

Flamingo Resort Report

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*****Hotels / Timeshares Special Edition*****

Vol. 2, #1147 --- Monday, April 9, 2018
News From St. Maarten / St. Martin



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St. Maarten & St. Martin "SXM" Weekly News

*St. Maarten & St. Martin's Most Relied-Upon Source
of Tourist-Oriented News & Information*

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From: www.jmbcommunications.com

Weekly News is part of JMB's St. Maarten / St. Martin website: www.everythingsxm.com

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IMPORTANT: "Jeff1620" is an unmonitored send-only email address. For Contact info, see [#Contact Us](#) at the end of this newsletter.

Important Note:

This is Jeff Berger's / JMB Communications' **St. Maarten & St. Martin / SXM Weekly News**, published every Monday (Tuesdays during most holiday weeks). **You are receiving St. Maarten & St. Martin "SXM" Weekly News because you subscribed to it and/or are a JMB Website Supporters member. Unsubscribe info is at the end of this newsletter. Stay with us for all the latest tourist-oriented news from St. Maarten / St. Martin / SXM all year long. Now read by more than 300,000 people around the world...**

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This narrow format is easily readable on all mobile devices. Scroll down for this week's news.

You can also download PDFs of recent editions here:

http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/free_newsletters/sxmweeklynews.shtml

On that page, the link beginning with the highest number is the most recent edition.

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TOP STORIES IN THIS ISSUE

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-- The Future of the Westin St. Maarten

-- Latest on Sonesta Maho Rebuilding

-- Alegria Owner Ray Sidhom Loses Again

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Timeshare Rental and Sale of the Week

Each week JMB randomly picks timeshare condominiums for rent and for sale in SXM from the huge selection at http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/timeshare_rent_sale/index.shtml and features them here.

To rent out or sell timeshares you own in SXM or anywhere else worldwide, for no ad charge or commission, join JMB Website Supporters. Visit http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/about_sxm/paypal.shtml for info. Membership now delivers a growing list of about 300 St. Maarten and St. Martin-focused travel benefits -- and your membership subscription helps keep these weekly SXM newsletters coming.

SXM Timeshare Rental of The Week:

RENTAL 5/20/2018 6/3/2018 Week 20 and 21 Simpson Bay Resort & Marina One bedroom deluxe unit in Marina Building. Very convenient to restaurants, pool and boat trip docks. \$1,200 per week. Steven 610-862-7850 smayer@msmpc.com

SXM Timeshare Sale of The Week:

SALE 1/19/2018 1/26/2018 Week 3 Royal Palm Beach Resort Oceanfront - Two Bedroom/two bath condo with oceanfront terrace. 4th floor away from the noisy pool area and bridge. King size beds with flat screens plus sofa bed and flat screen in living room Sleeps 6. Oceanfront and see the bay from the second bedroom Renovated bathroom and kitchen set up for eating in and cooking. Gym, free wifi, restaurant, shopping on the property. A short walk to the bigger market and many restaurants. We own this week, not points so you are guaranteed to get Week 3 at Royal Palm every year or you can use your 7.000 points and swap it to go somewhere else for a vacation but you own the week. This is the best of all worlds. \$3,500.00 Jane 203-733-2272 yessinj@gmail.com

Non-St. Maarten Timeshare Rentals:

See them all at http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/timeshare_rent_sale/index.shtml

Villa Rentals Now Offered On Our Site Too:

St. Maarten / St. Martin Homes, Villas, Businesses, Commercial Properties, and Residential Properties for Sale (NEW): [Click to access our recommended real estate agents](#)

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Stories are numbered; scroll down for stories of interest. This week's Table of Contents follows these links:

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<https://www.facebook.com/groups/6297726366/>

"Like" Our Facebook St. Maarten Timesharing Group

<https://www.facebook.com/StMaartenTimesharing/>

Search the **SXM Weekly News** Archives:

Current Archives (Since 4/2014) in PDF Format:

http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/free_newsletters/sxmweeklynews.shtml

Archives prior to April 12 2014 (old format):

<http://everythingxsm.com/cgi-bin/dada/mail.cgi?flavor=archive:list=sxmweeklynews>

Check Out Our Linked-In "St. Maarten and St. Martin Travelers" Group (Free; Timeshare Focus):

www.linkedin.com

Get a growing group of about 300 SXM-focused island discounts and other SXM-related benefits through JMB Website Supporters membership:

http://www.everythingsxm.com/sxm/about_sxm/paypal.shtml

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How To Get a *GROWING LIST of 300+* Money-Saving St. Maarten- and St. Martin-Focused Travel Benefits

Visit <http://www.everythingsxm.com/secret> , the *secret* site for JMB Website Supporters members only, for low fares to SXM from cities across the USA, Canada, and Western Europe, plus a growing list of 300+ additional major travel benefits.

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All JMB Newsletters Read *From JMB*

This newsletter and mail from JMB Website Supporters to members read *From JMB* in the subject area so you won't misinterpret them as spam.

THIS WEEK'S STORIES:

Stories are numbered; scroll down for stories of interest.

SECTION 1: Getting There: Flights, Airlines, Airports, Cruises, & Weather

1. Updated 2018 Hurricane Forecasts Agree to Disagree...

One after another last week, April revisions of 2018 hurricane season forecasts were trotted out by Accuweather, Crown Weather Services, and Colorado State University.

Originally, most expectations from these three services anticipated a hurricane season this year that was as bad or worse than last year — but that appears no longer to be the case.

That's the good news.

The bad news is that forecasters seem to agree that there is an increased likelihood of US impacts by some 2018 storms, because of anticipated changes in weather patterns.

There's another factor at play here. *It's that the climate is transitioning from a La Niña pattern to an El Niño pattern.* How fast that happens will have an impact on this hurricane season. Colorado State forecasters said it's rather early to know what's going to happen; they said they'll have revisions in June, at which time there will be a much better idea of where this season will be going.

If an El Niño develops earlier than expected, hurricane season will be more benign than currently expected. But if the transition from last year's La Niña condition to a neutral condition moves more slowly than anticipated, the season could be stormier. The speed of the transition means everything to how hurricane season 2018 turns out.

