-in-law. They have always enjoyed doing life together as friends, never knowing where that friendship would take them. Little did they know, God had a plan for them the whole time.

After having their son Tyten, Dakotah and Tyler later found out that they were not going to be able to have any more babies. The doctors told Dakotah she had a decision to make regarding her health and that decision led to her having a full hysterectomy. This decision was not something that came easy and they kept it a total secret, not informing family in the beginning. "It's really not something a 28-year-old woman wants to hear, especially when you're trying to conceive," said Dakotah.

"Literally, it wasn't 24-hours after we made this decision that I told Tyler I felt like I needed to tell Chayla," said Dakotah. Tyler wasn't sure why and when he asked about it, Dakotah said she really didn't know why either, she just felt like she needed to tell her what was going on.

Making this decision to have the surgery the idea came to light that maybe Dakotah could

preserve her eggs before surgery. The doctor confirmed that would be a possibility, if they could get it done promptly.

Again, the thought and feeling that she needed to tell Chayla never left Dakotah's heart. Even then, it wasn't really clear as to why she had that feeling that she needed to tell Chayla, they were friends, but not to the point that they called each other every day to report on their day.

Making contact with the doctor in Kansas City, Dakota had her eggs retrieved and in less than 2 weeks, had a complete hysterectomy. After that she asked Tyler, "What are we going to do with these embryo's?" His response was, "Your guess is as good as mine!" Surrogacy agencies are available, but neither of us wanted to go that route. "We were not ok with a total stranger carrying our child. We wanted someone that would forever be a part of our lives, and our children's lives" said Dakotah.

That's when Chayla came to mind again, just the need to reach out to her, kept getting heavier on my heart. To see if maybe she knew somebody that could carry for us. "I just didn't know, I just knew God was telling me to talk to her and maybe she could give us some direction," said Dakotah. Tyler suggested they invite them over for dinner to have this conversation, not send them a text! "But, of course, I didn't listen to him, I was afraid they would dart for the door, once I brought it up! So I sent her a pretty long text briefly telling her what was going on and that she has been heavy on my



heart from the beginning and I didn't really know why. At the end of the message, I included 'maybe we can have dinner and talk more about it.' As I was sending that text, it was like a weight was being lifted off my chest, I just knew I was supposed to reach out to her.

It took Chayla a day to reply — being a person that has to analyze things a little, she needed some time to give this text a little thought. But after that Chayla's response was — let's have dinner! "Tyler and I knew from that, that she would have some type of direction for us!"

Chayla has family that had been involved with surrogacy and that really helped for her to be able to get their input about what she was going to be proposing to do for the Learns.

GOD THING!



Chayla was a Gestational Carrier.

Gestational Carrier Definition: a woman who carries & delivers a child for another couple (intended parents). Carrier does not have any biological connection to the child.

Tyler and Dakotah Lear were Intended parents.

Intended parents Definition: a couple who cannot conceive on their own. An embryo is created by the intended parents and implanted into the gestational surrogate



welcome! “Our family and friends showered Dyce with wonderful gifts and we were able to shower Chayla with love and honor to the Hughes family for all the sacrifices they have made for us, it was a wonderful and emotional day for all of us,” said Dakota.

December quickly arrived. With both of Chayla’s children, she had delivered early. With the size Dyce was growing and with her history, they really thought he would for sure be here before Christmas! “My mother even bought us a ‘Baby’s 1st Christmas’ 2022 ornament! I really think that jinxed us,” said Dakotah.

Christmas came and went and still no baby. We hired a birth and postpartum Doula for Chayla. At this point, we wanted no more than to keep her comfortable and we knew they could do just that!

In this situation, a birth plan had to be created a little differently. Dakotah and Chayla had to make one individually and then they made one together.

“After the baby’s arrival, Chayla and I both wanted her to have her time to close this chapter however she felt necessary, and the baby and Tyler and I were supposed to leave the room. But God had other plans. As traditional Lear style, Dyce decided to arrive fashionably late. Arriving on Jan. 4, 2023.

He was 9 pounds 6 ounces and 22 inches long. Chayla delivered him naturally and they were all in a room together. “Even though it didn’t go as planned, I was glad it worked the way it did. I was able to witness Dakotah and Tyler meet their son for the very first time. It was a very humbling and rewarding experience. I had a sense of empowerment that I had never felt before,” said Chayla.

