

Metropolitan Community Churches

Around The Fellowship

T e a r i n g d o w n w a l l s ! B u i l d i n g u p h o p e !

Judy Dale, Editor

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APPLICATIONS ACCEPTED!

Applications are now being received for open positions on the MCC Board of Administration and the Elders Nominating Committee.

Details available at www.MCCchurch.org and application deadline is September 3, 2007.

VIEW PHOTOS OF MCC'S GENERAL CONFERENCE ON- LINE NOW!

You can view photos of MCC's General Conference on-line.

Thanks to Conference

SPOTLIGHT ON MCC PEOPLE AND CHURCHES

Rev. Jide Macaulay spoke to the 41st African Commission on Human and People's Rights, in Accra, Ghana. Before returning to **House of Rainbow MCC** in Lagos, Nigeria, he had a private session with one of the Commissioners who was very supportive of LGBT rights.

Congratulations! **MaryAnn Northcote** was named the Safety Professional of the Year for the state of Michigan. She serves on the Board at **Divine Peace MCC** (Pontiac, Michigan).

Kitteridge Cherry, former MCC staff member, has written another book, *Jesus in Love*. For more about her life and writings, visit www.JesusInLove.org.

A group from **MCC of the Palm Beaches** (Palm Beach Gardens, Florida) sailed from Boston, Massachusetts, to Montreal, Quebec, Canada. A special feature to the cruise was the legal wedding of **Rev. Paul Whiting** and **Karl Zwarych** in Montreal!

The **MCC Asian Pacific Initiative Steering Committee** met for the first time. The members are **Rev. Dr. Jonipher Kwong**, **Rev. Ed Paul**, and **Stedney Phillips**. One in three people in the world is Asian and there are individuals and groups from all over Asia reaching out to MCC. The team's prayer and plan is to see the wonderful things that MCC is doing in Central and South America and in Eastern Europe also happening in the Asian Pacific world within three years or less.

First MCC of Atlanta (Georgia) honored their first women's softball team

Photographer Mark Hahn, you'll find a complete photo retrospective of General Conference by [Clicking Here](#).

PLAN AHEAD FOR FELLOWSHIP SUNDAY 2007!

MCC churches around the world will celebrate "Fellowship Sunday" -- the anniversary of MCC's founding -- on Sunday, October 7th.

This year's Fellowship Sunday Offering is designated for Church Planting across Latin America and to underwrite costs for MCC's Latin American Conference.

Look for details coming soon!

Why not begin now to make plans for MCC's anniversary celebration on October 7, 2007 -- and plan to participate in this year's historic Fellowship Sunday Offering to support MCC's growing ministry across Latin America.

**MCC TEAM
MINISTERING IN
SOUTHEAST ASIA!**

with certificates as *Ambassadors of the Church in the Field of Sports*. The team was cited by the league for its great attitude and team spirit.

That's one way to do it! When five homophobic comments appeared on **Rev. Sky Anderson's** YouTube video, **Erico Chan**, a member of **MCC San Jose** (California) quickly posted forty positive and LGBT-affirming responses, burying the negative ones!
www.youtube.com/watch?v=CSzVfAb914E_blank

Thirty members and friends of the Gospel Ensemble at **Resurrection MCC** (Houston, Texas) ministered at **Harbor MCC** in Galveston, where they "rocked the church!"

Rev. Elder Darlene Garner was present with the folks at **ICM Nuevo Espiritu** (Santiago, Chile) to celebrate the completion of the church planting process and their official recognition as a church in MCC.

We're All Angels, is a documentary about the spiritual, personal, and musical journey of **Jason and deMarco**. The film was shown at NewFest 2007: The 19th Annual New York LGBT Film Festival and OUTFEST 2007: The 25th Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Film Festival. MCCLA and MCC worldwide served as community collaborators for the film's Outfest screening in Los Angeles, and **Rev. Neil Thomas** spoke at the OutFest premiere in LA. www.myspace.com/wereallangels

MCC Edinburgh (Scotland) members, **Lewis Reay** and **Mary O'Fee**, appeared on stage as part of the Loud and Proud Choir, Scotland's only LGBT choir. The choir made a special guest appearance when the London Gay Men's Chorus was in Scotland while touring the UK.

Here's a challenge: Can you go 21 days without complaining or criticizing? The congregation at **Exodus MCC** (Abilene, Texas) has joined over 2 million people in 76 countries in taking this serious challenge to change their behavior. They do so by wearing a purple bracelet and, if they complain or criticize (unless they have a valid solution and are willing to be part of it), they must change the bracelet to the other arm and begin again.

