



## a day to *Remember*

**It really was 'A Wedding to Remember' for six couples from Harbourside Lodge and Sea View House.**

Flanked by family and friends, the six couples renewed their wedding vows on October 23 in a ceremony widely described as one of the most memorable in Portland in recent years.

The idea evolved when it was identified that several couples were residing at PDH. Once the idea emerged many of the couples decided to join the party.

Everything lived up to expectations and it was a great day for the residents and their families, and also for the staff.

Harbourside Lodge Activities Co-ordinator Riemie Gunssar said the

event was one of the highlights of her working career. "It was exceptional and went even better than we anticipated," Riemie said.

She said she was touched by the reaction from the couples. "I had one resident mention to me that she and her husband would like to renew their wedding vows. We made that a reality for them," Riemie said.

"After the ceremony another resident told me what a wonderful idea it was and that she had never had the opportunity to renew her vows and really appreciated it."

Les and Mary Taylor were among those to renew their vows, more than 61 years after their original wedding in Oakleigh.

"Les is living in Harbourside Lodge



and when they were putting this together they asked if we wanted to be involved. Les was very keen so he said yes."

Mary first said yes to marrying Les on March 30, 1949 and she said that 'A Wedding to Remember' rekindled lovely thoughts of that day.

"It was different this time. Back then we were young and looking forward to the rest of lives but it was nice now to renew our commitment. It was just a lovely way to go back and remember things."

# Christmas greetings

**Welcome to our Christmas edition of PDH Pulse which has been prepared as we enter the hectic lead up to the holiday season.**

This edition of PDH Pulse includes a wealth of examples celebrating the achievements and contributions of many people at Portland District Health.

Christmas is a great time for families to come together and for people to enjoy celebrations and fellowship. Sadly it is also a time when accidents tend to occur on a more regular basis and when issues of loneliness become more pronounced for some people.

With more traffic on our roads and more time spent outdoors enjoying our summer weather, it is important to be mindful of safety and to watch out for those around us.

2010 has been a positive one for PDH and we look forward to exciting announcements in 2011 that will impact on our health service. I can vividly recall the strength of our community support for all those working in the local health sector; by the wonderful turnout for the opening of the Glenelg Cancer Information and Support Centre earlier this year and also the morning tea for the volunteers who work tirelessly to complement the work of health professionals to support people in our community.

We all know that whatever role we may play in the team, clinical or non clinical, health can be challenging. However the ability, dedication, passion and spirit of people working at PDH help us to meet those challenges and make it a special place to work.

Thank you to everyone who has played

a part over the last year, and the very best wishes for the holiday season to you and your families.

PDH management and staff wish everyone in our community a safe and happy Christmas.

**JOHN C O'NEILL**  
Chief Executive



## Baby bonus

**The number of babies being born at PDH is gradually increasing since the decision to re-establish a level 2 maternity service.**

The hospital has reaffirmed its strong commitment to a safe and sustainable Level 2, medical-based maternity service delivered locally.

Since the resumption numbers have been improving as local families gain confidence in the service. On average we now deliver about six babies per month and that number is expected to continue to grow.

During one week late in October six babies were born in Portland – a new record since the service was resumed.

The transfer system to South West Healthcare in Warrnambool continues to operate successfully when it is deemed to be in the best safe interests of mother and baby.

Belinda Brown and her new baby

Henry was one of those to travel to Warrnambool after a long labour.

“It’s not what we had planned but you have to adjust and it is best to be cautious,” Belinda said. “It all worked out well and we got to come back here fairly quickly.”

Henry is the second child of Belinda and Leigh Brown and is a little brother for Matilda.

