



Friends

NEWSLETTER

St. Augustine, FL ~ 2019

Dearest Friends of St. Photios,

"While walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon (who is called Peter) and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen." Matthew 4:18 ESV

There are many photos in this newsletter. On the front page we greet our new Archbishop of America, His Eminence Elpidophoros and recognize with gratitude the ministry of our former Archbishop of America, His Eminence Demetrios. *O Lord, preserve them, unto many years!*

The St. Photios Foundation recognizes the contributions of two phenomenal hierarchs, Metropolitan Alexios of Atlanta and Bishop Dimitrios of Xanthos. They have dedicated hours of administrative consultation but more importantly, they pray for us, encourage us and guide us toward our salvation. With their commitment to excellence in diakonia - service, the Shrine has thrived these past ten years. *O Lord, preserve them, unto many years!*

We see photos of events and photos of friends. Our Friends of St. Photios steadfastly commit to remembering the legacy inherited from our forefathers. We honor the memory of the New Smyrna Colonists and draw strength from their story as we are ever buoyed by living a life in Christ. We are offered the example of the ministry of the Apostle Andrew and the loving and wise ministry of our beloved Patriarch, His All Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew.

Friends of St. Photios celebrate similar backgrounds and are made richer in that which is different in us. We draw strength from one another and take on our challenges together in Him. This is the witness of St. Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine, an institution of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America.



HCHC Ambassador Sophia Petrou, His Eminence Demetrios, Former Archbishop of America, Rev. Dn. Athanasios Kartsonis, Rev. Dr. Nicholas G. Louh at the 2017 St. Photios Feastday.



June 28—Archbishop Elpidophoros addresses the Metropolis of Atlanta Clergy Laity Assembly at the Hyatt Regency, Jacksonville, FL.

Archon Dr. Steve Poulos began the Friends initiative in 1978. He and Friends Chairperson, Joanne Stavrakas ask that we look through the newsletter and support the Shrine's many programs, first insuring that we are counted among The Friends of St. Photios. *The 2019-2020 program envelope has been included for your convenience.*

I wish you all a blessed summer and may the new ecclesiastical year abound in shared blessings. With gratitude to God for the honor of overseeing our Archdiocese's first National Shrine in America,

Pollexeni Maouris Hillier
Executive Director

Second Annual Greek Educators Ioannis Ioannopolis Award Program

The Federation of Hellenic American Educators in collaboration with the Hellenic Paideia of New York and the Florida Teachers Association "Athena" held the Second Annual Ioannis Ioannopolis Award Recognition Program and Luncheon November 30 – December 2, 2018 in St. Augustine .



Father Ted Stavru celebrated the Memorial for the Ioannopolis Family and Educators who have fallen asleep in the Lord.

The festivities began Friday evening at St. Photios Shrine where Mrs. Stella Kokolis greeted everyone at the elegant welcome reception. She shared personal anecdotes as she introduced the teachers, one by one.

Father Theodore Stavru held a memorial service in the chapel and then chanted the Trisagion as the group, led by the St. Augustine Garrison, made its way to the Tolomato Cemetery where they were met by the volunteers of Tolomato Cemetery Foundation.

Tampa Consul General Dimitrios Sparos, assisted by other dignitaries, laid wreaths at the tombs of the colonists. The group then departed for Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church for the Luncheon Program. Parish President Margo Kelley and Vice President Nicholas Lekas welcomed the group.

Stavros Marmarinos served as the master of ceremonies. This year the Ioannis Ioannopolis Award was bestowed upon Andre Papantoniou who was born in Dara, Arcadia, in 1943. He graduated from the High School of Tripoli. In 1961, following a call from his relatives, he departed for Canada. He was there five years, working and attending McGill University.

Papantoniou founded Olympia Foods in 1972 in Chicago. Apart from his professional activities, he is an active member of the Hellenic American community, participating and supporting charitable organizations both in the United States and Greece.

Since 1992 he has been an active member of the Pan Arcadian Federation of America. He is married to Vasiliki Papantoniou and has two children, Petros and Katerina.



The Honorable George Gardner receives recognition from Stella Kokolis.



Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church for the Luncheon Program.



Consul General Dimitrios Sparos, center, with the St. Augustine Garrison and members of the Federation of Hellenic Educators at the Tolomato Cemetery.

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2019 Board of Trustees

The St. Photios Foundation Welcomes the New Trustees



SUSAN LOUSSION - Susan and her husband Archon Dr. Nicholas Loutsion reside in Canonsburg, PA, where they are active members of All Saints Greek Orthodox Church. Their children are Alexandra, a professional opera singer, and Alyssa Kyritsis who serves as Pastoral Assistant for St. John the Divine Greek Orthodox Church in Jacksonville, FL. They are the proud new grandparents of Nicholas Dimitrios Kyritsis. Susan is a steward of Philoptochos and has been active with several fundraising initiatives at All Saints. She and Nick were co-chairs of the Hellenic College/Holy Cross 75th Anniversary gala in Pittsburgh and she served on the committees for the All Saints Consecration and His Eminence Metropolitan Savas' Enthronement. They are also members of Leadership 100.

An advocate of the performing arts, Susan has served on the boards of the Pittsburgh Opera, Pittsburgh Symphony South, and the Children's Festival Chorus of Pittsburgh. She recently retired as the Office Manager of her husband's veterinary practice and now enjoys spending the winters with Nick in Tarpon Springs, FL. Susan represents the Metropolis of Pittsburgh.



JAMES A. FRANGIS - "Jimmy" was born and grew up in Atlanta, Georgia. Jimmy married Michelle Tissura of Atlanta in 1995. They are proud parents of Leo, 21, Manuel 16, and Nina 15. They are from Roswell, GA, and active members of Holy Transfiguration Church in Marietta, GA.

Jimmy has served on the Parish Council as treasurer, and became the fund-raising co-chairman of a new building project in 2015. Prior to joining Holy Transfiguration,

Jimmy served on the Parish Council at the Annunciation Cathedral, as treasurer. He also served as the finance chairman of the annual Atlanta Greek Festival for 5 years.

Jimmy graduated from the University of Georgia in 1990 with a Bachelor of Business Administration degree and in 1994, received his MBA from Georgia's Terry College of Business Administration. In 2016, he joined PDI, a leader in enterprise management software for the convenience retail and petroleum wholesale markets. Now serving as CEO, he is responsible for setting the direction and strategic vision of the global software company. Jimmy represents the Metropolis of Atlanta.



ARCHON CARL R. HOLLISTER - Carl is a member of AHEPA Chapter 209, Middletown, Ohio. He has served AHEPA in numerous leadership positions, including most recently, as Supreme President. Carl's responsibilities included being the chief executive officer, and principal spokesperson, of the entire AHEPA domain, which includes the United States, Canada, and chapters in Europe.

Carl is president of L.M. Kohn & Company, an Investment Advisory and Brokerage firm in Cincinnati, Ohio, managing 60 branch offices with more than \$3.5 billion in client assets.

With more than 20 years of experience in the Securities Industry, the supreme president holds a Master's Degree in Finance from Webster University and a Bachelor's Degree in Economics from Grove City College. In addition, Carl is a retired U.S. Army Major with 21 years of active and reserve service, of which, 17 years were in Special Operations with tours of duty in Central America and Central Asia.

Carl, his wife, Cynthia, and daughter, Alexandra, are members of Saints Constantine & Helen Greek Orthodox Church, Middletown, OH, where he served as parish council president. Carl represents the Metropolis of Detroit.

Celebrating the 251st Anniversary of Greek Landing Day

June 26, 2019



Executive Director Poxeni Maouris Hillier, Metropolitan Alexios of Atlanta, Rev. Dr. Nicholas G. Louh, V. Rev. George Tsahakis, Bishop Sevastianos of Zela and V. Rev. Joseph Samaan

Abiding Presence Part II in the Shrine Special Exhibit area. The faithful greeted Metropolitan Alexios of Atlanta, who arrived with Bishop Sevastianos of Zela, V. Rev. George Tsahakis and Rev. Dr. Nicholas G. Louh. Ecclesiastical services commenced and His Eminence lead the *Solemn Procession* to the Tolomato Cemetery, assisted by Rev. Dn. Athanasios Kartsonis, and acolytes Jacob Gaetanos and Nicholas Kelley.