Rob Lightbown of Crown Weather Services has graciously enabled us to offer his complete 2018 hurricane forecast to all our readers; normally, it is distributed only to his subscribers. You can find it as a PDF through a link being posted today (Monday) on our [Everything SXM Facebook Site](#). Or just go directly to it, [here](#).

2. So, What Are Your Hurricane Action Items?

Depending on how things shake out during the forthcoming hurricane season (normal activity or above average activity), the entire US coastline from Texas to Maine could be a target area for 2018 hurricanes -- more so than usual. If you live anywhere near the coast — anywhere that hurricanes have ever affected — you need a hurricane plan to make it through any approaching storm. And you need ample warning about approaching storms.

Preparedness, "Ready.gov" contains superb information showing how to prepare for storms long before they might happen. See it [here](#).

Warnings. Subscribe to Rob Lightbown's private weather subscription service (it's not expensive) and get the same forecasting details we receive in our newsroom. If you're in an area that ever gets hurricanes, this is the real deal. See [crownweather.com](#).

Official Watches, Warnings, Forecasts, Radar, and Satellite Images: Click "Weather" on our site, [everythingxsm.com](#), to see it all.

3. Fares Continue Heading Down

Many people are already hard at work making reservations for high season 2019, which begins late this year and extends into April of next year. What they're finding is that fares that have been announced for most of that time are low — in many cases lower than they may have expected.

Fares in the immediate future, especially on American Airlines, remain ridiculously high, a point that apparently was made diplomatically but clearly in recent talks between island representatives and the airline. We expect airfares to moderate in the next couple of months: the sooner the better. We already have reported that AA's Charlotte nonstop flights will be resuming and that their overnight flight from Miami will be returning, enabling an early morning take off from SXM back to the US in time for one-day connections home across the country.

Nonstops on AA from both Charlotte and Philadelphia will be resuming late in August as of now, AA has told us. Our hope is they switch that to June, which would make far more sense. It would be good for the island and good for American.

Meanwhile, JetBlue continues to offer flights seven days a week from New York at reasonable prices. We don't know whether their seasonal nonstops from Boston will return in the short term; they are usually available until the beginning of June, roughly. Boston still offers St. Maarten service via daily connections at JFK.

4. Major Airport Answers Due

We've been in touch with senior officials involved with airport operations and direction, and we hope to have final answers to a number of questions posed to them recently. We have some of that information now and we plan to run a feature here as soon as we have all of it.

Here's a rundown of some of the things we expect to be able to tell you....

The questions concern when the main passenger terminal will actually be reopening; whether the temporary arrival and departure terminals can withstand hurricane force winds — and if so, how; if and when passengers might expect preclearance to be introduced in SXM; when normal airline schedules and pricing may be reintroduced; when Southwest Airlines may start its service to SXM; and more.

Once we have all their answers, we'll publish them in the following edition of *SXM Weekly News* — hopefully next Monday.

5. Heading Back To The Ship? Allow Extra Time

Despite the fact that only a moderate number of tourists are currently on the island, traffic near the cruise ship terminal and in Simpson Bay now is running more slowly than usual thanks to some cables being buried underground, part of a continuing process across the island to mitigate power outages after storms. So if you're headed back to your ship — or back to a very important date in Simpson Bay late in the afternoon, allow plenty of extra time and leave early. Being an hour early for departing ship is far better than being 30 seconds late.

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+++ Anniversary Sale +++

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JMB Membership Reinstatements:
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<http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/reinstate/index.shtml>

In Addition To Those 300 Discounts
& Other Benefits,
Your JMB Membership
helps keep

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6. Current SXM Weather Info

You'll find detailed observations and forecasts by visiting our main SXM website, www.everythingsxm.com, and clicking either of the weather observations at the top of the page.

The four sources of current weather info, beyond the two above, are:

- 1) [Crown Weather Services](#) whose very inexpensive subscription service is, we feel, the best in the business.
- 2) Our "Weather" page at www.everythingsxm.com -- it has current satellite images and radar loops and now all the latest NHC weather forecasts, outlooks, and advisories as well. There are now also active weather widgets on the site's home page.
- 3) Our [Everything SXM Facebook Site](#), which publishes the latest advisories, watches, and warnings when SXM is threatened by any storms.
- 4) On or off the island, listen to Island 92 -- 91.9FM or see www.island92.com. They report island warnings at once and know exactly what's going on. You can listen on the web anytime through live streaming. They were knocked off the air by Irma but are now back.

Get a quick, current satellite look at the Atlantic basin anytime: <http://www.goes.noaa.gov/GIFS/ATWV.JPG> .

N. B.: *Again...Never rely on any website if you're in the path of a storm; always heed warnings from local authorities.*

7. ***Guaranteed Lowest Rates*** for Hotel Rooms & Car Rentals ***Around The World***

SkyMed Travel offers you a 110% Lowest Rate Guarantee for both hotel and car rental reservations worldwide. You can't lose with this, so read this article, sign up free and make your travel reservations directly through *SkyMed Travel*.

What it Is - How to Join (free for Our Readers & JMB Members):

We're now giving JMB Website Supporters members and *SXM Weekly News* readers access to a private, "members only" travel wholesale club that offers incredible prices not only on airfares but on travel reservations and packages worldwide.

The SkyMed Travel Club offers exceptional pricing on everything and almost invariably beats everyone else's pricing. We have found their pricing excellent across the board and their 110% low rate guarantee on hotels and car rentals is real news.

Normally, SkyMed Travel charges \$99 to join plus \$99 annual renewals. But for our JMB Website Supporters members and now for **Weekly News** readers, the cost to join is zero as will be the cost for renewals. Join the Club by going to <https://www.skymedtravel.com/register>, sign up, and provide the requested information. Complete the first sign up item (SkyMed Membership Number or Representative ID) by entering the code 391330 — doing that ensures that you pay nothing for your SkyMed Travel Club membership. No code, no free entry to the club's phenomenal pricing. **If you are a SkyMed Member, however, enter your SkyMed Membership Number here to get the absolute greatest possible discounts.**

You won't be disappointed.

