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# REGIONAL NEWS

## UNITED STATES

Dear Readers,

At this writing, in many parts of this country we're getting back to the life before Covid. We will forever remember though the toll this pandemic took everywhere. Hopefully, many of you will be able to celebrate the 1st of

August together in person.

The next Swiss Review USA will be published online on October 4, 2021. The deadline for submission of articles for the USA insert is August 25.

I wish you a fun-filled Summer.

DORIS BERNATH CUNNINGHAM, EDITOR

### Max Haechler: A Senior Statesman in the Service of the Swiss Residing in the U.S.

Submitted by David W. Moerker, Member of the Executive Board & of the Finance/Risk/Audit Committee, Organization of the Swiss Abroad & Member of the Council of the Swiss Abroad



In 2009, Max Haechler reached out to fill vacant seats on the Council of the Swiss Abroad. This led to us meeting in person a few months later in Lucerne. I was immediately struck by his statesmanship, setting the bar high for us new delegates not only to imitate but to emulate.

Mr. Haechler deserves credit for numerous introductions throughout the years. Looking back on his service for over three decades, many contributions come to mind, but I will limit such to three:

1. 1992: Voting rights for Swiss living abroad on a Federal level in Switzerland, many Cantons followed suit, including our beloved Canton Bern.
2. 1999: Scottsdale and Interlaken become sister cities: Since becoming a Scottsdale Sister City in 1999, a bi-annual school-to-school youth exchange has taken place. Over 100 Scottsdale students have had the opportunity to live with host families for two weeks in October, attending school at the Interlaken Gymnasium, a college prep high school.
3. 2000: Voluntary contributions to the Swiss Social Security system for the Swiss living abroad to be eligible for benefits.

On behalf of the over 80,000 internationally mobile Swiss residing in this great nation, the United States of America, I would like to express my deepest appreciation to Mr. Haechler for his tremendous leadership spanning more than three decades!

His contributions and dedication for the benefit to each of us will be felt for many years to come!

I would like to thank Max for making me aware of the Organization of the Swiss Abroad and for being such a tremendous mentor and friend!

Mr. Haechler will be sorely missed but, at the same time, we know

where he may be located... somewhere between Paradise Valley, AZ, and Bönigen on beautiful Lake Brienz...

Wishing him and his trusted wife and friend, Elsbeth, continued health and success in all their endeavors.

May we raise a toast to Max and Elsbeth!

David Moerker

From Suzanne Violet, former Executive Board Member & former US Delegate of the Organization of the Swiss Abroad, from Cocoa Beach, FL

I remember the time Max and I worked together in The Counsel for the Swiss Living Abroad or Auslandschweizerrat going back to 1993. We had lively discussions and ultimately accomplished many different things. It was great working with Max and I truly enjoyed our discussions in meetings, lunches and dinners we had together with the other delegates.

I wish you all the best for the coming years.

Warmest regards,

Suzanne Violet

From Remo Gysin, President of the Organization of the Swiss Abroad

Dear Max,

You have worked for decades with passion and great commitment to the Swiss abroad in the USA. That is why I would like to send you a personal thank you with these lines.

I met you at a Council of the Swiss Abroad meeting about twenty years ago. After that, we met again and again at meetings and congressional trips. I was always looking forward to seeing you. Even though we only talked together briefly during breaks, I was always very happy about our meetings and your positive and stimulating charisma. I will keep them in the best memory.

Thank you very much for all your groundbreaking suggestions, for all the countless hours you have worked for the Organization of the Swiss Abroad and the Swiss community abroad and especially for the trust you have placed in the organization and me.

I hope to see you again, be it in Lugano, Basel, Arizona or somewhere at a future congress venue and wish you and your loved ones good health and all the best.

With heartfelt thanks and greetings,

Remo Gysin

## The Council of the Swiss Abroad (CSA) finds itself in the Midst of Changing Times

### *The Organization of the Swiss Abroad (OSA) in brief*

655 associations and institutions worldwide; 140 members of the Council of the Swiss Abroad; 9 board members of the Council of the Swiss Abroad; 14 employees in the office of the OSA; 4 basic functions: informing, networking, representing, and advising; 423,300 copies of the "Swiss Review" sent out in four languages to the Swiss abroad as well as 7 newsletters annually.

