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FOLA

NEWS UPDATE

Toowoomba Friends

More Strange and Unusual Tales...



Launch of Don Talbot's Volume 5 of "Toowoomba - More Strange and Unusual Tales"

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Daniel Ferguson
Executive Director FOLA

More Junior Friends needed



Since the growth of Friends of Library groups around Australia, from the mid 1980s, one impediment to the future remains. We do not have enough *Junior Friends* – groups of young people 10–16 years.

Surely we need to ask why. If we do not ‘grow’ Junior Friends, we may not see the support for libraries in the future; support that we have come to expect from our adult Friends of the Library. The average membership age for Friends groups remains well above 65 years.

In the small town of Alexandra, just north of Melbourne, the local library service in Murrindindi have a wonderful asset which will assist them for many years to come. A thriving Junior Friends of the Library group have been operating for almost 20 years.

Past FOLA president, Peter McInnes, still speaks volumes for the importance of such groups being the bedrock for the survival of Friends in general. Peter, along with other conference delegates, was awestruck at the professionalism of six young teenagers arriving at the FOLA Conference in Adelaide in 1998, and presenting a wonderful paper. We now have the FOLA Peter McInnes Young Peoples Award in recognition of Peter’s passion, but also to encourage the younger generation who use our public libraries.

I am often asked – How do we establish a Junior Group? FOLA provides some answers. However, nothing speaks more wisdom than from the mouths of those who have been successful. This issue of *NewsUpdate* gives an extract from a wide ranging project undertaken by the State Library of Victoria, showcasing the ‘Best’ of services around the state. The Junior Friends of the Library at Alexandra certainly deserve to be published.

The Report gives a background to the group; its management, activities, partnerships, achievements, impact and key factors of success. This *NewsUpdate* gives a brief outline on some of the issues that may assist in helping others to develop Junior Friends.

Just as we need adult Friends for: Advocacy, Fundraising, Volunteering and Leadership, we also need young people who can do likewise. They are our future.

Start now – before it is too late!

“If we do not ‘grow’ Junior Friends, we may not see the support for libraries in the future, that we have come to expect from our adult Friends of the Library.”

“This NewsUpdate gives a brief outline on some of the issues that may assist in helping others to develop Junior Friends.”



Murrindindi Junior Friends outside Readings Bookstore in Carlton, Melbourne

Going to the Library for **more** than books

Nora Dunn

Going to the library used to be a fairly straight-forward task: enter library, borrow books, read books, return to library, repeat process.

But now, going to the library – especially the Murrindindi Library in Alexandra (a community about two hours NE of Melbourne) – is a sensory experience, and a way to tap into an artery of community activity. In Alex, the library is the place to be and to be seen.

As a Canadian writer and full-time traveller, I have been on the road solidly for two years staying for six weeks to six months in any given destination. Every new town I enter involves an immediate trip to the library. Around the world, libraries are a great way not only to borrow books, but also CDs, Movies, and often to gain easy internet access.

Rarely has a library shown me much more than these features – which even on their own are sadly underutilised these days. In chatting with a couple that recently moved to a small nearby town and were having trouble integrating into their local community, it hadn't occurred to them to visit the library. They are used to libraries being stuffy, boring and full of outdated and tattered books.

This is simply not so in Alexandra; the Murrindindi library is not like other libraries I have seen in my travels. I walk in the door and

am greeted by sounds of a young musician practising the piano, the laughter of a group of kids playing board games, and I look upon a warm open space inviting me to sink into a chair and spend the day. Ten minutes later, I am set up with not only a library card, but free wireless internet, access to over 600,000 books, and an entire roster of top notch events scheduled for the coming year.

Well known authors make stops on busy speaking tours to speak to the folks at Alexandra (attracting attendees from surrounding communities up to 100 kms away), courtesy of the hard work of the Friends Of The Library fund raising organisation. The evening reception after such events spared no expense, and provided a forum for attendees to mingle, sip drinks, and enjoy appetisers and deserts prepared by library staff.

The hard-working library employees host elaborate dinners for special interest groups, have a massive annual Halloween bash for kids, and coordinate murder mystery nights, on top of consistently shopping for and adding new books to the collections, hosting school groups, and even reading stories to toddlers regularly.

