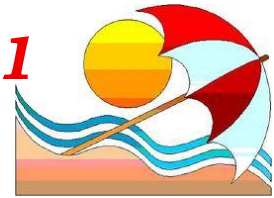




Summer 2011



OALCF Training begins for the Native Stream



Trainer Robyn Cook-Ritchie speaking to participants during the Thunder Bay OALCF training, May 5th and 6th.



Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework (OALCF) Implementation Training sessions are now happening throughout the Province. Trainings in Thunder Bay and London have already taken place and Sudbury and Peterborough will be done at the end of May and beginning of June respectively. There has been some concern among programs about the new framework but after each of the trainings that have taken place so far, comments were positive and encouraging. Linda Wright, one of the participants in Thunder Bay, was also hesitant about how programs were going to implement OALCF in their organizations but she said, 'The facilitator, Robyn Cook-Ritchie, did a wonderful job of going through the framework in two days. It was a lot to fit in, and I am glad that she made time for the interactive games that made the training fun. As always with ONLC events, there was lots of laughter, but I did feel that we learned a lot.'

As part of the two-day interactive workshops participants receive hard copies of the materials, which are also available on the eopg.ca website, and the information needed to begin preliminary work on the 4-key areas that they identified in their current year business plans.

ONLC will be providing on-going support as well as additional training in the fall when additional information will be available.



Mark your calendars NOW!

The fall OACLF training will be held at
Kempfenfelt Conference Centre

October 27 – 30, 2011

More information will be available shortly



Laura's Story



When I was 6, my Mom moved my brother and I from Gerralton, Ontario to Thunder Bay to a lower income neighbourhood called County Park. Going to school was one of my favorite things to do. I also loved to run and be involved in extra curricular activities. I was a strong long distance runner and had great grades all throughout grade school.

When I was 15, I became the winner of the Thunder Bay Model Search; winning a trip to Toronto. I went on to win the first runner-up for the Runway Competition as well as being a Cover Page Finalist. My poor decisions began when I was given a joint at my own kitchen table with my cousins. I also started drinking on the weekends. I met a man who became my first love. I moved out of my parent's to his parent's house in a small town called Nakina with less than 500 people. Living in isolation and desperate for an escape, I started smoking up and crushing pills routinely. I thought I'd be happy finding the "love of my life" but really I just wanted to disappear and not be found. It wasn't long before I was addicted to hard drugs and thought of nothing more to do. Constantly being dependent on men and using them for a place to live; I never made a decision on my own or felt self-supporting.

Living with one of my ex's doing nothing but watching TV, I knew that there was more for me. When I was 25, I made a promise to myself that it was going to be the cleanest year of my life without drugs or alcohol. I decided to quit prescription painkillers and start fresh with a job at Tim Horton's and did well for 5 months without Oxycontin, morphine, or pot. A co-worker convinced me to go to an AA meeting for the first time and I learned to have confidence in myself. I was able to step into the doors of the Indian Friendship Centre while I was still withdrawing from pills. I reconnected with my spiritual side when I read a book called *The Sacred Tree* by Herb Nabigon, a First Nations scholar. I studied the Medicine Wheel teachings and started picking sage and other medicines. Eventually I went to Dilico, an adult treatment centre and asked for my traditional name during a sweatlodge ceremony. I found my passion for running again one August day after I was clean for 2 months. I ran all the way around

Boulevard Lake. My passion for being connected to the world had reignited. Walking through the basement doors of the Friendship Centre was a turning point for me to enroll in school and complete my high school.

When I turn 28, I hope to be registered in University taking psychology, specializing in addictions. I want to share my experience, strength and hope to help others who thought there was no other way of life. Living everyday with excitement, joy, being happy, and free. I've been gifted with so many blessings. My spirit name is *Giniibowich Mishdodim*, meaning "Standing Horse." Knowing I have a responsibility to myself, and my people I can now be the powerful woman who stands on her own.



Anishnawbe Skills Development Program student Laura Gagnon is also a filmmaker. Along with 9 other northern Ontario Aboriginal youth, Laura made a film under the coaching of artist/filmmaker Keesic Douglas, as a part of the *imagineNATIVE Film + Media Arts Festival's* northern tour in February and March.