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SECTION 2: Accommodations: Hotels, Resorts, Timeshares, Villas Etc.

8. The Future of the Westin St. Maarten

We spoke last week with someone intimately involved in decision-making for the expected rebuilding of both the Dawn Beach Club and the Westin Resort on Dawn beach. Our source spoke on condition of anonymity, both in response to a number of rumors floating around the island about the future of the Westin and what happens next. Here are his comments:

"We will shortly begin rebuilding Dawn Beach Club for a reopening in April, 2019.

"As for the Westin hotel, there are lots of moving parts to the decision. However, we expect to know more in a month or so about the future of the hotel itself. There had been rumors about a Marriott rebranding, for example; those rumors are due to Marriott purchasing the Starwood brand last year. *Private owners can continue to fly a Westin flag even though Westin is one of many brands now falling under the Marriott brand.*

"I am in constant contact with our teams. None of our workers is disseminating false information. Rumors are stemming from elsewhere and should be ignored. As soon as everything is settled we will have a formal announcement."

As always, *SXM Weekly News* will keep you posted. Help us continue to keep you informed. Please join JMB Website Supporters; read all about it after story #5 in this issue.

9. Latest on Sonesta Maho Rebuilding

After a great deal of work had been carried out behind the scenes over the last few months, the owners of the Maho group this week issued the following statement concerning the future of the Sonesta Maho:

"We understand that it's been several months since we've updated you, yet the arduous task of our rebuild planning is a long and emotional one. The good news is that we have been busy!

"As is the norm in today's online world, many photos have been circulating which you've likely seen, yet we didn't want to post anything without a proper update. The past three months were dedicated to clearing debris, removing damaged portions of our buildings with the aim of stripping the Sky Tower (the main hotel building at Sonesta Maho) down to its bare structure, which is the first step in any total rebuild like the one we have planned. So if you've seen the "skeleton" building photos out there of Sonesta Maho's Sky Tower, this is intentional and something we carried out with our construction team.

"Now that this has been completed, we are building!

"We are excited to share with you our first renderings of the new looks of Sonesta Maho Beach Resort, Casino & Spa and Sonesta Ocean Point Resort. While keeping the heritage of the buildings, our architectural and design team have re-imagined the hotels in an entirely new, contemporary way. We will continue to share renderings with you here on social media as they become available. The new Maho is going to be incredible and we can't wait to have you experience it.

"Many of you have continued to ask about the incredible team of employees we have at our hotels, and this means a great deal to us. Well, we have more good news to share. Employees of the Maho Group have been enrolled in Hospitality First, an initiative developed by Sint Maarten Training Foundation (SMTF), an independent, non-profit organization created in December 2017, where they are earning wages while expanding their hospitality education. Recognizing the urgent need to provide a social safety net to employees of the hospitality industry who risked losing their jobs due to the closure of the resorts in the aftermath of Hurricane Irma, as there are no unemployment benefits in Dutch St. Maarten, SMTF was established by a group of concerned business executives, including representatives of the Maho Group, Sunwing Group, Price Waterhouse Cooper and Lexwell Attorneys, with the immediate task to activate the island's first hospitality training program for professionals. The founders initially contributed to its startup fund to cover operating costs and student stipends. Government funding has since been granted.

"Also, while the incredible GoFundMe campaign funds have been distributed, the fundraiser is still live, so if you wish to donate, you can: www.gofundme.com/sonestasxmstaff

"While we don't have a re-opening at this time, we do anticipate that within a short period we will have more details and announce our re-opening dates, as well as open for online reservations with a great pre-opening promotion.

"Finally, thank you so much for all of your loyalty, patience and support. Every email, phone call, post, message and thought means the world to each and every one of us. With your support we are coming back 'Stronger and Brand New.'"

A slide show of the "new Maho" was posted early Saturday on our [Everything SXM Facebook Site](#).

10. Does Sunwing Want Out of Its Great Bay Purchase?

Last year, Canadian airline Sunwing purchased the Sonesta Great Bay resort from its operators, the Maho group.

There has been no discernible work at that property, nor have there been any announcements made about its future by Sunwing. Repeated calls to Sunwing headquarters in Canada late last week drew no response, even though one of the calls was to the office of Sunwing's president.

If the Great Bay Beach Resort is to be rebuilt, that process should begin shortly. It strikes us as strange that the airline would not choose to refute this rumor if it is in fact untrue. Perhaps the extent of the damage to Great Bay was unexpected by Sunwing; perhaps it feels that it did not have adequate information at the time of the sale on the integrity of the building in a category five storm; we don't know, because it has said nothing.

In the meantime, Sunwing has asked the government of SXM for a loan -- and got a very interesting response. Here

are [all the details from The Daily Herald](#). Note the picture, which shows just how devastating the damage was to the Sonesta Great Bay Hotel (now Sunwing) from Irma.

11. Clearing Up Simpson Bay Misinformation

There appears to be a great deal of misinformation being disseminated in social media either by people who had owned timesharing in the three buildings that Irma destroyed at Simpson Bay Resort, or by others who for whatever reason wanted to stir the pot. They have charged that the resort is doing nothing for them (not true); that it has left them no alternatives other than Goodbye (not true); that they will miss the resort because their rooms were destroyed (while it's true that their rooms were destroyed, the resort tells us that plenty of space is available to timeshare owners who talk soon to the resort, accept their offer, and make timely reservations for the weeks they want).

The key, resort officials say, is to act quickly, while plenty of inventory is readily available throughout the resort, which is now in the process of formally reopening.

Please see our [Everything SXM Facebook Site](#) for contact information about the resort, also posted below. If you were in Caladium, Croton, or Dieffenbachia at Simpson Bay Resort, the three buildings that Irma destroyed, you need to get in touch with the Resort quickly to make this happen.

Contact info:

Rose Blackwell
[Director, Member Services](#)
1-888-852-8305
rblackwell@simpsonbayresort.com

Her team will answer your questions and help you rescue your SXM vacation.

More stories follow.