Bridge groups meet weekly at the library, as do chess players, vintage readers, local writers, and even French conversation groups. There is rarely a time when the library is not being used as some form of gathering place.

Continued overleaf.

“Ten minutes later, I am set up with not only a library card, but free wireless internet, access to over 600,000 books, and an entire roster of top notch events scheduled for the coming year.”

“The Murrindindi library is not like other libraries I have seen in my travels.”

Going to the Library for *more* than books

In smaller communities, the pub is often the only place to connect with people, and the folks at Murrindindi Library are dedicated to providing alternatives.

"We like to provide the initial impetus for groups to get together, and then it takes on a life of its own." Says Sharon Batt, Branch Coordinator. That is exactly what happened with the Band Night which inspired a few musical groups to branch off and practice together, and even the Pink Dinner, which created new friendships with the town's gay and lesbian community.

One of the big focuses of the Murrindindi Library is of course children, who, if we are not careful, could go through life reading not books but internet pages, and connecting with not people but Facebook profiles.

"In a town that is so sport-focused, the library provides something for kids who are not into sports." Batt says.

Libby Kotschet, who has been with the library since 1983, works very actively with the children. You will see her Thursday mornings working with kids from the ages of 2 through 18, leading school groups, and coordinating the efforts of the very active Junior Friends of the library group.

"It's a great round table for keeping the library active and current," Kotschet says to me, as she fields questions and greetings of the many kids coming in and out of the library who know her by name.

The Junior Friend of the Library, with members ranging from ages 10-18, is a reputable and incredibly active group. They raise thousands of dollars each year, using the funds to host workshops on topics like African drumming, writing, art, as well as buying books, DVDs, CDs, appliances, and even sponsoring aboriginal children.

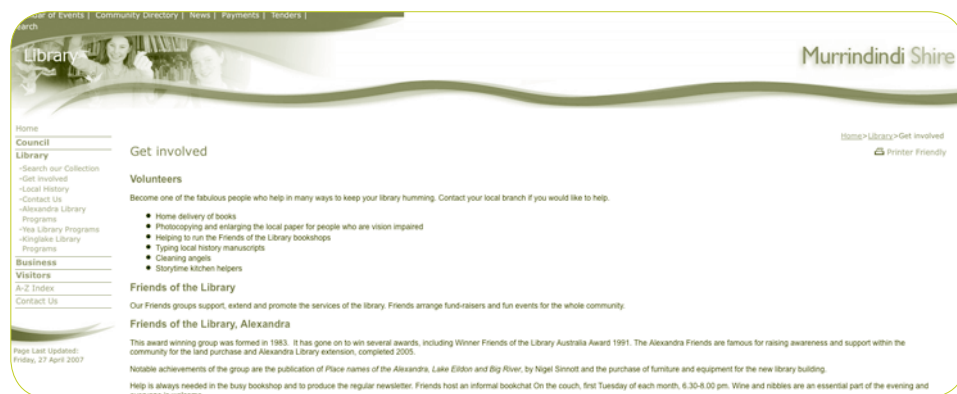
"The library is the last safe place, where you can say to your kids 'I'll pick you up at the library after school.'" When I observe that the library comes alive with activity as soon as school gets out Kotschet replies, "Where else would kids go? The supermarket or RSL?"

Even the building at Murrindindi Library has a story to tell; erected in 1877, with the addition of a billiards room in 1891 (to bring in needed funds to keep the library open), the original façade remains in superb condition. With the help of State Government Living Libraries funding, the old library was tastefully renovated in 2005, and a new wing was added. Each year, the library is continuously updated and improved to improve usability and access.

Personally, having seen libraries all over the world, I felt the difference immediately upon entering the Murrindindi Library. As a newcomer to the area, I have been welcomed with open arms, and given a key to the community. All by simply going to the library.

(Nora Dunn, a Canadian writer visiting Alexandra, Victoria. With thanks to Robert Scott, President, Friends of the Library – Alexandra & District)

"The library is the last safe place, where you can say to your kids 'I'll pick you up at the library after school'."