Laura Gagnon is shown here with Keesic Douglas, the artist/filmmaker who coached the youth (and Laura) in their filmmaking efforts.

Picture courtesy of imagineNATIVE Film + Media Arts Festival

Article submitted by:

Peter Fergus-Moore

Anishnawbe Skills Development Program, Thunder Bay

NEW

**Ontario Adult Literacy
Curriculum Framework
WEBSITE!**

The brand new OALCF website has just been launched!

Visit: www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/eopg/oalcf/index.html

GLA Learners of the Month April 2011

Morgan had enrolled for the Self-Management/Self Directions Back to Basics series being held for the Matawa First Nations communities in Northwestern Ontario. After some glitches and technical difficulties at the start, the courses got underway at the beginning of February. From that point forward, Morgan was a constant presence. She unfailingly showed up for class and once there interacted with other participants and myself, using her microphone, text chat and the whiteboard tools. She took to Centra like a duck to water!

During the series, I came to understand that Morgan was working toward some life goals with the support of her partner and family behind her. For these reasons, I felt she deserved to be nominated for Learner of the Month. My co-workers agreed and she was awarded the honour.

Congratulations Morgan and we wish you luck and success in your future endeavours.

CONGRATULATIONS MORGAN SOFEA!! Julie Mallon

Article submitted by:

Sandra Turner, Sioux Hudson Literacy Council

Morgan's Story

Well the advice I would give to anyone that's thinking of upgrading is, just do it, don't think about it. If it means making a better life for you and/or your dependants, you will be happy you are doing it not only for yourself but for your children, if any and also your accomplishments.

I decided to do this so I can make a better life for my children as it is hard to get a job without an education. Yes, I struggle every day with

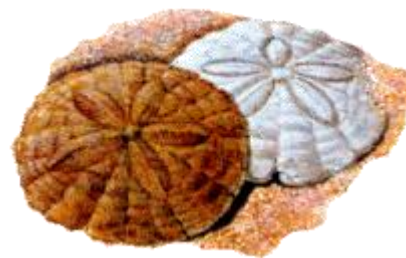
responsibilities but I am and have been on my own so I am going to push myself to keep going until I'm done. I did feel proud of myself for receiving this "Learner of the Month". I was not expecting anything out of this learning experience, I only had my sights set on my goal which right now is to get my GED done and pass. I hope I can do more than that though. I originally planned to become a nurse but I have other things in mind too.

I'm very fortunate to have the support of my husband for sending me to class every evening.

And a very special thank you to Julie for nominating me! A very excellent teacher, she makes class fun. Thanks again, Julie! You are a great teacher and I enjoy your classes.

Submitted by:

Morgan Sofea, GLA Learner



Lennie Spence



Lennie Spence and his daughter Liarah at seven months old. Liarah, now three years old, is one of the reasons Lennie decided to enrol with Sioux Hudson Literacy and it's online Good Learning Anywhere (GLA) training.

I am deeply honored and thrilled to be named the 'learner of the month'. And before I get started with my story I'd like to thank the 'Sioux Hudson literacy' for giving me this opportunity to be here and try to obtain my GED and also a special thanks goes out to my fellow students for being here as well for they too are trying to obtain their GED.

When I made my decision to apply for the GED program I had two reasons in mind. First, I now have a beautiful baby girl to support full time and secondly, I had a brother that took his own life a few years ago that made me open my eyes that through education I can change my life around.

Over the years I was involved in all kinds of odd and seasonal jobs such as firefighting, line cutting, tree planting, sewage plant helper and numerous part time jobs. When my daughter was born, I wondered, how am I going to support her with these kinds of jobs? I took two things into consideration; the high cost of living in the north and the scarcity of these part time jobs.

Having a part time job sometimes would take its toll on me. Bills would start to pile up and in most cases I barely had enough money left over to buy groceries for myself. At times it was really frustrating, although I had the opportunity to complete my education at an earlier age. I was one of the many who made that unwise decision to drop out of high school and this was my greatest regret in the years that followed.

My late brother went through the same thing too, but he took a different path to get back on track. He was leading a life of self destruction, he was drinking a lot on the reserve and getting into all kinds of trouble and as I recall, some people said that he will never make out of this reserve and that he'll probably end up in jail for good. But I, on the hand, had always believed that my brother was a very intelligent person and even his peers used to tell me how bright he was.

