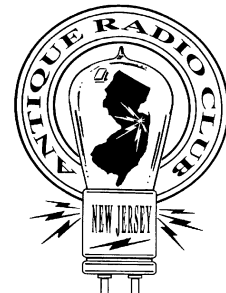# The Jersey Broadcaster

NEWSLETTER OF THE NEW JERSEY ANTIQUE RADIO CLUB

September 2008   **Volume 14 Issue 9**

MEETING/ ACTIVITY NOTES

Reported by Marv Beeferman

THE ON-LINE BROADCASTER

The New Jersey Broadcaster is now on-line. To date, 93 of your fellow NJARC members have subscribed, saving the club over $1600 a year. Interested? Send your e-mail address to:
            mbeeferman@cs.com

Be sure to include your <u>full name</u>.

MEETING NOTICE

<u>NOTE: MEETING LOCATION CHANGE (SEPTEMBER ONLY)</u>

   The next meeting of the New Jersey Antique Radio Club will take place on Friday, September 12th, at 7:30 PM at the InfoAge "Telephone Exchange" building in Wall Township. Visit us at http://www.njarc.org for directions. The main event will be our popular member's-only auction that is detailed below.

   There's some important club events coming due in the next few months so let's start by attempting to get them ingrained in your gray matter (organic, electronic or otherwise). Knowing my audience (your editor included), we'll also drop a few hints in October and November.

   As stated in the Meeting Notice, our September meeting will take advantage of the InfoAge facilities to hold a members-only auction. This might be a good opportunity to gather some cash for the Kutztown swapmeet on the 19th and 20th. Any member in good standing (2008 dues paid) may bring up to five nice items (no junk, please) to be offered at auction; minimum bids will be accepted. There will be no buyer commissions and no seller commissions. Although the club will administer the auction, all financial transactions or disagreements regarding how an item was represented, will be conducted directly between the buyer and seller.

   On Saturday, October 18th, the club will host an open-to-the-public repair clinic at the David Sarnoff Library. Of course, members are also encouraged to bring their own repair projects that could use a helping hand from our panel of experts. We'll be setting up at 9 AM with doors opening at 10 AM and the clinic scheduled to end

about 4 PM. Bring a lunch or join us in our usual pizza-fest.

   For the October 10th meeting, we've scheduled an Old Equipment Contest at the Sarnoff Library. On November 8th, we'll be holding our Fall swapmeet at the Parsippany PAL building and on November 14th we're back at InfoAge to experiment with a concept that our Technical Coordinator Al Klase has termed a "DXpedition." All these events are fully described in this month's *Broadcaster*.

   In this month's issue, you'll also find an article covering Dave Sica who was the winner of the Taylor Award at this year's AWA national radio convention in Rochester, NY. NJARC members were treated to a sneak preview of Dave's talents at the August meeting where he took a short reference to Elektro the Smoking Robot from "YouTube" and turned it into a hilarious, tongue-in-cheek video presentation of mechanical men from the past. Back in 1939, Elektro was able to walk, talk, raise and lower his arms, turn his head and move his mouth as he spoke. Built in total secrecy by Westinghouse, Elektro was promoted as the ultimate appliance. In fact, it was thought that Elektro would one day be able to cook, do laundry and entertain the children. It used a 78-rpm record player to simulate conversation and had a vocabulary of more than 700 words. Thousands of people enjoyed Elektro at the New York World's Fair in 1939 and it even appeared in a long-time forgotten movie, "Sex Kittens Go to College."
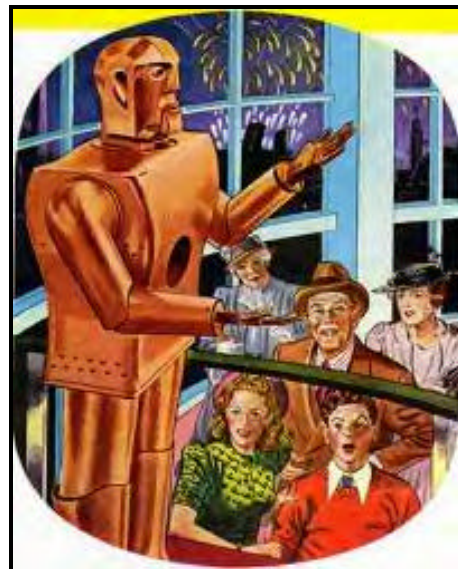
   Past NJARC president Jim Whartenby and his lovely wife Ruth always manage to stop by our meetings and events whenever they get the opportunity. Ray Chase reports that a couple of months ago, he got a lead on an SCR-268 radar receiver that was available in Oak Ridge, TN. But how does one transport an 80-pound steel-cased unit? Ray contacted Jim and asked him if he was planning any trips to our area and was Oak Ridge anywhere in his travel path. As it turns out, the Whartenby's were planning a trip North and Oak Ridge was on the way. The receiver is now in the radar room of our military electronics display in the Marconi Hotel. Many thanks to Jim and Ruth for transporting the unit and for their kind comments regarding the club's accomplishments at InfoAge.

