

# CURSILLO NEWSLETTER

Diocese of Lincoln, Nebraska

March 2023

## Calendar of Events



April 11, 2023 **Secretariat Meeting, 9:30am via ZOOM**

- To participate in Secretariat Meeting, start your Zoom app, and enter the **Meeting ID: 629-734-5912**

April 28-30, 2023 **Spring 2023 Region VI Encounter**, Savior Pastoral Center, KC, KS

May 6, 2023 **SOL - 11:00am** at St. Mary Church, Aurora (In person AND via ZOOM)

- To participate in SOL, start your Zoom app, and enter the **Meeting ID: 629-734-5912**

July 20-23, 2023 **National Cursillo Encounter**, Creighton University, Omaha, NE

September 22-24, 2023 **Fall 2023 Region VI Encounter**, Wichita, KS

### Region VI Spring Encounter, April 28-30, 2023

The Region VI Spring Encounter will be held April 28-30, 2023, at Savior Pastoral Center, KC, KS. Go to the Region VI website (<https://tinyurl.com/4yjr37zh>) for registration. De Colores!

### Welcome New Fourth Dayers

The new 2022 Fourth Dayers are: Rob Barger, Rod Church, Frank Lanik, Martin Saucedo, Don Schmit, Fr. Christopher Stoley, Betty Benson, Cathy Bryant, Shirley Ho, Maria Lara, Deb Polacek, Jane Reffett, Kate Severin, and Mary Sharp.

Hopefully, all are part of a Group Reunion and participating in Ultreya. If you haven't found a group or simply haven't started to group yet, go to your area's Ultreya or contact your sponsor or a team member from the Weekend (you were sent a roster) – they can help you find a Group Reunion. It is in sharing with your brothers and sisters in Christ about your attempts to grow in Piety, Study, and (apostolic) Action that you will persevere and progress in the spiritual life ... that's where you will find "total security"!!

Remember that **Christ is counting on you**, and you said that you would count on Him. He gave you the gift of the Cursillo Method of Group Reunion and Ultreya to help you in the Fourth Day; these tools will help you live each day in a more focused way, that focus being Christ.



## Comments from the Women's Cursillo Weekend (October 27-30, 2022):

- My Cursillo Weekend has definitely been a blessing for me. I have been praying the Rosary daily, listening to the Bible in a Year with Fr. Mike Schmitz almost every day and Donna and I group either via FaceTime or in person almost every week. Having Kathy invite me, and finding the courage to attend the Cursillo Weekend [October 27-30, 2022](#), in Hastings was definitely what God had planned for me at this very difficult time in my life, after having lost my dear husband to cancer earlier in 2022. I can't really explain what happened to me during that Weekend, but it really started me on the path to a closer relationship with God through prayer and a yearning to figure out my true purpose in this life through our Lord Jesus Christ.
- For me, it has created one more bond with people not just in our parish, but also Cursillistas from other parishes. Now I spend more time reading and studying our Faith than what I did before.
- Cursillo has been a literal Palanca in my relationship with God. Feeling alone, I walked into our weekend retreat sad and defeated, but clinging to the knowledge that me being there was not a coincidence or a mere random decision on my part. The Holy Spirit proved me right. I found Him again, I let him revive the joyful spirit I let go so long ago. And knowing that people around the world were praying for me and my encounter with him, gave me the strength to not feel alone anymore.

Life is still hard, and I do have my not-so-holy moments, but Cursillo made it easier for me to look back and walk towards Jesus every time I get off the path he has for me. Thank you for your prayers and sacrifices, I carry them with me as a great reminder that God works through all of us, touching lives in ways we will never understand. -- Maria L

- The Cursillo experience is very genuine and moving, but it is the joy and connection you'll find with your group that is unique!
- *[This was written by the sister of one of the new cursillistas, who now has women to group with]:* Cursillo was one of the most powerful and personal moments I've ever experienced with God. The peace, love and acceptance, I felt during this amazing weekend in 2010 can not be put into words. The best words I can think of, are Life Changing. Nothing was ever the same after Cursillo. My life truly became De Colores!
- The time spent that weekend was peaceful, inspiring, and fun. Women don't usually take time for themselves. The time away from my routine life gave me the chance to grow closer to God, meet some wonderful people, and have the opportunity to openly talk about God, our lives, and to pray and worship together. De Colores!
- Impressions from Cursillo Team Leaders who were part of Table Groups (Julie, Kay, and Monica):

