If you ask me

By Bettye Moss

Hats off!

This column satisfied its curiosity and made opening day at the White Marsh Mall, providing us an opportunity to see another young black employee doing a professional job.

It happened in Bamberger's, the N.Y.-based department store. As we entered, we spied the Estee Lauder counter. We had not planned to stop, only to browse.

But we were caught by the appearance of the young black Estee saleswoman and went back to watch her work.

She was vibrant, enthusiastic and appeared just as happy about the opening of the new shopping center, as though it was her own.

Because of her good salesmanship, we made a purchase of toilet water. Her "thank you, come again," made us forget the price.

We called later to get her name, learned she is Frederika Clay-Matthews.

Her supervisor, Kathi Williams, identified her as, "a brand new employee."

From this customer, Bamberger's can learn that this "brand new employee" has sales skills and is a real asset.

White Marsh

Just in case you missed the publicity which has flooded the Baltimore area, White Marsh is the $35 million dollar Rouse-owned development in Perry Hall in Baltimore County.

In addition to Bamberger's there are four other department stores, plus 190 restaurants and shops.

The opening day crowd was huge. The spacious parking lots were filled. People were everywhere.

There were mothers carrying unborn babies, mothers and mothers and fathers with infants and children in tow, some on their backs, others in carts.

There were gifts and favors at some of the stores. As usual, people pushed to get them.

It was like a carnival.

We passed one exclusive men's store where the sales people were standing at the door watching the crowd. One commented, "We don't expect to make any sales on the first day, but this crowd gives us hope of many sales in the future."

White Marsh is a beautiful shopping center. Like other Rouse Co. malls — Columbia and Mondawmin — the decor is attractive.

Cuff Note: If you're planning to shop in White Marsh, do wear comfortable shoes. There is plenty of space to walk.

We did not see many black employees, but then our visit was a short one. There were, however, a large number of black persons among the opening day visitors.

Pratt's Curry

In 1959, when Anna Anthony Curry joined the professional staff of the Enoch Pratt Free Library here in Baltimore, she was considered in her own words, "an oddity."

Last Friday, at 9:15 a.m., when James Gary, chairman of Pratt's Board of Trustees, called to tell her she was the "unanimous choice" of the body to become the library's chief executive, she was "overwhelmed."

In fact, Baltimore-born and bred Mrs. Curry told this writer, "at that point the ability to say something rational was beyond me . . . I had no optimism that I would be appointed."

In retrospect, however, Mrs. Curry modestly admits that she won out over 50 other top contenders "because I feel my competency made the difference."

She was referring to her administrative role in the No. 2 post for the past five years as assistant director, and the past six months as acting director, when she assumed in February when former director, Ernest Siegel, resigned.

During this period, she has won accolades for her innovative programs, and for her knowledge of the library's inner workings and the need to preserve its services at the same time keeping within budget restraints.

Pays $45,000

The new Pratt Library director is a native of East Baltimore, where her father, the late Alfonso Anthony, ran a barber shop at Gay and Bond Sts.

Her mother is Mrs. Clara Alston, who resides with the Curry family on Dorchester Rd. Mrs. Curry's husband, Anthony, is a Social Security employee. Their daughter, Antonia, 16, last week, is a City College student.

Mrs. Curry is a graduate of Dunbar High School, Morgan State University, class of 1954. She earned her master's degree in 1959, in library science at Atlanta University, joining the Pratt staff the same year.

She will earn $45,000 a year, supervise a staff of over 500 employees and administer a budget of $15 million, some $5 million from the state which has designated the Pratt as Maryland's library resource center. Balance is from city funds.

Cuff Note: Mrs. Curry is a warm person, very articulate and confident, a reporter's dream to talk to.

Pratt's Kerr

Mrs. Curry was not quite 10 years old and was attending elementary school when Pratt Library hit AFRO headlines in 1944.

There was much excitement in our newsroom as we recorded the historic court action. AFRO's late publisher, Carl Murphy, NAACP late president, Dr. Lillie M. Jackson, and other NAACP leaders decided to file suit in federal court to open Pratt Library jobs to all citizens.

The plaintiff was Louise Kerr, (now Mrs. Morsell Hines), daughter of Dr. T. Henderson Kerr, now 93, and the late Mrs. Geneva Lyles Kerr.

