

Chair's Message



Happy New Year to all. May it be a wonderful year of dancing.

Family Night in December was a great success in spite of the weather (again). It's too bad some people had to turn back home. Our 50-50 draw certainly helped Ken MacKinnon with his Christmas shopping.

We were pleased to surprise Jean and Gordon Hamilton with the presentation of a well-deserved Branch Award. Congratulations! [See also page 3.]

At the AGM in Perth some decisions were made which affect many of us.

We had six representatives from Toronto along with three lent to us from Inverness to make up our full delegation. Passing the motion that each individual delegate can carry up to three votes will help us substantially in the future as we do not often have enough people attending the AGM.

New Zealand's motion to allow Branch Only memberships has been tabled pending a full review of the implications.

There is now a new fee structure for the Scottish portion of our membership:

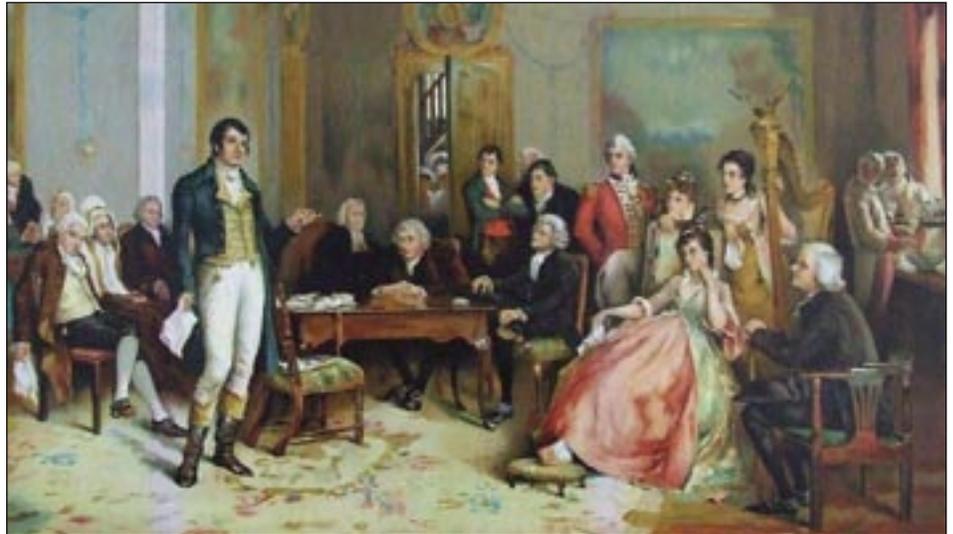
- Youth (12-17): 50% of full adult membership
- Young Adult (18-25): 80% of full adult membership
- Adult Single: as agreed by the AGM
- Adult Joint (2 people residing at the same address both age 25+): 80% of 2 adult rates. (I assume this includes more than 2 adults also.)

At our own AGM the question was raised as to whether a decrease in fees would be passed on automatically as well as an increase. The answer is yes, and we will be adjusting our membership fees accordingly.

In closing, I hope many of you will accept the challenge of the briefed-only dance on January 11.

Robert Burns at 250: The Immortal Memory lives on...

... Barry Pipes



Robbie Burns presenting his poetry in Edinburgh, January 1787.

Two hundred and fifty years ago on January 25, 1759, the Bard of Scotland, Robbie Burns, was born in the Ayrshire community of Alloway. Thirteen years had passed since the bloody carnage of Culloden, and it would be a further twenty-three years before the wearing of either the kilt or any form of tartan was again allowed in Scotland.

Robbie's family lived through much poverty and hardship in the 1760s. His father, William Burness, was a tenant farmer who scraped a living from the land. In due course, Robert also had to join his father in this back-breaking manual labour, which was a later cause of his ill health. But it was in the fields that, as a fifteen-year-old, he encountered his first love, whom he called "Handsome Nell". This love led to his early attempts at poetry... "O, Once I Loved a Bonnie Lass". The romance with Nell was followed by a string of further adventures with any number of young ladies, until he met the real love of his life, Jean Armour. These casual relationships not only resulted in several children, but more importantly, a growing number of poems, as he celebrated his conquests in verse. Jean Armour herself, whom he married in 1788, bore Robbie nine children in all, although it is said only three survived infancy; such were the hardships of those times.