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12. Promotions at Oyster Bay Beach Resort

Oyster Bay Beach Resort's (OBBR) new Assistant General Manager is Anju Snow-Baharani, replacing Anne-Marie Brooks.

Snow-Baharani, a 25-year resident of St. Maarten, was previously the manager of Light House Rentals (a division of Light House Realty), as well as rental agent for a number of luxury villas at Coral Beach Club.

"I'm excited and thankful for this new opportunity at OBBR and CBC," said Snow-Baharani. "Working in the hospitality/hotel/timeshare industry has always been my true passion."

She's held positions with several prominent St. Maarten timeshare resorts since moving to the island, as well as was a partner in a well-known island real estate firm.

Anju has a wealth of hospitality experience, having worked in many high-end hotels throughout her career, said OBBR General Manager Ricardo Perez. "Anju's people-oriented and has energy and style, and she loves to please people.

For the past year Snow-Baharani worked closely with the OBBR staff in managing the Lighthouse and Coral Beach Club rental program. She has a degree in hotel management from Sophia Polytechnic in Mumbai, India. Snow-Baharani, born in Hong Kong, has lived in the Caribbean since the mid-1970s."

It was also announced that Mientje Illis-Brown, a 23-year, senior OBBR staff member was promoted from Human Resources Manager to Director of Operations/Human Resources. Illis-Brown has a Bachelor of Science in computer systems management and accounting from Johnson & Wales University in Rhode Island. Mientje is a St. Maarten native, and "we're proud she's taken a top position of responsibility in our organization," said Perez. "She's an expert at government and human resources, having had both assignments for the several years. Anju and Mientje, along with our management team of Cindy Clarke, Lorenzo Bryan, Ursula Illis, Ninoska Lambert and myself, will continue providing the excellent hospitality and service our guests have enjoyed over the years," said Perez.

For more information and for the latest updates, visit: www.oysterbaybeachresort.com

13. Why Some Timeshare Resort Communications Seem Poor

Timeshare owners at some SXM resorts aren't particularly happy right now because of the lack of communication they perceive from their resorts. We've had a fair number of people on our [Everything SXM Facebook Site](#) voice criticism of both Royal Islander resorts, Royal Palm Resort, and especially Ocean Club Resort for what they charge is a poor record of communicating with timeshare owners in the wake of catastrophic hurricane Irma.

Hurricane Irma was the most powerful tropical system in Atlantic basin history, with sustained winds of 185 mph and recorded gusts of 240. It made a direct hit on SXM early in September causing well over \$6-billion in damage on the island.

Irma's effect on the lives of people who live here is unimaginable to those who don't. Most homes suffered heavy damage, with thousands losing their roofs. Hurricane Maria followed after Irma, dumping heavy rain into buildings without roofs. Timeshare resort executives and employees had to cope with their own personal tragedies during the storm as well as help timeshare owners get to the airport in time to be evacuated by US military transport aircraft, since passenger flights to the airport immediately after the storm were impossible.

That was the beginning.

The number of insurance claims that had to be filed was somewhere in the neighborhood of 60,000 on SXM alone. Despite the fact that a number of adjusters were brought in from outside, it took months for adjusters to see most properties and get claims filed.

For big timeshare projects, the road is even longer, since analyzing the losses to building structures, contents, systems, etc. is a highly involved, complex process.

In many cases, there has been disagreement about proposed claims payments, a number of which have involved lawyers in court rooms. While that's going on, timeshare developers/operators need architects, engineers, skilled craftspeople, and more to plan, purchase materials for, and execute thousands of repairs for hundreds of rooms in some cases in multiple buildings. People to do the work are at a premium as well.

Although it isn't politically correct, the proverbial one armed paper hanger comes to mind: they can't do all of this as quickly as they'd like, and they don't want to make wrong guesses about what they can do and when they can complete the work. It's just not that simple. While we realize that perhaps especially in the case of Ocean Club, it is taking months to get news, even there the situation is highly complex due to the distributed ownership in that Resort and the fact that the developer owns multiple properties, many of them affected severely by hurricanes.

As always, we're watching all these details for you and we will continue to report on them whenever we obtain updates. You will also receive updates sent directly to timeshare owners who post those updates on our [Everything SXM Facebook Site](#) when they received them. With now 20,500 members, our [Everything SXM Facebook Site](#) is often the first site where resort updates are posted for public scrutiny. If you have not become a member there, do it today.

14. Future Hotel / Timeshare Reopenings

New opening dates for SXM hotels and timeshare resorts are being announced with increased frequency, with details posted in real time on our [Everything SXM Facebook Site](#).

Find the information, join the site. Then, when enrolled, after you've answered a few very quick and simple vetting questions, use the search window to get information about your resort or hotel; you can also simply ask about it by creating a new post. Since we do have about 20,500 members there, people are online around-the-clock around the world, so you may just receive an answer more quickly than you might expect.

15. SXM Timeshare Condo & Villa Rentals

With several timeshare resorts back online — Belair, Sea Palace, and Atrium Resort, with Divi, Simpson Bay, and Oyster Bay Beach following quickly -- timeshare owners are now posting units available for rent on our [timeshare rental site](#) on everythingSXM.com and on our new companion Villas for Rent page, also on everythingsxm.com. Check them out: they are being heavily revised this week.

SECTION 3: JMB Member Discounts & Benefits

16. "Section Three" -- Member Discounts / Benefits News & Updates (Updated)

This section of *SXM Weekly News*, which appears weekly, will provide detailed information about current JMB Website Supporters discounts and benefits both for current members and for people thinking about joining JMB.

We now offer about 300 discounts (including some now being rolled out). We think you'll find many surprises here that will be of great interest and value. Please check this section in the coming months as we restart rolling out a number of entirely new discounts and benefits.

We expect to start adding new discounts and benefits in the next week or two. Please stay tuned; special special messages will be sent to all JMB Website Supporters members as the newest benefits are rolled out.

For more info on what you get with your JMB membership, [go here](#).

SECTION 4: Island News, Info, & Features

**Huge Sale Continues
on
SkyMed's Lowest Daily Cost
Five-Year SkyMed Ultimate
Medical Evacuation Memberships!**

SkyMed's best coverage!