We, as a team, went from feeling overwhelmed with this being our first time on team and sometimes frustrated with all the preparations needed for the Weekend, to being able to open up with each other, as well as with all the new cursillistas. We could feel the trust building between everyone. We could feel the Holy Spirit moving throughout all of us, as total strangers became truly Christian friends. It was such a blessing to see everyone embracing the graces offered throughout the Weekend. We also felt the effect of all the Palanca offered for the success of this Weekend and we thank you.

As Team Leaders, we were very inexperienced! In fact, the last time each of us attended a Cursillo Weekend was when we lived our own! We were the ones sitting at the tables, listening, taking notes and making posters! Now, we were the ones standing up giving the rollos. We have grown as cursillistas as will all of you new cursillistas! We believe God has big plans for each one of you!

We are so thankful to all who helped with the Weekend as well as all who encouraged us throughout the process. This was truly a work of God, and we will feel forever blessed to have been a part of it.

**School of Leaders (SOL) ... [May 6, 2023 - 11:00am](#) at St. Mary Parish, Aurora in person or via ZOOM. (To participate in SOL, start your Zoom app, and enter the **Meeting ID: 629-734-5912**).**

The lay presentations are coming from the book pictured on the left ([Cursillo History & Memory](#)). This book can be ordered at the National Cursillo website: <https://tinyurl.com/y5fe72be> ... There will also be a Spiritual presentation tying in with particular aspects of Cursillo.

## **From the Spiritual Advisor**

Come Cursillistas to the weekly Friendship Reunion! If you don't have one, then start one. Christ Jesus wants you to share what He has been doing in your life that week with the other members of His body for mutual edification and inspiration. Come and live the sincere and transparent discipleship of Jesus like a saint of God that we all want to become. Bring a friend and let the weekly Friendship Reunion empower you to be a light of Christ in the darkness and violence of today's world. Let Jesus Christ make you a voice of hope and saving truths in the "disinformation depression" we suffer today. Gather together to "strengthen your drooping hands and your weak knees" (Hebrews 12:12) by opening your heart to prayer and sharing in the weekly Friendship Reunion in and with Christ Jesus. Let the bright and Colorful light shine bright. Now is the time.

I have been in the Cursillo movement for only 20 years now and I believe, as a friend who is now Methodist and soon to be Catholic said to me just weeks ago, "the catholic church is positioned spiritually today to receive a great influx of separated brethren coming back to the Catholic fullness of unity". So my call to you is to be the welcoming face of the risen Jesus today for all who are looking for salvation and joy; looking for "the pleasure of being in grace in colors with us", the friendship that saves!

*De Colores!!*

**Fr. Bernard Lorenz**

## **From the Lay Director**

With Three Day Cursillo Weekends in the rearview mirror, there are several more cursillistas living the Cursillo method in their fourth day! Praise God! After living the weekend there are many opportunities to enrich the experience of the three-day weekend for the new and old alike through Group Reunion, Ultreya, School of Leaders and Regional Encounters.

You'll find a well written article in this issue of the newsletter explaining the enclosed Group Reunion sheet and Service Sheet, that each of you completed during your Cursillo Weekend, so you can make the most of your Group Reunions. The Ultreya schedules can also be found in the newsletter. It would be great if the areas listed as not currently having Ultreyas could be started up again. There's not that much involved in hosting an Ultreya, which is a gathering of the Group Reunions. A gathering for friendship and sharing how the Lord is working in and through your life. Any member of the Secretariat will be happy to assist in getting an Ultreya organized in your area.

The Calendar of Events at the beginning of the newsletter lists the dates and locations for upcoming School of Leaders and Regional Encounter events. The Spring Region VI Encounter is in Kansas City, KS, a few hours drive, next month, April 28-30. The registration fee for the Friday evening through Sunday morning event including lodging and meals is only \$80. At the Encounter you'll be able to Group with cursillistas from other member states, including Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, North and South Dakota and Wisconsin. Several are planning to attend from the Eastern and Western parts of the diocese, so carpooling is a possibility.

