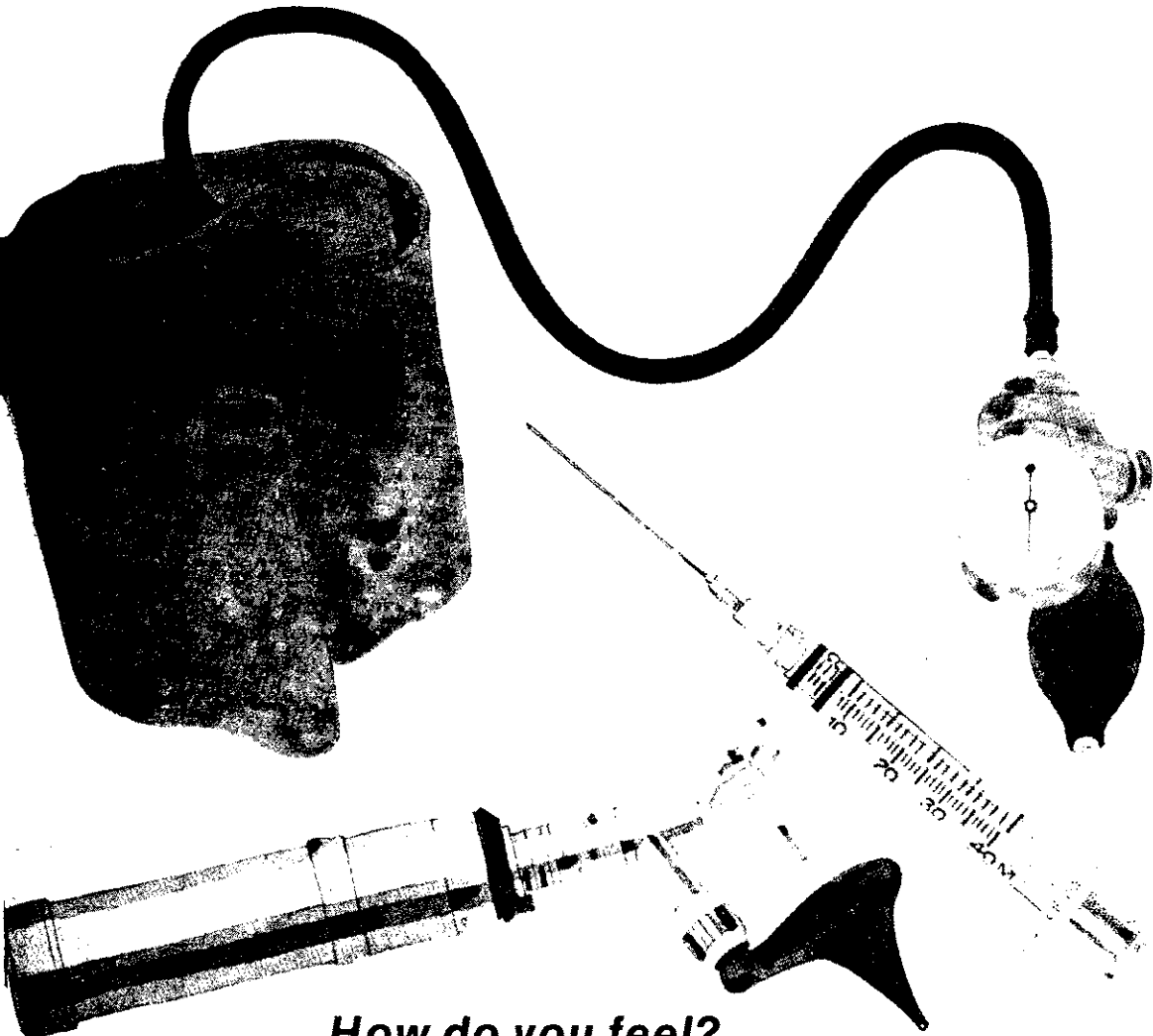


InULA

Quarterly



How do you feel?

InULA Quarterly

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How do you feel?

