PAARA NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 72, NUMBER 8, September 2021

PAARAgraphs

The Official Newsletter of the

Palo Alto Amateur Radio Association, Inc.

Celebrating 84 years as an *active* amateur radio club—Since 1937

Node-RED, what is it? Andreas Junge, N6NU

W6OTX W6ARA

Practically hot off the press! This month's QST featured an article on Node-RED. It's all about Flow Based Programming. Invented by J. Paul Morrison in the 1970s, flow-based programming is a way of describing an application's behavior as a network of blackboxes, or "nodes" as they are called in Node-RED. Each node has a welldefined purpose; it is given some data, it does something with that data and then it passes that data on. So, what does this have to do with ham radio? Andreas will show us how this open-source software can be an easy solution for controlling many applications in the ham shack.

This meeting will be conducted with Zoom Time: Sep 10 , 2021 07:00 PM Pacific Time Note — Second Friday This Month <u>https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84578497477</u> Login ID: First name and Call Sign Meeting ID: 829 3066 0082

Upcoming Events						
Sept 10 Oct 1 Nov 5	PAARA General Meeting, 7:00 PM Zoom Meeting					
Sept 15 Oct 20 Nov 17	Board Meeting, 7:00 PM. Everyone welcome! Zoom Meeting, eMail President for details!					
Sept	Electronic Flea Market Cancelled					
Oct 12-17 Pacificon (currently on)						

K6OTA

President's Corner

September 2021

As you'll notice in the board minutes, the board agreed that having a September inperson meeting wouldn't be prudent. We feel with the Delta strain of Covid, the later than usual date of the meeting (we're meeting on September 10th, the sec-



K6YOT

ond Friday), and the fact that Joel, KD6W, our meeting site zoom master will be out of town, were more than enough reasons to wait a month and see what the prognosis is in October. Thus, the September meeting will only be on zoom and not in person.

I received an interesting link from the ARRL the other day to a FEMA document. Seems FEMA put together a document advising what to do 2

PAARAgraphs — September 2021 Celebrating 84 years as an active ham radio club—Since 1937

WHAT IT'S LIKE TO MAKE A PARACHUTE MOBILE JUMP Chronicle of our Sept 2009 operation at Byron, CA

Mark Meltzer, AF6IM, "Jumper 1"

~ Part 2 ~

During opening, I carefully check for other traffic. After canopy inflation, I look for collapsed cells, tears, broken lines, and other problems. I will leave the steering toggles in their stowed position so that they configure the canopy in a "half flaps" slow speed flight mode. I try a few turns by pull-ing on the rear risers. The safety check is complete. Now I can take in the SPECTACULAR views of SF Bay, the Pacific Ocean, and the Sacramento River Delta. I can see the buildings in SF, all the bridges and many airplanes too, fortunately none nearby. I then look straight down and it literally takes my breath away. I think to myself, "all that is keeping me from falling 13,000 feet is some sewn nvlon fabric and a few surprisingly thin Spectra polyester lines." It is a sobering thought. I ask myself, "would you ride in an elevator suspended by only a bunch of thin polyester cords?" My answer is "no," but it isn't practical to use steel cables on a parachute so I am stuck with what I have. "Might as well enjoy the ride Mark, and stop driving yourself crazy," I think to myself as I settle down and start attending to the tasks at hand. I look around for traffic again as this area has quite a few gliders and powered planes, see no conflicts, then pull out my speaker mic, key it and announce, "Mission Control, JUMP-ER 1, AF6IM, open at 13,000 feet, good canopy, safety checks complete, ready for comms." I exchange greetings with our Crew Chief Jon Gefaell, K6OJ, then I work call after call. It all goes incredibly well, callers are courteous and patient, and the thrill is mutual as I work hams from all over on 2 meter FM simplex. At times, the breathtaking view and the eerie feeling of being suspended above it by only a few cords