Rev. Jane Newall of **Rainbow Cathedral MCC** (Yakama, Washington) was interviewed by "Woman-Stirred Radio" from Goddard College's KGDR FM in Vermont, which features interviews with LGBT writers, poets, musicians and artists. <http://woman-stirred.blogspot.com/>

Vitória is the location of our newest ICM Mission in Brazil. **ICM Vitória** recently celebrated its first worship service and is led by **Filipe Alves**. They have regular social activities, ICM informational meetings, and membership classes, so that newcomers will experience a complete church.

Congratulations to **Toby Bishop**, who was just named to the Board of Directors for Lambda Legal and will chair Audit Committee. He was also a panelist at an Out and Equal event addressing workplace equality with representatives from major employers in the Chicago area.

Rev. Sandy Bochonok was the guest speaker at the Naval Hospital in Bremerton, Washington, for their (US) National Day of Prayer Breakfast.

Journey MCC (Birmingham, England) was awarded a £10,000 grant to

A six-member team led by Rev. Pat Bumgardner, Chair of MCC's Global Justice Team, and Rev. Troy Perry, Founder of MCC, is taking part in a two-week ministry tour to Malaysia and Singapore.

The team will meet with groups and churches interested in affiliating with MCC, and with LGBT justice groups.

Please hold this team in your prayers.

CONGRATULATIONS TO MELANIE MARTINEZ AND HANNAH LOVE

We extend our love and best wishes to Melanie Martinez, MCC Web Manager, and Hannah Love, who were united in marriage in Dallas, Texas, on Saturday, July 28, 2007.

Rev. Dr. Cindi Love officiated.

improve their worship space. The congregation occupies a renovated railway arch in which they have worship space, offices, a kitchen, two bathrooms, a lounge, and social area. The grant will allow them to increase sanctuary seating to over 100 people by adding a mezzanine level accessible by both stairs and a stair lift. Under the direction of **Stephe Bentley**, they raised over £500 for the stair lift at an *Afternoon Tea with the Elder*.

Folks from **MCC Baton Rouge** (Louisiana) joined friends from **MCC of Greater New Orleans** (Louisiana) to view the Vatican Mosaic exhibit and lunch together.

Dee Soza was just elected to the Board of the **A. Austin Amerine Retreat Center** in northern California. They continue to search for three more AAARC Board members, especially individuals with experience in non-profits, marketing, and fund raising. www.aaarc.org

Internet technology is a wonderful thing! **Rev. Elder Darlene Garner** is able to consult with all of the leaders of the church plants in **Brazil** and with the leadership team of MCC's church plant in **Venezuela**. And the **Lay Ministry Council** was able to meet via MCC's TAP setup to plan their presentation for General Conference, all looking at **Bryan Parker's** computer screen from their own computers around the world!

MCC Key West (Florida) was featured in the June issue of *Key West Magazine* among other prominent spiritual communities on the island including Bethel AME, St. Mary's Catholic Church, Iglesia de Dios Restauracion, and B'nai Zion synagogue. Both **Rev. Charles Tigard** and **Rev. Steve Torrence** were interviewed for the piece.

Rev. Ray Neal, Cynthia Hall, and Dusty Kennedy of MCC Knoxville (Tennessee) were featured on *The Deborah Interview Show* on cable TV discussing being Gay and Christian.

The AD Players of **Resurrection MCC** (Houston, Texas) produced *Galley Proof*, a whimsical, yet thought provoking, look at Exodus with **Lee Walker** portraying Moses.

Joy MCC (Orlando, Florida) hosted the first MCC worship service held in conjunction with the annual Gay Days event held at Walt Disney World!

MCC-DC (Washington, DC) had a Hoedown to raise funds to send a group of 22 folks to work in the **Dominican Republic** for two weeks. They will serve at an orphanage school in El Tamarindo, present a Summer Bible Camp for pre-K to 8th grade, distribute much-needed school supplies and cash contributions, and perform major renovations and repairs to the school building.

Orgena Rose's Summer Concert Tour, *It's All about Love*, kicked-off at **Imago Dei MCC** (Glen Mills, Pennsylvania) on July 13.

Jennifer Hall and **Cindy Wiley** were involved in Cross Walk America last year to show the more progressive face of Christianity. A documentary film *The Asphalt Gospel* is being made and shows them in the promo trailer. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=exylTcuDLuY> They were also interviewed about the *Love Thy Neighbor* and *Gay by God* shirts that they have created.

www.love-thy-neighbor.org

ICM Niteroi (Brazil) has been granted affiliation with MCC, bringing a successful conclusion to a three-year church planting effort. The Pastor of the newest church in MCC is **Rev. Gelson Piber**. (Learn more about this congregation in the next issue of *Around the Fellowship*.)

Dr. Paul Dodd, formerly a member of the Elders Nominating Committee, represented MCC at the Marie Fortune's Faith/Trust Institute, which funded his participation.