I think it was around 1996 that he finally decided to go back to school because he knew that it was hopeless to live on the reserve due to the lack of opportunities. He first sifted through mail correspondence courses and then went down the local Educational center to see if there was anything that appealed to him. Then entered another brother who just happened to be the Chief of the community at the time suggested that he just leave the community to attend college in Thunder Bay, Ontario.

After a few years of attending college in Thunder Bay he graduated with a diploma in business management and then shortly afterwards he continued onto Lakehead University where he graduated with a degree in Political Science. And right after Lakehead, he enrolled in a law school in Toronto, Ontario where he got accepted but never got around securing funding for it.

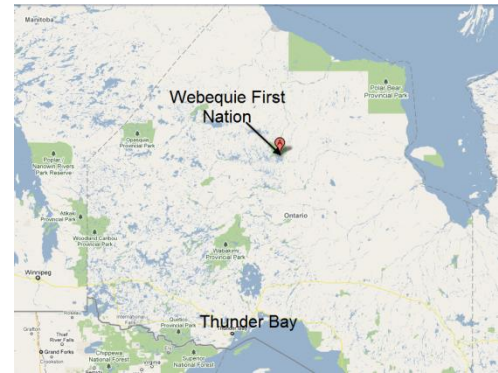
Sadly, after going through some personal

problems and the pressures of city life he took his own life in June of 2004. One thing I learned from what he went through is that no matter what we go through we can all still be successful in obtaining our goals through hard work and a good education.

My goal is to continue in my quest for a good education for a full time job.

Thank you very much.

Lennie Spence, Webequie First Nation



Article submitted by:

Sandra Turner, Sioux Hudson Literacy Council



2011 Aboriginal Education Incentive Award

For the seventh year, Canada Post is offering the Aboriginal Education Incentive Awards as part of its nationwide scholarship program.

This unique program celebrates the motivation and determination of those who have conquered personal economic or social adversity in the pursuit of learning.

To be eligible to win one of the 24 awards individuals must:

- be an Aboriginal Canadian;
- have been out of school for at least one year before returning;
- have completed one full year of studies before applying for this award; and
- not have received this Award in the past.

Submissions will be accepted from May 1 to August 31, 2011 and more information can be found at www.canadapost.ca/aboriginal, by phone at 613-734-6398, or by email: aboriginalawards@canadapost.ca.



New Essential Skills Resources just in time for OALCF implementation

ONLC just received notice of a brand new set of Essential Skills (ES) resources that have been produced by Literacy Link South Central.

This series of ES Workbooks was developed for those who want to look for employment while strengthening their Essential Skills. The activities and exercises include working with other people so they are ideal for use in a facilitated group setting.

There are seven (7) workbooks in the set and they can either be used sequentially as a course, or they can be used individually to meet the needs of your learners.

The workbooks are titled:

Essential Skills to:

- Identify the Job Searcher
- Identify the Job
- Research your Occupation
- Search for Jobs
- Market Yourself with a Resume and Cover Letter
- Market Yourself at the Interview and
- Maintain Employment

These workbooks are free for use within literacy and are available two ways, in hard copy or online. To request a complete set of hardcopy books (shipping will be charged but the books themselves are free) you can send an email to communications@bellnet.ca before the end of July 2011. You can also access them online where they can be used interactively at www.llsc.on.ca or downloaded for use off-line.



The Journey with Matawa First Nations

In January of this year, GLA and Matawa First Nations Education Council launched a pilot program with participating communities in remote Northwest Ontario. The goal of the program is to help community members attain their GED and to pursue careers in the various trades. Good Learning Anywhere is the first step among many that these learners will be taking on their journey.

While I have been part of this project from the start, I feel the story that our instructors can tell is much more relevant and a real testament to what Good Learning Anywhere tries to achieve and stands for. The blood, sweat and tears that the three instructors put into this project is reflected in the incredibly moving feedback and progress that the participants have made.

I asked Cathy Noganosh, Julie Mallon and Stephanie Park to take a moment to reflect on the challenges and triumphs that they faced: as with all pilots, this project has had its ups and downs, but the ups outweigh the downs by a tonne.