Ray Chase also reminds us that the next meeting of the NJARC is the evening before the two-day (10 AM to 5 PM, Saturday and Sunday) Vintage Computer Festival East sponsored by MARCH (Mid Atlantic Retro Computer Hobbyists). During the event, the club will unveil its new InfoAge museum quarters and Ray says that the displays are quite good. Admission is $10 for one day and $15 for both days. More information is available at midatlanticretro.org or 646-546-9999.

In October, the club will once again participate in the InfoAge Haunted Hotel. Our "Mad Science Lab" has always been a big hit and we are always looking for new ideas. We have a large, tall open-front black relay cabinet (courtesy of Rob Flory) that would look nice with something scary in it. Does anyone have a skeleton "hanging" around or a decent mannequin that we could do something with? (Okay guys, this is a family club.) We're also looking for scary stuff with a scientific bent; noise, lights, sparks, etc. and associated props are all fair game. Others in the group are planning on crashed flying saucers, lost aliens, nuclear melt-downs (I know a power plant we could rent for a few weeks), etc.

As many of you know, Phil Vourtsis is leading a project to inventory all of our museum assets at InfoAge, including those on loan from club members. Dave Sica recently posted the following to the NJARC reflector regarding the importance of Phil's project:

"Today's Star-Ledger contained a sobering reminder that a good inventory is good insurance against possible future problems in situations such as our museum. The Waterloo Foundation for the Arts operated the Waterloo Village Historic Site, owned by the State of New Jersey for 33 years. When they ran out of money and the site was closed down, foundation members were prevented by police from removing their artifacts and the state padlocked the entire collection until they can prove ownership. The problem is, they apparently have no formal inventory records and they will probably have to go to court to try to get their stuff back, with no guarantees they will be successful!"

Dave's posting emphasizes the full importance of Phil's project and we should all strive to offer him our help and support. Finally, here's Dave's take on this year's AWA conference:

"I was surprised and pleased when I was informed shortly before the event that I had been nominated to receive the AWA Taylor Award for Preservation of Television History. For one reason or another, I haven't made the trek to Rochester for several years, so this seemed as good a time as any to resume the habit. I was honored to receive the award at Friday's awards dinner and it certainly was a lot of fun to reconnect with folks I hadn't seen for a while. The New Jersey delegation filled an entire banquet table."

"Although the prevailing mood was somber at times, I'd prefer to look at it the way fellow member Dick Hurff did: 'I found six very nice, very old radios first thing Thursday morning in the flea market. Now, where else can you do that?' Since I have only been to the conference a few times over the past twenty years, I wasn't in a position to make year-to-year comparisons. The flea market did look positively anemic compared to what I remembered from ten years ago, but it was still about the same size and of significantly higher quality than many of our NJ affairs. The seminars were, as always, world class. At one point, I was sitting in front of a guy from England (who was sitting next to a guy from Japan), next to a guy from Canada and behind a guy from Holland. That says a lot about how the event is perceived elsewhere in the world and something about how we can perceive a drive up from New Jersey to be "too far." There was some literally wonderful stuff in the auction. The 'powers that be' seemed quite sincere in acknowledging that there are problems and in their resolution to address them. We'll see how things play out."

NJARC 2008 OLD EQUIPMENT CONTEST

By Marv Beeferman

Most major antique radio meets and conventions that extend over more than one day usually include an old equipment contest. These provide a great opportunity for collectors to display, in a wide variety of categories, items that are usually seen only in photographs. Displays range from the simple to the very elaborate with unique supporting documentation describing the origin, history or technical aspects of the item.