"The sweetest hours that e'er I spend, Are spent among the lasses O!"

Meanwhile, with the assistance of both his father and a tutor, Robbie managed to secure a classical education. In turn, this opened the tap to an outpouring of verse, much of which was published in the highly successful *Kilmarnock Edition*. An invitation to visit Edinburgh followed, resulting in many social connections which helped further publication of his poetry in Scottish dialect. There were more female dalliances (and children!), until he finally returned to his beloved Jean Armour in Ayrshire, where he trained as an Exciseman to better support his growing family. Even so, his outstanding skills as a poet had grown beyond measure. "Tam O' Shanter" is a classic example of his work.

► Please see Burns, page 2

February Monthly Dance

Date: Saturday, February 14, 2009
Time: 8:00 - 10:30 p.m.
Place: **Crescent School**
 2365 Bayview Avenue
Music: Bobby Brown & The Scottish Accent
Hosts: • Calvin • Midtown • Petronella

The Lassies of Dunse	8x32J	Bk. 18/5
John McAlpin	8x32S	Bk. 3 Dances Foss
The Peat Fire Flame *	8x40R	Drewry Bon Accord
Roaring Jelly †	8x32J	Foss Glendarroch
The Trysting Place	6x32S	Bk. 35/6
The Whistling Wind	8x32R	Bk. 36/5
Interval		
The Last of the Lairds *	8x32J	Bk. 22/5
Argyll Strathspey	8x32S	Bk. 35/3
The Flowers of Edinburgh †	8x32R	Bk. 1/6
The Luckenbooth Brooch	8x32J	Dickson Glendarroch
Frae A' the Airts	8x32M	Lft. 16
The Highlandman Kissed His Mother	8x32R	MMM1
Extra		
The Sailor	8x32H	Bk. 24/4

* Tartan Ball dances

† Dances that will be briefed only

Special Events

An Evening with Robert Burns

(as Portrayed by Stewart Bennett)

January 17, 2009

Highlands of Durham present a traditional roast beef dinner and entertainment. All types of dancing to favourite Scottish music. Scugog Community Centre, Port Perry. Tickets \$50. Contact Marjorie Mason, 905-649-3532, mmason@bellnet.ca or Stewart Bennett, 905-985-6573, stewart@theweetartanshop.com

Tartan Ball Practices

Hillcrest: Tuesdays, February 10 & 17 @ 7:30-9:30 p.m.

Toronto French School,
Lawrence Ave E. near Bayview

Glenview: Wednesdays, February 11 & 18 @ 8-10 p.m.

Glenview Presbyterian Church,
1 Glenview, near Lawrence subway

West End Workshop / Tea Dance

Saturday, March 21, 2009

Shake off those winter blues: come celebrate the joy in the Dance. Classes morning & afternoon, with a hot lunch. Afternoon break followed by a Tea Dance. Teachers are Alan Twigg, Ian Souter and Ian Paterson. Musicians are Bobby Brown, Laird Brown, Don Bartlett. At Turner Fenton SS, North Campus, 7935 Kennedy Road, Brampton (just west of Hwy 410). \$45 for the day, or \$12 for the Tea Dance only. Contact Anna & Tom Rielly 519-927-5502 or t.rielly@rogers.com or check www.RSCDSToronto.org (What's On).

January Challenge Dance

Your Monthly Dance Committee wants to thank all those dancers who braved the wintery weather on December 6 to come to the Family Night Dance. We had a total of 154 and despite the challenges of certain dances, a good time was had by all.

A reminder that the 12 dances on the January Monthly Dance program will be briefed only, and not walked. It means that dancers will have to do a little more preparation, perhaps attend an extra Social Group prior to the dance, or get together with other dancers to practice, walk the dances and learn the geography and the formations.

... Forbes Duncan



Watch for it!

50 - 50 draws will be held at all the Monthly Dances this season. Tickets are \$2 each or three for \$5. This is a fund-raising initiative to support Dancing In The Park. At the December dance, Ken MacKinnon won \$141 in the draw.

► Robbie Burns at 250 – Continued from page 1

Alas, the earlier strains of poverty were catching up with him. Intemperance, in conjunction with a rheumatic heart condition, and blood poisoning that resulted from a dental extraction got the better of Robbie Burns and he died at the age of thirty-seven on July 21, 1796. Ironically, Jean Armour gave birth to his last son, Maxwell, on the day of his funeral.