is overwhelming and unsettling. I force myself to "reset" and consciously focus on deciphering the numerous incoming calls. Since I can hear stations over a two hundred mile diameter but their hearing range for other ground stations is far smaller, doubles and triples abound. It takes some work to sort it out. As I float miles above a beautiful California summer landscape, I feel truly blessed being able to enjoy such an exciting hobby a month ahead of my 60th birthday. When I was a new jumper at age 18, 59 was absolutely ANCIENT. I lie to myself that 60 is the new 40, times have changed, I am not really so old, etc. It is easy to deceive yourself at 13,000 feet, perhaps slightly hypoxic, participating in an extreme sport populated by wild hedonistic young people. I am not in denial about aging. I just am crazy about skydiving. I love it as much as I did when I made my first jump in 1968. I was hooked on my first jump. I just can't see quitting the incredible rush and feeling of euphoria that comes with every jump. It's also a really cheap thrill at only \$17 for a ride to 14,000 feet for experienced sky-divers. I don't drive fast cars, my wife is my own age, and tattoos and piercings don't appeal to me at all. I am just an older guy who isn't ready to hang up his rig yet -- it's really just that simple.

Most of the time, I have jumper 2 in sight, but not always. My pulse rate rises really quickly when I cannot see him. Five California jumpers have died this summer in canopy collisions. A call from mission control tells me that jumper 2 is half a mile west of my position (in the sun, which is why I cannot see him) and I relax for a few moments. Mission control relays a helpful suggestion from jumper 1 that I head further west as lower winds have increased. At about 3500 feet I tell the callers that I have to pay attention to navigating back to the landing area and will be in listen mode only from 3000 feet down to landing. One by one they fade out as I descend below the Altamont Pass hills that cut me off from the SF Peninsula. Oddly, KR6DD's signal still comes through long after the others have been blocked. Mission control, sited on a high peak, is loud and clear during every phase

(Mobile Jump — Continued from page 2)

of the descent. Mission control reports with obvious pleasure and excitement that our APRS jump telemetry gear (put together by our Chief Engineer Michael "Mikey" Pechner NE6RD and Scott Miller N1VG of Argent Data) is functioning perfectly and that the data packets are already up on the Internet. I am focusing on pulling my rear right riser, steering my canopy upwind and don't acknowledge the call, but a chill runs down my spine as I ponder the enormous power of radio, electronics and networks. I literally shudder knowing that my son Eric, KI6PQR, who shuns ham radio in favor of the Internet, is currently looking at his Dad's (AF6IM-7 on APRS) heart rate, blood oxygen level, altitude, heading and speed from the comfort of his dorm room at Peking University in Beijing China. We truly live in an age of tangible miracles. At 2500 feet I unstow the steering toggles which takes the trailing edge of the canopy back up to a flush position and I surge forward picking up speed. My chute is now handling more like a nimble fighter plane than a ponderous dirigible. The quiet peace has been invaded by a loud rush of air as my unleashed canopy takes the bit and runs fast. I can pull high G banked turns that fling my body out horizontal to the ground and cause me to shed altitude with alarming rapidity. I play around with a few high G maneuvers but pav close attention to altitude, position and the location of jumper 2 who, besides me, is the only jumper in the sky. I can see that I will clear the ground hazards and make it to the DZ landing area. I keep an eve out for jumper 2 as I navigate toward the same field that he will be landing in. We are far apart now but will be converging fast as we approach the DZ. At about 1500 feet I set up for my final approach, making sure I have enough speed to penetrate the wind for an upwind DZ landing. I am bouncing around a lot in turbulence and eye the horizontal wind streamers which show strong gusty winds on the ground. I keep my speed high in the turbulence to insure full canopy pressurization. If you get too slow you can stall or have a canopy collapse. Unlike the old round chutes. these dual surface rectangular ram air canopies have to be piloted or they will crash.