Buy or Upgrade to a new Five-Year SkyMed Ultimate Membership Through Us (their Best Membership at their Lowest Daily Cost) & Get 10 Years of membership in JMB Website Supporters w/ About 300 SXM Discounts as our Huge Winter Bonus!

Plus you can get a 10-year price guarantee on SkyMed!

Applies only to new or upgraded Five-Year Ultimate memberships bought directly through us (including the original SkyMed purchase).

Not combinable with any other offer.

Available exclusively through us.

For details, contact

Jeff Berger at 508-747-8281

or email Jeff.Berger@skymed.com

with the Subject "SkyMed."

Do it now...

this offer could soon disappear.

17. Astonishingly Fast Recovery...

Newspaper reporters, broadcasters, villa owners, boat owners, and a spectrum of other individuals who saw SXM get mauled in September by hurricane Irma said last Fall that it would take the island two to three years to recover from the monster storm.

Although the island certainly isn't anywhere close to being fully recovered, it has advanced astonishingly fast and is greeting increasing numbers of tourists in more and more reopening timeshares and hotels every week. They're all being greeted with open arms by grateful people who are amazingly resilient, upbeat, positive, and thankful for simply living through this monster storm.

No visitors can quite believe how fast the island is recovering. Yes you will certainly see damage if you come here in

the next few months.

But above all, you'll see great people doing miraculous things in a place you love.

18. Sargassum Seaweed a No-Show -- So Far

There were expert predictions several weeks ago that Sargassum seaweed would be returning to SXM in sizable batches, soon.

Those predictions so far have not come true. In fact, last week we asked people on the island to take pictures of the beaches and post them on our [Everything SXM Facebook Site](#). They did, surprising many readers with how clean the water is and how beautiful the beaches are — with very little seaweed of any kind.

To be sure, the predictions haven't been rescinded. But for now, they haven't come true, either.

19. Spiga Returns To Dinner Service - Exclusively

Not many weeks after Irma tore through SXM, Ciro and Lara Russo, Spiga's owners, returned to find that their Grand Case restaurant had suffered comparatively minor damage. They made repairs, did some planned updating, and soon reopened -- for both lunch and dinner -- as "Cafe Spiga."

Now they've returned exclusively to what made them great: some of the best dinners you'll find anywhere in the Caribbean. If you're thinking it's just another Italian Restaurant on an island with many of them, just try it once -- you'll see it's clearly unlike any other. It's creative Italian dining which has won Ciro and Lara numerous awards including some from us (Everything SXM Awards of Excellence).

Go. You will not be disappointed. See [their site](#) and call for reservations. Also see our Restaurant of the Week, below.

20. Alegria Owner Ray Sidhom Loses Again

You have to hand it to Alegria Resort owner Ray Sidhom -- he doesn't give up very easily. Kind of like a prize fighter who has been hit in the head a lot and hardly knows what planet he's on but nonetheless keeps doing what he knows how to do - get back up and be slammed again.

Sidhom's major accomplishment on SXM -- besides suing people who offend him -- is losing those suits in court, consistently.

Here's the latest post to our site about Mr. Sidhom, from Marty Dijkhuis, owner of The Dream Pool Bar at his resort:

"Alegria's Owner, Ray Sidhom, Alegria LLC Melville Long Island, Chairman EVO payment processing Melville, has NOT been granted by the court the eviction of My Apartment in the F Building . He now purposely leaves doors open of units that were fine and were fine after Irma, for them to rot away and blaming Irma to get me out and have reports made up that the building is 'unsafe' to live in now.

"Ray Sidhom has now decided and instructed his gardener 3 weeks ago (and the God fearing management is aware and does nothing as I confronted her about her "boss" actions) to throw all garbage and garden trash of Alegria and around his "Sunset Bar and Refuge" in the units UNDER my apartment. Alegria's Ray Sidhom Dignity is at its best again. ZERO respect for SXM law or the Court. Creating a Serious Health and Fire hazard under my living quarters. The Police [Department] has been notified, The fire department has been notified, the hygiene department has been notified, Inspection has been notified and now again the World as I gave him time to clean it up. VROMI 's actions will be published this week. Wake up SXM..."

You'll find photos of the mess that Mr. Dijkhuis alleges Mr. Sidhom's people created on our [Everything SXM Facebook Site](#).

21. **New York Times** Publishes Caribbean Volunteering Story

Not too much is mentioned about SXM in [this story](#), but we thought you might want to see it. For much more on what you can bring / how you can help in SXM, see the FILES area on our [Everything SXM Facebook Site](#). You can also ask specific questions on the site about alternative ways of helping.

More news follows this message.

Our

JMB Website Supporters

+++ Anniversary Sale +++

Is Now Underway

JMB Website Supporters
is celebrating its
16th Birthday --
but you get the Presents!

Get About 300 SXM Discounts
& Many Other Benefits Through Our Exclusive
JMB Website Supporters Island Discount Program

Join, Renew, or Reinstate Today:

New JMB memberships: One year \$39; Two, \$59; Our Best Offer: Four Years just \$99

http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/about_sxm/paypal.shtml

Renewal JMB memberships: One year, \$35; Our Best Offer: Five Years just \$99

www.everythingsxm.com/secret Go to the **Membership Renewal Center**

JMB Membership Reinstatements:

One year, \$35; Our Best Offer: Five Years just \$99

<http://everythingsxm.com/sxm/reinstate/index.shtml>

In Addition To Those 300 Discounts
& Other Benefits,
Your JMB Membership
helps keep

SXM Weekly News
Publishing for You Every Week!

Please Join Today!

22. At Orient Beach, Things Returning to Normal - Sort Of

Occasional voyeurs, thought to be mostly from cruise ships, are showing up now on the clothing-optional portion of Orient Beach in front of naturist resort Club Orient. The number of naturists on the beach has been steadily increasing. Though the policy on the beach is still "no photos," security staff at Club Orient now are involved in other things and spend less time patrolling the perimeter of the beach next to the resort, so photos can and do happen.

Readers should not leave any valuables in their cars or on the beach. If you park your car at Club Orient (secure parking should now be available), ask the guards if they can hold onto your keys. They did that pre-Irma.