Showcasing **the best:**

MURRINDINDI JUNIOR FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY – Alexandra (Vic)

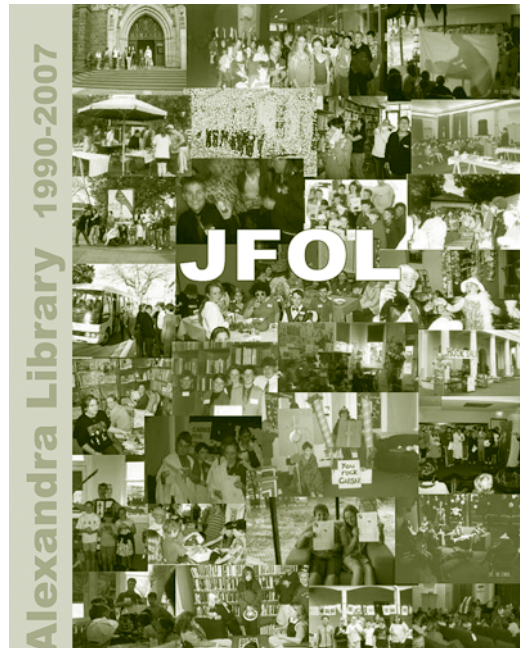
Extract from: Libraries Building Communities Report 4 Showcasing the best. State Library of Victoria 2007

Impact on the community

- The diverse range of cultural events facilitated by JFOL has extended the outreach capacity of our library to the wider community
- The Library has an enhanced community profile
- Program has provided a voice in the community for local youth
- Community now has an ever-changing, highly motivated group of local youth who meet monthly in the library
- Young people involved in planning and implementing projects for all young people and families within our community
- Fundraising provides an opportunity for meaningful participation in the wider community both local, national and international. It encourages active citizenship and develops social capital
- JFOL have provided events and projects for the whole community that would not have happened otherwise

“Program has provided a voice in the community for local youth.”

“Remember the home basics: contact people in advance and follow up with reminders”



Impact on staff

- The Junior Friends have boundless youthful energy, and it flows both ways. Planning a program with a group of young people and tapping into community resources is enlightening and inspiring
- The connection forged via JFOL provides staff with a privileged and unique insight into the current mindset of youth
- JFOL events and themes are used for displays, activities, reading lists, media releases and publicity
- JFOL focuses staff on the needs of youth in the community
- Ready-made focus group – it provides a direct link with youth for forums and future planning
- Young people currently have a key role in the library’s book selection process

Showcasing **the best**



Unexpected outcomes

- Staff have noticed a marked difference when connecting with secondary school groups with JFOL members in them. We have increased our credibility with many and a have point of reference for conversation
- We receive vibrant and succinct feedback about the library from an unexpected source
- These young people have become passionate readers and advocates for the library within their peer group
- A constant reminder of the mercurial nature of childhood and that stereotypes do not apply
- Providing youth with opportunities to do things for others builds self-esteem and positive memories
- JFOL provides opportunities to explore positive friendships across age groups and sexes
- Youth in our community have had their ideas accepted, supported and applauded and have won support from unexpected directions

Future benefits

- Building a core group of people who will have a lifelong relationship with libraries
- Youth realise that planning and implementing successful events can have long-term benefits to themselves and the community
- Youth in our community have had the opportunity to form relationships with non-custodial adults

Key factors of our success

- Staff are very aware of their non custodial role, we are not teachers or parents – we are all in this together to have a good time!
- JFOL is all-inclusive and adapts to accommodate all personalities and abilities. (the noisy, loud, rude, impertinent, somnambulant, overwhelming, are all welcome)

- Long term planning in consultation with youth
- A variety of projects and objectives both short and long term
- Annual fundraising objectives
- Food – plenty of food at everything
- Dedicated and enthusiastic staff committed to ongoing training and new ideas
- An annual plan

Main challenges, their impact and management

- Never knowing how many people will attend – we never cancel and soldier on regardless of numbers. Staff have learnt to be infinitely adaptable.
- Wide age group and diverse interests overcome by involving everyone in the planning stage so that people are prepared to compromise
- Challenge of keeping it relevant, attractive and fun, we address this by providing staff with training and networking opportunities statewide and by involving young people in annual planning
- Program has to constantly evolve; participants usually stay for around 3 years before they move on. We address this by reinventing ourselves often!
- Challenge to maintain the pace of the session and stay within the timeframe, we address this by being well prepared and staffed (at least 2)

What would we do differently?