We in Nebraska have another special opportunity in July as the 33rd National Cursillo® Encounter will be held at Creighton University in Omaha, July 20-23, 2023. The registration fee is \$450 per person if the registration form is received by June 7, 2023, and increases by \$50 per person thereafter. Attendance cannot be guaranteed for registrations after July 8. Attendees will come from North America and beyond and will likely represent all nine United States Regions. Our Region bears some responsibility for facilitating the event, so there will also be opportunities for some behind the scenes involvement for those interested.

There is also the opportunity to join the Secretariat in helping to plan, budget, and otherwise guide and direct the activities of the Lincoln Diocese Cursillo Movement. Think of the Secretariat as the Board of Directors for our diocesan movement. You'll see at the end of the newsletter that the Precursillo, Three Day Weekend, and Postcursillo positions are open. Prayerfully consider whether the Lord is calling you to serve the movement in one of those positions. You may ask questions about serving of any of the Secretariat members.

I pray that your Lenten Season is blessed by your prayer, fasting and almsgiving and that your Easter is celebrated with joyous recognition of Christ's resurrection and the promise of salvation!

*De Colores! – Greg Vandenberg*

## **Something New ... The Group Reunion Sheet**

De Colores to All!! You will notice that the new multi-colored Group Reunion sheets are included in this newsletter, along with a cream-colored Service Sheet (just like the one you filled out on your Cursillo Weekend and received back at the Clausura/Closing). Why were the Group Reunion sheets changed? It was the direct result of going back to the roots of Cursillo.

Prior to his death, Eduardo Bonnín Aguiló, founder of Cursillo, decided that he needed to leave all of us who have lived (or will ever live) a Cursillo a legacy – the legacy of Cursillo. According to his friend, Jesús Valls Flores, what Eduardo wanted “to transmit is not the author’s rights but the witness of an idea” attributed to the Holy Spirit, but given as a charism, and “incarnated, built, directed, and organized by Eduardo”. Eduardo’s intent was to append the entire thought process of the Cursillo Three Day Weekend (“step by step”) to his book, “My Spiritual Testament.” However, Eduardo died before he finished.

In Eduardo’s words: “This is the way to conduct the Cursillo weekend today. This is the way through which, by the grace of God and the prayers of the brothers and sisters, it has been possible to achieve that a great many people over the years have had an encounter with Christ and decided to follow him ...

“We started in a place where there was no electricity, and today we hand out the list of those attending the Cursillo printed by computer. All I know is that if Cursillo is to remain faithful to the purpose for which it was intended and for which it was prayed and for which we have been grateful, it should not lower its target, and they should serve to give those who attend a “living”, simple, clear and true experience of the Christ of the Gospel as best as possible. He, who through his resurrection and by his Grace, is alive, normal and close in each person.

“This requires and calls for a personal encounter between Christ and each person. Obviously, the evil of the world is the evil of the human person, and what the person needs most is to encounter himself and then to be able to grasp with joy, and even perplexity, the invitation that Christ gives to him, so that by being connected to Him by Grace, and through that same Grace, he will understand the joy that comes from spreading it to others.” THIS is the purpose of Group Reunion!

So, how does the new Group Reunion sheet differ from the old one? In terms of content, the two are not very different; rather, what changes is the focus of what should be shared and how.

The old Group Reunion sheets were divided into Piety, Study, and Action, with specific questions to be addressed by the cursillista whose turn it was to share. [Of course, each Group Reunion opened with The Prayer to the Holy Spirit, Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be.] For example, the questions included: What spiritual aids helped you nurture your vital union with Christ [Piety]? What moment did you feel closest to Christ [Close Moment]? What have you done to better know God’s gift [Study]? What apostolic success did the Lord want to accomplish in His Church through you this week ... in your family? your neighborhood? your environment? [Action] With what failure did the Lord want to test you this week ... in your family? your neighborhood? your environment? [still, Action] How was your last week’s plan fulfilled? What are your plans for next week? Activities of your group? And finally, closing with prayer. Generally, each cursillista would take turns sharing, first about Piety, then about Study, then about Action, after which each would take turns sharing about how last week’s plan went and what was planned for the coming week. As a result, participants took turns sharing about each individual part of the Group Reunion sheet.