## Bonanza for graduates

**For the first time all PDH staff who have graduated from training courses will be recognised together at a special ceremony on December 7.**

More than 30 staff, including graduate and post graduate nurses, enrolled nurses who have completed their medication endorsement and

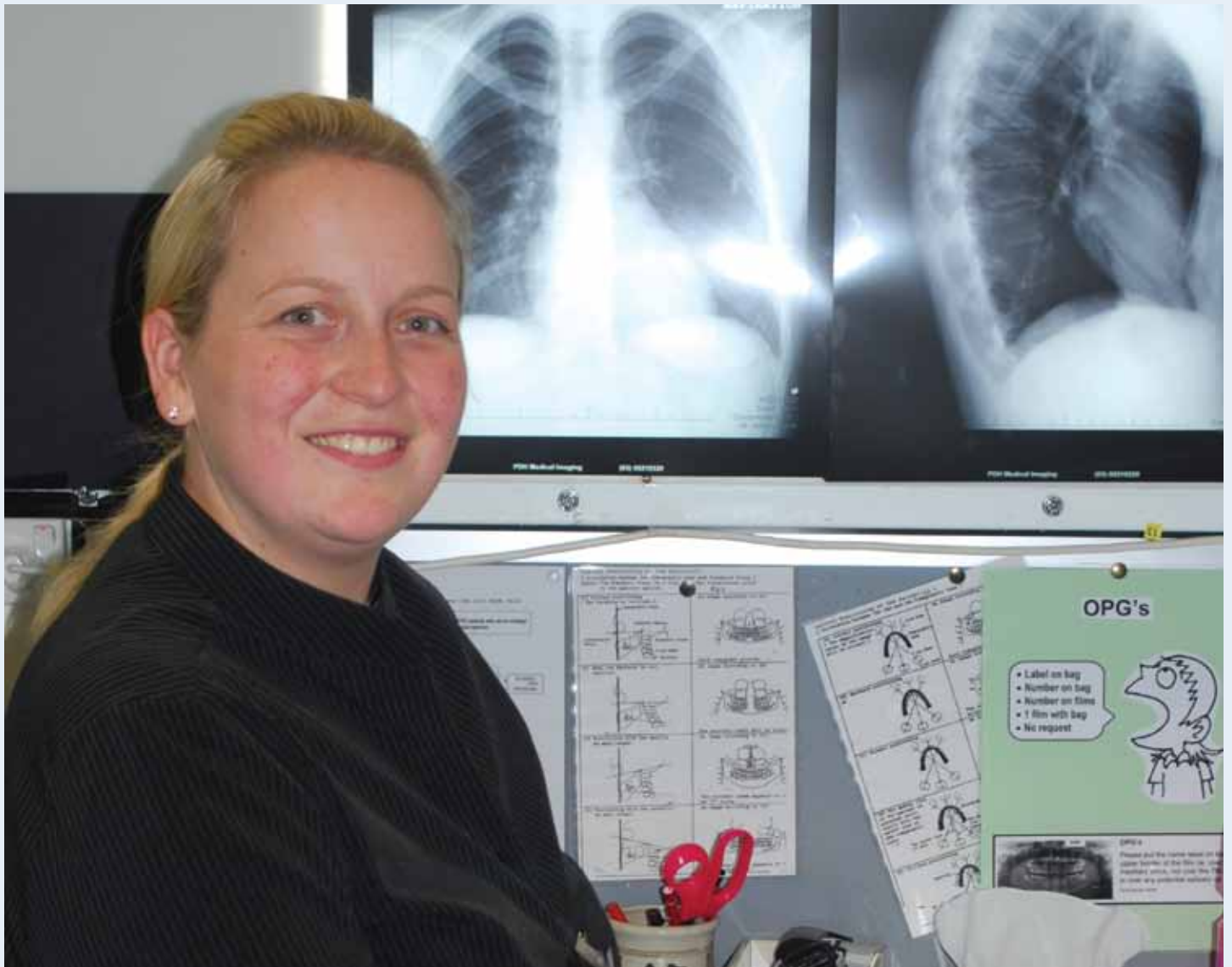
others who have undertaken short courses during the year, will take part in the ceremony at PDH from 2pm-3.30pm on December 7 in the staff dining room.

Change Manager Anne Burley said it would be the first time all graduates were brought together to celebrate their achievements.

“It will be a great function to recognise and celebrate the efforts of all those who have graduated or completed courses during 2010,” Anne said. “We put a lot of effort into education and training which improves the skills of our staff to enhance patient care,” she added. “It’s nice to thank the staff for their effort.”