Tragic Circumstances - Very early on in this project, one community was faced with two tragedies that could have had crippling effects on the learners. In early February, Jordan Wabasse, 16, went missing. The tragedy was relived again when Jordan's body was discovered early this month. Shortly after Jordan's disappearance, the community experienced another tragedy when it lost one of their youngest members, an infant. Despite the tragedies, the learners came to class, determined to continue on their learning path. The tragedies hit the small, close-knit community hard. To honour the lives lost and the community itself, learners and instructors reflected that week, sharing stories and showing support for the grieving families.

Freezing Cold - learners from one community stood outside their learning centre for an hour, on a cold March night, waiting to be let into their class. Stephanie points out that these learners never give up on nights when the internet connection acts up and they continually are booted out of class over and over again. Now that's dedication.

The Laughter - one of the most striking things about our classes is the laughter. An elearn blogger wrote recently that the biggest key in distance education is laughter: once you have them laughing, you've got 'em hooked. For example, Stephanie relates this incident, and I dare you not to chuckle: "I called them

"folks" one night and they thought that meant they were old, I suggested I'd use 'peeps' from now on, they suggested 'homeys'."

Exploring the Unknown - one of the greatest moments we see in our classes, is the moment when learners realize that our classes are a safe place to explore. When learners are "rocking it out on the drama nights by taking on some fantastic, emotionally charged roles", you know that heart and soul is being given to each and every class.

Sharing - The remarkable thing about this group of learners is their openness and willingness to share a bit of their world with their instructor. Stephanie has never physically met any of these learners, but she knows what their community and classroom looks like, and has even been sent some personal photos. Yet, the connection goes much deeper than sharing pictures; learners have shared short stories, letters and very personal stories with our instructors. To be a part of their story is an honour indeed.

Chat, Email and Everything Else - One of the most challenging things about teaching online is effectively communicating with the learners--at least that is what critics of distance education might say. However, at GLA, we strive to overcome this potential obstacle. The software that we teach with allows everyone to communicate in so many different ways that there is always at least one method a learner feels comfortable with. Stephanie notes that with her group, they aren't big microphone users so it's a pretty quiet class. However, text chat is always hopping as learners are constantly sending messages to her and other learners. The other place that gets a lot of action is the whiteboard, which provides a blank space for the learners to type on, draw on, highlight on, etc. There is continuous participation between instructor and learner and interaction among learners as well.

The interaction doesn't stop once class is done either! Stephanie was astonished at how wonderful these learners are with using email. She comments, "I've been getting a ton of assignments both emailed and faxed to me--more than any other group I have taught." They also email her to let her know if they are unable to make class, and even once emailed when they were at the centre and having trouble logging in to let her know they were there. It was only because they took the time and cared to do that, that we were able to troubleshoot the problem with them and essentially save the remainder of class.

Learning Outside The Project Box - As a project, with set courses, schedules and expectations, project participants are given their class schedule and that is

generally what they stick to. The project learners don't have much contact with the mainstream GLA learner, as their classes have been set up for a specific purpose. In February though, to honour Family Day, GLA held a writing contest, where all learners were invited to explore what family means to them. Two learners from Matawa joined that contest and submitted beautiful writings on their families. Our NHL Hockey Pool is no different. Not only are 6 learners participating, one learner even consulted online stats to make his picks! Now that is learning outside of the project box!

As the learners are getting ready to take another step in their journey, I want to thank the instructors, Stephanie, Julie and Cathy. Bridging distances, breaking down barriers and developing skills is what we are here to do: you have done that and so much more. You have been a part of a journey that has only just begun, but I know that these learners are now equipped and ready for the next challenge.

Chi miigwech, friends.

Article submitted by:

Sandra Turner, GLA Practitioner



Nominations are open for Ontario Medal for Good Citizenship

This medal honours Ontarians who, through exceptional, long-term efforts, have made outstanding contributions to life in their communities.

The medal has been awarded since 1973 and is sponsored by the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration.

Winners will receive their medal from the Lieutenant Governor of Canada at Queen's Park.

Nomination forms and further information is available at www.ontario.ca/honoursandawards.



2011 Transliteracy Conference



Information for the LBS community about transliteracy, elearning and essential skills



Explore! Create!  Learn! Share!

The 2011 Transliteracy Conference will be held at Kempenfelt Bay Conference Centre from June 27th – 29th.