23. 2012-2013 SXM Ship-Tossed Bottle Message Found in Biloxi

Somewhere between Christmas and New Year's at the end of 2012, someone on a cruise ship off SXM threw a whiskey bottle with a message in it into the Caribbean.

Recently, that bottle with its message was found on a barrier island off Biloxi, Ms. The folks who found it contacted us and we have twice posted pictures of it on our [Everything SXM Facebook Site](#). It includes an email address but some water (or whiskey?) blurred the email address, which was from Hotmail. If you threw the bottle -- or perhaps know someone who did -- please have them contact us. "KUSA" appears to be part of the email address. Pictures of the bottle and the note are on our [Everything SXM Facebook Site](#). Just search "bottle" or "Biloxi" and you'll find them. We would love to let the senders know where their bottle wound up....

24. Get the Latest Island Updates As They Happen

Between issues of *SXM Weekly News*, we send bulletins to members of our [JMB Website Supporters Island Discount Program](#), and we publish updates on many things on our [Everything SXM Facebook Site](#). You can find out more about both by clicking their links.

When hurricane season starts (June 1), we'll be posting regular updates on our [Everything SXM Facebook Site](#) and lots of forecasts, watches, and warnings, plus real-time satellite images and loops in the Weather Center on our main site, everythingxsm.com. Check them out.

25. Answers You Seek: The What / How / Why of SkyMed

We have long recommended SkyMed Medical Evacuation Memberships for anyone who travels. SkyMed can save you a small fortune when you become critically ill or injured when traveling -- and it *takes you home*, where your support system is and [where your health insurance actually works](#):

What SkyMed Is: SkyMed is a Scottsdale, Arizona-based medical evacuation membership company. It "Takes You Home" if you're a SkyMed member when you become critically ill or injured while traveling anywhere in the United States (all 50 states), Canada, Mexico, Bermuda, the Bahamas, and all the nations of the Caribbean. Global coverage, offering services in the rest of the world (except where the U. S. State Department has issued [travel advisories](#)), is available as an option on annual memberships and is included in multi-year "Ultimate" memberships through SkyMed company GETS, Global Emergency Transport Services. Americans, Canadians, and ExPats living in any of the countries named here are eligible to apply for membership.

What SkyMed Covers: SkyMed memberships deliver a spectrum of critical evacuation-related services. Download the complete list with descriptions [here](#). (PDF) [SkyMed Takes You Home® where your health insurance policy actually works](#).

What Medical Evacuations Cost Without SkyMed: At the low end, medical evacuation flights aboard private specially-outfitted and staffed "air ambulances" may cost anywhere from \$35,000 to \$70,000 [payable in cash in advance, before anything happens](#). Prices from Mexico and some distant parts of the world can cost far more. For SkyMed members, SkyMed arranges and pays for all the services it provides. There are no claims forms, no deductibles, [no](#) pre-payments for services by you with you waiting for SkyMed reimbursements -- no hassles at all. You make one phone call to SkyMed and SkyMed handles everything. *Medical evacuations are typically [never covered by health insurance policies and are not covered by Medicare](#)*.

How SkyMed Works: As you would in any medical emergency anywhere, get to a hospital right away when you become critically ill or injured. You can call SkyMed at their toll-free number (or collect from outside the US) when you first get to the hospital if you like, to make SkyMed aware of the situation. Once the hospital's medical staff has given you emergency care, call SkyMed from the hospital so SkyMed can contact those handling the member's care. Critically ill or injured members need to be stable for medical evacuation travel to occur safely. SkyMed keeps you informed every step of the way, and SkyMed arranges and pays for the ambulance from the hospital to the airport; the medevac jet to your destination city; the medical crew on the aircraft; and the ambulance from the destination airport to the hospital. SkyMed will already have obtained and transferred your records to the destination hospital, where a bed will be waiting for you and a team will be ready to help you. *SkyMed Takes You Home* where your support system is and where your health insurance actually works. All you pay is your SkyMed membership fee; SkyMed arranges and pays for all the services it provides for you.

SkyMed Special Features:

- a) [SkyMed Takes You Home®](#). Others in their fine print say they take you home or to the nearest appropriate facility, at their option; that could be thousands of miles from home. Being home matters when you're critically ill or injured -- home to doctors and hospitals you know and trust.
- b) [No age limit to apply](#).
- c) [Pre-existing conditions are covered in full](#) after only 90 days for one-year and longer memberships, and immediately for short-term memberships.
- d) [Guaranteed renewable regardless of advancing age or declining health](#) (applies to annual and multiyear memberships).

e) No membership price increases due solely to advancing age or declining health. You pay what everyone pays.

f) Ten-year price guarantee for five-year Ultimate SkyMed memberships: When you apply for a five-year SkyMed Ultimate membership and indicate "renew automatically" on your application, you are guaranteed the same price upon your first renewal that you paid when joining. The SkyMed Ultimate, which is prepaid for five years at inception, currently offers more features and benefits than SkyMed's annual memberships (see What it Covers, above) at a highly advantageous annual cost. SkyMed Annual memberships have no price guarantee (though their price has been unchanged for several years). Jet fuel price spikes can affect the cost of Annual memberships. But with the Ultimate's 10-year price guarantee, you're solid no matter what.

JMB Website Supporters Members Get Discounts & Bonuses: Substantial discounts are available to JMB members on all multiyear SkyMed memberships. (We can sign you up for JMB membership when you talk with us about SkyMed.) Ask Jeff for details; see next item. Bonuses available give you additional years on your JMB membership when you buy a new multi-year SkyMed membership from us or upgrade a SkyMed membership bought from us to multi-year. After buying, simply notify support@jmbcommunications.com of your SkyMed purchase and you get an equal number of years added to your JMB membership.

Where to Get More Answers: Call SkyMed Ambassador Jeff Berger any daytime or evening (EDT) at 508-747-8281. He can answer all your questions and even complete an application with you in about 10 minutes. Often, you'll have SkyMed's reply in one or two business days. You can also email Jeff at jeff@jmbcommunications.com or jeff.berger@skymed.com (with the subject SkyMed); please include your phone number and time zone.