Jean Armour

So, in two or three weeks, folks the world over will celebrate his 250th birthday at Burns' Suppers, most as onlookers, and some of us as participants in the "Address to a Haggis" ceremony. We will partake of portions of that delectable dish (at least as it is currently prepared), while downing a dram or two of Speyside's finest. Perhaps we will feel sorrowful about his early demise, which terminated forever the flow of further gems like "Holy Willie's Prayer", "Ode to a Mouse" and "A Man's A Man For A' That". Even before his January 25th birthday, however, many will have celebrated Hogmanay on December 31st with a rousing rendition of probably the most notable of Robbie's works – "Auld Lang Syne".

Clearly, the Immortal Memory continues to live on...

Tartan Ball 2009

Feb. 21:- This is the highlight event in the Toronto Association calendar. We'll enjoy great dances, wonderful music by Bobby Brown & The Scottish Accent, and an excellent meal in the company of friends.

Salad: Baby Spinach Salad, Roasted Pears, Toasted Pine Nuts, Roasted Shallot Chestnut Dressing.

Entree: Wild Mushroom and Brioche Stuffed Chicken Supreme, Honey Lemon Pan Jus, Herb Roasted Chateau Potatoes.

Dessert: Traditional Royal York Yule Log, Black Rum Vanilla Sauce.

Branch Award honours The Hamiltons

The RSCDS Branch Award is awarded by branches of the Society and is given for outstanding service to a branch.



Jean and Gordon Hamilton were presented with our second Branch Award at the December Monthly Dance.

Over the years, they have made great contributions to the Toronto Association both individually and together.

Jean has taught the Erin Mills SCD Group for many years. In addition to weekly classes, she organizes special evenings which are enjoyed by all. Gordon is always on hand to provide the recorded music, to organize the kitchen, and to fill in when needed. Jean

also ran a demonstration team, the Ceilidh Dancers, which entertained at community events and Seniors' Homes.

Jean has taught Association Classes, has served on numerous committees, and has been called upon several times to devise the program of monthly dances for the year. For the 50th Anniversary she did an incredible job of including dances with a Toronto connection. Jean has also taught workshops in various places, including Florida.

Jean is very knowledgeable about Scottish Country Dancing and works hard to get the best from her dancers.

Gordon has had two stints on the Board of the Toronto Association. The first involved nine years convening events such as monthly dances and the Tartan Ball, and culminated in his becoming Chairman. Gordon continued to help out on committees and three years ago was persuaded to rejoin the Board as Director of Volunteers.

Gordon is always willing to design tickets, brief sheets and other documents, and to help out in various other capacities.

For 25 years, Jean and Gordon organized a very successful Hogmanay dance. They brought hours of pleasure to many Toronto area dancers.

Winter Association Classes

Come out of the cold and into the fun and warmth of Scottish Country Dance Classes. Enthusiastic teachers, friendly participants and lively music will chase away the winter chills. Invite a friend and double the pleasure!

St. Leonard's Anglican Church

25 Wanless Ave., 2 minutes from Lawrence subway.

LEVEL 1: Basic level for inexperienced dancers.

Mondays, January 5 - March 9, from 7:30-9:30 p.m.

Teacher is Wendy Loberg.

Swansea Town Hall

95 Lavinia Ave., 7 minute walk from Runnymede station.

LEVEL 1: Basic level for inexperienced dancers.

Wednesdays, January 7 - March 11, from 7:30-9:30 p.m.

Teacher is Ian Paterson.

LEVEL 3: Advanced level for experienced dancers.

Thursdays, January 8 - March 12, from 7:30-9:30 p.m.

Teacher is Barbara Taylor.

Eastminster United Church

310 Danforth Ave., 2 minutes from Chester station

LEVEL 1: Basic level for inexperienced dancers.

Thursdays, January 8 - March 12, 7:30-9:30 p.m.

Teacher is Linda Argent, and Bobby Brown plays accordion.

LEVEL 2: For dancers wishing to improve their knowledge of basic formations, continue step practice, and expand their dance experience. Teacher is Vicky Zeltins.

Thursdays, Jan. 8 - Mar. 12.