### *Milestone achievements*

OSA and its supreme body, the Council of the Swiss Abroad (CSA), can look back on many successes in favor of the Swiss Abroad: Milestones in OSA's history are the recognition of the Swiss expatriate community in London (1916); Founding of the OSA by the New Helvetic Society (1916); Children and youth camps for Swiss abroad during the war years; Swiss Citizenship Act (1953), which enables women with a foreign spouse to retain their Swiss citizenship; Constitutional Article for the Swiss Abroad (1966); Organization of the Swiss Abroad as a foundation (1989); Right to vote by mail (1992); Children of Swiss mothers to retain their Swiss citizenship; Voluntary old-age and survivor's insurance (AHV) for Swiss citizens living outside the EU/EFTA (2000); Swiss Abroad Act (2015); and OSA's 100-year anniversary (2016).

### *Accomplishments in 2020*

Despite the pandemic, OSA achieved almost all its goals in 2020. Thanks to a survey, such was able to analyze the readership of the "Swiss Review". OSA launched a new website, from the layout to the completion of the individual texts. It increased its capital base and implemented a legacy concept and a new fundraising concept in conjunction with the new website.

Such drew up a new contract with the Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad (FYSA). It stayed on the ball about bank connections, with a campaign to recommend the Geneva Cantonal Bank, the only bank that accepts all Swiss abroad on terms similar to those of the Swiss residing in Switzerland.

There was also important progress in old-age provision for old age and survivors' insurance and disability insurance. With the new director of the Federal Social Insurance Office and the new members of parliament, possibilities for implementing the OSA goals were discussed and analyzed. The cooperation with the compensation office was intensified to find a solution for the dispatch of life certificates. The OSA also advocated the long-term goal of making it possible to cover contribution gaps retrospectively.

OSA intervened with the federal government in the area of voting and electoral rights for the Swiss Abroad with the aim of maintaining e-voting as an option for the Swiss Abroad and urged the Federal Council to play a leading role in system development.

In another core area of OSA, international mobility, the Council of the Swiss Abroad issued a statement on the limitation initiative and an active OSA campaign against the initiative. The cooperation with swissnex, Presence Switzerland and Pro Helvetia was strengthened to show the added value of the Fifth Switzerland in communication and at events.

The promotion of young people was continued with numerous celebrations for young citizens, which were carried out in cooperation

with educationsuisse and the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs.

### *Looking ahead: Objectives of the new legislature 2021 - 2025*

The goals for the coming legislative period are divided into three categories: political, general institutional and internal goals.

### *The political objectives include:*

A solution to the banking problem. The aim here is to maintain the partnership with the Geneva Cantonal Bank, which enables the Swiss abroad to maintain an account under conditions similar to those for the Swiss at home.

Progress in the area of AHV/IV and health insurance. Here an analysis of the implementation of the goals of the OSA with members of the parliamentary group of the Swiss Abroad is pending. The search for solutions for the mailing of life certificates continues by strengthening the cooperation with the Swiss Compensation Office. As a long-term goal, the possibility of retrospectively covering deficits in contributions is being pursued.

Strengthening the political rights of the Swiss abroad. The focus here is on the introduction of a new e-voting system in Switzerland. OSA wants to ensure that the Federal Chancellery takes the lead in the question of the political rights of the Swiss abroad. Until electronic voting is possible, the dispatch of paper documents is to be optimized.

Realization of a memorial for Swiss victims of National Socialism by the Confederation. Through direct contacts with the responsible federal authorities and members of parliament, the OSA will support the implementation of the concept through to the realization of the project.

At the center of the institutional goals is a new service contract between OSA and the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA). Preparation is needed for the next elections to the Council of the Swiss Abroad in 2025. This includes the creation of annual reserves, which ensure that the use of the SimpleVote voting platform can be financed. Constituencies must be determined. Countries must be identified that are interested in online voting in 2025. The support of the FDFA for the next election to the Council of the Swiss Abroad should also be planned and secured.