Cost is \$675.00 per person, which includes meals and accommodations.

Detailed information about the training can be found at <http://transliteracyinfo.blogspot.com/> or you can contact the Adult Learning Centres: Grey Bruce Georgian directly at 519-376-6623 ext 300 or email the organizers at learning@e-owensound.com.



Follow Up: 1st Class – 2011 Canadian Federal Election

The following blog posting was submitted by Warren Butler, Sioux Hudson Literacy Council GLA Instructor

This new blog post is a follow-up to our blog announcing the new Centra course we launched called [2011 Canadian Federal Election](#).

Our first class was on Thursday April 14th, 2011 and the results were fantastic! If I were to speak in Elections terminology, I can say that we had an 81% turnout rate for this class. These numbers are actually high for what we are typically used to in a LIVE Centra class. There are still learners that may go back and listen to the recorded Playback which may in fact increase the turnout rates even more.

"I just wanted to say thanks so much for this course, I learnt a great deal about the importance of voting and I'm definitely going to vote. Warren did a very good job."

There were some interesting observations from this class. There was approximately 85% of the group that have never voted before. And I mean never voted for anything. They have never voted for mayor, their band council, the provincial government or anything at all. One might think that this is shocking and disappointing but I looked at this as an opportunity and a definite reason why we needed to run this course.

The class was structured in format and outline but flexible because learners were encouraged to use their voices and text chat to discuss their concerns about the upcoming election. Here is a sample of their concerns from the class:

- TRUST was a big concern for these potential voters – How do they trust that a leader will follow through on their promises?
- Votes don't seem to count if the person you vote for loses
- Are water issues present on First Nations reserves because not enough people are voting?
- How do I know who I should vote for?

The course was also set up to accommodate different learning styles among Aboriginal learners.

The Aboriginal Approach to Learning encompasses the philosophy of teaching holistically and uses the medicine wheel as it's symbol.



From a medicine wheel perspective, the course adapted well to these 4 different learning styles. Intuitive learners are represented in East quadrant of the medicine wheel. These learners may have recognized that they needed to learn more about the elections process. They needed to visually see what this process looks like. Emotional learners are represented in the South quadrant of the medicine wheel. These learners could relate to the issues and understand the impacts of not voting. Mental learners are represented in the West quadrant where they were introduced to the process and steps involved to vote on election day. Some learners prefer to be more objective and logical with their learning. Physical learners in the North quadrant learn more by observing and doing. They were provided with interactive online resources to reinforce what they were learning through self-directed participation.

This class was balanced and respected all four different learning styles.



At the end of class, I also shared with the learners the results of a social media experiment using Twitter. Prior to the class, I contacted all of the MP candidates in Ontario who were on Twitter and introduced them to this course we are offering to learners. I also asked if they had any advice for our learners. The comments and feedback were priceless. I shared a few of these with learners and it seemed to bring the class full circle. The comments and advice from the MP candidates helped the learners feel a part of the election and that their voice counted for something.

In the end, all but one learner expressed that they would be at the polls in their community on May 2nd!

For this and other blogs go to:

<http://siouxhudsonliteracy.wordpress.com>



REMINDER Re: OALCF Trainings

The final two regional OALCF training events are coming up

May 26/27 – Sudbury

June 2/3 - Peterborough

If you have not already done so, please return your completed registration forms to the ONLC office.



ONLC OFFICE CLOSURE Reminder

The ONLC office will be closed for the months of June, July and August this year.

**DEADLINE FOR NEXT NEWSLETTER
September 16, 2011**

If you need to reach someone please email Ellen Paterson at onlce@bmts.com

The office will be closed Monday, June 6th, reopening on Monday, August 29th.



Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

The Government of Ontario recently passed the 'Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act' (AODA). This Act (Bill 118) calls on the business

community, public sector, and not for profit sector to develop, implement and enforce mandatory accessibility standards.

Accessibility standards are the rules that businesses and organizations in Ontario will have to follow to identify and remove barriers to accessibility.

The first standard to come into effect is the Accessibility Customer Service Standard. The government is also developing future standards in the areas of:

- Employment
- Information and communications
- Transportation
- Built environments (buildings & other structures)

You can learn more about this act by going to: www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/index.aspx



Peterborough Native Learning

Funding Issue Resolved! New Directions in the Works!