# A royal choice

Radiographer Emma Grant has rubbed shoulders with the Queen and other members of the extended royal family, but is now happy to call Portland home.



**Emma has returned to PDH as a full-time radiographer after previously spending three months here in 2009 as a locum.**

Trained at the University of South Australia, Emma saw the shortage of radiographers as her ticket to see the world. "It is a rite of passage for many young radiographers to travel the world on a working holiday," she says.

"There's always a shortage of radiographers so there are great opportunities to travel and find locum jobs."

Emma found several jobs around Australia, including Portland, before

embarking on a trip to England where she secured work at the King Edward VII private hospital, which is commonly known as the 'Royal hospital'. Queen Elizabeth is the hospital patron and she, along with other members of the royal family, uses the hospital's services. Staff are told to follow strict protocol when the Queen and family members attend, including not being allowed to speak unless spoken to. "The Queen came in while I was there and I saw her but didn't get to speak to her," Emma said.

But through all the excitement of mingling with the royals, Emma still felt a yearning for Portland, which was the favourite of all her locum positions.

She contacted the hospital and asked if she could be considered for a permanent job. The answer was yes and now Emma and her partner Rob Woolley have made the permanent move back to Portland.

"I loved the hospital. I was here during the time of the bus crash at Heathmere and was really impressed with how everything went so smoothly and everybody worked as a team."

Emma is now happily established in Portland and she and Rob hope to settle here.

PDH now has four radiographers and two sonographers on our team.

# A premier purchase

**Kel Sparrow confirmed his appreciation for PDH and his love of Collingwood Football Club when he paid \$3100 in a radio competition to buy a signed Magpies jumper.**

A life-long Collingwood fan, Kel was not only supporting his beloved Pies but also saying thanks to the hospital for its care after he suffered horrific injuries in a truck accident at Sydney about three years ago.

Kel spent more than five months in the hospital as he recovered from multiple fractures caused when a load of timber crashed on to him.

“When I heard about the competition on the radio I thought it was a good cause and a way for me to say thanks and show support for the hospital,” he said.

“They were fantastic and looked after me very well.”

A long-time truck driver, Kel, 55, has returned to work with K&S Freighters in an office position in Portland.

The jumper was auctioned by MIXX FM as a fund-raiser for PDH to buy new equipment.

# Learning from body parts

**A full-body mannequin, an arm, a pelvic area and babies of varying descriptions are helping staff at PDH learn more about the body.**

They're not the real thing, of course, but they are the next best thing when it comes to training.

The various mannequins in use in the hospital have been a great addition to our educational program. Thanks to support from local groups several new items have been added in recent months.

Education Manager Usha Naidoo said having mannequins provided realistic simulation opportunities for staff.

A new \$13,000 full body mannequin is for the first time allowing full simulated scenario training.

Usha said the mannequin would allow staff to practice all the basic nursing skills along with some more specialised and advanced skills. “Some of the scenarios are things that you don't see on a regular basis and so the simulated scenarios are the best way to up-skill staff.”

The mannequin is connected to a computer and can talk, breathe, cough and displays vital signs. It has a series of additions that can aid the education process and can also be converted from male to female as needed.



*Graduate and Student Facilitator Elizabeth Munro, Clinical Support Nurse Gaynor Denboer and Education Manager Usha Naidoo with the new mannequin.*

Other recent additions to the stable of training items include a birthing baby and resuscitation baby, a fundus and a life-like arm.

In total about \$50,000 has been spent purchasing the equipment.

The Murray to Moyne riders, the Nurses Education Fund and United Way contributed to the recent purchases. PDH thanks each of the supporters for their contribution.

The hospital also has 'Resus Annie', an older mannequin being used for basic life support training to all staff. This training enables staff to have an understanding of how to react, initiate and respond to someone who has collapsed and needs resuscitating.

# Reports now available

**Our annual report and quality of care report are now available for the community to review.**

These reports are important documents which detail how we have sustained and improved our services during the past 12 months.