All God's Children MCC (Minneapolis, Minnesota) is in the midst of a successful capital appeal campaign, *Blessed and Blessing Others*. Their goal is to raise \$500,000 (USD) to support their recent "Would Jesus Discriminate?" campaign, upgrade the church's heating and ventilation system, and provide seed money for new ministries.

WOW!!! Two and a half years ago when **Rev. Jonathan Jones** arrived in Alaska from his home in Australia, **MCC Anchorage** had 18 members. Today, they have 70!

Due to Hurricane Wilma in 2005, **MCC of the Palm Beaches** (Palm Beach Gardens, Florida) lost 113 pine trees. They have just completed the arduous task of removing the dead wood and grinding all those stumps. They planted ten Live Oaks and created new landscaping, a recreation area, additional parking, and a private garden for the parsonage.

Rev. Mel White, Founder of Soulforce and an MCC clergyperson, appeared on both *Larry King Live* and *Anderson Cooper 360* on CNN cable news to discuss the life and death of Rev. Jerry Falwell.

SHARE YOUR CHURCH'S NEWS

To share your church's news with the MCC Fellowship, send info by e-mail to [Judy Dale](mailto:Judy.Dale@mcc.org), Editor.

Deadline is the 15th of each month.

CONGRATULATIONS TO MCC GRADUATES!

Rev. Dr. Sandy Robinson received her Ph.D. in Rhetoric from Texas Woman's University. She is now qualified to teach Women's Studies and some philosophy and religion classes.

Rev. Jennifer Paty, Pastor of **Northern Lights MCC** (Augusta, Maine) completed her M.Div. (Masters of Divinity) at SS Cyril and Methodius Seminary in Orchard Lake, Michigan, the same seminary from which our Moderator graduated!

Light University, the educational arm of **Sunshine Cathedral MCC** (Ft. Lauderdale, Florida) held their Commencement Service. **Jean Johnson** received an Associate of Applied Religious Studies, being the first student to complete all required course work for a Light University degree. Deacon **Joel Slotnick** received the same degree and **Rev. Grant Lynn Ford** was awarded a Bachelor of Theological Studies and an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters. Deacon **Marian Cavagnaro** received a Master of Religious Studies. **Phil LaPadula** was the recipient of the Community Award from the Multi-Cultural Institute, which was presented by **Patricia Mathis**, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Treasury under US President

Jimmy Carter.

Randall Besta graduated with his M.Div. from Emmanuel College, Toronto School of Theology, University of Toronto (Canada).

Rachelle Brown, a member of **MCC of Greater St. Louis** (Missouri) received her M.Div. from Eden Theological Seminary.

Rev. Leanna R. Hamilton graduated from Pacific School of Religion with her M.Div. She was also one of three to receive the Certificate in Sexuality and Religion from the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies based at PSR.

Graduating from Wesley Theological Seminary were **MCC Washington DC** members **Elcindor Johnson** with an MTS (Masters in Theological Studies), and **Rev. Marian Humphrey** and **Rev. Lori McPherson** with their M. Divs.

Rev. Alejandro Escoto graduated with a Certificate in Ministry from Disciples Seminary in Claremont, California.

Rev. Ursula Cargill received her M.Div. from Princeton Theological Seminary.

Mykal Slack, Clergy Candidate at **Vision of Hope MCC** (Mountville, Pennsylvania), was awarded an M.Div. from Union Theological Seminary.



PENTECOST SUNDAY OBSERVANCES

Many of us think of the traditional changing to red altar linens and even wearing red for Pentecost. However, **Rev. Anne Hulse of MCC Seattle** (Washington) researched it and green is the Whitsunday color in some nations, such as Poland, Russia, and the Ukraine, where green branches decorate the homes and churches, symbolizing new birth, the birthday of the church. Clergy and altar boys also wear green vestments as do many in the congregation. In Italy they scatter rose petals from the ceiling of the churches to recall the miracle of the fiery tongues and wear red vestments. In France trumpets are blown to remember the sound of the mighty wind which accompanied the descent of the Holy Spirit. In Denmark it is a public holiday. In the Eastern Orthodox and Greek-Catholic Churches, an extraordinary vesper service, the Kneeling Prayer, happens on the night of Pentecost. There are three sets of long poetical prayers, the composition of Saint Basil the Great, during which everyone makes a full prostration, touching their foreheads to the floor.

MCCs each have their own ways of celebrating Pentecost!

The sermon series *7 Spiritual Habits for Moving from Resurrection to Transformation* at **MCC of Greater New Orleans** (Louisiana) culminated on Pentecost Sunday with *Take Time to be Renewed and Revived*.