Classes run for 10 weeks. Cost is \$80 (GST included). Cheques preferred, payable to RSCDS Toronto. For information on all classes, contact Alice Chase 416-410-7078 (leave a message) chase_al@hotmail.com

The Sunday Miscellany is back!

When: January 18, February 15, March 15, April 19

Time: 2 - 4 p.m.

Where: Broadlands Community Centre, 19 Castlegrove Blvd.

Cost: \$5 members, \$8 non-members



Some of us have very fond memories of the Sunday Miscellany, the group which Blair Gerrie used to run every other Sunday afternoon, where we learned really interesting and sometimes really challenging dances. Well, the Sunday Miscellany is being revived for four sessions at Broadlands. Intermediate and advanced dancers are invited to come out for a great dancing experience with Blair.

Contact Blair Gerrie 416-651-8933, pbgerrie@rogers.com

... Ann Campbell



Bring-A-Friend to Ceilidh

Everyone had so much fun at the November ceilidh classes, and we saw so many new faces, that your Special Events and Outreach Committees are hosting another series of classes in the hope that new ceilidh dancers will become new Scottish Country Dancers. Members are welcome but are urged to bring a non-dancer (or two, or three). Teresa Lockhart again leads the class. Contact is Carole Bell (416) 221-1201.

At St. Leonard's (see above), 7:30-9:30pm

Fridays: Jan 30 • Feb 6 • Feb 20

• Feb 27 • March 6

Ask a Teacher



This is the first in a series of "Ask a Teacher". Do you have a question about dancing? Submit it to the Editor and we will ask a teacher to respond. This month Carole Skinner considers...

The Importance of Handing

Think of how many ways you take hands while dancing: hands across, turning, leading down the middle, Allemande, rights and lefts, circles. Most dancers don't give handing a second thought, but it's a very important part of the dance. It's with the joining of hands that the sociability and team work of dancing come through.

Everyone has had a problem dancing corner, partner. Sometimes you just can't get around because the person you were dancing with didn't consider it important enough, or didn't know how to give hands correctly – or was it you?

In hands across it's always difficult, but if first man joins hands with 2nd woman, 1st woman and 2nd man can join their hands on top. In 6 hands across, try for the person opposite, again if 1st man is on the bottom there shouldn't be a problem with everyone finding a hand across from them. If in doubt remember to ask your teacher.



Volunteer Award

Please send your Social Group nominations to:

Tom Clark,
Director for Volunteers,
20 Elmhurst Avenue
North York, M2N 1S2
or e-mail: tom.clark@kos.net

Deadline for submissions is
February 6, 2009.

Visiting the Keppies in Nova Scotia

Kathy and Jim Armstrong sent this news from Nova Scotia.

Have you wondered where Maggie and Duncan Keppie dance the other 51 weeks of the year, besides the July week in Haliburton?

The answer is: mainly with the Valley Scottish Country Dancers in Wolfville, Nova Scotia, part of the Annapolis Valley. Tuesday nights at the legion two or three sets gather for social dancing. We joined them while visiting our son and family and it was easy to feel at home with many familiar dances such as *Mrs. Hamilton of Eaglemount*, fast becoming a favourite with the group.

We also had an opportunity to attend one of the periodic advanced classes conducted by the Keppies in nearby Grand Pré. Dancers attended from around Nova Scotia for what felt to us like "Haliburton in November". Characteristically, there were new dance creations introduced—strathspey tempo first and then reel. And a theme of the night, which was "the snake".

For a weekend away, Maggie and Duncan also were in Mexico to lead a St Andrew's dance. We can indeed confirm that they are keeping up their dancing—and they are looking forward to joining everyone again next July in Haliburton.



Duncan Keppie is in the front row, second from the right. Maggie is in the back row at the far right.

Your Newsletter Committee wishes you happy dancing in the New Year



L-R: Carole Bell, Donald Holmes, Marian White, Judy Williams, Rob Lockhart (inset).

Pictured above is your Set & Link newsletter Committee, shown at an atypical, pre-Christmas, evening meeting. We normally meet in the mornings, over coffee rather than wine – and Rob is normally there but, alas, had to miss *this* meeting. At our monthly meetings we review the content of the Set & Link under construction and 'imagineer' future issues. We, the Committee toast you, the readers, and wish you another year of great dancing. Thanks also to the many contributors who provide lively content.