There are no go-arounds in skydiving landings. You only get one shot. The ground rushes up at me. I make last minute small steering corrections to hold an upwind track. I can see my teammate Ray Rogoway W6RAR shooting pho -tos as I make my final approach to touchdown. Just a second before I hit, I pull down hard on both steering toggles, pulling down the rear surface of the canopy and bringing the airfoil to a full stall as I touch down for a soft stand up landing. I gather up the collapsed canopy which is trying to reinflate in the 25 knot wind and then make my touchdown call: "Mission Control, JUMPER 1 AF6IM is on the ground at the DZ, safe landing." I watch jumper 2 make his final approach in high winds and bouncy turbulence to an absolutely perfect standup landing. "MIssion Control, JUMPER 1, JUMP-ER 2 has touched down on the DZ, safe landing." Jumpers 1 and 2 walk back toward the packing hanger, post adrenaline rush going full blast, endorphins flowing, thinking of the big one, the high one in which we will launch from above 20,000 feet and all the preparation and planning that lies ahead. Mission control is relaving congratulations from our QSO contacts and thanking all the support crew. A beautiful California summer sunset is playing behind us as we walk toward our friends and loved ones gathered at the DZ fence. It is hard to say which side of the fence has the biggest smiles. High fives, whoops, and offers of cold drinks mark the end of a successful parachute mobile jump. Combining the two hobbies that I love has succeeded beyond my wildest expectations. As I drive home I ponder going higher, using oxygen and communicating with long distance capable HF radio gear. The project is working and is underway. My team mates are enthusiastic and are helping out so generously. We have a lot yet to do but the momentum is there and it I can feel it building. I am totally stoked. It always feels especially good to be alive after a jump. Today, the feeling lingers long after touchdown and finds its way into my dreams.

10 August, 2021 900 MHz Portable Radio Checks

Gary Barnes

Not long after PAARA's 900 MHz was placed into operation, Joel Wilhite, KD6W, acquired some Motorola XTS1500, 900 MHz radios. Joel has been offering these radio to club members of \$75 each so they can get on the club's 900 MHz repeater.

I got my Motorola radio in May 2021. Joel told me that I would need to buy a power cable for the battery charger, and that its battery needed charging. I ordered a new power cable on the internet for the charger. I received the power cable 8 days later. While I was waiting to the power cable, I ordered a second power cable. The first cable cost \$9.95 and the second cable cost \$1.95 and took only four days before I received the power cable.

It took many hours to charge the radio's battery, but it would not hold a charge. I purchased a new Ni-Mh 2500 mAH battery for my radio. This battery works well.

At each of the rotary channel selection position, I recorded the repeater call sign. Next, I measured the radio's transmitter frequency for each channel selector position. I recorded the transmitter frequency to 10 Hertz resolution. The radio has a frequency accuracy of 1.5 part-per-million (ppm). My frequency counter has an accuracy of 1 part-per-billion (ppb).

The channel switch is two concentric rotary switches. One rotary switch has positions A, B and C. and the other rotary switch has positions 1 to 16 for total number of channels is 48. I found the channel selector switch has some problems. The radio does not stay on channel. A new switch would correct the problem, but I have not been able find one. I believe the repeater listings have some errors for call sign or city, for examples W6AFT should be K6AFT (channel A6). Repeater WI6H SF may have a problem with frequency (channel A5). Repeater NC9 should be NC9RC (channel A2).

Joel told me that this radio has power output of 5 watts, but I found the RF output power level to be at least 3.2 watts on all transmitter channels that I tested. The Motorola manual has the power listed for the 900 MHz radios as 3 watts.

The radio's receiver seems to work OK. It has a sensitivity of 0.36 microvolts for a 12 dB SINAD (Signal-to-Noise+Distortion ratio). The receiver's audio frequency response from 400 Hertz to 3000 Hertz is within 1.5 dB. The transmitter has about the same frequency response.

I checked the Motorola's antenna using my directional coupler and a power meter. I had a Voltage Standing Wave Ratio (VSWR) of less than 4:1, but greater than 3:1. This reading might be due to not having the antenna mounted to the radio.

I have not been able to check the receiver's adjacent channel interference, because I have only one RF signal generator for 900 MHz band. I have used my one signal generator at 20 KHz separation. I set the signal generator's output level to -73 dB (50 microvolts) with 1000 Hertz audio tone at an FM deviation of 1500 Hertz. Adjust to radio's volume control for about 2.6 volts across the 28 ohms resistor load resistor. Increase RF signal for the adjacent channel level until the 1000 Hertz audio tone is detected. No adjacent signal was detected up to an input level of +7 dBm (0.5 volts).

This appears to be a good radio with a bad channel selector switch and some programming problems. Not all of the switch positions have problems.