The faithful were met by Director Elizabeth Gessner and board members of the Tolomato Cemetery. Memory Eternal was chanted, a wreath was laid at the grave of Ioannopolis' daughter, Mary Darling, and the Metropolis of Atlanta Chancellor, V. Rev. George Tsahakis, read the City of St. Augustine Greek Landing Day Proclamation.

Senora Antonia Averro portrayed by historical re-enactor, Diane Jacoby, gave a tour of the neighborhood on the return to the Shrine. She spoke about the Averro House and what it meant to the family to return to their home after being exiled to Cuba during the St. Augustine British period.

His Eminence, Metropolitan Alexios, congratulated Dr. Samonides on his very important work preserving the history of the Greek Orthodox Church in America. The second exhibit highlights the history of the Annunciation Cathedral, Atlanta

Continued on pg. 7

V. Rev. Father Joseph Samaan began Greek Landing Day 2019 with prayer. He introduced event chairs, Christy Xynidis and Denise Brown of St. Barbara Philoptochos of St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church in Daytona Beach.

On behalf of the St. Photios Foundation, he applauded their efforts. This year's commemoration is celebrated in honor of the New Smyrna Colony and the Xynidis and Sarris families who came from Symi to Florida as shrimp boat builders and entrepreneurs. He remembered with great fondness Christy's dad of blessed memory, Steve Xynidis of Daytona Beach and uncle, Shrine Founder Steve Sarris, who fell asleep in the Lord in August, 2018.

Father Joseph read Archbishop Elpidophoros' Greek Landing Day Encyclical whose greetings included "The St. Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine reminds all of us that the human person's odyssey in search of true freedom is never ending, but our goal is always union with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Father Joseph then introduced the guest speaker Dr. William Samonides, author and historian of the churches in America.

Dr. Samonides presented a paper on the priests and parishes of the South, opening *Profound and*



Executive Director Poxeni Maouris Hillier, V. Rev. Joseph Samaan Event Chairs Denise Brown and Christy Xynidis

Shrine Visitors



Boy Scouts from Advent Lutheran Troop #327 in Boca Raton volunteered at the Shrine to prepare for services.



Toys For Tots at the Shrine



Hosting the Volusia County Council of Girl Scouts



Christine and Andrew Mesquite



Father Michael brought faithful followers from St. Rebekah Coptic Orthodox Church in Orlando.



Right: Gerry Clonaris and St. Nektarios Sunday School Students of Charlotte, NC



Celebrating Divine Liturgy with Bishop Dimitrios of Xanthos, V. Rev. Joseph Samaan & Rev. Dn. Athanasios Kartsonis at St Demetrios in Daytona Beach



St. Photios National Shrine Church Supplies

(NSCS) is an important funding source of the St. Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine. NSCS offers parishes a large selection of candle sizes and types at low prices from a number of vendors located throughout the country. Inventory includes high quality incense, self-lighting charcoal, candle safety cups and the Shrine distinctive Epiphany Icon Holy Water Bottles!

The bottles were designed by His Grace, Bishop Dimitrios of Xanthos and are still manufactured here in America! National Shrine Church Supplies offers competitive prices along with the opportunity to support our sacred and historic institution. All proceeds aid in preserving the St. Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine. Provide for your parish and support our First National Shrine!

Call today to place your order...904.829.8205.





The City Commission proclaimed Greek Landing Day in honor of the 251st anniversary of Greek settlers landing in St. Augustine.