*(article continued on next page)*

In contrast, the new sheet begins with a review of the Service Sheet (the cream colored insert in the newsletter ... the one you received on your Weekend) all at once. Each person in the group goes through the entire Order of the Reunion, and only then is it the next person's turn to share. In reality, this makes a lot of sense. How many times using the old sheet, when it was your turn to share on Piety or Study or Action, did you find yourself crossing into one or both of the other two elements? And it was perfectly natural that you should!! Your Piety and your Study SHOULD impact your Action ... Your Piety (what you pray about) SHOULD be informed by what you are studying to better God, and it SHOULD be impacted by what happens if your efforts to be apostolic (Action). Likewise, what you Study SHOULD be impacted by your Piety (what you talk to God about), and by what you need to know to be a good apostle (Action). And through your sharing the review of the Service Sheet for the last week, you will be able to identify an apostolic success and an apostolic failure (that didn't turn out as you had planned). And this leads directly into your sharing about how your last week's plans were fulfilled (or not), and what your plans are for the coming week. When everyone has shared about their individual Piety, Study and Action, then the group as a whole can discuss its group activities (e.g., our Group Reunion is trying to get a bookshelf set up in Church so those making visits to the Blessed Sacrament have materials to read/reflect on if they so choose ... our intent is that it could also act as a book exchange ... "take one, leave one." And finally, as always, the reunion concludes with prayer.

The sharing using the new Group Reunion sheets also seems to focus what each person shares. "The Service Sheet is designed to help the cursillista stay focused on the commitments they have made. This also eliminates the need for reciting a list of pious acts during their Group Reunion. Going to Mass every day is fine, but in sharing at the Group Reunion, the person wants to tell how going to Mass every day helps them grow in their relationship with God. Remember, reciting a list of pious acts can be very overwhelming to someone who is new and it may intimidate them or make them think that this is what is required of them. It is the daily examination of our own commitments that prepares us for sharing with our friends on a level that draws us deeper into our relationship with Christ and each other.

"All three elements: Piety, Study, and Action of the Service Sheet must be operating in order to be effective. Piety alone is simply spiritualism. We get a nice warm and fuzzy feeling. Study alone leads to intellectualism. Knowledge without action is no knowledge at all. Action without Piety and Study is reduced to humanism. We are performing good human acts that anyone can do whether or not they even believe in God. All three elements of the Service Sheet must reflect our metanoia" [change in one's way of life resulting from penitence or spiritual conversion] ... At each new crossroad of our lives, we should be adjusting our Service Sheet (the commitments we are making from week to week) in order to operate on fertile soil, open up new horizons, and close the door against dangerous deviations ... [we should be] acting upon vital points of the soul, by which it is made more keen, efficient and individual, without the danger of reducing it to a ritual and periodical review of a piety which, not considered in conjunction with life and without zeal, becomes mechanical, and without action, bogs down.

"In essence, the Group Reunion maintains and safeguards the spirit necessary to fulfill the promises on the Service Sheet. The group provides support for the decisive efficacy (fruitfulness in fulfilling) of those who are meeting together in Grace in the name of the Lord. The Service Sheet is, in short, the practical means for helping us be in a vanguard position as Christian Catholic Cursillistas, in line with all those who, from the Vicar of Christ to the least of all Christians, make their life a continuous pilgrimage toward the Father, encouraging and bringing all their brothers and sisters along with them."

Ultreya (Onward)!!! In Group Reunion ... in Ultreya ... in life!!!

De Colores!!

## Looking for a Lost Sheep by Kay Portillo

(In the following story, names other than mine have been changed)

Prior to the 2022 Women's Cursillo Weekend, three of us helping with the Weekend made arrangements to stay together at a motel in Hastings after the Clausura (Closing) ... we are old and don't like driving in the dark. Not being familiar with Hastings and not trusting our knowledge of GPS guidance to get us across town, a very kind cursillista from the Hastings area offered to guide us. The plan seemed simple enough – we simply had to keep three cars driving in a row. You know what they say about making plans and hearing God laugh?