Seven librarians answer this question as **InULA Quarterly** explores the issue of self-esteem. The contributors, all performing different types of functions and at different stages of their careers, represent a variety of viewpoints. The articles here are responses to the following questions:

1. How have you reacted to the changes that have occurred in the field of librarianship (information explosion, on-line searching, new physical environments)?
2. How has your self-esteem changed over the years?
3. Have you doubted the relevance of librarianship and your choice of career?
4. Have you felt respected throughout your career?
5. How do you foresee your future in librarianship? Do you anticipate a career change?

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Six years out of library school, and little more than half of that as a “professional,” hardly constitutes a career. But even in this relatively brief period significant changes have occurred. Six or seven years ago there was little exposure to technology in library school. OCLC was barely mentioned in cataloging class, and on-line searching was still too new to be formally included in the curriculum. The school’s first terminal was treated like a *rara avis*, displayed to students to admire but not touch. But the adjustments and acceptance come so easily. Is it age? Is it harder on older librarians who are supposed to be especially resistant to change? It would seem not, since most appear to use new technology most readily. How quickly, for example, we’ve come to depend on OCLC in reference and inter-library loan. Perhaps the conservative and rigid librarian is just one of the many stereotypes that still abound.

I never thought about librarianship as a career until I was ready to leave the military, long after college. The support of friends was not overwhelming, and I’m sure my family would have preferred a dentist. A librarian is just not something girls or boys want to be when they grow up. Most people seem to come to librarianship after trying something else—the stereotype of failed teachers and unemployable liberal arts graduates may have some basis in fact. But then I doubt that many young people enter college planning to get an MBA and work for Proctor & Gamble.

Granted there are image problems. We know that not all female librarians wear

glasses on the ends of their noses, and that all male librarians are not rejects from “The Village People.” But for others who have little contact with the wide world of librarianship, these ideas persist. My family now lives in a small Massachusetts town with a public library that is open three afternoons a week and staffed by two elderly ladies who have run the place for at least 30 years. Understandably, my parents still ask me “just what exactly is it that you do?”

Fortunately, “image” does not seem to be much of a problem in a large academic library. Amidst eccentric faculty members, librarians appear relatively normal. And I can’t moan that “I get no respect.” Respect is something that is earned, not an automatic benefit of a position. I suspect that librarians who grumble about lack of respect would probably have the same complaint in any other profession.

The relevance of librarianship is in the eye of the beholder. There are those who would try to put it on a par with missionary work—bringing salvation through knowledge to the ignorant masses tottering on the edge of intellectual starvation. Such lofty notions are unnecessary; if we simply value learning for its own sake, then librarianship needs no special justification. And if we value our work, then why would we consider change? Granted, librarians will never get rich, but we knew that before we entered the field. Frustration and dissatisfaction that are related to a particular job can be overcome by trying another position. The profession is large and varied enough to offer a multitude of oppor-

tunities. Admittedly the entrepreneurial bug bites most of us sooner or later, causing dreams of financial independence with our own "information broker" business. (When I was in library school everyone wanted to own a bookstore.) But such dreams seem a natural outgrowth of a fondness for what we do as librarians.

All this is not to say that I never have doubts. Being a "visiting librarian" can play havoc with your security needs. The word "visiting" itself is mocking, implying

"home" where you will be welcomed back when your six-month extensions finally run out. But that again is a quirk of a particular position, and resentment against one situation should not carry over to the profession as a whole. I no longer feel I need to explain why I became a librarian. I enjoy what I do, derive a sense of accomplishment from it, find it rewarding, stimulating, and sufficient (barely) to pay the bills. What more need I ask for?

Fred Musto is Visiting Assistant Librarian, Reference Department.



Viewpoint of

A Librarian Educator

William Warner Bishop was still giving an occasional lecture in the library school at Michigan when I went there in 1950, although he had long since retired. He had been director of libraries at the U of M from 1914 to 1941 and was probably the leading academic librarian anywhere on earth between the two world wars. I doubt that he knew who I was—certainly he never gave me the pleasure of believing that he might—but he influenced me mightily nonetheless.

It was clear just from watching him that Dr. Bishop knew something that other people didn't know. The way he flourished his cane; the way he trimmed his goatee (long after his elders had given up goatees, and equally long before his juniors would adopt them); the way he made his presence (or absence) felt in a room, all conveyed an unmistakable message that he *knew* that there was high adventure and overarching social significance in

research librarianship whether anyone else saw it there or not. It was the supreme confidence of the man that entranced me and kept me watching him intently for a number of years. It was obvious that, as a research librarian, he controlled "the keys to the kingdom," the requisite paraphernalia for the preservation and extension of civilization on this earth.