Gary Barnes KI6HIG

August 2021 Board Meeting Minutes	- This will be held in San Ramon on Oct 15-					
The August board meeting was held by vide- oconference. Present were President Jim Thielemann K6SV; Vice President Rob Fenn,	17. Pacificon will be either full-on or will be can- celled. All local regulations will be followed.					
KC6TYD; Secretary Ric Hulett N6AJS, Treas- urer Bob Korte KD6KYT; Directors Doug Teter KG6LWE, Joel Wilhite KD6W and Walt Gyger,	Indoor gatherings >1000 people require proof of vaccination, or a negative covid test result.					
K6WGY. Mikko Sannala AB6RF also attend- ed. The meeting was called to order at 7:18 pm	We have secured callsign W1AW/6. Radios and amplifiers are secured. Joanna K6YL helped again this year with two rigs and asso- ciated filters. WB6KIO has also supplied a rig.					
President's Report: FEMA has issued a new publication: shelter-in-place for Active Shooter, I chemical hazard, earthquake, nuclear event, thunderstorm, pandemic. There are many op-	PAARA will have an antenna work party a Doug Teter's in San Martin, October 9. Dou will tow the antenna trailer up to San Ramon.					
portunities for hams to train for CERT, FEMA, i etc. Ham Radio is still essential in emergen-	1900 MHz repeater status: Repeater is ON THE AIR.					
cies! Note: Hams have been asked to preserve clear frequencies at 3150, 7150, and 14330 for Haiti earthquake ham activities.	We will be looking for a club member to take on the job of managing PAARA-owned equip- ment (donations) for sale. Contact Rob KC6TYD for more information.					
Secretary's Report: We have two member- ship renewals this month. Thanks to Mikko AB6RF for handling last month's PAAR- Agraphs mailing.	We will probably drop the 'shack show' from the PAARA meeting agenda, unless there are more volunteers.					
Members: PAARA membership renewal time	The board discussed whether to hold the Sep- tember PAARA meeting at Cubberley, or to stay with video meetings for another month. Because of uncertainty with the Covid-19 pan-					
Treasurer's Report: Last month, PAARA paid the bookkeeping service and PIP printing.	demic, and issues with the zoom link, we w hold the meeting by Zoom for September.					
These were the only expenses for the last	We hope to be back in-person by October.					
VP / Program Chair Report — No report this month.	Sheila Foley is our new accountant. She up- dated the books and filed the necessary pa- perwork with the government. She's					
Old Business:	working on the raffle filing.					
Members! We need more PAARAgraphs arti- cles, from you! Put fingers to keyboard, and send in even a short article about your ham activities and interests. It's member-	New Business: PAARA will organize a party to remove a tow- er from the site of Jim Teimstra K6JAT (a re- cent SK) in Oakland. Doug KG6LWE will co-					
generated content that makes PAARAgraphs	I ordinate this work.					
We have two articles in the hopper, but always	age of Elecraft radios and other ham gear to the club at a very favorable price. The board					
Pacificon special event station update, Mikko	(Minutes — Continued on page 6)					

Though I forgot to mention it at the board meet-I (Minutes — Continued from page 5) ling, it's that time of year again for electing officvoted to make this purchase. We will evaluate ers. All officers and directors, except for Joel, whether to keep some radios as club gear, KD6W whose term doesn't expire until next! and whether to offer for sale to club members. year, are up for election. I reached out to Clark Another PAARA member was featured in QST Martin, KK6ISP, who's run the last several elecfor September: Andreas Junge, N6NU is the tions to see if he'd run this year's election. He's developer of Node-RED software, featured in agreed to run the election again this year. an article. Please reach out to him if you are interested in running or nominating someone for a position The meeting was adjourned at: 8:59 on the board. **Respectfully Submitted** Did you receive your September issue of QST? Ric Hulett, N6AJS If you did, have you read the story on Node-PAARA Secretary RED? If not, it would be a good thing to do before attending the next meeting as the person? behind Node-RED, Andreas Juge, N6NU, will (President — Continued from page 1) be presenting at the September meeting! If you when different events occur depending on what don't know what Node-RED is and wondered type of structure you are in. The document can how you might automate your remote station, be found here: don't miss his presentation! https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/ In a bit of sad news, in case you hadn't heard, documents/fema shelter-in-Doyle Kissler, KG6YUN, passed away the place guidance 5-25-2021.pdf As most likely know but it bears repeating, we've been asked to stay off frequencies: 3750 kHz, 7150 kHz, and 14330 kHz as they are being used for emergency communications with Hati hams. Though there has been lots of press to the contrary, it's nice to see there still is all need for hams in emergencies. PACIFICON is still scheduled to occur on October 12 ~ 17. Mikko, AB6RF, our special event station captain, has been busy making preparations. He's collected the radios and is working on getting the club computers so he can get them to connect to the radios. Doug, KG6LWE, has volunteered to take the tower trailer and antenna to the site on the 12th and help with the setup. He'll return on the 17th to help take it down and cart it back. Doug will host an Octomorning of 8/22/21 as the result of a hemorber 9th antenna party to go through the antenna rhagic stroke he suffered roughly a month ago. for the event. Please reach out to Mikko and He was a long-time PAARA member and supoffer your assistance in setting up the entire staporter and a great guy. Our condolences go out I tion on the 12th, covering periods during station to his family. operation, assist in dismantling the station on the 17th. He can use all the help we can mus-73. Jim K6SV ter. Get on the air to keep the airwaves alive!