“The feeling of ‘I actually did this!’ was truly an experience I will never forget,” said Chayla.

As for the Lear family, there will never be enough “thank you’s” to give Chayla or her family. “I have never met a person like her and I’m not sure we ever will. Chayla gave us LIFE and completed our family. And little did we know, God had this planned out when our paths crossed,” said Dakota.

As for now, both families are still adjusting and getting back to routine. We are raising our children and making sure they all know how amazing Chayla really is.

On April 14, 2022 they did their last and final transfer. Chayla, Dakotah and their spouses knew that they had done everything possible for this to either be a start of a new beginning or a closing to an unforgettable journey. Just 10-days later, which just so happened to be Tyler’s birthday, Dakotah arrived at Chayla’s house. “I remember sitting in her drive praying for this to be a new beginning. And to be honest, I hadn’t gotten anything for Tyler for his birthday, because I so badly wanted to be able to surprise him with baby news,” said Dakotah. “I remember walking in the door and Chayla saying, “Dakotah, I’m not sure I even need to take a test, because my body is really telling me that I’m pregnant.” Sure enough, she was! There were tears of joy flooding the Hughes home. And they couldn’t wait to tell their families. “Dyce’s due date was supposed to be the same week both my kids were born, on December 26, I thought how neat would it be if they had shared the same birthday,” said Chayla.

After celebrating the news with the families, it was but a couple of weeks, Chayla became very sick. “Dakotah and I spent three days at the hospital in Kansas City. My levels were low, but by the time we had left, I was already feeling better,” said Chayla.

By the second trimester, Chayla was already showing and was ready to tell the kids. Colter was still fairly young so he didn’t have many questions, but their daughter, Landri, was very curious. “We bought them books about surrogacy (a kangaroo) that helped them understand that this baby wasn’t going to stay at our home, that he was going to stay at Tyten’s home,” said Chayla.

Dakota said she couldn’t speak for Chayla, but she thoroughly enjoyed the kids being so involved. Tyten attended every baby appointment, when he wasn’t in school and if he was, he had them record it, so he could hear his baby brother’s heartbeat.

In October, Dakotah’s dear friends hosted a “family shower” where spouses and kids were

After the dinner and the idea was proposed there were a lot of things going forward that had to be done and covered before the doctors would even go into the process. Counseling, attorneys for each party, paperwork to draw up and sign. “Chayla and I were more on the handshake and a hug wavelength with our plans, but that isn’t how it works, which did make it more stressful for both families,” said Dakotah.

In the fall of 2021, they finally did the first transfer — which didn’t work. “I felt like our prayers weren’t answered. As a mother, I felt bad for Tyten for not being able to experience the bond that I share with my own siblings, for Chayla and the endless amount of sacrifices she made to prepare her body and family for this journey, and not to mention the overall expense of it all.”

“A second attempt didn’t really seem like an option for us, for multiple reasons,” said Dakotah. But for Chayla (gestational carrier) it was. “After accepting to do this, I told Dakotah and Tyler (intended parents) that I would be willing to do two attempts.”

After months of research and praying for some kind of guidance, I brought it up to Chayla again. I wanted to see how she felt about it and within a week, we started preparing! Chayla spent countless hours going to acupuncture, chiropractic, yoga — all while taking care of her own family.



FINDING THE BLESSINGS IN LIFE

Mackenzie Slack

By Deanna Moore
news@bolivarmone.com

Wife, Mother, Photographer & Nurse- Mackenzie Slack of Bolivar has started a Ladies Blessing Box to help women in need of feminine hygiene products. Mackenzie started the blessing box as a tribute to her beautiful angel daughter, Caroline to help support women and girls in our community.

What inspired you to start the Ladies Blessing Box?