A Great Experience at Swansea Town Hall



Ali Moallim is from Somalia and has lived in Canada for 10 years. He and his son Ibrahim were among the group from Rose Avenue Public School who attended the Children's Workshop at Swansea Town Hall November 15. They enjoyed themselves so much that they invited a group of dancers (organized by Lourdes Genosa) to come and teach Scottish dancing at the "Festive Season's" celebration at "Community Matters" in St. Jamestown, Toronto, December 11 (see pictures below). Mr Moallim shares this account of the Children's Workshop.

It was a wet and dreary Saturday morning. While most people were at home enjoying their early morning cup of coffee, my youngest son, Ibrahim roused me from my sleep and asked me to take him to the Swansea Town Hall to participate in a Scottish Dancing workshop. This was an event that he had looked forward to with eager anticipation since he first learned about it. On this morning, he was so excited, and keen on going that I had to set aside all my plans for the day and take him to the workshop.

It was an experience that my son thoroughly enjoyed and as I watched the children dance, I could not help but be very impressed. I was witnessing a cultural activity that I had not been previously exposed to. My family came to Canada from Somalia and we had no idea about Scottish Country dancing. This was fantastic, I thought. As I continued to watch the dancers having an enjoyable time, I was not only entertained but I was also learning another aspect of the Canadian culture, Canada's Scottish heritage. I have heard from my son how much he enjoys Scottish dancing at his school and now that I have seen him and the others dance, I have a better understanding why this activity has become meaningful to him. I also like the idea that one does not have to

come with a partner, nor be Scottish in order to participate. There is always someone there to dance with and everyone is welcome. It is indeed an activity worth pursuing. Here are more of my observations:

While the children were dancing, they were oblivious to each other's ethnic heritage. They were having fun, they had a part to perform and they felt that they belonged there. Ibrahim was so happy that I was with him and we shared this experience. He met new kids and was confident enough to move away from me and meet others. The adults who were there as part of the organizing team were very welcoming and very eager to have us participate. What a metaphor for the diversity that we are trying to achieve in Canada! People can enjoy themselves as individuals and participate in the whole at the same time.

Apart from the sociability aspect, I became aware of the aerobic benefit that one can derive from Scottish dancing and therefore involvement in this activity, I feel is very worthwhile.

The parents of the children from Rose Ave. P.S. who came with my son had their own workshop on the second floor of the Town Hall that day. This was unexpected as they thought they were there only to accompany their children. They had a good workout, they learned some basic steps and they enjoyed moving to the music.

One parent had this to say, "If we had Scottish Dancing in St. Jamestown, I would be the first one to sign up." Another echoed this sentiment by saying, "My friend and I will join you and we will get some others to come along." Then another said, "That was a good exercise I had today and I was not even aware that I was doing it. Scottish dancing is so much fun."

From this experience, I have found that there are so many new things to learn here in Canada, our adopted country and I am so pleased to know that there are opportunities as well if one is interested. One only needs to go out and take advantage of them. It is always a good idea to get active, to participate, to be involved and to be willing to try something new.

I thank Ms. Lourdes Genosa, my son's Scottish dance teacher at Rose Avenue P.S., for inviting us to the workshop.

... Ali Moallim



Upcoming events: NEAR

JAN. 10. **Challenge Night Monthly Dance.** At Crescent School, 8:00 p.m. All dances will be briefed only – not walked.

JAN. 17. **Sunday Miscellany.** See page 3.

FEB. 14. **South Simcoe Workshop,** Alliston. Teachers are Carole Skinner & May Divers. Contact David Wilson: 705-435-2361

FEB. 14. **Monthly Dance.** At Crescent School, 8:00 p.m. See Page 2.

FEB. 15. **Sunday Miscellany.** See page 3.

FEB. 21. **46th Annual Tartan Ball** at the Fairmont Royal York Hotel. Music by Bobby Brown & The Scottish Accent. For tickets contact Jim Stark, 416-691-8035, jstark@sympatico.ca

MAR. 14. **Monthly Dance – Beginners' Night.** At Crescent School.

MAR 15. **Sunday Miscellany.** See page 3.

MAR. 21. **West End Workshop/Tea Dance.** (Pg 3.)

Burns' Suppers

There are many Burns' Suppers in January, and dancers often either mount or participate in them. Book early - they usually sell out!