Unfortunately, many collectors are hesitant to participate in these contests. Some see it as a distraction from rummaging through the flea market and missing that "great buy." Others don't want to deal with the hassle of registering, protecting and retrieving their entries. Still others don't feel they don't have a chance when competing with the "big players." Personally, for old equipment contests sponsored by local clubs, I have seen just the opposite. Although the displays are simple and the items far from "one-of-a-kind," club members seem to have just as much enthusiasm for entries from their fellow collectors as those found at any national meet.

At the October 10th meeting, we'll be arranging the David Sarnoff Library to let you display some of the more unique items in your collection and we'll reward your efforts with some nice trophies and ribbons. We've set up rules that, although not too stringent, are not so liberal where quality can be ignored. But best of all, you'll have a month to prepare and judging will be conducted by your fellow collectors attending that evening.

RULES:

1. Each member may submit no more than one entry per category and not more than a total of three entries.

2. Equipment is not required to be demonstrated as working, but a statement of restoration to full operability (honor system) will be used as a basis for judging.

3. Categories are as follows:

A. Crystal receivers
B. Battery receivers (regenerative, non-regenerative, homebrews, etc.)
C. AC receivers - 1929 and earlier
D. AC receivers - 1930 and later
E. Transistor receivers (non-novelty)
F. Novelty receivers (transistor or tube)
G. Communication equipment (receivers, transmitters and transceivers): commercial, military and amateur
H. Ephemera and advertising (books, magazines, catalogs, posters, photographs, postcards, etc.)
I. Radio Accessories (speakers, headphones, antennas, tubes, parts, test equipment, etc.)
J. Entertainment items: TV's, phonographs (acoustic and electronic), recording devices (wire, tape), etc.

4. At the registration desk, you will receive a 3 X 5 card with a category registration number. Clearly print a short description of your entry on the front and check its status (restored/unrestored, working/not working); on the back, print your full name. This card shall displayed next to each of your entries so they can be identified when voted on and returned at the end of the contest.

5. A ballot sheet will be distributed to the membership so that 1st and 2nd place choices (based on registration number) in each category can be checked. A "people's choice" category will also be included.

6. Members will be asked to judge entries based on the following guidelines:

a) General appearance and condition (is the entry restored, cleaned, working and generally presentable or "as found").
b) Rarity (is the entry relatively hard to find).
c) Documentation (ads, journal articles, books, newsclips, photos, magazine articles, manuals, etc.).
d) Effort (how much work was put in to restoration, appearance, documentation and display).

7. Awards: Three major awards will be presented at the November meeting which represent the most ballots received from ALL categories. Ribbons will be also awarded to 1st and 2nd place winners in each category.

In the following photos, we've gathered, courtesy of Dave Sica, some examples of entries that appeared in the Old Equipment Contest at the 2008 AWA Rochester conference. We hope they give you some ideas in preparing your award winning entry.

NJARC 2008 DXpedition

By Al Klase

Date: 14-15 November 2008 (in lieu of the monthly meeting)
Location: InfoAge

What is it?

The basic concept is to gather together a working collection of radios representing the various era's of receiver design in an environment that will allow each of us an opportunity to operate the sets.

We're going to take advantage of the great facilities and quiet listening environment available to us at InfoAge. The primary theme will be broadcast-band DX, but the antenna facilities will support short-wave and long-wave operation as well.

We'll maintain two log books for each receiver, one for stations heard and a second for user comments. These can be published, with pictures, to the NJARC website for future reference. We can also shoot some video of each set in operation, and post it to *YouTube* etc.

Bring Your Radio

Come with sets in good working condition that you don't mind having other club members operate. If you can bring a length of coax that can be connected to your radio, with a BNC connector on the far end, it would be helpful. We'll try to have a lot of cables and adaptors, but we'll need your help.

We'll try to coordinate the different types of radios that show up so we don't end up with 13 All-American Fives. It would be nice to have representative receivers from the following categories:

- Crystal Sets
- Battery Sets: Regen, TRF-Regen, TRF, Superhet
- 1930's & '40's AC Sets: TRF, Superhet
- Other Entertainment Sets
- Communications Receivers: TRF-Autodyne, Single-Conversion, Multiple-Conversion
- Transistor Radios

Antennas

The primary antenna will be a Sky-waves Wideband Antenna System (see the GE V-Doublet in Riders Volume VI) feeding a multi-set coupler with 32 isolated outputs. There will also be tuned loops for the broadcast band, and a random wire or two for crystal sets.