Finally, in addition to the internal goals, there is the repositioning of Swiss Review with a new layout and further adjustments in form and content. In addition, the development of online services for youth services with the aim of reaching as many young Swiss abroad as possible.

If one looks at the diversity of all these efforts and goals, one can say that the Organization of the Swiss Abroad and the Council of the Swiss Abroad are more relevant than ever.

The diverse interests and needs of overseas Swiss have been and will continue to be addressed in a coordinated manner to ensure the best possible long-term success.

In the service of the Swiss living in these parts of the world,

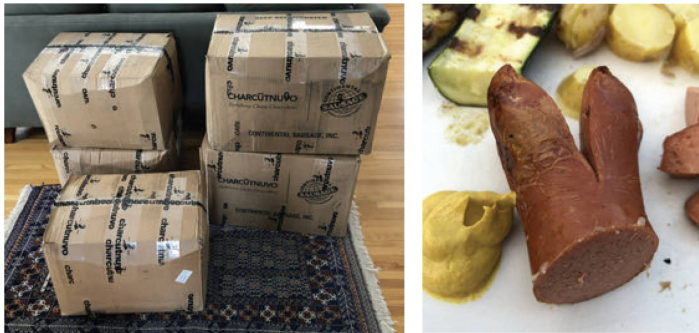
DAVID W. MOERKER AND THE COUNCIL OF THE SWISS ABROAD USA  
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## Minnesota: Twin Cities Swiss American Association (TCSAA) The TCSAA on the way toward the end of the Covid-19 lockdown

Along with the arrival of spring, the pandemic situation is slowly getting under control. Here in the Midwest, the situation is improving, and we can see the proverbial light at the end of the tunnel. Restaurants are opening, and occupancy rates will soon be back to 100%. That is what we all are hoping for.

Looking back at what our membership went through, we can say it was a hard time for all. Some members were infected and recovered from the virus, many have received either one or two shots, depending on what was prescribed. There were no meetings in person, no live events, and the only thing we have been doing are virtual happy hours. However, that does not mean that the board was not still working in the background. One event I would like to mention is the spring sausage sale that we just had. Many members took the opportunity to order Swiss specialties (Swiss veal brats, cervelats and Landjäger). We added a new item to the list: "Fleischkäse" which is a kind of meat loaf.



We started a member discussion about having happy hour in person again. The feedback from the membership was positive, and it looks like many members received their Covid vaccine and are feeling protected. So, we will start looking for places where we can enjoy each other's company and socialize. This will also be a test as we start planning for upcoming events, such as the Annual General Meeting and, of course, the August 1st celebration. It would be great to be able to have those events again since last year's events were canceled.

I think the outlook is brighter than a year ago. With the evolving situation we can now start all of our planning for the remaining events for this year. So much has changed within a span of not quite a year and a half: from having all of our standard events to having none and hoping to get them back. Since we are lucky to have a very experienced board, this switch from virtual to in person events will soon be possible.

All of our events will be published on our website (<http://www.tcsaa.us>) or for interested Swiss people or friends of Switzerland in the Midwest, they can sign up for our TCSAA eNews. New members are always welcome.

We are hopeful that we will soon be able to report from our next in-person event.  
Happy spring to all.

MARKUS HOESLI, VICE PRESIDENT  
[WWW.TCSAA.US](http://WWW.TCSAA.US)

## Florida: Swiss American Club of SW Florida

Our new board, including new and old members, met in March at the home of our president, Joe Huber. Amongst the many matters discussed, three topics captured our passion.

First, as a board, we took the big decision to resume our social activities! The first such activity will be our annual picnic at the Delnor-Wiggins Pass State Park on the Beach in Naples, FL. We are all so excited to bring this possibility to our members and we can't wait to see them all again and catch up on the past year. This event will be an outdoor event on the beach with ample opportunity to social distancing. Additionally, many of our members are reporting to have been vaccinated already and that will provide an additional layer of safety.

Second, the board focused its attention to our membership and how we can continue growing our club in terms of activities and in terms of new members. Since the beginning of this year, we can already count four new members which makes us very happy. We welcome them all and look forward to meeting them in person at the picnic.