SkyMed Takes You Home: What else matters?

26. JMB Anniversary Sale Now Underway!

JMB Website Supporters was founded 16 years ago, in April, 2002, after a month of testing. And JMB Communications was formed in June, 1990, almost 28 years ago: so it's time to celebrate with one of our most popular sales of the year:

New JMB memberships: One year \$39; Two, \$59; Our Best Offer: Four Years just \$99

http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/about_sxm/paypal.shtml

Renewal JMB memberships: One year, \$35; Our Best Offer: Five Years just \$99

www.everythingsxm.com/secret Go to the **Membership Renewal Center**

JMB Membership Reinstatements:

One year, \$35; Our Best Offer: Five Years just \$99

<http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/reinstate/index.shtml>

27. Restaurant of the Week: Spiga

Although the Caribbean "culinary capital" Grand Case on SXM's northwest coast was hit hard by Irma, the stars were aligned for Lara and Ciro Russo's Cafe Spiga which suffered comparatively minor damage.

Serving dinner exclusively from 6-10 pm daily except Sunday, Spiga is flat-out amazing, The flavors and textures and aromas you'll experience here are unsurpassed by any other restaurants on SXM. Typical Italian it's not -- they call it creative but we think you'll call it stupendous. Just do it: you will not be disappointed. See www.spiga-xsm.com.

Here is a rundown of the status of all restaurants featured in the last year or so in our *Weekly News* restaurant column. Dates below are when each restaurant was last covered.

Spiga, www.spiga-xsm.com (featured 4/9/18) Reopened as Cafe Spiga, new menu; redesigned; also now serving lunch. New bar, new bar snacks, same great staff, service, and wonderful food.

Celine Too Motor Yacht, www.sailsmaarten.com (featured 8/7/17). Sunk by Irma. Neil has bought a new sailing yacht as big as Celine Too was and is readying it to enter service soon. Neil is known for amazing cooking on board

his boats.

Big Fish Restaurant www.bigfishsxm.com/ (featured 5/1/17). Big Fish has closed. We do not have any word on whether Mike and Teresa will be reopening.

IZI Ristorante Italiano, www.iziristoranteitaliano.com (featured 1/15/18) David is back and the restaurant has reopened. Now open for lunch as well.

Busby's Chicken Rotisserie (featured 6/5/17) Wrecked by Irma. The owners are awaiting insurance resolution. Isola Ristorante Italiano (featured 5/29/17) Marco Ferrante's Isola Ristorante Italiano next to Hollywood casino in the middle of Simpson Bay Resort was one of the first restaurants to reopen soon after Irma struck, and it has been open ever since. It is now also fully enclosed and fully air conditioned - no street noise. Neat place.

Avantika Thai www.avantikasxm.com (featured 2/6/17) Avantika is open. SXM's best Thai.

Canoa, www.canoasxm.com (featured 4/10/17) Canoa has established a gofundme campaign to help it rebuild. We have no information on timing, but our guess is probably late 2018, or later.

Mario Bistro www.mariobistrot.com/en/ 1/29/18 Mario's Bistro reopened a few weeks after Irma hit and looks forward to your return. Phenomenal dining.

SkipJack's SXM, <http://www.skipjacks-sxm.com/> (featured 7/17/17) Skipjack's main dining deck overlooking the lagoon was wrecked by Irma and is being rebuilt. They should be open late 2018.

Trattoria Pizza Pasta, Maho Plaza near Casino Royale (featured 9/12/16). The Maho area was hit very badly by Irma and Pizza Pasta has closed and is not expected to reopen, not at that location anyway. Selena has moved to St. Kitts where her mom, Ilde, and dad, Dario, operate their Ciao restaurant.

Daniel's By The Sea, www.dawnbeachsxm.com (featured 8/14/17) Wrecked by Irma. The owners are awaiting insurance resolution.

La Patrona, Simpson Bay Resort (featured 1/30/17; added 1/17) La Patrona is open and has been for quite some time.

Domino's Pizza <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Dominos-Pizza-St-Maarten/95635717338> (featured 9/16) Open.

The Boathouse, <https://www.facebook.com/CDayDay777> 10/3/16 Just got insurance settlement, not yet reopened.

The Hideaway, <http://www.lavistaresort.com/restaurant.html> (featured 10/31/16) Open; contact the restaurant for details and reservations. Updated 3/2/18.

Stone Restaurant, www.thestonerestaurant.com (featured 9/2/14) Stone is permanently closed.

Melange International Grill (featured 2/20/17) Reopened.

Le Pressoir, <http://www.lepressoir-sxm.com> (featured 7/6/15) Believed permanently closed and likely for sale. We'll post quickly if we hear anything else.

Temptation, <http://www.temptation-sxm.com/> (featured 7/5/17) Permanently closed. Dino has now relocated to Emilio's at the Emilio Wilson Estate, which will be featured here soon.

Lal's Curry In A Hurry Indian Restaurant, Airport Road, Simpson Bay (featured 7/10/17) Open now for lunch and dinner.

Mr. Busby's Beach Bar <http://www.dawnbeachsxm.com> (featured 6/26/17) Wrecked by Irma. The owners are awaiting insurance resolution.

Island Pizza, <http://www.dawnbeachsxm.com> (featured 6/19/17) Wrecked by Irma. The owners are awaiting insurance resolution.

Pineapple Pete, www.pineapplepete.com (featured 7/31/17) Reopened.

Papagayo, <http://www.cluborient.com/papagayo.php> (featured 10/17/16) Club Orient was wrecked by Irma; rebuilding is planned. ETA not yet known.

Dany & John's Cupecoy Beach Bar (on Cupecoy beach; follow the car path the turn near Shore Pointe to get there). (featured 4/17/2017) Reopened. Their sign blew away in Irma -- to Virgin Gorda's airport 192 miles away.

FIG, Maho complex at Le Terasse Had closed permanently before Irma hit.

St. Maarten Yacht Club, at the Dutch Side Drawbridge Reopened.