Whether or not I ever came to know Dr. Bishop's secret is impossible for me to say, but over time I did come to realize a difference about him. It was that, whereas virtually all the other librarians I had ever known were concerned with how to perform library operations, he was the first and foremost interested in *why* society needed libraries in the first place. This is not to say that he lacked technical competence. On the contrary, he was exceedingly competent, having served as head of technical services at Princeton and as head of public services at the Library of

Congress before coming to Michigan. It was rather that he began thinking and talking about libraries always with their prime roots, their social causation itself, and thereafter the technical matters fell into place like night follows day.

I have consciously attempted throughout my career to emulate Dr. Bishop in this important regard. I am exceedingly grateful that he taught me, albeit from afar, that research libraries are an absolutely essential cornerstone upon which successful attainment in any field of intellectual endeavor must inexorably be based. This simple recognition had given me the kind of professional self-confidence that I once envied in him.

Have I ever felt "put down" as a librar-

ian? Never. People have *tried* to put me down, but I have simply smiled and said, "That's alright; I'll pray for you." Has my self-esteem changed over the years? No, not since 1955 when I first began to feel that I had learned Dr. Bishop's secret. Have I ever doubted the relevance of librarianship? Not a whit. Do I foresee changes in librarianship? Only in our techniques; I foresee librarians in the twenty-fifth century performing exactly the same social functions as they have always performed: acquiring, organizing, preserving, and delivering the human record, regardless of what format it may then be in. If they are not still doing it then, civilization will long since have passed from the face of this planet.

David Kaser is Professor of Library Science, School of Library and Information Science



Viewpoint of

A Librarian In a Non-Professional Position

When I first expressed interest several years ago in making the library profession my career, the reactions of most of my friends were uniform. "You," they teased, grinning from ear to ear, "an old maid librarian, hair in a bun, glasses creeping down your nose, dusting books all day?" I just did not catch the humor. The stereotype of the librarian (not to mention the stereotype of aging women) just did not fit in my mind. From my experience spending time in libraries as a youngster, as a student, and eventually as a librarian, my impression of a library was characterized by activity, expression of curiosity, and quiet excitement.

As a librarian I had felt much satisfac-

tion in the process of developing skill in meeting the demands of my clientele. It is that satisfaction and the belief in the value of the service I provide which have been the foundation of the respect I have for my work. And respect, I believe, reflects respect. That respect has gone a long way to meet what the salary has not.

It is often heard that technology threatens to render librarians obsolete. Yet here I feel no real threat to me professionally. True, technology allows the capability to access information with amazing speed and accuracy, and at times I've felt overwhelmed by its complexity. But there will always be the need for one who is skilled at framing the question, one who is skilled

at making good judgements where the computer interfaces with the user. In the right hands (and with the right head) technology promises to free the librarian-for services which are now relegated to the sidelines.

More threatening to me, perhaps, is the current decreased salary funding many libraries seem to be facing. Constantly, my question to myself is how best to concentrate on developing the basic and transferrable skills of librarianship. Versatility seems for me to be the key to surviving and thriving as a librarian. The opportunity for this kind of change, with the

variety it offers, may provide the glue for sticking with it during the doubtful times.

At this point in my young career, I am still looking forward to my first professional position. Perhaps the real test of my dedication to the profession will come later. As my career develops, salary expectations will become higher. Likewise, what I expect in terms of opportunity for further development on the job will become greater. The extent to which I can realize these changing expectations may cause me to reassess my choice of career. But then this continual reassessment is vital to the health of any career.

Dianne Albers is Secretary, Circulation Department.



A Public Librarian

In preparation for this article I talked to many public librarians about this subject of self-esteem, and each one felt that self-esteem among public librarians is high. When one considers the forces at work to destroy this pride, it is a surprising statement.

The low pay alone is a powerful negative force at work. Each pay day is a reminder of the value society places upon one's work and, for the public librarian, who is always near the bottom of any salary comparison study, it is a depressant, regularly repeated.