They reflect a positive year of

development where PDH has continued to grow and consolidate its services to meet the health needs of our community.

They also stress PDH's emphasis on the delivery of safe patient care and the growth in demand experienced during 2009-10.

There were almost 200 additional

inpatients using the hospital compared to 2008/09, the number of operations performed rose by nearly 1000 to 2513 and use of the Accident and Emergency Department increased dramatically from 8374 to 9291.

Copies of the reports are available from PDH Executive Administration Department or [www.pdh.net.au](http://www.pdh.net.au)

# Paramedic skills

**Martin Starick hopes to supplement his nursing skills with new paramedic knowledge after winning a prestigious scholarship.**

Martin is one of three young people working in emergency nursing in the Barwon-South West region to win a scholarship of up to \$14,000 in 2010 from the Albert Coates Memorial Trust.

The Division One nurse plans to use the scholarship to further his studies at the University of Ballarat to add paramedic skills to his resume.

"I would like to build on my nursing skills and

develop paramedic skills and be able to combine the two," Martin said.

Martin has been with PDH for four years and also works as a volunteer community ambulance officer at Heywood.

He would like to see nurses and paramedics working more closely together. "I have a vision of paramedics working out of an accident and emergency department and working in conjunction with hospital nurses," he said.

"It is becoming more common for people to have skills in both areas."

Martin went through an application and interview process to achieve the scholarship. "I think they liked my mix of nursing and paramedics which was different to the other applicants," he said.

Sir Albert Coates was an Australian soldier and surgeon from Ballarat.



## Chris retires... and returns

When nurse Chris Black retires on December 31 she won't be saying a final goodbye to the staff and residents at Harbourside Lodge.

**Instead, Chris intends to keep up her long-standing connections by returning as a volunteer.**

Chris has been with PDH for a total of 41 years. She will spend her last day as an official employee on New Year's Eve.

At 66 she admits she finds the lifting and workload required in supporting aged care residents have become a bit heavy.

But Chris isn't about to sever all ties with PDH. She has been gradually reducing her hours in recent years but doesn't want to close the door on a career and workplace that she continues to enjoy.

"I'll come up here as a volunteer," Chris said. "A while back I came in to do massages for the residents.

They really enjoyed that so I'll come back and do that. I can also help with Meals on Wheels and shopping trips," she added.

Chris has completed a massage course and looks forward to continuing to help residents while maintaining her friendships with staff.

Chris did her initial nurse training at PDH before moving to Melbourne and Geelong with her husband Terry. "My husband worked with Telstra and got moved around a bit. I was lucky with nursing that I could move and pick up work."

The couple returned to Portland 38 years ago and Chris resumed her career with PDH, initially on a relieving basis. She has since worked in virtually all departments, with a focus on midwifery earlier in her career and

aged care in more recent times.

Chris was inspired to become a nurse after seeing the care shown to her father when he was in hospital in both Coleraine and Portland.

"I was working in a department store at the time. I thought 'I'd like to be like those girls'. The way they cared for him, nothing was too much trouble. I was really impressed."

Chris likes to think she has put the same level of care and commitment into her work and appreciates it when others recognise that effort.

"The companionship of the staff and residents and visitors has been wonderful. It is very rewarding when someone tells you how much they appreciate the care you have given their family member," she said.

# Parmjit is our top graduate nurse

**Parmjit Mann admits he's a 'country boy' at heart.**

Parmjit was raised in a rural area in his native India and now looks forward to establishing roots in Portland.



"I've been here about 10 months and I love it," he said. "We're looking to buy a house and settle here."

"I lived in Melbourne for a while and then Warrnambool. I'd prefer to live in regional Victoria. I was a country boy in India and that's the life I like.

"It's nice to be in a community where people know each other."

Parmjit also enjoys working at PDH, where his nursing skills are mainly employed in theatre and recovery.

"I enjoy the work and the hospital... it has a real family atmosphere," he said.

On top of that, Parmjit, his wife Rajinder and particularly their three children love the local beaches!