Daytona Parishioners Hosting and Enjoying the Reception



The Constantine Sisters Courtyard



Programs and Treats for our Guests



Dr. William Samonides offered a lecture about the parishes in the South



As the Metropolis Clergy and Laity honored the memory of the Colonists



Solemn Procession ~



Continued down St. George Street ~



to the Tolomato Cemetery



Chanting *Memory Eternal* at the Tolomato Cemetery



Chancellor V. Rev. Tsahakis Reads the City of St. Augustine Proclamation



Elaine and Jim Pitenis, Connie Gaitanis and Evgenia Mercado



The Ellada Band featuring Dino Theofilos and Triantafillos



Metropolitan Alexios with the Dancers



The St. Demetrios Folk Dancers Perform at the Lightner Museum

GA [Metropolis of Atlanta], St. George Cathedral, Greenville SC [Metropolis of Atlanta], St. Nicholas Cathedral, Tarpon Springs FL [Metropolis of Atlanta], Holy Trinity Cathedral, New Orleans LA [Metropolis of Atlanta], Annunciation Church, Pensacola FL [Metropolis of Atlanta] and St. George Church, Shreveport LA [Metropolis of Denver].

Part I included Atlanta Metropolis parishes: Holy Trinity (Charleston, SC), Holy Trinity (Charlotte, NC), St. Paul (Savannah, GA) and St. John the Divine (Jacksonville, FL).

At 6:00 p.m., the group was received at the Lightner Museum. Dinner was catered by George Chrysaidis, music was provided by Dino Theofilos of the Ellada Band. The folk dancers of St. Demetrios, Daytona Beach performed, concluding with all who wished, joining the dancers in the Kalamatiano.

St. Augustine is America's oldest city. For 37 years the city has celebrated Greek Landing Day. 251 years ago, 8 ships with over 1200 people arrived on Florida's east coast. The indentured servants were

registered with the Custom's office and sent 75 miles south to farm the 100,000 acres in Mosquito Inlet. They were brutally worked and in the 9th year the remaining 500 survivors of the *New Smyrna Colony* fled to St. Augustine. These refugees were granted a place to live, worship and most importantly, freedom from their contracts indenturing them to Dr. Andrew Turnbull.

The Minorcans, many Corsicans, French and Italians were Roman Catholic. The Greeks were all from Asia Minor, Crete, Greece and Corsica. Initially the clergy were Catholic and Orthodox. Only the Catholic priest, Father Pedro Camps, ministered the colonists from the period of recruitment (1767) to relocating in St. Augustine (1777). First Vice President Archon Dr. Manuel Tissura said, "today is a fitting reminder that the Catholic residents of St. Augustine are our brothers and sisters, united in the immigration history of not only this city but of America."

Shrine Visit to Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church, Fort Myers, FL

The St. Photios Foundation is ever grateful for the warm hospitality and generosity extended by the parishioners of Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church in Fort Myers, FL the weekend of May 18.

Father Dean and Presvytera Caroline Nastos included Polly and Allan Hillier in the Parish Family Night and then had three opportunities for Polly to witness the Shrine on Sunday.

Father Dean asked her to speak of the ministry of St. Photios the Great, the purpose of Greek Landing Day and to encourage the teenagers to participate in the Shrine Essay Contest.

In closing remarks, Polly thanked Father Dean for not "Passing the Tray for Greek Landing Day" but instead, creating a historic and meaningful interaction. The parish gifted \$1,000.00 to be used for Shrine ministries.



37th Annual National Shrine Feast Day



Archon Philip Yamalis (Pittsburgh), Shrine Architect Archon Ted Pappas and Regional Commander John Scurtis (Miami), Bishop Dimitrios of Xanthos, Archon George Donkar, Metropolitan Alexios of Atlanta, Archon Nicholas Furriss, Archon Commander Metropolis of Atlanta Dr. Manuel N. Tissura, Archon Commander Metropolis of Pittsburgh Dr. Nicholas Loutsion, Archon Dr. Steve Poulos and Archon Regional Commander Harry Tom Cavalaris (Charlotte).

“Truly,” said Dr. Papademetriou, “for family and friends to come together to witness the ministry of Father Grigori and to venerate this Gospel with the imprint of the five holy martyrs – Afskentios, Eustratios, Orestes, Evgenios and Mardarios saints of Semendria, is a joyful opportunity afforded by Divine Grace.” His wife Dorrie echoed this was especially appreciated because it was her mom, Ann Mulopulos’ birthday.

Metropolitan Alexios visited the Shrine for four days. He presided over the St. Photios Foundation meeting and

Dr. William Samonides and Dr. Tom Papademetriou were the featured speakers at the 2019 St. Photios Feast Day Pilgrimage weekend.