Bring Your Sleeping Bag

Marconi Cottage #1 will be available for a sleepover. There are beds and cots and a working bathroom and kitchen. Bring your own bedding and towel. Please let the event chairman know if you're likely to stay over.

DAVE SICA WINS TAYLOR AWARD

We're very happy to announce that NJARC member and webmaster Dave Sica has won the Taylor Award at the recent AWA (Antique Wireless Association) national convention in Rochester, New York. The Taylor Award is presented in recognition of the preservation of television history; Dave was singled out for outstanding video documentation work associated with the Early Television Foundation and the David Sarnoff Library. Many of us have seen this work first hand at NJARC meetings throughout the years.

Dave was introduced to the award's banquet audience by Richard Brewster, the AWA television editor:

"Dave was born during the 'golden age of television' and always felt that there was something sublimely magical about the ability to move images through the air. He built his first television camera while still in high school from plans advertised in Popular Electronics. His first part time job was working in the local television repair shop, and his first job out of college was working with ABC Sports at the 1976 Olympics in Montreal. Even after all these years, it's hard to top that experience for sheer excitement! Later, he started his own video production business, Sica Productions, which he runs to this day. He recently received a Telly Award for "Onramps to Innovation", a historic documentary film sponsored by the New Jersey Department of Transportation."

"Dave has provided video coverage of every one of the six Early Television Conventions. For 2008, he broadcast the entire event live on the Internet and approximately two dozen early television enthusiasts were able to 'tune in' from all around the world."

"Dave is a founding member of the New Jersey Antique Radio Club. The club has offered live video webcasts of every meeting to the collecting community since January of 2008. He is also a life member of the InfoAge Science and Learning Center and he provides video production services for InfoAge and for NJARC's Radio Technology Museum, which is located on the InfoAge campus. He's planning to build a television studio in the Marconi Hotel at InfoAge."

This is the second year in a row that the Taylor Award was taken home by an NJARC member; last year, David Sarnoff Library Executive Director Alex Magoun was also so honored. Not only is this a wonderful accomplishment for each individual involved, but it is also a statement about the depth and talent of our membership.

Dave in his usual position at NJARC meetings...behind the camera.

Dave accepts from Richard Brewster.

Dave receives congratulations from NJARC attendees Frank Feczko, Edith Chase and Ray Chase.

ISAAC "IKE" BLONDER

1916-2008

Edited by
Marv Beeferman

With deep regret, the NJARC has learned of the passing of long time club member Isaac S. Blonder. Husband, father, inventor, businessman and technology visionary, Isaac died on August 29, 2008 at 92 after a long and productive life.

Mr. Blonder was born in NYC on June 24, 1916, and grew up in an apartment over his family's garage and gas station in New London, Connecticut. One of five children of Russian immigrants, "Ike" developed his early engineering skills wandering among junked cars, a blacksmith forge and his mother's egg-laying hens. As a teenager, he helped out in his father's auto repair garage repairing early car radios, in addition to working on his neighbor's home sets. He was the first in

his family to attend college and was the University of Connecticut's first physics major, graduating in 1938. Mr. Blonder went on to receive a Masters in Science degree from Cornell University.

Mr. Blonder entered the army in early 1941 as a member of the Electronic Training Group. As part of a secret clause in the lend-lease agreement between Roosevelt and Churchill, the ETG was sent to England before Pearl Harbor to operate classified radar installations under the auspices of the British Government. In the early days of the NJARC, when we held meetings at the Grace Lutheran Church in

Freehold, Isaac entertained the club with some hilarious stories from his days in England. While in the service, he became friends with another radar officer, Robert Rines, whose father was a patent attorney in the radio business.

After the war, Mr. Blonder gravitated to the burgeoning field of electronics engineering, first teaching physics at City College in New York. In 1948, he took an engineering position at TeleKing Corporation, a New York television manufacturer. Not only did he become involved in television, but he gained his first experience with a master antenna system. Because several TeleKing lab engineers needed access to one television antenna on the roof of the building, Isaac developed a splitter and amplifier system so that several televisions could share a single feed.