In 1943, the then Miss Kerr had asnswered a Pratt ad for library trainees and was refused admission. The NAACP employed top legal counsel, Baltimore's late W. A. C. Hughes Jr., and nationally known lawyer, the late Dr. Charles H. Houston.

Their petition sought $4,500 in damages on behalf of Miss Kerr and her parents for denial of equal rights. Defendants were Mayor Theodore McKeldin and members of the City Council and the Pratt trustees.

In March, 1944, U.S. District Judge W. Calvin Chesnut ruled Pratt trustees were right in refusing Kerr admission, concluding that the library "in the selection and appointment of its employees was acting as a private corporation and not as a governmental agency."

Judge Soper

Undaunted, the NAACP appealed this ruling to the 4th Circuit Court of Appeals, sitting in Richmond.

In 1944, Judge Morris A. Soper, speaking for the court, overturned the Chesnut decision, ruling that Pratt must admit all.

The then city attorneys, Allen Davis and Harry Baetier, appealed this ruling to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Oct. 13, 1945 headlines in this newspaper reported that the nation's highest court had refused to review the Soper ruling, a victory for the NAACP. The library classes must admit all.

But, entry of black applicants did not come swiftly. (We were referred to as "colored" then).

Pratt abandoned its training class for a period, rather than conform to the court ruling. Later, more reasonable heads prevailed and our girls were employed. The first, all with degrees in library science, were Iona Wood Collins, Thelma Thomas Bell and Alma Bell Gray. The latter became head librarian at the colored branch located on Pitcher St.

Louise Kerr, (now Hines) never reapplied for a job at Pratt Library.

During the three-year court battle to admit us to Pratt jobs, she worked on the Baltimore AFRO City Desk as a reporter. (These were war years when the desk was all females — Ruth Jenkins, Maethelda Morris, Frankie Murphy, et al. The men were at war.)

Later, Kerr-Hines taught schoool, and in 1978, retired after 27 years with the Md. Department of Human Resources.

We called her to get her reaction to the appointment of Mrs. Curry as Pratt's first black director.

She said she was happy to see it happen in her lifetime and wished the new director well.

Gets Even

Today, Kerr-Hines keeps busy as a volunteer. She is a Md. Historical Society Tour Guide.

Included in the trip is a visit to the Monument St. home of the Baltimore philanthropist, Enoch Pratt for whom the library is named, and who gave the money to establish the library.

Kerr-Hines relates that every time she passes the Pratt portrait, she winks at it and says, "Well, here I am again, Eeny." The next time, she says, she'll give an extra wink for Anna Curry."

Cuff notes: Dr. Kerr, co-plaintiff with his daughter, is also pleased about the decision.

He is the same Dr. Kerr, who was a practicing pharmacist at Myrtle Ave., and George St., for 50 years. He closed his drugstore in 1960 to make way for the George Murphy Homes.

Trustees

More cuff: Pratt trustees at the time of the NAACP suit included: Thomas F. Cullen, Henry Stockridge 3rd, Blanchard Randall Jr., William J. Casey, Albert D. Hutzler, Robert W. Williams, Henry Duffie, Joseph L. Wheeler was library director.

On the 1981 board which selected the first black executive are three black citizens. They are: Dr. Andrew Billingsley, Dr. Harriet Trader and Kenneth O. Wilson, the latter two served on the search committee.

Other current board members: C. Keating Bowie, Lou Azrael, Henry H. Callard, E. Stephen Derby, M. Albert Siginski, Michael J. Kelly, M. Elizabeth Plant-King, Greg Lewis, Decatur Miller, vice president; Marvin Millspaugh, Stephen H. Sachs. James A. Garry 3rd is president of the board. Bowie is president-emeritus.

Cuff note: Many members of the 1981 board are well known for their leadership roles in our community.

All of them deserve commendation for picking the best person available for their new director.

Cuff note: The Soper Library at Morgan State University honors the memory of Judge Soper, who gave the favorable ruling in this Pratt Library case, as well as in a number of other civil rights proceedings. He also served with distinction as member and chairman of the old Morgan College board of trustees.

The Jennifers

Ruth Jennifer, who had been here in Baltimore area for the past week, was very much entertained by old friends. She left Sunday for a bridge tournament in Ohio and afterwards to return to her home in California. While here, she guested with Stevie Harris.