After coming to Australia about 14 years ago, Parmjit worked in a variety of jobs, including factory work and driving a taxi, before a friend suggested he try aged care and nursing.

The move has been a great success.

At PDH's annual meeting Parmjit was named Graduate Nurse of the Year in recognition of his efforts since arriving in Portland. The award is named in honour of Roy Aitken, a long-standing board member.

# Lisa to update skills

Lisa Barby realises the dialysis unit at PDH is relatively small...but that doesn't mean it isn't important.

"There is a real need to have a specialist dialysis unit and that is going to become stronger in the future," Lisa says.

"It's a specialist area, not just anyone can work here."

Which is why Lisa is about to improve her skills in the area.

Lisa will undertake her Certificate in Renal Nursing through the University of Tasmania next year and will be helped by PDH after she was announced as the winner of the 2011 Bert Wilmot Scholarship.

Lisa's colleague Carol Crowe will also undertake the course next year.

The new specialist knowledge will complement Lisa's existing Division One nursing degree through Deakin University in Warrnambool and her seven years of experience at PDH.

"It's good to have more knowledge and it will benefit our unit," she said.

"Dialysis is an area of real need. It is different to working in other areas and I really enjoy it. You build a real rapport with patients because you work with them so often."



With dialysis rates tipped to increase dramatically over the next decade, Lisa predicts increasing demand for the services of the dialysis unit.

"It is good that we have the opportunity to further our knowledge in this area," she added.

The Scholarship is allocated every year to support a PDH staff member with their study or further training.

# Accreditation for four years

**The Australian Council on Healthcare Standards (ACHS) has awarded a Certificate of Accreditation to PDH for four years and commended our commitment to quality of care.**

The ACHS report is one of the best received by PDH which met all 45 prescribed standards covering clinical, support and corporate services. The survey did not find any areas requiring high priority attention.

The ACHS said the four year accreditation sent a strong message to the community that PDH, its management and staff were committed to excellence in health care with a strong and continuing focus on safety, quality and performance.

"We are aware that consumers demand a high standard of health care, and we are pleased and proud that Portland District Health has been recognised for meeting their expectation," the ACHS said.

# Fellowship for UK

## PDH surgeon Uvarasen (U.K.) Naidoo saw the best and worst of health care in South Africa.

Now he is enjoying being part of the high level of care being offered in Australia and after becoming a Fellow of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons is looking forward to continuing here on a permanent basis.

U.K. has been in Australia for two years while completing his local Fellowship.

"The South African equivalent of the Fellowship is not fully recognised in Australia, which meant I needed to work in a rural area under supervision for two years," U.K. said.

He has now undergone the review process and met the required standards for the Australian College.

"With this new qualification I am accredited like any other surgeon."

U.K. is enjoying the work and living environments in Australia. "In South Africa the conditions were very different. I saw the best and worst of it. There was the Third World environment in state-funded care and the First World environment in the private sector. The problem is that only about 10 percent of the population has access to that type of care which made it very frustrating and difficult. Here in Australia it is a more level playing field and more fulfilling."

U.K., his wife Usha (PDH's Education Manager) and their children are also enjoying the rural lifestyle offered by the Portland region.

"Coming to Australia was also a lifestyle issue for us," he says. "We were chasing our tails a bit in South

Africa, really living to work. Here we have a better balance and more time to ourselves and children, which is probably due to the rural setting and easier travel. We thought it might be a bit remote but we have been pleasantly surprised by how much we enjoy living in the area."

The fellowship is good news for the Portland district as U.K. and his family plan to remain in the area.

U.K. is now sharing his time between PDH and Western District Health Services at Hamilton. "We have set up a good system here and hope to keep the wheels turning and provide an ongoing service for the people of Portland," he added.

U.K. and his family are hoping to move to Hamilton for their children's education in early 2011.

# Welcome back winner!

## There was a nice surprise awaiting Occupational Therapist Jacki Barnett when she returned to work after a recent holiday.

On her desk was a framed certificate notifying Jacki that she had been chosen as PDH's September Employee of the Month. "I had no idea...it was a very pleasant surprise," Jacki said.