In 1950, with friend and fellow engineer, Ben Tongue, and patent attorney Robert Rines, Isaac Blonder founded New Jersey-based Blonder-Tongue Laboratories. Many early NJARC members remember the entertaining story that Isaac used to tell about that first year. Isaac and Ben had rented an old dance hall in Yonkers, New York, which had formerly housed an illegal gambling operation that took bets on horse races from the nearby track. Curiously, it featured a long row of toilets in the basement, all without stalls. Within days, Blonder-Tongue was raided by the local police, who suspected that the two engineers were actually bookies attempting to again set up shop. The toilets, it turned out, were there to flush away the evidence of betting slips in a raid.

In the beginning, Blonder and Tongue earned money by installing high-end televisions for wealthy Westchester home-owners while developing their first marketable product, the HA-1, a broadband booster that allowed for the amplification of all 12 TV channels. Later on, after moving to Mount Vernon, a high-gain, high power broadband amplifier and UHF converter were developed. In 1952, the company was moved to Westfield, New Jersey where a number of products for master antenna systems were manufactured. Over the next several years, they manufactured TV cameras, monitors, cable TV equipment, and other products related to the television industry. The company also entered the audio market, producing radios, tuners, a graphic equalizer, amplifiers and speakers. Under their leadership, Blonder-Tongue Labs created jobs for more than 200 people for 39 years. Mr. Blonder was as proud as this accomplishment as much as his 39 patents.

Isaac Blonder and Ben Tongue had a long history of pioneering innovations. A dispute over one key invention, the asymmetric log-periodic television antenna, made it to the Supreme Court where Blonder-Tongue prevailed. This also established a key legal precedent on collateral estoppel (the situation in which a judgment in one case prevents (estops) a party to that suit from trying to litigate the issue in another legal action). Beyond their many products serving the cable TV industry, Blonder-Tongue created the first successful Spanish-language television station in the country. Later, fascinated with 3-D technology, Isaac launched an experimental 3-D TV channel in conjunction with the Stevens Institute of Technology. Blonder-Tongue was also the first to invent a pay-per-view system for cable television, the Guards-

man. In 2002, Mr. Blonder and Mr. Tongue were inducted into the New Jersey Inventors Hall of Fame.
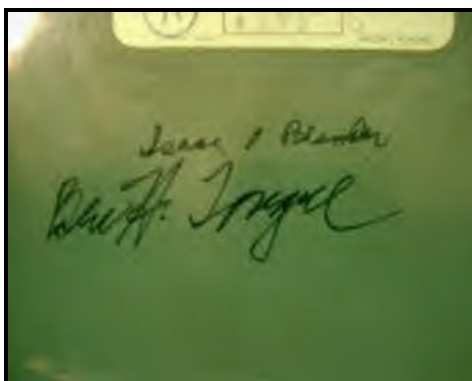

In the 1970's, along with Robert Rines, Isaac joined the Academy of Applied Sciences which sponsored many expeditions to Loch Ness to utilize sonar, underwater photography and pheromones to track its elusive "monster." Soon, Loch Ness became an annual family pilgrimage and Mr. Blonder's preferred "vacation."

Isaac was married to Lois Blonder for 46 years, with whom he had three children - Greg, Brad and Terry. Until her death in 1999, Lois, an artist, broadened his world with art, theater, travel and stimulating conversation. Mr. Blonder leaves two children, four grandchildren and three siblings. Donations in Isaac Blonder's name may be made to the Cable Center (2000 Buchtel Boulevard, Denver, CO 80210, cablecenter.org).

Member Comments:

I remember Ike telling us a story about his experiences working at a radio manufacturer where they used a mallet to whack the newly assembled radio to diagnose any intermittents. I am very fond of my Blonder-Tongue BTR-98B AM/FM tube radio. True to club ritual, when anyone brings in a Blonder-Tongue product, we ask Mr. Blonder and Mr. Tongue to sign it. The following photos show their signatures on my BTR-98B and me holding a BTU-2B UHF converter with Ben on the left and Isaac on the right.
Sal Brisindi

Like Sal, I asked Ike and Ben to sign a BT radio for me. In fact, I think I'm the one who "blew their cover." Up until then, few people in the club knew that they were famous in the electronics industry. It was great to hear them talk about the set; Ike did the mechanical design and Ben the electronic design.