Main reason for ther trip East was to attend the August 1 wedding of her youngest son, Clinton Jennifer. He exchanged vows with Sheila Plummer at La Boure Catholic Church in Wheaton, Md.

The bride, a 1981 magna cum laude graduate of Morgan State University, is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Garrett Plummer (Shirley), of Wheaton.

The bridegroom is also the son of Harold J. Jennifer Jr., of Annapolis. He is a graduate of Bowie State and Springfield College.

(Whew! - it seems only yesterday that the Jennifer family lived in the 2000 block Bentalou St., and we watched them grow up).

Recently

In attendance at the wedding, the bridegroom's grandpop, Harold Jennifer Sr., of Bladensburg, Md.

Following the ceremony, the bride's parents hosted a reception at the Rockville Civic Center. In attendance a number of his brothers in Iota Phi Beta, and Baltimore friends of the young couple, including the Cliche Combo, which provided entertainment.

Cuff note: The bridegroom is aquatics director at Baltimore's Druid Hill YMCA. This is the same position his father held when he came to Baltimore over 20 years ago, fresh out of Springfield College. Remember?

Other Jennifer offspring is Harold 3rd (Sonny), employed by a Mondawmin business firm.

More people

Maryland members of the National Association of Real Estate Brokers are in from Freeport in the Bahamas.

Some 40 states were in attendance at the sessions held at the Prince Hotel.

Maryland president Dan Spaulding was there. Also chairman of the board, Michael Cassell.

Other Marylanders there: George Carroll, Joy Pinder Sacage, Lenny Peoples, Buckley Savage, Denise Deleacher, Mildred Hawkins, Faye Marcin, Gloria Tucker, Mark Brown, Edith Whitmore, Edna Myers, Barbara Johnson and Gwen Singletary.

A large delegation of Baltimore lawyers and judges was in Chicago a week back for the National Bar Association Convention.

Dr. Scott W. Williams, who left recently for Europe to speak at the NATO Conference, has Baltimore ties.

He is the son of Morgan's Dr. and Mrs. Roger K. Williams, (Dr. Beryl).

A product of the Baltimore Public Schools and Morgan State University, he earned his Master's degree and Doctorate at Lehigh University. This year, Dr. Williams is on leave from the Institute for Medicine and Mathematics at Ohio University. He resides with his wife Karen and daughters Rachael and Rebecca. The Baltimorean is also a member of the faculty of the University of Buffalo.

People being kind to people - The Ushers of St. Mark's United Methodist Church in Hanover, Maryland, will honor three of their own for a total of 101 years of service to the usher's board.

They are Edna Burley, 31 years; Celestine Nicholson, 35 years: and Raymond Nicholson, 35 years. For past 25 years, Mr. Nicholson has served as president of the board.

An appreciation banquet will be held 7:30 p.m., August 22nd, at the Empire Towers in Glen Burnie, Maryland.

Miss Virgie

When we were growing up, there was no such thing as a permanent or natural, and going to the hairdresser's was an ordeal for many, especially those who did not have "blow" hair.

It meant suffering through the shampooing and combing out of tangles (knots), particularly if your hair was coarse and thick.

In those pre - teen years, the hairdresser was not only a technician but a friend.

Mrs. Virgie Waters owned and operated a comfortable shop on Cumberland St., in west Baltimore. She was then first of her race to be named to the State Board of Cosmetologists. For 14 years she served as president of the Maryland State Beauty Culturists Assoc.

Every Saturday, or at least every 10 days the five girls in our family were there to "get your hair done." The shop, located in the basement (we call them club rooms mow), was full of laughter, fun and goodies. Mr. Waters (Willie), a postal employee by trade, was handy in fixing things, so that his wife's hair dressing shop was comfortable.

If you're old enough to remember going to Miss Virgie's to get your hair done, you can learn here that you're getting older.

Mrs. Virgie Waters died June 24 at the age of 90. She was an able beautician, a food friend and neighbor.

It is good that the community gave her her flowers while she was active and could enjoy them.

At a retirement dinner in her honor in 1961, she was recognized for her promotion of good will and understanding.

Miss Virgie Waters was truly a grand lady.