Jimbo's, www.jimboscafe.com (featured 6/12/17) Recently reopened.

Vesna Taverna, www.vesnataverna.com (featured 1/22/18). Reopened. Now open Wed through Sunday B/L/D.

Topper's <http://www.sxmtoppers.com/> (featured 2/27/17) Reopened quickly.

Taloula Mango <http://www.taloulamango.com/> (featured 4/20/15) Reopened.

Bylbos, Simpson Bay Not yet known.

Sushiitto Japanese Restaurant, Port de Plaisance <https://www.facebook.com/sushiitto.sxm> (featured 2/13/17) Closed permanently; see next item. Pierre ("Pete") Ferland has opened a new Japanese Restaurant next to Pineapple Pete...

Wasabi Charlie Japanese Restaurant (formerly Sushiitto) is the new name of Sushiitto, now relocated next door to Pineapple Pete in Simpson bay. Essentially the same menu, same staff, same great service.

Emilio's at Emilio Wilson Estate will be featured soon. It's the new property run by renowned chef Dino Jagtiani, whose Temptation Restaurant was wrecked by Irma.

You will find hundreds more restaurants from both the Dutch Side and French Side listed in the Files area of our [Everything St. Maarten / St. Martin / SXM Facebook Site](#). Our thanks to our Admin there, Contessa Aiello, who edited the restaurant entries on that site.

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Deserves a Marketing-Centric, Customer-Focused
Website That Works.

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www.websitesthatworkusa.com

In business since the web began --

a unit of JMB Communications.

28. Still Time: Enter Our SXM Summertime Vacation Giveaway

Our Summertime SXM vacation giveaway is underway and you can now enter. *SXM Weekly News* readers (NOT pass-along readers) can enter up to 10 times per subscribed email address. The drawing now has been deferred until early Summer 2018.

Here is our current prize list. Since this giveaway promotes non high-season visits to SXM, most of these vacations are yours from mid April to mid December, 2018, though for obvious reasons those dates are subject to change. All vacations are subject to availability.

- an 8-day, 7-night vacation at La Vista Resort, May through December 2018.
- a 5 night stay (based upon availability April 10-Dec 18, 2018) in an ocean front room at the Westin St Maarten Dawn Beach Resort, Spa, and Casino.
- a 4-day, 3-night stay at the beautiful Oyster Bay Beach Resort.
- Dinner for Two at Davide Foini's legendary IZI Ristorante Italiano in Simpson Bay (One winner)
- Dinner for Two at Marco Ferrante's Isola Ristorante Italiano next to Hollywood Casino at Simpson Bay Resort. (One winner)
- Dinner for Two at Cafe Spiga, the highly acclaimed Italian Restaurant in Grand Case. (One winner.)

Enter here: http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/getting_here/entry-form-for-our-seven-vacation-giveaway.shtml

Dates for all vacations subject to change thanks to Irma....

29. Where to Find Past Issues of SXM Weekly News

Look here for our PDF archives: http://everythingxsm.com/sxm/free_newsletters/sxmweeklynews.shtml. Most issues for the past few years are now online. This will be updated shortly.

Get The Current Low Price
on SkyMed's Best 5-Year Ultimate Membership
and keep the current low price on your first 5-yr. renewal.
That's a 10-year price guarantee.
More benefits... same price.

Ask Jeff for details -- call him at 508-747-8281 (SkyMed calls only, reg. hours Eastern time.) More info? See getskymed.com.

St. Maarten / St. Martin Homes, Villas, Businesses, Commercial Properties, and Residential Properties for Sale (NEW):

[Click to access our recommended real estate agent, Arun Jagtiani, featured on HGTV.](#)

Rent Out or Sell Your Timeshare (both SXM and Worldwide) -- Frequently Updated

JMB members can run up to 10 free ads on our website per 12-month period to rent out or sell St. Maarten / St. Martin timeshare weeks they own -- or any timeshares, anywhere worldwide. If you're not a member, learn more about membership here: http://everythingsexm.com/sxm/about_sxm/paypal.shtml .

Want to rent or buy a week?

2017 St. Maarten / St. Martin Timeshare Weeks For Rent or Sale are posted at http://everythingsexm.com/sxm/timeshare_rent_sale/index.shtml Listings are now updated every few weekdays. Ads are free (no commission) but are accepted from JMB Website Supporters members only.

SECTION 5: For Members Only

- A. Where to Get Member Info: www.everythingsxm.com/secret
- B. Password Recovery Info: Your username is the email address you have registered with JMB Website Supporters. If you forget your password, click "forgot / change password" in the orange login box near the masthead at www.everythingsxm.com. To change your password, click that same link.
- C. How To Submit Rental or Sale Ads or Update the Price in an Ad: See www.everythingsxm.com/secret .Your username and password are required.

SECTION 6: Background Information for Travelers (For New Readers) Updated 7/2017

See www.everythingsxm.com.

About Email Address Changes / How To Unsubscribe (Updated 4/17/17)

To unsubscribe, go here: www.sxmweeklynews.com. You CAN NOT unsubscribe either by replying to this email or, if you are an AOL user, by clicking the *spam* button on AOL.

To change your email address, visit www.sxmweeklynews.com; unsubscribe your old email address and subscribe your new one. *JMB Website Supporters members should notify Membership Services of the new email address for continued Secret Site access.*

Get Your Own Free Copy Of St. Maarten and St. Martin Weekly News:

<http://www.everythingsxm.com/cgi-bin/dada/mail.cgi?>

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Our email headers also contain subscribe / unsubscribe / address change links.

Contact Us (Revised 8/21/17)

All member discounts and benefits are explained in detail on the members-only *secret* website, <http://www.everythingsxm.com/secret> . If you're a JMB Website Supporters member and have a question not answered there, contact **support@jmbcommunications.com**

NON-members who wish to contact us should write to **jmbweb@jmbcommunications.com** with the subject *Free Newsletter Recipient,* but due to the huge volume of mail received, we may not respond individually.

Our main St. Maarten / St. Martin website: www.everythingsxm.com .

Privacy Policy http://www.everythingsxm.com/sxm/privacy_policy/index.shtml

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