Third, we discussed how we can stay best connected with our current members, past members as well as prospective new members. Part of that conversation included the addition of a Facebook page as a means to expand our reach and share news from Southwest Florida as well as news from back home. The Facebook page was launched early April and we welcome everyone interested to follow us on [www.facebook.com/swissamericanclub](http://www.facebook.com/swissamericanclub).

Finally, our new board is actively discussing several activities, events and other attractions for our members and we will be communicating further news in the coming weeks. We are excited about 2021 and can't wait to meet our members in person again.

To learn more about our club, please visit us at [www.swissamericanclub.com](http://www.swissamericanclub.com) and join our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/swissamericanclub](http://www.facebook.com/swissamericanclub).



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## Illinois: Swiss Club of Chicago

The Board of the Swiss Club of Chicago is super excited to finally offer live events again this year. We are longing to see our members face to face! On Saturday May 29th, we will kick-off our events with a fun day outdoors in Milwaukee, WI. For Father's Day on Sunday June 20th, we will have our well-loved Swiss Sunday Brunch at the Lake, with home-made Zopf, Bircher muesli, and many other delicious items on the buffet.

On Sunday August 1st we will celebrate our Swiss National Day on the "Rütli Wiese" in Morton Grove, IL. Cervelat, brats, cakes, Swiss wine will be on the menu and as tradition holds, we will have a polka band as entertainment. To protect everyone, we will be outdoors without a tent and will not have the jumpy castle. We are sure our



members of all ages will have a great time celebrating the birthday of Switzerland. We heard there is an Alphorn music performance! Don't miss it!

Our next event in August is our camping/canoe weekend from August 20 to 22 at the Sweet Minihaha Campground, Broadhead, WI. A great fun and action filled weekend for adults and kids alike. Have you ever had Fondue while camping, after a day of canoeing down the Sugar River? If not, this is your opportunity! The "Swiss Colony" tents are clearly marked with lots of Swiss flags. Rumor has it that this weekend event was voted to be "de Hit".



Of course, all our events will adhere to the latest Covid-19 rules and restrictions, to ensure everyone is safe, while having fun getting together. We are very hopeful to plan indoor events for the fall and winter.

Please check out our website [www.swissclubchicago.com](http://www.swissclubchicago.com) to find out more about activities of the Swiss Club of Chicago and sign up for the Newsletter so receive emails with future event invitations.

ELKE DIETZ SUJDAK, VICE PRESIDENT  
SWISS@SWISSCLUBCHICAGO.COM  
WWW.SWISSCLUBCHICAGO.COM

## Northern California: Peninsula Swiss Club

Grüezi! The Peninsula Swiss Club in the San Francisco Bay Area was established in 1961 as a social club to all friends of Switzerland. We are a very family-oriented club where we promote Swiss heritage, food, language, and culture. Our last physical event was Fondue back in February 2020 but since then we have had to cancel our in-person events.

We've had a festive start to the year. We continue to bring our members some fun virtual events. In February, we had our online Fondue event. We had about 40 participants with kids! We went on a virtual tour of Gruyère and one of our members showed us how to make fondue at home. We then played a wonderful online game via Kahoot that was a trivia about Swiss cheese. Lots of fun! The faster you answer the more points you get. No stress!! :)

We also had an Easter "hop-by". The Easter bunny still brought joy to those kids who needed a little something other than Zooming. Treats and goodies were enjoyed by all.



We hope to offer a wine tasting, be it online or in person if possible, to help members stay connected with one another.

Our goal is to have an in-person event no later than November.

ERIC SONNBERGER, PRESIDENT  
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## Colorado: Swiss American Friendship Society (SAFS)

As everywhere it has been a quiet start of the New Year for the Swiss American Friendship Society (SAFS) in the Denver area. The over 200 members of the 52-year-old club mostly stayed at home and socially distanced. While the yearly assembly and fondue dinner, which usually takes place in February, was cancelled, the president and the board stayed in touch with newsletters and through social media as well as personal check in calls.

However, we see the light at the end of the long tunnel and the board was more than happy to announce that our 'Stammtisch' is back as of this spring. During these informal gatherings, existing and new members have the chance to socialize and



exchange the newest updates from far and wide. The members gather on both ends of the Denver metropolitan area: one Stammtisch is offered

North of Denver and another one is offered South of Denver. And not seldom, loyal members crisscross the Mile High City to attend both.