Sunday night after the Clausura, we put our plan into action. We lined up the three cars, with Ruth driving the lead/guide car, Jane driving the second car (with me riding shotgun), and Mary driving the third car. My job was to make sure that Mary's car didn't get separated from the pack. As we set out from St. Michael's, it seemed darker than I thought it would be (not many street lights to help me with my job!). As we journeyed together down both main and side streets, we were all in line and the plan seemed to be working. Upon encountering our first traffic light, we all made it through on green, although speeding laws may have been broken ... maybe ...

At the second traffic light, the first two cars made it through, but Mary didn't make it. Jane and I slowed down as much as we could on a busy 2-lane street, as I watched for the light to change so Mary could catch up. I truly believed I saw the light change and thought the car coming up behind us was Mary's. It was the same style and had a "Choose Life" license plate like Mary's. I re-assured Jane, who was very concerned, that it was Mary who was now behind us. Jane relaxed and sped up, and we soon spotted Ruth's car. We were all back together and on our way to the hotel. We then came to another traffic light at a T in the road – you could only go right or left. Only Ruth made it through the light, turning right. Jane and I didn't make it, but we saw Ruth had turned right and that she had pulled off the road waiting for us. When the light changed, Jane and I turned right, as did the car behind us. We were all back in line! We were now on a street that had lots of lights, so I took a good look at the car behind us. Yes, I told myself with just a hint of pride, that's Mary's car! It was the same make, model, color, and license plate type. We finally reached the hotel, and Ruth pulled in and got out of her car, and Jane and I pulled in and got out of our car ... and the three of us then watched the car behind us (the car I was so sure was Mary's) continue down the road!! There was an odd silence as we looked at each other ... no one wanted to be the first to ask "Where's Mary?" Then Jane's phone rang, and it was Mary!

Jane put Mary on speaker phone ... her voice was a little confused and fearful as she told us that she was in the parking lot of a well-known fast food restaurant, which was next to a well-known gas station. Ruth (our local guide) told us Mary was just a few blocks away; she told Mary to stay in her car and we would call her right back. Ruth seemed very sure she knew where Mary was, and this was very calming to Jane and me. So, now we were on to plan B ... I checked us into the hotel, and left the room key with Jane; she would wait in the room while Ruth and I went to get Mary. Before we left, I asked Jane to pray for our success!

Once in Ruth's car, we called Mary, joking about the whole situation ...the three of us from out of town didn't know Hastings, so something like this could happen to anyone. As we approached the fast food restaurant's parking lot (next to the gas station), Ruth asked Mary to turn on her flashers. Mary said "They are on", which was interesting because none of the cars had flashing lights -- not in the fast food parking lot or the gas station parking lot. Ruth calmly said that the same fast food restaurant had another location next to the same gas station chain just up past the hotel, and that maybe Mary had gone there. Ruth told Mary to stay in the car and leave the phone on.

We started down the street in the opposite direction, still joking around. We joked about why the city would put the same businesses next to one another just a few miles away on the same street. We arrived at the second fast food restaurant, next to the same gas station chain, and asked Mary to turn on her flashers. She said they were on, but just like before, no car had flashers on in either parking lot. Ruth announced that we would return to the first location, that Mary surely had to be there.

Once back at first fast food restaurant parking lot, I got out of the car and started walking around calling Mary's name ... I even walked over to the gas station. Still no Mary! I went back to the car, got the phone, and walked back into the parking lot, asking Mary where she was. Now, other people started to notice this lady yelling into a phone while walking around looking at cars and I'm sure it was very entertaining! That's when Ruth yelled out, "Ask her if she is by a motel?" I asked Mary, who quickly said yes and told us the name of the motel. When I told Ruth, she hollered with glee, "I know right where she is!"

I got back in the car and we were off ... Ruth asked Mary if she had turned right or left at the T in the road, and Mary said "left". Ruth explained that Mary was all the way on the other side of Hastings! I responded, "Let me guess ... the motel she went to is next to the same fast food chain and gas station chain?" "Yep," Mary answered back, just as Ruth slammed on the brakes to avoid hitting a herd of deer that ran across the road in front of us! Ruth yelled out, "This is like Jesus searching for a lost sheep!", and we all started laughing, wondering what else could go wrong. We got to the fast food restaurant parking lot and immediately saw a car with flashing lights – it was Mary!! Ruth suggested that I ride with Mary and follow her back to the hotel. I thanked Ruth, got into the car with Mary, and off we went. This time we left the phones on, talking all the way back to our motel! In no time, Mary and I were in the motel room telling Jane about our big adventure!