Burns Club of Toronto

JAN. 23. **A special night at the Granite Club** to honour Burns' 250th anniversary. Gourmet meal, entertainment, and ceilidh dancing to the 48th Highlanders. A fund-raiser for Scottish Studies. \$80. Contact Gordon Hepburn (905) 881-5780.

ST. ANDREW'S SOCIETY

JAN. 23. **Aboon Them A'** Celebrate the 250th Anniversary of Robert Burns' birth with the Highest Burns' Supper in the World. Not highest above sea level — there is probably a Burns' Supper in La Paz, Bolivia (3640 m above sea level!) but highest above the ground. This year's "Aboon them A'" Burns' Supper will be held in the Horizons Restaurant at the CN Tower, about 350 m up. Info at standrews-society.ca

Southern Ontario Kilt Society

JAN. 23. Celebrate the Bard with a traditional Burns' Supper at The Scottish Rite in Hamilton. Contact Glen: glenmallardyce@hotmail.com

ASTA Burns' Evening

JAN. 24. ASTA Burns' Evening is at a new location Brae Ben Golf Course, 5700 Terry Fox Way, Mississauga. Come out and be part of this elegant salute to Robert Burns! Entertainment includes John Cooper, John Middleton, RSCDS Demo Team, Joyce Kite Highland Dancers, Ceilidh with entertainment, dancing and much more. Tickets purchased early are \$44 per person; \$49 after January 5th. Call Maggie Shortt, 905-257-0941

Upcoming events: FAR

JAN. 30 – FEB. 1 **Ardbrae Ball,** Ottawa. Welcome Dance, January 30. Formal buffet and ball, January 31, at the Glebe Community Centre Ballroom, with Bobby Brown & The Scottish Accent. Brunch, February 1. Details and registration form: www.flora.org/ardbrae

FEB. 26 - MARCH 3. **RSCDS Winter School 2009,** Pitlochry. Info: Jill Petri at HQ, Scotland: jill.petri@rscds.org

MAR. 6-8. **Belleville Workshop and Ball** with Bobby Brown & The Scottish Accent. Teachers to be announced.

MAR. 20-22. **RSCDS Tokyo Branch 25th Anniversary Weekend** with Ball on Saturday. Venue: Hotel Kagetsu-en, Hakone spa area approx. 2hrs from Tokyo. Teachers: Alex and Kate Gray. Cost: Approximately \$400 Canadian for classes, ball, accommodation and meals. Contact: Mrs. Noriko Nishimoto, the Branch secretary at bonaccord24wood@kfybiglobe.ne.jp

MAR. 27-29. **Spring in Victoria. 33rd Annual VISCDS Workshop and Ball Weekend.** Teachers: Rebecca Blackhall-Peters (Langley) and Patrick Fly (Seattle). Musicians: Julie Smith (Trio) and Mary Ross. Registrar: Jill Leslie, 250-391-3908, jleslie@uoguelph.ca. www.viscnds.ca/springball.html

MAR. 28. **Blair Spring Ball,** Waterloo Regional Police Association Banquet Hall. Music: Bobby Brown & The Scottish Accent. Cost not yet known. Contact Liz Reckers, 193 Wedgewood Dr., Cambridge, N1S 4P7, reckers@sympatico.ca

APRIL 9-13. **Barcelona International Dance Competition for Dance Schools/Companies,** Spain. Info: <http://web.tiscali.it/barcawardance>

APRIL 24 - MAY 3, 2009. **Budapest & Vienna Branch Joint Jubilee Celebration.** A combo of touring and dancing. Teachers: Graham Donald and Susi Mayr. Musicians: Muriel Johnstone and Keith Smith. Info: www.rscdsvienna.org/jubilee2009 and/or www.bstkl.hu/bal2009

Demo Pool Practices

Sundays, 2-4 p.m. at Broadlands.
January 4, 11, March 1 and April 5.
The demo pool welcomes interested dancers. Contact Deirdre MacCuish Bark, 905-822-1707

Kilt for Sale

2 years old in excellent condition. Hand sewn in rare "Prince Charles Edward Stewart" tartan. Back is sewn "to stripe". Waist 34-36, length 23½. Will fit gentleman 5'7"-5'10". \$350 for Kilt. Option of matching fly plaid \$100. Call 416-483-1541



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