A special treat awaited the members at the end of April: a Jass themed Kafichraenzli at the Waldschaenke, a favorite Swiss Cidery, in Denver. About 20 members gathered not only around the Jass table but also around the newest addition to the cidery and Coffee Haus, the EuroWagen, a food truck which is serving up goodies such as Bratwuerste (crafted by CHARCUTNUVO) with Gruyere or Raclette cheese and huge pretzels. What better reason to get out of



the house and enjoy the signs of spring and start mingling again? With outdoor activities being safe even during the pandemic, we are looking forward to the yearly Father's Day hike.

The Swiss American Friendship Society (SAFS) is dedicated to foster and advance friendship and goodwill between the people of the state of Colorado and Switzerland. Our president Rene Sonderegger also happens to be the Honorary Consul of Switzerland and therefore fulfills this goal in good old Swiss fashion with excellence. Rene can be reached at 303 378 4577 or [rene.sonderegger@renaisys.com](mailto:rene.sonderegger@renaisys.com).

REGULA GRENIER  
<https://www.facebook.com/safs.denver>

## Florida: Swiss American Club of Sarasota

Hello Swiss & American friends of the Swiss Review ...

have we finally exited from this pandemic? Maybe not, but certainly the news is more comforting. The great majority of our members have now been fully vaccinated, and this has certainly put everyone's mind at ease. We are also happy to state that, as of this writing, none of our members was afflicted with the Covid-19 virus. The State of Florida has done an excellent job in taking care of its senior population. In March, the SAC Board decided that, as it had been exactly a year since



Imelda Egg and Jack Adjami



Dorli Hausermann and Bill Ehrsam



Dr. Larry Bunnell and Ruth Keller

our last picnic, we would restart our events with a picnic on April 4th, Easter Sunday. Attendance was limited to 50 guests and that number was easily achieved...there is nothing better than a good 'brat on the grill' to entice people to come out and socialize. The mood was happy, and participants enjoyed exchanging their experiences of the past year. Our Jack Adjami brought his incomparable good humor and a bucketful of 'Tombola' tickets, a game enjoyed by everyone especially the winners! Brats, salads, and an array of sweet goodies – some brought by the attendees – contributed to a very successful event. Unless further restrictions are enacted, the Board has decided to continue with all planned events for the calendar year 2021. Our Club also welcomed new members: André & Nicole Fortier and Christian & Mary Meier, the two couples were introduced at the picnic. If you wish to join our community, please reach out to us at [info@swissamericanclubsarasota.org](mailto:info@swissamericanclubsarasota.org).

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## Florida: Swiss Club Miami 2nd Swiss Miami Golf Open

Together with the Swiss American Chamber of Commerce Florida Chapter, the Swiss Club Miami organized the second Swiss Miami Golf Open on Saturday May 1st. The location was the beautiful Crandon Golf Course on Key Biscayne. 88 players participated and a total of 120 people attended lunch, some even flying in from outside the U.S.

Shotgun start at 8:00 am was at 8:05 am. Not exactly Swiss time, but 'on time' according to the head of the golf course. Shotgun is a golf tournament format in which all groups of players tee off simultaneously from different holes. We played a 'Scramble' which is always fun because the best hit in each group counts.



Crandon Golf is a championship 18-hole golf course located on the island paradise of Key Biscayne. The course is considered one of the most beautiful and difficult par-72 courses in the state of Florida. Crandon's seventh hole is touted as "One of the Greatest Holes in Golf," a gorgeous par 4 that doglegs to the right and sends your golf ball soaring over sparkling water. The course has been rated in the top ten courses by Golfweek, and one of America's top 75 upscale courses by Golf Digest.

The day started with the sponsored Nespresso coffee (machines included) and Empanadas which were a lifesaver for the ensuing five hours of golf that followed. Dufry sponsored the extraordinary goodie bags filled with lots of, well, goodies! The golfers could win a \$30k watch from Ulysse Nardin or a \$30k BMW from Braman for a 'Hole in One'. We had one player coming very close, but no luck for any golfer going home with a new watch or car. Next time!