We recently heard that the funding cut that was planned for literacy programs has been turned around. What a celebration we had when we heard this news! We had a feast to celebrate the battle being won and welcomed Spring as the funding news came around the same time as her arrival. As you know from the last Spider's Web article we submitted we had been looking at closing the centre after a solid 16 year run in our community. It was a very difficult time for the Learners, Staff and Board of Directors as well as our community partners who could not refer to us and had to turn to other services. Many potential learners ended up on waiting lists or simply refused to be sent on to a service that was not the Native Learning Centre. Literally hundreds of supporters wrote letters, called, signed petitions, emailed the elected officials to help us win the battle. The media was extremely supportive and that helped tremendously in getting the word out to the greater community. A woman who heard about it in the news had no prior

knowledge or our centre but came in and gave \$100.00 because she felt so strongly about keeping PNLN open. The Coalitions and other advocacy groups for adult literacy in Ontario attribute the change of heart of government to the small programs that stepped up the appeal in the way we did here in Peterborough. One of the outcomes in addition to getting the funding increase which is permanent is that learners who had never had their voices heard in the past saw the results of speaking up. They were great in getting this message out through letters and media interviews and talking to people in the community. One of our learners was going through the mall with petitions and was taken to the administrative office by Security. She told me afterwards that she was getting people quite riled up and vocal about the injustice over her school closing!

We are happy to be alive and well and moving forward into a new year that brings areas of growth and learning that will challenge us. We are up for the challenge and look forward to the days ahead and what they bring now that we can put the funding issue behind us.

The economic state of our community is not good. The unemployment rate here exceeds the provincial average by 1.5%. Employers in our area use a grade 12 Diploma or equivalency as their number one screening method when looking at resumes. Hundreds in our area lost their long term jobs in manufacturing, where grade 12 Diplomas were not required, and these individuals have been added to the already high number of people who have not been able to find work and were coming to see us (over 100 people a year for the past 3 years). The demand for our services is even greater, therefore the investment of funds into upgrading services for adults makes good sense. We applaud the Ontario government for the change of heart.

Peterborough has won the nefarious award of **Number One in Canada** for the highest ratio of income to rent amounts in two categories: over 30% and over 50%. We are looking at two new areas of development at PNLN in keeping with these abysmal local trends.

To try and stretch dollars where it seems there's nothing left to give, we:

- plan to work with the credit counselling agency to come in and deliver workshops on stretching our dollars, budgeting, debt, credit and
- will add a new dimension: Collective Kitchens, to our partnership with the mainstream literacy program where they boast a full kitchen.

To better address the desires of learners with direct to employment (or re-employment) goals we plan to do:

- Recognition of Prior Learning (I just took a course for credit with Red River College) of individuals who have worked for many years and just want another job, not a diploma. We have an arrangement with a local employer where individuals can job shadow in their administrative, shipping and receiving departments. The employer is not seeking a grade 12 Diploma or equivalency; rather they value the essential skills of work. Our job is to ensure the employer that the learners we send have the desired skills.

The learners who are selected for these positions will work with us on getting their resume updated, documenting their prior learning, researching what the job and job shadowing entails, matching their skills to what's required, coming up with a plan to get to and from work on time each day, arrangements for childcare, proper work attire, etc., working on the gap areas before they go off to a three week placement, attending and successfully completing the job shadowing placement.

We believe this short job readiness course and job placement will help learners with employment goals in a number of ways:

- less interruption in work patterns so motivation remains intact
- work record on the learner's resume reflects less time out of the workforce as they will add the job shadowing and preparation to their resume
- skills are being upgraded with a specific goal in mind. It's short term and the upgraded skills are likely transferable to the next job they seek. This has real appeal for mature learners who have worked most of their lives and don't see themselves in the classroom long-term or going on to college or apprenticeship, and so on.
- Connections are made with a new potential employer who knows other employers. If the learners impress the employer during the job shadowing placement, this could lead to a job.

All for now. Hope to see some of you soon at the regional OALCF training in Peterborough!

Article submitted by:

Pat Powell Owen

Peterborough Native Learning Program



The Board and staff of the ONLC wish you a wonderful, safe Summer season!

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