Dr. Samonides spoke at the Saturday Trustees Dinner which followed Great Vespers and the blessing of the new special exhibit, *Parishes and Priests of the South: A Profound and Abiding Presence Part 1*. With a dearth of information regarding the history of parishes in the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, Dr. Samonides highlighted the Greek Orthodox communities in Savannah, GA, Charlotte, NC, Charleston, SC and Jacksonville, FL. He brought to life the pastoral visits of beloved Archbishops of blessed memory: Alexander, Athenagoras, Michael and Iakovos and the ongoing ministries of the priests who served those communities.

Dr. Papademetriou’s keynote address, *Christian Shrines and Sacred Geography of Cappadocia*, highlighted the shared traditions and characteristics in which a sacred site is designated a Shrine. He spoke of the relics at St. Photios and the ecclesiastical items of Father Gregory Eliades—true antiquities of a priest whose mission it was to serve those without a priest in the New World.

The family of Father Gregory Eliades gathered later in the St. Photios museum to pay their respects to liturgical items that he brought when emigrating in 1900. All were emotional when venerating his 300-year-old Gospel.

commended the Executive Board for the pristine audit report given by Janice Brown of Lake Brown Williams CPAs and Consultants, Inc.

His Eminence held Great Vespers in the Chapel of St. Photios with the chanters’ stand led by HCHC students Sophia Petrou, Despina Wilson, Paul Murray, and Theofanis Rauch. Hierarchical Divine Liturgy was held at Holy Trinity Church in St. Augustine where His Eminence awarded the Essay Certificate of Participation and first place prize to 16-year old Noah Hays.

Archon Nicholas Furriss emceed the banquet. Bishop Dimitrios of Xanthos recognized Archon Ted Johnson for providing the technical support needed to open the Shrine in 1982. Ted achieved this in 11 months with his company Florida Productions. Metropolitan Alexios recognized Ted and the members of Jacksonville Socrates AHEPA Chapter #6 with a plaque citing their 40 years of support for St. Photios Shrine, beginning with AHEPA local chapter president, Teddy Panos. He distributed the Wall of Tribute Certificates and recognized all the Archons and AHEPA family members. He congratulated event chairs, Archon Dr. Manuel N. and Elaine Tissura for their warm hospitality and their grandson Manuel on the occasion of his 16th birthday. His Eminence said, “We are all happy, are we not? And it is because the Shrine is a place for families and this is a happy family.”



Alan and Leslye Phillips, Dr. Samonides, Metropolitan Alexios, Manuel Tissura, Alexa and George Donkar, Elaine Tissura



2019 St. Photios Foundation Board of Trustees



Reflections following Great Vespers



Dr. Samonides and Metropolitan Alexios



Metropolitan Alexios introduces HCHC Ambassadors, Chanters and Father Louh



Trustees Dinner Speaker, Dr. William Samonides



Fanya Paouris, Bishop Dimitrios of Xanthos and Dr. Tom Papademetriou



2018 Wall of Tribute Inductees



Daughters of Penelope Past Presidents and District Governors



The Keynote Address given by Dr. Papademetriou



Metropolitan Alexios with Dean Stavarakas and Archon John Scurtis



Family of Father Gregory Eliades



Manuel Frangis celebrates his 16th birthday with Metropolitan Alexios



Mayor of St. Augustine Nancy Shaver with Bishop Dimitrios of Xanthos and Trustee Leslye Alex Phillips and Alan Phillips

+ Memory Eternal +

We remember with great love St. Photios Friends George Carantza, Evgnosia White, Margaret Yeager, Kay Carantzas, Harold Peponis, Maria Keritsis and June Stavros who fell asleep in the Lord these past six months. They all sustained their Shrine membership for years.

George joined the Shrine Committee in the early 70's and with his wife Lee; raised a family in Jacksonville who today are active Shrine members and Shrine Volunteers. Evgnosia was a vanguard – the first and only female parish council president in her community. For 37 years, she volunteered at every St. Photios Shrine Feast Day Pilgrimage Banquet.