- Involve youth in book buying (trips to Melbourne bookshops) earlier than we did
- If we had more time we would have sought more external funding sources
- Raised our profile as conveners of great program for youth, but we didn't realise how little was out there

“Empower an imaginative staff member with a generous heart to develop the program with young people.”

Showcasing the best

Advice to libraries implementing a similar strategy

- Empower an imaginative staff member with a generous heart to develop the program with young people
- Consult with young people via formal meetings with standard meeting rules. Train young people in public speaking and meeting procedures, help them realise what a useful tool this is
- Develop an annual plan with short and long-term objectives
- Plan both small and large-scale events
- Be generous and welcoming, provide heaps of food
- Advertise widely, never cancel, include any who turn up, be very careful not to become an exclusive club
- Try and have meetings in the library when it's closed to create a sense of privilege, inclusion and trust. There is something very special about being in a library when it's closed

"Advertise widely, never cancel, include any who turn up, be very careful not to become an exclusive club"

- Remember it's not school or home, having fun is enough and there won't always be a measurable outcome
- NEVER EVER cancel, the essence of a program may need to be altered if only a few turn up but the event must always go on. Kids love to plan and look forward to events, they put in energy convincing their parent to bring them along don't disappoint them

The Junior Friends were established in 1990 with key assistance from staff member Libby Koeschet, who continues to inspire this wonderful group of young people, building skills and interests of the young and helping to build social capital within the community. The adult Friends of the Library Alexandra group continue to give support and encouragement.

10 TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE RECRUITING

1. The first person to really talk to is yourself?

Disregard old stereotypes, don't lie, don't diminish the job, don't apologise, don't beg.

2. Ask one to one, face to face

It's the best method. 80% of people volunteer because someone they know asked them.

3. Be enthusiastic!

The best recruiter is someone who likes what they are doing and values the work of the organisation. Share your enthusiasm.

4. Know the job to be done.

Have a one-page job description prepared. Provide a contact name and selected print resources. Don't overwhelm. Suggested information: Position title, Purpose/Objective, Responsibilities, Skills required, Time commitment, Benefits, Training, Additional requirements.

5. Explain why you asked them

Do your homework. Know skills, attitudes, knowledge required to do the job. Match the right person with the right job.

6. Be explicit about "what's in it for them"

Try to put yourself in their shoes. What needs does this job satisfy for this particular volunteer?

7. Ask!!!

85% of people who don't volunteer say it's because no one asked them. Remember, don't apologise. Try the following: "I have an opportunity for you..." "Join us, we can really use your talents..."

8. Answer questions honestly

Answering their questions demonstrates your interest in their concerns. Remember to use the "no surprises" method of volunteer management. Even if the individual says no to you, you've told the story of your organisation.

9. Link recruits with a specific project and a personal contact

Agreeing to help takes courage. You want to get someone involved while their interest and enthusiasm are high. Many people offer to volunteer and then are not contacted.

10. Don't promise what you can't deliver

It may be tempting to offer the world in order to entice a hesitant recruit. Resist the temptation. Promising what you can't deliver makes people resentful and sets up a series of expectations which may not be realised.

11. Volunteers Appreciate:

- Being greeted with a smile
- That you take the time to learn volunteer names
- Verbal thanks from staff
- Recognition in the library newsletter or in the media
- Free coffee
- A volunteer appreciation event
- Certificates of appreciation
- A mug, a pen

(from the Friends of Sault Ste. Marie Public Library and FOLUSA)

Programs and Projects from the **USA** and **Canada**

Ball State University, Muncie, In

"Who Are These People?" was a program presented by the Friends of the Bracken Library. College fold and towns people were invited to come and help identify people and places in photos of Delaware county from one of the library's collections.

Winter Haven, Fl

Children's Outreach is a spring program sponsored by Friends of the Winter Haven Public Library. Invitations are extended to public and private schools and home schoolers to bring their third and fourth graders to the library for a tour, free time to look at books, and a storytime. Students learn to get a library card and how to become involved in the summer reading programs, and they each receive a bookbag and bookmark. The friends pay for transportation to the library.