'Closest to the Cheese': we had a very happy winner walking home with a wheel of Raclette cheese sponsored by Raclette Corner. The



Longest Drive for Ladies and Gents received a pair of ON shoes and a \$50 gift certificate for 'Nearest to the pin Ladies and Gents'.

Winner prizes: 1st - Sunday Brunches at the Setai for 8 people; 2nd - Round of golf at the Card Sound Golf, Key Largo; 3rd - Round of Golf at Deering Bay, and for the most honest flight, 4 Swiss pocketknives.

A big thank you goes to our main sponsors: FRACHT USA, Villiger Cigars and Trafimar – without them

this event would not have taken place. Thank you so much!

Our volunteers were working hard to make this event a success, thanks go to Adriana, Astrid, Avril, Katharina, Roland, Sandra, Thomas, and Tobias.



As always, our star photographers were Olga Riedi and Butch Gilmartin!






Everyone raved about the Swiss Miami Golf Open going home with a smile on their face and recharged from a day which felt like a day in Paradise! Somebody had commented that 'it felt like an oasis of normal life again'.

See you next year!

BEA SCHMIED, PRESIDENT  
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## Tara's Stories/Taras Geschichten

A large alligator is shown resting on a gravel path. Its mouth is wide open, revealing its sharp teeth and pinkish interior. The alligator's dark, scaly skin is prominent. It is surrounded by lush green foliage, including tall grasses and leafy plants. The background shows a clear blue sky.

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**Louisiana:** Swiss American Society of New Orleans (SASNOLA)

In compliance with our by-laws, our Annual January Meeting and Party was held via Zoom on January 24. It was an important meeting as our 2021 Board was elected: President, Don Schwarzenbach, Vice President, Nicole Luder, Secretary, Jean Stickney, Treasurer, Manuel Gemperli, Director-at-Large, Ann Inderbitzin, Director-at-large, Harley Bourgeois. Although we would have liked to have been together, in person, it was not possible due to Covid-19 restrictions that were still in place. Our turn out was good and it was fun visiting even though it was on the virtual platform.



With a large swath of the city being fully vaccinated, restrictions have begun to lift here in New Orleans. Restaurants are beginning to open at full capacity for indoor and outdoor dining, music venues are slowly opening, and life is beginning to look more on the right side of normal. With the continued decline of Covid-19 cases, and the ongoing success of the upbeat "Sleeves Up, NOLA" campaign to vaccinate, we are certainly optimistic that an in person get together is possible in the very near future.

Although Mardi Gras parades were cancelled this year, we still found a way to have quite the celebration with "Yardi Gras" and "Krewe of House Floats". There were so many creative displays of yards and porches that were decorated to resemble Mardi Gras floats. The "House Floats" started in New Orleans and spanned across Louisiana, as well as into states across this country and made their way into countries across the world. Decorated houses started popping up on January 6, Twelfth Night, and stayed up through Mardi Gras Day, February 16. It was also a means to employ an industry of out of work float builders

and Mardi Gras artists in our city. It was a safe way to enjoy carnival season, driving around the city and viewing these sometimes magnificent, sometimes simple, but always fun and certainly festive homes from your car. Below is a short video of some of the 'House Floats' in our area including ours which was titled "The Garden Party" a satirical play on a political party.

<https://www.facebook.com/wozneworleans/videos/273640340844436>

It was a second year of "Jazz Festing In Place" or "Porch Festing" for New Orleans. For the last two weekends, WWOZ, our local jazz station

has played nonstop Jazz Festival performances pulled from 51 years of the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival archives. This year instead of being completely cancelled the festival has been rescheduled from the last weekend in April and the first weekend in May, to the weekends of October 8 and 17. There were lots of opportunities to purchase food from traditional festival food vendors at "pop ups" around town to enjoy at home while "Festing" from the porch. We heard from many SASNOLA members who partook in the past weekend's activities, we just couldn't do it together.

Wishing all of our Swiss friends and family across the world the best of everything!

JEAN STICKNEY, SECRETARY  
WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/SWISSNOLA

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