Last September, our baby girl was diagnosed with anencephaly at 12 weeks gestation. During the pregnancy, we tried to celebrate her life and our lives together as much as possible. Caroline was born in February of 2023, and stayed with us for the most incredible 84-minutes of our lives before she slipped into paradise. Going through this was extremely physically, mentally, and financially hard on our family, but it changed us in more ways than I could have ever imagined. Our experience really opened my eyes to not only how fortunate we are, but how much we take for granted every day. After her birth, I was finally able to fully open my boudoir photography studio. My business really focuses on helping women see that they are worthy, strong, and beautiful — but I had and still have this deep desire to do more. I couldn't help my girl, but I knew that I could help other girls and women. I meditated for a while on what I could do to help women in the community that I love. One day, I saw a Facebook post regarding the blessing boxes around town - and I had the thought to designate a box for feminine hygiene products. The cost of these products can be a huge burden on women and teens without access or for those who are in a season of financial struggle. There's never a day that it feels like this small effort to help is enough, but you have to start somewhere. My goal is that as my business grows, to eventually expand this to be able to help more women in more ways.

There's never a day that it feels like this small effort to help is enough, but you have to start somewhere.

Who has been the biggest influence in your life and why?

The person who has been the biggest influence in my life is my daughter, Caroline. I've learned more during and after my time

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with her than I had learned in the 27-years before. I've gained perspective, a deeper understanding of love and grief, and what it means to serve others and be all that I can be.

What advice would you give your teenage self?

I'm not sure that all of the advice I would give my teenage self would fit inside an entire book, much less a newspaper. I guess I've had a lot to learn over the years.

But, one of the most important pieces of advice I would give my younger self actually came to me this week while I was working on the blessing box. The blessing box is not perfect or pretty and will likely need to be replaced before winter. But in a moment of frustration the thought came to me "It doesn't have to be perfect".

The box doesn't have to be "perfect" to hold products that help women.

Just like...

Your business idea doesn't have to be "perfect" before you start.

You don't have to be "perfect" before you join a team, group, etc.

Showing up for someone in a season of grief or loss doesn't have to be "perfect".

Your body doesn't have to be "perfect" before you wear your favorite dress.

Your house doesn't have to be "perfect" before you invite your friends in.

I could go on and on... but my point is - if you wait for "perfect," you'll miss out and so will those around you.

What would be your ideal day off?

My ideal day off would be a Summer day spent with my husband, our son, and maybe a yard full of family and friends. Eating delicious food, singing all of our favorite songs, riding dirt bikes around the neighborhood, and laughing. No stress, no to-do lists. Just a day full of love.



If people want to add to the Ladies Blessing Box.. how would they go about that?

There are a few ways to contribute to the Ladies Blessing Box. You can directly put items into the box (located at 207 East Jackson Street), give them to me in person, send them from our Amazon wishlist, or donate money so that I can purchase items the box is missing.

If they need to get in contact with me, my email is Mackenzieslackphotography@gmail.com or you can message me through Facebook.

Keeping the box stocked is expensive, so each and every donation is extremely appreciated.



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Middle row...Jane Francka, Cheyanne McGinnis, Sheila Vonnostrand, Whitney Welch
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STAY ACTIVE — ENJOY LIFE

Trish Brummell

By Linda Simmons
news@bolivarmonews.com

Trish Brummell has been a para with the Bolivar Primary School for 23 years. That is a full time job and keeps her busy, but not busy enough. Three years ago she started holding an exercise class. That adds to her busy days, but that wasn't enough either. Now she has a hat business, making designer cowgirl hats.

The Bolivar Herald-Free Press visited with Trish about her busy life and found out a little about what 'drives' her.



What does your para career consist of and mean to you?

I work with students with special needs, helping them navigate throughout the day. I have had the honor to work with some of the best students and some days I'm not sure who is helping who. Most days they keep us all on track. BPS has been a second home for me for many years. The friendships that I have made are so special and have gotten me through good and bad times. I wouldn't want any other work family. All the relationships I have made with students and their families are so special. How could you not love big hugs and high fives throughout the day!?

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Left to right, Ema Wells, Kelly Coffey, Mary McSurley, Jady Brown, Chole Davenport

Your Real Local Florist

Who has been your biggest influence in all of your endeavors?

I have had many, but the ones I have to name are my parents, John and Pam Scott. My dad has been and still is one of the hardest working men I know, and my mom for all of her patience for working alongside my dad for so many years, all while raising four kids. Also, my husband, Jason, watching him turning a hobby into a second full-time job and seeing his hard work pay off, showed me you can do anything if you work hard enough for it.