Vancouver, Bc, Canada

Last October the Friends of the Vancouver Public Library hosted a general meeting devoted to book clubs. They invited all those interested in the topic, via the media. The audience of over 120 heard about some library-sponsored programs and courses, toured the Central Branch, had a short course on how to research a book, listened to a few representative describe how their clubs are run, and picked up copies of book lists. Those present said they'd like for it to be an annual event.

Chatham, Ma

The highlight of the annual meeting of the Friends of the Eldredge Public Library was a panel discussion – Chatham Looks at its Library. Participants included the chairman of the Board of Selectmen, the superintendent of schools, and the executive director of the Chamber of Commerce.

South Windsor, Ct

"Pick of the Crop" is an annual program of short book reviews by local townspeople. Five community members give brief reviews of books of their choice. A recent program included the Town Manager, a town council member, a journalist, a high school teacher and a businessman.

Columbus, Oh, Dublin Branch

The Dublin Friends celebrated the season with a Garden Day in June. Garden-related books were on sale, small children enjoyed a "Secret Garden" storytime, and a family program was offered for adults and older children. Three authors spoke in the afternoon – two authors of gardening books and a cookbook author – and the day was wrapped up with tea and a light lunch in the library's garden.

Rowan

The Friends of Rowan Public Library make library services better by: Sponsoring programs, helping with programs, providing volunteers to help, and by developing and implementing new ideas for the betterment of library services.



<http://www.rowancountync.gov/GOVERNMENT/Departments/PublicLibrary/Friends/tabid/577/Default.aspx>



Berkeley

The Friends Bookstores are staffed by more than 75 volunteers.



http://berkeleypubliclibrary.org/about_the_library/support_the_library.php

Hennepin County

Some of the benefits include: direct channel for your suggestions and support of library needs, one FREE Bestseller Express book rental, priority ticketing for the Pen Pals author series, VIP at special events, and annual recognition activities.

<http://www.hclib.org/pub/info/support/friends.cfm>

St Clair

Friends of the St Clair County Library is a volunteer non-profit organisation that is dedicated to support library programs and services, contributing to the financial stability of the library and educating the community and its governing bodies about library issues.

<http://www.sccl.lib.mi.us/hdqtrts/friends.html>

Rochester

The money that they raise is given to the Rochester Public Library to expand collections and programs to finance the **Read With Me** program which encourages early literacy by giving books to area newborns.

<http://rochesterpubliclibrary.org/friends/index.html>



Peninsula

Friends President Ted Paulson welcomes you to the newly launched Peninsula Friends of the Library website and blog. And, the Library Shop celebrates 25 years.



On Saturday evening, the Library Shop remained open so the visitors could shop for unique gifts when they weren't looking at art.

<http://www.friends.pvld.mobi/>

Sault Ste. Marie

Formed in 1990 for the purpose of bringing together people who share an enthusiasm for the library, for promoting and encouraging public awareness and appreciation of the library, and supporting the work of the library in the community.

<http://www.ssmpl.ca/content/friends/?d=1>

Salt Lake

For 50 year the Friends have provide support for public programs, events, library equipment, outreach to the community, collections and services and educational support for the library.

http://www.slclpl.lib.ut.us/details.jsp?parent_id=7&page_id=112

Friends around Australia



News, Events & Ideas...

National Library (ACT)

The Friends Committee were delighted that Sharyn O'Brien has been appointed as Friends Executive Officer in October.

The Library have decided to cease the monthly magazine *National Library of Australia News* and replace it with a quarterly publication from March 2009. The Friends have been distributing the *Friends Newsletter* at the same time.

The Friends Committee have decided to contribute to this mailout to 1800 members, at a cost of \$15,000, which is half the total cost of \$30,000.

Port Macquarie (NSW)

The Literary Lunch for September featured Jane Gleeson-White on Australian Classics. Published in 2007, Janes second book Australian Classics – 50 great writers and their celebrated works. Two recent events were Australia's Biggest Morning Tea/Mad Hatters Tea Party in May and in June – Souper Scenes.

Thuringowa (Qld)

The AGM was held in August, and notable amongst its report was the item mentioning the Friends donation of \$8,000 towards furniture for the library.