The award recognises Jacki's enthusiasm and abilities in helping people to regain good health in her role as Occupational Therapist.

Jacki joined PDH in 2005 after studying Occupational Therapy as a mature aged student at Charles Sturt University in New South Wales.

Originally from Portland, Jacki had pursued a career in cycling competition and coaching. Before moving into O.T. she was assistant cycling coach for the New South

Wales Australian Institute of Sport.

"I actually applied for a physio course but got Occupational Therapy so thought I would give it a go. I liked it so much I stuck with it," she said.

"You get to work in so many different areas and it is nice to be able to help people back to where they would like to be," Jacki added.

"It is a very broad role, working on different body parts, in the community, in rehab, in sub-acute and in modifying homes."

Jacki's cycling career has helped her prepare for her current role. "It is surprising how much of the coaching principles and methodology can be transferred to Occupational Therapy,"



she said.

While no longer active in the cycling world, Jacki is enjoying being part of the O.T. team at PDH with Julia Mason and Alicia Tavare.

"I'm not riding now, I have other priorities...but the bikes are still there if I need them."

# Keeping active

**Riemie Gunssar gets all the job satisfaction she needs when she sees a smiling face among the residents at Harbourside Lodge.**

As the Lodge's Activities Co-ordinator, Riemie loves to put a bit of spark into the days of residents, whether it be through outings, barbecues, sing-a-longs, bingo, carpet bowls, discussion groups, cooking or other special events.

"It is very rewarding to see the residents having a good time," she said. "It's nice to make their lives a little better and I think the activities we do can make a difference."

Riemie has recently received another reward for her efforts when she was named Employee of the Month for October for her role in bringing together the 'A Wedding to Remember' function.

Riemie has worked in activities for aged care residents for nearly



30 years and moved to Portland from Brisbane seven years ago.

"My father worked in hospital care and I've been in hospital or aged care since I was 16. I've never known anything else but I still enjoy it."

## New role for Ros

**Ros Jones has been appointed as PDH's new Corporate Services Manager.**

Ros's elevation from her previous role as Quality and Infection Control Co-ordinator is the culmination of a 30-year career in nursing, mostly in hospitals in south-west Victoria.

She completed her initial nursing training at Hamilton Hospital.

"I know it sounds like a cliché but I always wanted to be a nurse.

I knew nurses at the time and they enjoyed it. Nursing was seen as a bit of a poor man's profession in those days...luckily things have changed dramatically since then.

"It is a great lifestyle and I enjoy working to help people."

Ros is an advocate of life-long learning and has completed her Masters in Infection Control and Advanced Practice and is now studying her Masters of Business Administration at the University of Ballarat.

# Transfer Fund Established

**Portland District Health's Emergency Department treats many seriously unwell patients each year, providing high quality care and effective, safe, specialised treatments for all patients. However, a number of these critically ill people require transfer to another hospital for further treatment, whether they are ill children, trauma patients, patients requiring an intensive care unit or patients requiring specialist surgeries.**

As a body of health care professionals, we are able to help stabilise patients prior to any potential plan for transfer to another hospital.

It was through observation during these time critical situations that the further needs of families and relatives were recognised. In many cases, especially with younger patients, one parent may be able to travel by air with their child, leaving the remaining immediate family members in Portland to embark on a long journey to Melbourne during a time when they are both stressed and vulnerable. It was this burden on families which identified the need for financial support.

PDH is pleased to partner with Portland Aluminium under their 'Partnering Stronger Communities' initiative to allow the set up of a Portland District Health / Portland Aluminium Emergency Transfer Fund.

The initial aim of the Transfer Fund will be to provide information, funds for accommodation and/or funds for return airfares to immediate family members of younger patients, in situations where patients are transferred from Portland to Melbourne.

We wish to thank Portland Aluminium for their funding and we look forward to assisting the smooth integration of this package into our holistic, high standard of patient care.

Also thanks to Sharp Aviation for their in-kind support through the access of flight services.



**Portland District Health**

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