She was the oldest living member of the Advisory Board of Advance Federal Savings and Loan Association, investing her savings in the institution in its early years.

PRATT LIBRARY in Baltimore refused to hire black librarians when this 1944 photo was made. Second from right, Louise Kerr Hines, plaintiff in NAACP suit, which opened jobs for blacks after three-year court battle which went all the way to Supreme Court. From left, Dr. T. Henderson Kerr and the late Mrs. Kerr, parents of the plaintiff; and the late Charles H. Houston and W. A. C. Hughes, Jr., NAACP attorneys. For more on this historic case and last week's appointment of the first black head of the library, Mrs. Anna A. Curry, see "If You Ask Me" on this page.

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SUNDAY, AUGUST 23, 1981
Deacon & Deaconess Day

8:00 A.M. Early Morning Worship Sermon Rev. Theodore Fickling Associate Minister

9:15 A.M. Church School New Members Class
10:30 A.M. Open Heart Service
11:00 A.M. Morning Worship Sermon Rev. Arthur J. Benns Pastor of Mt. Moriah Baptist Church

REV. RICHARD OGLE Pastor

ST. JAMES' EPISCOPAL CHURCH
Lafayette Square, Baltimore, Maryland
The Reverend Donald O. Wilson, Rector
The Rev. Hugh R. Page, Jr., Assistant
Dr. Robert T. Ford, Deacon
Maurice Murphy, organist Choirmaster
8:00 A.M. Holy Communion
10:00 A.M. Choral Eucharist Sermon
The Public is Cordially Invited To Attend

DOUGLAS COMMUNITY CHURCH
"The People of the Way"
Lafayette and Madison Aves
MARION CURTIS BASCOM
D.D. Minister
James S. Hammond, M. Mus.
JUANITA HALL DAVIS
Organist

Sunday, August 23, 1981

Eight and Eleven O'Clock

"On Getting Jesus Out of The Holy Land"

Marion C. Bascom, preaching

8:00
I Will Arise
Shaw-Parker, arr.
Holy Bible
John Work, III, arr.
11:00 - Gloria (from "Twelfth Mass")
W. A. Mozart
I'll Never Turn Back, No More
R. Nathaniel Dett

SHOWTIME

O'Donel Levy, Larry Woodie going places, doing things!

By Ida Peters

Some fantastic things have happened to O'Donel Levy since we did our in depth interview last February. He's appearing every Friday and Saturday during August at Gatsby's and every Sunday at the Sportsmen's Lounge.

He has been doing some traveling and working hard. His production company (I Love Music) ILM has been putting packages together for local artists and groups including David Lightner and Birds of Harmony.

In June, his group played in the Summer Pier Festival in New York and they were so highly polished they were invited back in July. The Summer Pier Festival in New York is like the Pier 6 concerts in Baltimore and are held on New York's river front.

He rests on Mondays and Thursdays and teaches professional guitar on Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

He had a club date in Birmingham, Ala. in May and he created so much excitement that the University of Alabama featured him on a three month TV special "On Target".

Yvonne Lamb, Director of Community Relations sent the following letter to Mayor William Donald Schaefer:

Dear Mayor Schaefer:

University of Alabama Television Services was fortunate recently to feature an extraordinarily talented young musician from your city, O'Donel Levy. In their performance on our statewide television show, "On Target", Mr. Levy and the group (also from Baltimore) showed such versatility and mastery of musical interpretation that our audience response was tremendous. We are constantly seeking talent of his calibre, talent which is, indeed, rare.

Baltimore should be very proud of his "native son" for both the mastery of this art form and for his dedication to the idea of sharing beauty and love through music.

University Television Services thanks Mr. Levy for adding such an inspiring dimension to our program. We hope that you will continue your support of these innovative musicians.

Yvonne Lamb, Director of Community Relations, Producer - Director "On Target.

Larry Woody, a native Baltimorean remembered for his role of Tony in Arena Players' "The Boyfriends" and for "Streamers" and "Count Dracula" with the Baltimore Theatre Company, has recently written a play and appeared in the movie "Blow-Out".

When you see the movie starring John Travolta, look for Larry Woodie. He plays the West Indian doctor and has six lines to say.

O'Donel Levy at Gatsby's.