The low esteem granted public librarians by others in their own profession is one more factor attacking pride in one's work. The innuendos are often present that we are less educated and less professional, that the problems we deal with

are trivial, or even frivolous; we do not operate on the high planes of librarianship. This attitude is not easy to accept from one's colleagues.

The isolation experienced by individuals in very small libraries where there may be only one or two professional librarians with no one else to share experiences and little money to attend meetings is still another problem for many people.

The new technology and the fear of one's inability to cope with the computers and networks can also be disheartening. Last but not least, a factor that touches us all is the unattractive stereotype of "the librarian," accompanied by the little or non-existent recognition by the world at large.

How can there be high esteem in the face of that depressing list? It would seem that public librarians are not easily

stampeded. They are a sturdy lot. Most have chosen this profession deliberately. Librarianship, especially public librarianship, is seldom encouraged by guidance counselors or by parents and friends as a promising career for young people. However, whether or not chosen deliberately, once in the service, public librarians seem quite determined to stay. Even with today's pressures of reduced budgets and cutbacks going hand-in-hand with the demand for increased services and the growing problems of censorship, librarians are not willingly leaving the field. Why? The answer is that they *know* that the work they do, the service they give, is valuable. It cannot be done without training and experience and a caring attitude. It is an honorable profession. That awareness is a powerful boost toward high self-esteem, and the level of esteem increases as one's career lengthens. It becomes ever more apparent that the work one does is truly important, that one does touch other people's lives in a significant way. After all, the opportunity to influence and stimulate children through those vital early years, to facilitate their public school education, to support those people who missed earlier chances and are picking up their education later in life, to solve the daily problems common to all of us, and

often to assist in the solutions of uncommon problems, are everyday experiences in the public library; all this, plus offering fun and recreation on many levels. It is a stimulating job. One becomes involved in the interests of others and learns something new almost every day. The patrons whose lives are touched are the most generous with their appreciation and praise. Indeed, regular users become friends, and there is a real sense of being a vital part of the community.

Good solid initial training and continuing education opportunities are the foundations on which this security is built. In recent years public libraries have blossomed with additional services, and the creativity with which they are offered is exciting: information and referral, circulating toys and games, coupon exchange, expanded ILL, OCLC, book cassettes—every department is rich in services new to libraries. In Indiana, the ALSAs offer added services to even the smallest libraries by sharing materials, programs, advice, professional journals, etc. All of these enable the public librarian to do the job better and it is just that—assisting people, doing it well, and receiving appreciation from those patrons that is the most solid self-esteem booster of all.

Roberta Mueller is Head of the Reference Department, Monroe County Public Library

Having feasted at the smorgasbord of library education, I am approaching the entrance to the library marketplace. My emotions have become a seesaw of joy and trepidation, anticipation and dread. Though I have enjoyed my library classes, I am eager to apply the theories I have studied.

I realize that I will be competing for every job, not only with the hordes of recent graduates, but with the many librarians who have lost jobs due to budget constraints.

The only way to face this fact and remain cheerful is to recognize the fact that statistics are measures of masses, not individuals. A person has a job, or he does not have a job. A person cannot be 5% unemployed any more than he can be 3% pregnant or 25% dead. Statistics are useful to measure the economic health of the nation, but they give me no help in job hunting. When confronted by good-intentioned doom-sayers equipped with a battery of statistics, I listen politely, gullibly; I allow myself a few moments of rock-bottom depression, then I disregard the information. I am one person. I intend to slip through those nets of statistics and find myself a job. I cannot afford to run blindly with a band of stampeding graduates.

It is possible that I will need to accept a job that is less than Full Librarian. If so, I will consider the situation as a form of apprenticeship. It is also possible that I will

take such a job, considering it "apprenticeship leading up ladder to librarianship" while the library administrators will uncompromisingly believe "once support staff, always support staff." There may be library administrators who ask neophyte librarians to exhibit unswerving devotion, unquestioning obedience and unblinking attention, then hold them hostage with the attitude "there are dozens more where you came from, kid—one bad day and you're back on the street!"

This is my greatest concern: that the reality of library work will be quite different from the expectations that led me to make financial sacrifices to become a librarian. I agree with the Philosophies of library service and management that I have studied in library school—if these philosophies exist only on paper, I will be bitterly disappointed. This disillusionment would be far worse to me than the problem of finding employment.