Later that night, I pondered our original plan, wondering why it went so wrong ... was there anything we could have changed that would have given us a better outcome? It occurred to me that maybe if we had all talked to each other the whole drive, no one would have gotten lost. We all had cell phones ... it would have been so easy! Then I remembered what Ruth had said about Jesus looking for a lost sheep ... We all know the story of how the good shepherd left the 99 sheep to go in search of the one lost sheep, not stopping until he found it, safely returning the lost sheep to the herd. In my life, I've been that one lost sheep ... not just once, but many times. I believed that I was leading a good life, following most of the rules, but never really talking to Jesus. I had the old "I can do this" mindset. Then I'd come to a T in the road and make a wrong turn. Sometimes I knew it was wrong, but honestly, at the moment I didn't care, or I really believed I had made the right choice. Either way, it didn't take long until my whole world would come crashing down. I would discover that I was lost, alone, and afraid. Only then would I call out to Jesus to help me, and He would always lovingly say, "I know right where you are!!" He would then lead me back to Him.

It occurred to me that living my Cursillo had helped me to develop good habits of prayer, study, and action, but especially prayer. I now truly understand Cursillo's importance, and it has helped me not always be that one lost sheep. I think my best take away from that night in Hastings was this – talking with Jesus every single day is the best way not to get lost!!! De Colores!!

## Upcoming Ultreyas

### Beatrice-Hebron-Crete:

Location alternates (2:00pm; usually 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of month)

- April Ultreya (April 23, 2:00pm) – Beatrice, St. Joseph Parish Hall.
- May Ultreya (May 7, 2:00pm) – Hebron, Sacred Heart Parish Hall.
- June Ultreya (June 11, 2:00pm) – Crete, Sacred Heart Parish Hall.

Contacts: John/Kathy Springer, (402) 826-2699 or (402) 580-1367.

### Southwestern Nebraska (McCook-Imperial-North Platte):

Location alternates (usually 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of month)

- April & May Ultreyas to be determined due to Easter and Mother's Day
- June Ultreya (June 11, 12:30pmMT) – In-person & ZOOM (St. Patrick Parish Hall, Imperial)

Contact: Kay Portillo (308) 227-1231

### Lincoln – Vietnamese Language Group:

Immaculate Heart of Mary Church, Lincoln

- Normally 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of each month after 9:00am Mass (about 10:15am)

Contacts: Diep Van Nguyen (402) 474-9588, Canh Nguyen (402) 435-0921.

### Not Currently Having Ultreyas [*Please participate in a neighboring Ultreya*]

- Lincoln
- Doniphan-Hastings-Holdrege-Minden
- Plattsmouth-Nebraska City
- Weston-David City-Shelby-Wahoo

For more information, contact Greg Vandenberg (308) 530-7587, Lay Director

### Secretariat Mail

Lay Director – Greg Vandenberg; 3101 Meadow Court, North Platte, NE 69101  
(glvandenberg@charter.net)

*Newsletter is currently published as needed.*

Lincoln Diocese Cursillo WebPage: [www.seas-np.org/cursillolincoln.html](http://www.seas-np.org/cursillolincoln.html)

Region VI WebPage: [www.natl-cursillo.org/region6](http://www.natl-cursillo.org/region6)

National WebPage: [www.natl-cursillo.org](http://www.natl-cursillo.org)

### Secretariat Members

Lay Director.....	Greg Vandenberg (308) 530-7587
Precursillo.....	
Three Day Weekend.....	
Postcursillo.....	
School of Leaders / Secretary.....	John Springer (402) 826-2699
Treasurer.....	Kathy Springer (402) 826-2699
Spiritual Advisor.....	Fr. Bernard Lorenz (308) 414-1195



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***New Group Reunion Sheet Enclosed;  
Service Sheet also Enclosed***

# CURSILLO NEWSLETTER

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Diocese of Lincoln, Nebraska

March 2023

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**Make a Friend, Be a Friend, Bring Your Friend to Christ!**

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