How did you get started with the exercise classes that you do?

I was going to classes at a local gym and had been asked to cover class for the instructor and loved it. That class consisted of a lot of teachers attending and when it ended I had several ask if I would do it and have them at the school. I got permission to do that and the rest is history. This started in 2020 and now I have classes at 3:40 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays and 8:30 a.m. most Saturdays.

What do you enjoy about the exercise class the most?

The friendships, the encouragement that each one gives each other. To watch the strength in each person grow or something hard become easier, is amazing to be a part of. It's just a huge stress reliever. Watching your day melt away with every drop of sweat is amazing.

Your new hat journey...how did that get started?

The hats are so much fun! I got started after seeing a few on Pinterest and thought, I can draw. So after a few ruined hats and some practice — here we are!

What do you enjoy about it the most?

I love being creative and making the hats have personality for the person that's going to wear them. They are available to purchase at Hawk Fertilizer.

Where do you see yourself in 5 years.. still doing all three!?

Hopefully! I am hoping to still be as active as I am now!



To watch the strength in each person grow or something hard become easier, is amazing to be a part of.



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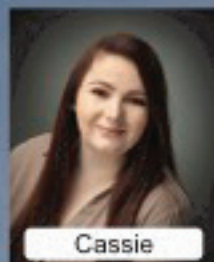


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Back row, left to right: Barb Haynes, Annie Artz, Hannah Toombs, Sammy Burks, Anna Presley, Michelle Woods, Amy Bushey, Anita Ellis, Melinda Needham, and Leslie Cantrell
Front Row, left to right: Sarah Sibley, Myrla Hall, Deb Coble, Sarah Watson, Jenny Williams, and Ally Murray
Not pictured: Michelle Follis, Cindy Young and Terri Cloyd



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What Is Your Favorite Movie and Why?

- Janieca Hancock- *The Man from Snowy River*—"I love the beautiful Australian ranch and land, horsemanship and the independent young lady willing to take chances for what she believes in."
- Donna Marquis- *Smokey and the Bandit*—"It is hands down the coolest movie ever made!"
- Kelly Barnhouse- *Top Gun*—*Maverick*—"I like all of the actors in the movie."
- Darlene McBride- *The Man from Snowy River*—"I love the scene in which he rides his horse down the side of the mountain."
- Lori Rice- *Tombstone*—"I've always loved a good western and there is no better than this classic! Full of danger and romance, this movie checks all the boxes."
- Shelley Choate- *The Godfather*—"It's not personal, it's business."
- Mary Brummett- *Lonesome Dove*—"It's about everything I love—cattle drives, Montana and Texas."
- Cassie Hedges- *The Little Mermaid*—"It's been my favorite move since I was a kid."
- Katelynn Nelson- Disney's *Inside Out*—"It's easy to avoid uncomfortable feelings but once you embrace them, you will grow as a person."
- Maddison Anderson- *Scream*—"As a horror fan, I love it because it revived the genre and made fun of itself while staying true to the slasher tropes."
- Whitney Ehbrecht: *Princess and The Frog*—"It's cute and inspiring at the same time."
- Lauren Ford- *Mrs. Doubtfire*—"Robin Williams!"
- Allison Matthews- *The Greatest Showman*—"I can't help but sing along to all of the songs."
- Mattie Wright- *Sweet Home Alabama*—"I love it because it's a sappy rom-com."
- Tonya Moore- *Point Of No Return*—"Given a second chance to get life right, the main character gains a back bone and begins to think for herself. She adapts and overcomes her situation."

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- Colette Potter- *Steel Magnolias*—"It is based in a small town, focusing on a group of friends that prove you don't have to be blood to be family."
- Jan Wilson- *Second Hand Lions*—"It shows family and love are so important and can overcome anything."
- Carla Fuller- *Pretty Woman*—"How can you go wrong with Richard Gere and Julia Roberts?"
- Kasey Warfel- *The Lion King*—"I've loved this movie since I was a kid and as an adult I see that it teaches so many valuable lessons about life and death, forgiving yourself throughout life's madness (we don't always "get it right" and that's okay), moving past betrayal and greed, overcoming fear, building lasting relationships, respect, and leadership!"



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