I believe Ike worked at GE in New Haven (?) doing QA work before the war. That's where the hammer story comes from. I also remember Ike giving a talk on his radar experience in England during WWII. He said they gave him some kind of car (I can't remember the British make) to use to tour around the various radar sites. Ike said the car was so underpowered that it would not go uphill unless you got out and went up first. Another time, he wore a vintage "I like IKE campaign button to an NJARC meeting. (The other "Ike" was Dwight Eisenhower, for you younger folks.)

I am very proud to own an Emerson Catalin that Ike donated to the club to be auctioned off. It is my first and only Catalin and I had outbid Al Klase for it. Al and I are <u>not</u> the first two guys that people think of when they think of Catalin collectors.

John Ruccolo

It was with a great feeling of loss that I read that longtime NJARC member, television pioneer and inveterate jokester Isaac Blonder had died. Although its been a number of years since we've seen Ike at a club meeting, I felt awfully privileged to have known him. I'll always remember his stories and his unique ability to keep us laughing while discussing even the most technical subject.

Dave Sica

I am sorry to hear of the passing of Ike Blonder. My prayers go out to his family and friends.

As I write this, I am looking at my B-T audio amplifier, model A-1B, that Isaac and Ben autographed in July, 2002. I remember his talk about getting a job working for General-Electric in Bridgeport Connecticut in the final test dept. He said over half the radios failed the "thunk" test and had to be reworked. GE used spot welds to attach wires to the chassis and this was a common problem that was never fully resolved.

Isaac also talked about going to England to work on their radar. He went to class and then failed the final exam because he didn't write his answers exactly as the instructor explained. He then took the exam again but wrote his answers as the instructor wanted and passed.

Jon Butz Fiscina

These photos came out of my archives and with a little digging, I could probably find a few more. Talking with member Nick Senker, the first may have come from a show-and-tell video from September 1998. Nick said that Isaac "sure was a good story teller." It would be great to run this segment again; enough can't be said about Phil Vourtsis beginning the tradition of taping our meetings for this very reason. The photo below was taken at at David Sarnoff Library show-and-tell. Ed

At one of our NJARC meetings, someone showed up with the unusual piece of equipment shown below. It turned out to be a B-T "Audio Baton," the first 'no-inductor' graphic equalizer for hi-fi and broadcast use. The audio band-pass filter circuit was invented and patented by Ben Tongue and manufactured from about 1959 through 1961. The *Swirlies*, originally a Go-Go's cover band, moved into experimental music and created the album "Blonder Tongue Audio Baton" in 1993 which was named after the equalizer. What else could you expect from this innovative team? Ed
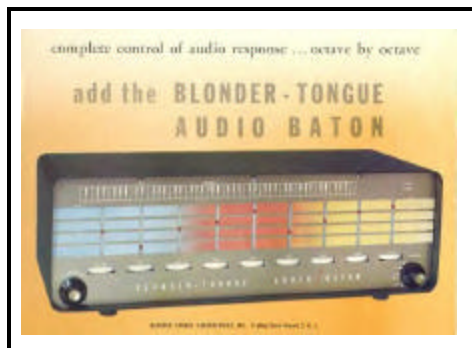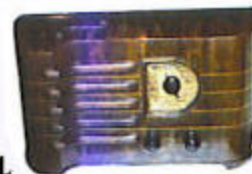
New Jersey Antique Radio Club's
Tri-State Fall Swapmeet

Parsippany PAL Building
Smith Field
Route 46 & 33 Baldwin Road
Parsippany, New Jersey 07054

Saturday, November 8, 2008

Walk around auction starts at 11:30 am. Bring in your attic treasures for free appraisal!

Expert Antique Radio Repair Available. Refreshments Available. Easy ground level access.

(70) 8 ft. Tables
$20.00 for members
$25.00 for non-members
Reserved Additional Tables $15.00
At the Door $20.00

Open to the Public
(8:00 am to 1:00 pm)
Vendor Set-Up at 7:00 am
$5.00 ENTRANCE FEE
CLUB DONATION

FOR DIRECTIONS
VISIT OUR WEBSITE: WWW.NJARC.ORG
OR MAPQUEST.
(33 Baldwin Rd., Parsippany, NJ 07054)

Vendors Make Your Reservations Now!
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