I enjoy librarianship and I am worthy of the title "librarian." Library school has taught me resourcefulness. Adding to that resourcefulness my own perseverance, it is logical that someday, somewhere, I will find a job as a librarian. Until then I intend to practice my resourcefulness in whatever job I find and to maintain contact with libraries either through volunteer/parttime work or simply through reading and research.

Meanwhile, one step at a time, on a tightrope, I proceed into the profession.

Carla Long will be an August, 1981 graduate of the School of Library and Information Science.

It is exciting and challenging to see the explosion in the amount of information, the resources, and the technological advances. Not only have these changes been of tremendous value for patron service but they have been personally stimulating. In order to learn more of the use of automation it was necessary to take classes and workshops. It was exciting to initiate and direct a computer searching service for faculty and students, i.e., ERIC/PROBE. New technology, such as microcomputers, make it challenging to keep abreast of changes via continuing education.

My view of self-esteem includes both my professional life as well as personal. For me this has changed little through the years. I have no hesitation in telling people about my profession since I believe very strongly that librarianship is quite important in our society. I feel of value when able to perform service through a profession which I and others view as worthwhile.

I have not doubted the relevance and choice of my career because I feel library service is becoming increasingly necessary for daily survival as well as research. I

have been both librarian and teacher and continue to be interested in both aspects. Librarianship is in the forefront in organizing and providing access to information via user services, bibliographic instruction and the use of automation.

Respect from colleagues, administrators, and patrons is necessary but must be developed gradually. Both as a librarian and teacher I have expected and received respect and equality. It is certainly important and necessary, of course, to accept personal responsibility to fulfill the qualifications of any position as to performance, research, continuing education, and service. Respect is then usually received when one is qualified, performs well, and acts professionally.

My future in librarianship is just as open as are the opportunities available. Just as I feel change is necessary and invigorating in the profession, I believe also it aids individual growth. It is worthwhile to remain in a position long enough to make a contribution but not long enough to become bored or in a rut. I do not anticipate a "career" change but will make a "position" change this fall.

Eva Kiewitt is Head of the School of Library and Information Science Library and Associate Professor, School of Library and Information Science.



A Seasoned Librarian

At the risk of sounding too much like one of my very early fictional heroines, the ever-optimistic Pollyanna, I must confess that I could not have been happier in my choice of career than I have been in librarianship. For me, the library provides the best of professions, and it has not occurred to me to doubt seriously the relevance of librarianship as a career. Because I reared my children before I returned to graduate school for my degree in library science, I shall have less time as a librarian than many, but I have relished every year. And since 1969, I have been fortunate in being situated in a physically inviting building with an enviable working environment.

An ancient Greek philosopher is supposed to have said, "Nothing endureth but change." We librarians should agree with him. Although my position in the library since 1960 has been stable, it has never been static. I sometimes wonder if there hasn't been more change in libraries and, therewith, the Indiana University Libraries since I became a librarian than in any comparable period. We have had an enormous information explosion, a substantial increase in budget for collection development and the concomitant expansion in public and technical services to handle this growth as well as the snow-balling of

enrollment, the challenge and hope of an advancing technology and the advent of faculty status with its exciting but demanding mandates. We are able to participate in the determination of library goals; we are communicating effectively with faculty and students; we engage in continuing education, research and in many other intellectual activities so that we may become more capable professionals; and we are encouraged to undertake university and community service. In addition, we are only just entering the computer era in libraries with the radical and fundamental changes this will bring about. As a cataloger, I have experienced many of the benefits that automation can bring and know that automation is absolutely necessary to relieve the pressures on technical services. Although our library has not been able to automate so much as might be desirable because of the presently restricted budget, we are on the threshold of exciting applications of on-line search and retrieval in reference services and are approaching the installation of automated circulation and acquisition systems.

When addressing the InULA/SLIS symposium on April 25, 1981, Michael Gorman told us that change is good for us. Perhaps that is the reason I have felt so much personal satisfaction in being a librarian.

Rosanna Blakeley is Assistant Librarian, Cataloging Department.