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VE Exams

Redwood City Main Library, Community Conference Room, 4th Saturday 10:30 am each month and De Anza Park, Sunnyvale, 2nd Saturday 10:30 am each month except November and December. See website for details and exceptions: http:// amateur-radio.org or Contact AI, WB6IMX@att.net

Electronics Flea Market

Sponsorship by A.S.V.A.R.O. - Association of Silicon Valley Amateur Radio Organizations

Second Saturday of month, March-September, 6am-12 noon Contact: http://www.electronicsfleamarket.com

PAARA — Palo Alto Amateur Radio Association

Meets 1st Friday 7:00pm each month at Room H-6, Cubberley Community Center; Net 145.230 - PL 100Hz Mondays at 8:30. See our website at http://www.paara.org for more information or contact: Joel Wilhite KD6W, KD6W@ARRL.NET, 650-325-8239

FARS — Foothills Amateur Radio Society

Meets 4th Friday each month at 7:30pm Contact: http://www.fars.k6ya.org

NCDXC — Northern California DX Club

Meets 3rd Thursday 7:30pm each month, Repeater for member info 147.360, Thursday 8:00PM Contact: http://ncdxc.org or Mike Gavin W6WZ, (650) 851 8699

50 MHz & Up Group

Meets 1st Thursday each month at 7pm in the Summit Room at the Sunnyvale Sports Basement, 1177 Kern Ave, Sunnyvale Contact: http://50MhzandUp.org

SPECS

Southern Peninsula Emergency Communication System

Meets each Monday 8:00pm on Net 145.27, 440.80 MHz Contact: http://specsnet.org or Tom Cascone, KF6LWZ, 650-688-0441

SCARES South County Amateur Radio Emergency Service

Meets 3rd Thursday 7:30pm each month, Belmont EOC, Belmont City Hall, One Twin Pines Lane, Belmont CA 94002. Net is on 146.445 [PL 114.8] & 444.50 (PL-100) 7:30 Monday evenings. Contact: President Gary D. Aden, K6GDA 650-743-1265 (D), 650- 595-5590 (N)

Web: http://k6mpn.org E-mail: pres@k6mpn.org

SCCARA Santa Clara County Amateur Radio Association

Operates W6UU & W6UU/R, repeater 146.985-pl Nets: 2m, 7:30pm Mon; 70cm, 10M (28.385) 8PM Thur. Meets 2nd Mon each month @ 7:30 PM. ARRL/VEC license testing contact 408-507-4698

SVECS — Silicon Valley Emergency Communications Operates AA6BT repeater (146.115 MHz+)

contact: http://www.svecs.net or Lou Stierer WA6QYS 408 241 7999

TEARS — The Elmer Amateur Radio Society Dedicated to operational training, knowledge building & FCC exam testing. KV6R repeater under construction. Contact: AA6T@AR

Most members are Extra Class or VE's. See QRZ dot com/kv6r for class info

WVARA — West Valley Amateur Radio Association W6PIY six-meter repeater on 52.58mHz. Normally, six-meters is linked with 147 and 223, while 441 and 1286 repeaters are linked.