Larry Woodie has written new play

He went into the movie as an extra and Brian DePalma upgraded him to a Day Player and gave him six lines right on the set.

The action is in a hospital examining room and Travolta has just rescued a woman trapped underwater.

Travolta says "Doc how is she?" and Woodie answers:

"Very lucky, mild shock, some cuts and bruises but no major injuries".

Woodie has written a play "Rock-A-Way, a rock drama to be performed at Columbia University for their Drama Department. He is working with Susan Watson who is getting her Masters in Theatre. He will play the title role and has written three songs. He will also play the guitar in the play which is about a Jimi Hendrix like character.

— —

Tonight (Friday) Odetta at Pier 6 in the Harbor Lights Festival downtown. Kool and the Gang at Merriweather Post, Saturday, August 22. The Jacksons are back at the Capital Center in D.C. also Saturday, Aug. 22.

'Alive at Left Bank'

"Alive at Left Bank", a colorful look at Baltimore's significant contribution to American jazz through the Left Bank Jazz Society will be Saturday, Aug. 22, 7:30 p.m. on WBAL-TV.

The program will examine, historically and currently Baltimore's place in the jazz world and discover how the Left Bank Jazz Society has maintained and supported this musical artform.

Included in the program are performances by jazz notables Reggie Workman & Top Shelf and the Woody Shaw Quintet. "Alive At Left Bank" also offers a look at the unique atmosphere of the Famous Ballroom, the Society's Baltimore headquarters, where for 15 years its has brought the legends of jazz to our city.

The program will also take a look at the Left Bank's branch chapter located the in the Maryland State Penitentiary and the Society's highly regarded radio show.

Pat Lawson of WBAL-TV's Action News Team is the program's narrator. "Alive At Left Bank" was written by Jeff Rathner.

Claudette Colbert, Jean Pierre Aumont in comedy-thriller at Kennedy Center

The legendary Claudette Colbert will star in "A Talent For Murder", a new mystery-comedy-thriler by Jerome Chodorov and Norman Panama, which will have its premiere at the Eisenhower Theatre of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts August 31 playing through September 19. The opening night is Tuesday, September 1, at 7:30 p.m. The production, in its pre - Broadway engagement, co-stars international star Jean-Pierre Aumont.

"A Talent For Murder" is directed by Paul Aaron, with sets by Oliver Smith and lighting by Ken Billington. Miss Colbert's costumes are designed by Bill Blass. This is the first time Mr. Blass has designed for the stage.

Miss Colbert, one of the few great film stars who has been equally successful and popular on the stage, will play Anne Royce McClain, a prolific and best-selling mystery writer with a notorious private life and a multi-million dollar art collection.

Although still identified with her Academy Award winning role as the scatter-brained heiress opposite Clark Gable in the classic "It Happened One Night", Miss Colbert made over sixty films, including such memorable ones as the DeMille epics "Cleopatra" and "Sign of the Cross", "Since You Went Away", "Imitation of Life", "Boom Town", "Palm Beach Story" and "The Egg and I". Her last Broadway appearance was opposite Rex Harrison and George Rose in the comedy hit "The Kingfisher".

Jean-Pierre Aumont, who will play Miss Colbert's doctor and former lover, has also had a long and successful career as a romantic leading man on film and stage, both in Europe and America, where he is fondly remembered particularly for his performances in the classic MGM musical "Lily", and in the Broadway musical hit "Tovarich", opposite Vivien Leigh.

Lafayette Square fashion show

The latest styles in casual, sports, back-to-school, and evening wear will be on view Wed., Aug. 26, at 6:30 p.m. when the Pratt library's Lafayette Square Center, 1510 W. Lafayette Ave., presents "A Fall Fashion Affair".

Admission to the fashion show will be free, with seating available on a first-come, first-served basis. For further information, call 728-6332.

More AFRO 89th Birthday

The Conquistador Caballeros Drum and Bugle Corps in red and black has a good swinging line at AFRO's 89th Birthday at War Memorial Plaza.

Carrying the banner for the Conquistador Caballeros Drum and Bugle Corp at AFRO parade, these youngsters held the full attention of the crowd. They are directed by Herb Skinner.

City Council Vice-President Clarence 'Du' Burns extends greetings at AFRO's 89th Birthday Party at War Memorial Plaza last week.