Altona (Vic)

Friends sponsored an Illustration Competition for students from Prep to Year 12 who are members of Hobsons Bay Libraries. The Theme was 'Draw yourself into your favourite story'.

Barossa (SA)

The AGM was held in August, the last annual meeting in the old Nuriootpa library building. Through the Barossa Council's Community Assistance Scheme, the Friends received a grant of \$2,500 for laptop computers for the library's program of teaching basic computer

skills to community members. Also reported in the annual report was the wide variety of programs and donations to the library, including \$10,500 from the Friends towards a Self-Check Machine for borrowers in the new library.

Wagga Wagga (NSW)

The July book sale was a great success raising \$2,580. The remaining books were sorted into some for recycling, some for the Rotary Booksale and some to be put out again. A review of the year's activities showed a 15% increase in drink sales with the new machine, book sales income up by 193%!

Wingecarribee (NSW)

In September, Michael Keenan spoke on his latest book – The Shadows of Horses. In August the Friends made a trip to Goulburn Regional Gallery for the 2008 Archibald Prize. And in July they had Richard O'Brien speak on the works of Kafka.

Balmain (NSW)

Friends will award a prize of \$3,500 for the best design in the FOBL Glass Art Competition. Students of the Sydney College of the Arts were asked to submit a design for five windows in the southern wall of the Balmain Library's new Children's Section, part of the overall redesign, refurbishment, and enlargement of the library.

Toowoomba (Qld)

After ten year of good service, the Friends brochure needed some revision and updating. Hence the committee decided to make a complete change. Friends made input on the wording and the colour. One member produced a poem and another, a skilled artist, produced a new picture of the library.

Wagga Wagga:

"The first Book Sale of the year in March was a great success, raising \$2,030."

Friends around Australia



Willunga & Aldinga (SA)

FOWAL returned to the Willunga area in style in September. About 30 people gathered at the Hub for a great experience when they heard author Marion Yallup talk about her book – Sins of the Father.

Salisbury (SA)

The Friends recently sponsored 2 major projects. An Oral History Project commenced late 2007 and completed in July 2008. One Book One Salisbury finalised in August 2008. The Friends Honour Board, displayed in the Library Shop has been extended and updated and in May the Friends converted the Library Shop into a tea room in support of the Cancer Research Foundation Biggest Morning Tea Party. Salisbury is about to celebrate 20 years as a Friends group in November.

State Library (SA)

On 22 May the Friends farewelled Helen Williams, Executive Officer of 13 years. She was presented a special copy of – the Peron/Freyrcinet Atlas which included a page recording the thanks of the Friends. Earlier, in April, Mark Gilbert, Alan Brissenden and the New Executive Officer, Carolyn Potts, had the pleasure of sharing morning tea with the Friends Patron, His Excellency Rear Admiral Kevin Scarce, Governor of South Australia.

Help needed in Colac (Vic)

Colac Library is to become a Joint-use Library located at the secondary school known as the Beechy Centre. Opposition to this has been overwhelming in Colac with some 3250 signatures to a petition. The Colac Otway Shire Council has received funding from the State and Federal governments and plans are in place to go ahead. The library is located 2kms out of town, which may disadvantage

people with limited access. The Friends have been campaigning the Council for over 12 months. The Friends of the Colac Library have produced a number of 'You Tubes' explaining the situation.

Jim Crawford Award 2008.

Charles Sturt Council's library service has won the prestigious Jim Crawford Award for an outstanding program to bridge cultures for Muslim refugees in western Adelaide.

The program was aimed at connecting new arrivals from the Middle East, Africa and Bosnia to social networks and English literacy skills. The program supports the SA Strategic Plan objectives for community building, literacy and population growth.

The Award is named in honour of the late Jim Crawford who was Chairman of the Libraries Board of South Australia from 1977 until 1987 and established the blueprint for development of the public library system in SA. Jim was a strong support in the development of Friends groups in South Australia.

Launceston

Friends:

"Friends of the Library, Launceston recently received an honourable mention for its publishing program in the Smart Communities Award."



Friends of Libraries RESOURCE BOOK (2005)

Daniel Ferguson, Friends of Libraries Australia (FOLA)

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The authoritative guide and source book for Friends of Library groups in Australasia

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10 December – Melbourne
11 March – Melbourne

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