Book Review

What Else You Can Do With a Library Degree, ed. by Betty-Carol Sellen. New York: Neal-Schuman Publishers, 1980. (School of Library and Information Science - Z682 .W64)

Records Supervisor for the Wisconsin Power and Light Company; Director of the Office of Community Enrichment for the City of Corpus Christi, Texas; Vice President for University Relations and Development, University of Washington; Editor of the *Canadian Business Periodicals Index* and *Canadian Newspaper Index*. What do these people have in common? They're all trained librarians working outside the traditional library. In *What Else You Can Do With a Library Degree*, 52 such people tell their stories.

Betty-Carol Sellen conceived the book while bemoaning the scarcity of jobs for librarians. The problem, as she saw it, was that librarians, as a rule, narrowly define themselves not by their skills and abilities, but by where they work. She surveyed the bulletins of approximately 50 library schools, and found them to be guilty of perpetuating this definition by structuring their programs around and preparing their students for work in traditional libraries. Syracuse University, the sole exception, stresses development of the skills involved in being a librarian, and encourages students to think in broader terms than just the academic, school, public, or special library.

Ms. Sellen began by sending a questionnaire to an admittedly non-random sample of graduate librarians in alternative careers, which yielded some interesting responses. Because of the traditional stereotype of "librarian," those working outside

libraries often call themselves by other names, such as information broker or media consultant, even though they identify with the profession. Most librarians practicing in alternative careers have humanities and social sciences backgrounds. This is not surprising, in view of the data gleaned by researchers Albrecht and Redfield (Appendix B) who reviewed job descriptions which appeared in library journals. They found a steady demand for those with specialized training or experience in such areas as management, physical sciences, and computer sciences. There is relatively little call in the traditional library for people with more general backgrounds. The majority of respondents worked in a traditional library at one time; most would not return. Most believe their training and experience as librarians helped them get their present jobs, and they still use the same skills, such as organization and retrieval of information and the ability to see interrelationships among subjects. With the job market as tight as it is and the salary scales comparatively low for traditional librarians, it is surprising that relatively few respondents left the library for these reasons. Most left because they did not feel sufficiently challenged. The questionnaire did not ask, yet one must wonder what positions these librarians held before they left.

A few common threads run through the book: the librarian is a generalist, can assume an encyclopedic approach, and can

therefore work in any type of business, agency, or institution; it is incumbent upon the librarian to market her/his skills, creating a need and demand for her/his services where none was known to exist before; and the librarian's opportunities are limited only by her/his imagination.

This book is marred by narrow margins and pages crowded with type, as well as an inordinate number of typographical errors. The thirteen essays comprising the first part of the book are about successful free-lancers. Although individual writing styles differ, the experiences are

similar enough that they become pretty dull reading after the first few. The second, third, and fourth parts, because they cover more diverse occupations and interests, are less tedious. For those who are on the verge of pursuing an alternative library career and are seeking support and encouragement, this book provides it. Those who are merely curious about what their colleagues are up to can save themselves a lot of time by reading the profiles of the contributors, contained in the last ten pages of the book.

Amy E. Novick is Visiting Affiliate Librarian for Reference and Bibliographic Instruction, Undergraduate Library.

News

The InULA National Library Week Book and Plant Sale continues to be a success, with this year's receipts totaling \$3209.43. InULA members arranged for a string quartet concert and demonstrations of CARS, OCLC, and InDIRS, rounding out the week's activities.

Funds from the book sale will support SLIS student scholarships and the purchase of a print-to-speech machine for the Resource Center for the Visually Impaired, as well as continuing education for librarians.

Thanks to the increased support of the library administration, storage space for book sale materials is now available on the fifth floor of UGL. A rented storage unit will no longer be necessary, saving InULA and the Book Sale Committee a lot of time and money.

The Continuing Education Committees of InULA and the School of Library and Information Science sponsored a symposium on April 25th on the topic, "Surviving the Budget Crunch."

Video tapes of the symposium are available in the School of Library and Information Science Library, room 002 of the Main Library, IU-Bloomington. They may be viewed in the library or can be circulated to regional campuses through Interlibrary Services. One or all the tapes may be borrowed; they are 1/2" reel-to-reel.

- 1st reel - Elaine Sloan and Betty Martin
- 2nd reel - Michael Gorman
- 3rd reel - Laura Johnson and Clayton Shepherd
- 4th reel - Barbara Markuson

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