VHF: 52.58 (-500) 151.4 ctcss UHF: 441.35 (+5.0) 88.5 ctcss 1286.20 (-12m) 100.0 ctcss 147.39 (+600) 151.4 ctcss 223.96 (+1.6) 156.7 ctcss Meetings are 2nd Wednesday of every month except July, August and December. Contact: <u>http://wvara.org</u>, Bill Ashby N6FFC, 408-267-3118, <u>president@wvara.org</u>

American Red Cross, Santa Clara Valley Chapter

Contact: http://santaclaravalley.redcross.org or Scott Hensley KB6UOO, (408) 967 7924 fshensley@Novell.com

(Please send changes to PAARAgraphs editor)



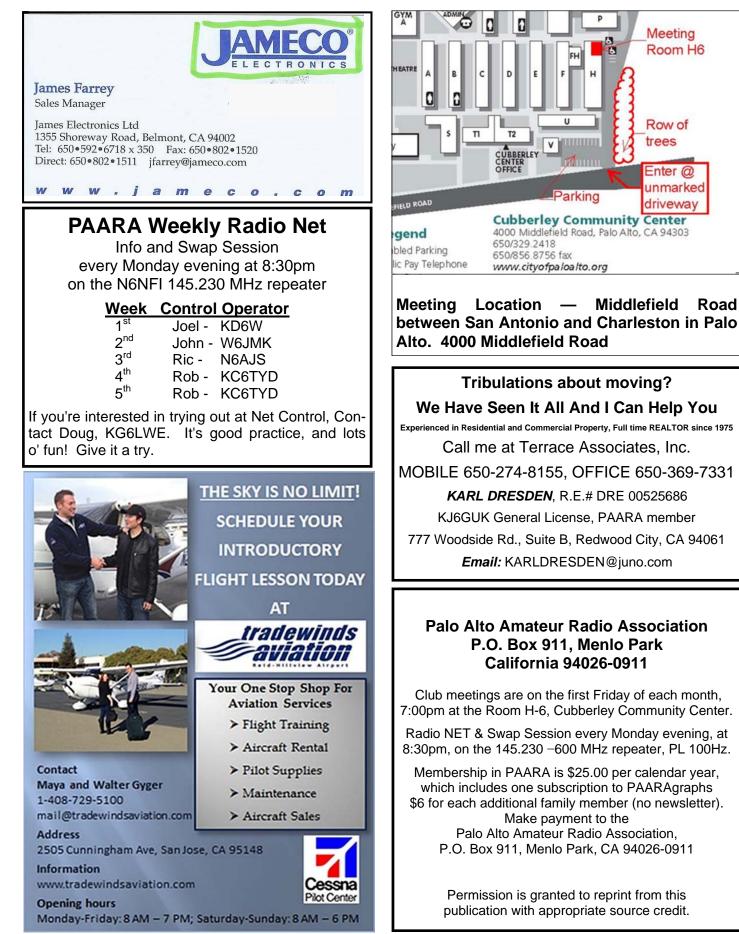
- Halted Specialties Co., Inc. has sold HSC Electronic Supply to Excess Solutions of San Jose...making the biggest surplus electronics store in the Bay Area!
- Much of the millions of parts seen on HSC's shelves will be showing up soon on Excess Solutions' shelves...for your electronic needs.
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PAARA Badges

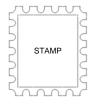
In the absence of in person meetings, you can still order a badge from the Club's website, <u>PAARA.org</u>. Go to the bottom of the membership page to order. Badges will be mailed to purchasers, at an additional cost of \$4.95 until we can meet face to face again.

PAARAgraphs Ad Rates

PAARA*graphs* accepts paid advertisements from non-members. (short personal ads remain free for members in good standing). All ad rates listed are per issue. 1. Not-for-profit ads by association members for ham-related items and wants. No cost for business card-size ads (additional space at \$2.50 per business card size per issue). 2. For Profit organizations and/or individuals: \$5-business card size, \$14.00-quarter page, \$25-half page, \$50 full page or back cover per issue. These fees may be reduced or waived in exchange for a valuable consideration that is given to the Association or its general membership. Such consideration must be in addition to any existing arrangements with the association. The PAARAgraphs editors reserve the right to reject any ad deemed to be not in the best interest of the Association. All fees payable in advance by the year with "scanner-ready" copy or text-only ads. Give payment and copy to Walt Gyger, K6WGY.

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