Polly Hillier with Kay Carantzas at the Blessing of the Foundation of St. John the Divine, Jacksonville, FL new campus.



Faye and Harold Peponis

Harold at one time was a Shrine Trustee representing the then Chicago diocese. Maria served as President for the Eastern Federation of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians and since 2012, Chairman of the National Forum of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians. We thank Maria's family—sister Alexa Garrison, brother Dean Fragakis and daughters, Andra Bournias and Lea Gilmer, for following through with Maria's wish to add her parents, Alex and Andra Athanas Fragakis to the Wall of Tribute. *God give rest to their souls.*

Miss Margaret and June were steadfast subscribers to the Light A Candle Program. We will miss their prayer requests and we will miss being the recipient of their prayers – so together, let us say, *Christ is Risen, Memory eternal* – and may these dear Friends of St. Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine pray for us as we pray for them. Everlasting be their memory.

The Wall of Tribute

Subscriptions for the Wall of Tribute are gathered and the panel of special donors is installed the third week in the new year.

Consider subscribing with this year's inscriptions: His Eminence, Elpidophoros, Archbishop of America, Archon Carl and Cynthia Hollister, Constantine and Elaine Michell, and Alex and Andra Fragakis.

When you do, you continue the legacy of remembrance of the New Smyrna Colonists while witnessing Orthodox Christianity to the thousands of tourists and pilgrims visiting this embassy of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America.



St. Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine Annual Essay Contest

The St. Photios Foundation, Inc. invites all teenagers, 13-19 years of age, to participate in the St. Photios Annual Essay Contest. Submit a 1000-word, double-spaced essay relating to the theme. Include a cover page with your name, address, email address, phone number, and home parish details.

**The Essay Theme asks us to reflect on
*How do we, as Orthodox Christians, relate to sacred and
historically significant treasures in our homes, in our churches, at our Shrine.***

Icons, the cotton with the oil with which we received Holy Unction, the blessed palm cross we received after Divine Liturgy, the cross around our neck. We all know of and have sacred items. What do they mean to us? At St. Photios there are relics of 21 saints of the early church enshrined in the Chapel. Eighteen are in the narthex, three are embedded in the Holy Altar Table. There are a dozen artifacts including the St. Photios cross, on exhibit in the museum. The ecclesiastical items of Father Gregory Eliades of blessed memory are lovingly displayed.

Every essayist will receive a certificate of participation. The Committee accepts submissions through Monday, January 6, 2020. The essays are judged by an independent panel. The results will be posted February 1, 2020. Prizes for the top three essays are first place, \$500; second place, \$250; and third place, \$100. The Essay Program is generously supported through the estate of Mrs. Kathie D'Anna and AHEPA Socrates Chapter #6 of Jacksonville, Florida. The essays become the property of St. Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine.

February 18, 2019

Dear Mrs. Hillier,

I just received my letter from Archbishop Demetrios and the monetary award. I want to thank you and the St. Photios Foundation for providing the wonderful opportunity of researching and then reflecting on Greek-American history and Greek Orthodoxy. I genuinely loved learning about my family's culture and I'm proud to participate in a contest like this! Thank you very much!

*Gabriella
Couloubaritsis*



Noah Hays, Metropolitan Alexios, of Atlanta and Father John Hays at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, St. Augustine, FL

Visit stphotios.org for Essay Contest details.



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OR CURRENT RESIDENT

Let Us Light A Candle For You



Trustee Evan Mekras Scurtis is not only the chair of the Light A Candle program, but a patron of the program. She finds peace and hope in the tranquil St. Photios Chapel. When she can not be present, she asks us to light candles on her behalf in memory of someone dear or for the

health and wellbeing of a friend who is celebrating a milestone.

All are invited to submit a prayer request. There is no greater honor than to be asked to pray on behalf of someone else.

In addition, Father Joseph Samaan, spiritual advisor to the Light A Candle committee, adds the names submitted to his prayer list and offers these names during his daily prayer routine.

St. Photios Shrine is a "kandili" of our Church in America. It is a place of witness and remembrance, illumined by the prayers and sacrifices of our ancestors and today, by you, our brothers and sisters in Christ.

St. Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine



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