Miss Kimberly Ann Brooks, Miss Talented Teen International presents AFRO Birthday Flowers to Rev. Eleanor Powell, for 22 years of service to AFRO Clean Block. In rear, Mrs. Mary Sue Johnson, 18 years.

Lead singer of Baltimore's "First Class," Harold Bell signs autographs

Photo by Mark Gail

for admirers at AFRO's 89th Birthday 47th Annual Clean Block Celebration.

Ms. Mereida Goodman, Housing and Community Development, representing M. Jay Brodie is congratulated by Mrs. Ida Peters for her help with the 47th Annual AFRO Campaign.

Photo by Roman Hankewycz

Winners Marching Band Contest

Winners in the AFRO's 89th Birthday Parade Marching Band contest will be presented their AFRO-KOOL cash awards and trophies at the AFRO Clean Block 47th Awards Ceremony, Sunday, August 30, 2 p.m. at the Prince Hall Masonic Temple, 1307 Eutaw Place.

First place winner of $50 and a trophy is the Marquis Drum and Bugle Corps.

Second place winner of $35 and a trophy is the Jackson Steppers.

Others who will win $25 and trophies are St. James Majorettes; Cherryettes, St. James' Teen Marching Band; Immaculate Conception Vickings Conquistador Caballeros and Paradise.

Afro Clean Block workers from the 2500 blk. Garrett Avenue represented their block in the Birthday Parade.

Night Scene Seen

By Bob Matthews

Went to a special preview of the documentary about the Left Bank Jazz Society that will be aired tomorrow (Saturday) at 7 p.m.

The taping went on during the early part of the year, when the featured artists were the Reggie Workman Quintet, and the Woody Shaw quintet.

The piece delineates the various activities of LBJS, and gives a pretty good look to the Sunday afternoon sets, complete with the food available and cutaway shots of the audience.

Of course, Benny Kearse and James Murray, plus Leon Manker of the LBJS get a chance to expound on the background and significance of the society.

And, both Reggie and Woody give the musician's viewpoint, which in essence is laudatory to the Balimore jazz society. They indicate that musicians around the world look forward to playing gigs in our town.

Our only carping criticism is the segment, following the midpoint commercial, of activities of the LBJS branch at the Md. State Pen. Shown is a bit of a "gong show" performance, which seems out of context for a purported jazz show.

Pat Lawson of the TV-11 staff does the narration, and puts in a credible job. Both the opening and closing feature local musician Mickey Fields blowing solo on his tenor.

'Tis a worthwhile venture, and we hope LBJS acquires a tape cassette of the program to preserve for future generations.

— —

Got over to the 20 Grand Club for the benefit session for Jimhi Johnsun, and it was a whopping success.

Best of all, they raised $1,200 cash to present to Jimhi, as almost every local musician showed up to donate his artistry to the cause.

Ruby Glover emceed the proceedings and guitarist Eddie Harrison videotaped the entire session, so that Jimhi would be able to see the tribute, although health reasons prevented his attending.

Asked several auditors what they considered the high point of the evening, and the answer came back unanimously, the set done by Lady Rebecca, which was really a show stopper.

Other accolades were reserved for the "house" band, led by drummer Harold White, and the parade of artists who donated their performances reads like a who's who in Baltimore jazz.

Won't attempt to list them for fear of overlooking someone, and everyone deserves a sound round of applause—let us be the first.

— —

Have been intending to give a listen to the reggae group Might Invaders, and this weekend just might give me the chance, for they are headlining at The Ritz Friday and Saturday nights.

Also on the bill is Determination, another group composed of Caribbean natives, who specialize in that Jamaican sound. It should be a complete gas.

— —

Everything can't always be sweetness and light, so scanned the latest hearings list from the Baltimore Liquor Board which met last week, and noted that Roots was scheduled to appear to answer a charge of not cooperating with the police department.

Only word from the board is that the case was postponed, with no new hearing date set.

Two liquor facilities on Laurens St., Carter's Cut Rate in the 1300 block was closed for one day because of a health department violation.

The Busy Bee Restaurant at 1505 Laurens St. received a three-day suspension for health department violations with the stipulation that they cannot reopen without the health department's say so. Also, they received a 2-day suspension for failure to cooperate with the health department.

A
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G