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Right-angled Artin groups as normal subgroups of mapping class groups.

Free normal subgroups of mapping class groups abound, by the result of Dahmani, Guirardel, and Osin that the normal closure of high powers of pseudo-Anosovs is free. At the other extreme, if a normal subgroup contains a mapping class supported on too small a subsurface, it can never be isomorphic to a right-angled Artin group, by work of Brendle and Margalit. I will talk about a case right in between: a family of normal subgroups isomorphic to non-free right-angled Artin groups. We also recover, expand, and make constructive the result of Dahmani, Guirardel, and Osin about free normal subgroups. We do this by creating a version of their “windmill” construction tailor-made for the projection complexes introduced by Bestvina, Bromberg, and Fujiwara. This is joint work with Matt Clay and Dan Margalit.