Sunshine Cathedral MCC (Ft. Lauderdale, Florida) focused on

Pluralism. In addition to Christian hymns, Scripture, and Communion liturgy, they also had readings from the Jewish, Muslim, Unitarian, Native American, Hindu, Buddhist, Sufi, and Earth-based religious traditions.

The Praise Dancers of **Resurrection MCC** (Houston, Texas) celebrated their 3rd anniversary by performing on Pentecost Sunday and **Ron Drumm** offered a dramatic presentation of Acts 2.

MCC Newcastle (England) used "the birthday of the church" to have a Congregational Meeting to address supporting the Aims of the Church which they had previously adopted. They have grown enormously over the past year and are creating the infrastructure to support it and grow even more!

The Creative Worship Team at **MCC Los Angeles** (West Hollywood, California) opened the worship with a wonderful liturgical dance assisted by the choir and members of the Kid's Club. They even made it available on their website and on DVD.

Members of the Dance Team from **Vision of Hope MCC** (Lancaster, Pennsylvania) were the special guests at **MCC-DC** (Washington, DC) to assist the Gospel Choir with their rendition of *Send Your Spirit Down*.

Gentle Shepherd MCC (Phoenix, Arizona) used Pentecost Sunday to craft the Vision Statement for their Capital Campaign.

Following the Spirit was the Pentecost theme at **Trinity MCC** (Gainesville, Florida)

For **MCC San Francisco** (California) Pentecost was not just the moving of the Holy Spirit, but the moving of their Sunday worship services to a new home at The Kanbar Center.

Heartland MCC (San Bernardino, California) used it to celebrate their last Sunday in their chapel, which they had outgrown with 20 members. They have now moved to larger quarters.



CREATIVE MINISTRY IDEAS YOU CAN USE!

Members of **Exodus MCC** (Abilene, Texas) held a box auction, cookout, and ice cream social, having a great time and raising enough money to bring one delegate from Eastern Europe to General Conference!

A busload from **King of Peace MCC** (St. Petersburg, Florida) traveled to Orlando for Gay Days at Disney World.

Mary Smail, Director of Music at **MCC South London** (England) began a Guitar Club. The eight members meet regularly for instruction and practice. They had their debut performance at a recent worship service.

Instead of celebrating Mother's Day in May and Father's Day in June, **MCC Lubbock** (Texas) split the difference and celebrated Parent's Day!

MCC Fredericksburg (Virginia) has launched a new outreach/support

ministry designed to encourage MCC church planters and new church starts. Team members gather to send notes and pray for these new congregations and their leaders.

Yummmmy! The judges for the *Blessed Bread Pudding Bake-Off* at **MCC of Greater New Orleans** (Louisiana) finally declared a tie between the Bananas Foster, Irish Cream, and Chocolate Sauced versions of this New Orleans classic!

Free To Be MCC (Belville, Ontario, Canada) hosted a chili dinner, indoor yard sale, silent auction, and a sale of baked goods as a fundraiser for the church.

As a fundraiser for Conference, the Lay Delegates of **MCC Portland** (Oregon) sponsored an evening of folk music by **Gail Bumala** and **Kimberly Brown** and Friends. The \$20 (USD) admission included an array of desserts, as well as the music and fun.

FirstCoast MCC (St. Augustine, Florida) has formed a Grant Writing Ministry Team!

The folks at **Trinity MCC (Gainesville, Florida)** made Kool Kerchiefs to sell at General Conference and have been given a contract by the University of Florida to produce ones for them.

Open Door MCC (Boyds, Maryland) had a Puppy Social and BBQ. If you didn't have a dog to bring, you were invited to come anyway and pet some of the ones who were there!

Gentle Shepherd MCC (Phoenix, Arizona) hosted a portion of the Family Diversity Project Photo Exhibit prior to it being shown in its entirety at the OutFront Arizona Conference.

MCC NOVA (Fairfax, Virginia) had a booth at their city's Celebrate Fairfax Festival, reaching out to the wider community.

O Sol a Mio! **Church of our Savior MCC** (Boynton Beach, Florida) had an Italian Dinner, complete with music, good company, and great food.

New Hope MCC (Montgomery, Alabama) showed *Facing the Giants*, which was followed by free lunch for the community.

Empress Candidate Madeline Feinstein hosted a night of entertainment featuring both **MCC Omaha** (Nebraska) performers and ones from the community as a fundraiser for the church.



REV. PAT'S FINISHING SCHOOL FOR TRANNY GIRLS

After their dinner on the last Thursday of every month, members of the trans community move from **MCC New York's** first floor dining area to its third floor Gallery. There, amidst paintings and photographs, stained glass and hand-made greeting cards representing the work of 14 local artists, participants from the Bread of Life Dinner share secrets and tips on everything from "tucking" to tailoring.

Born out of **Rev. Pat Bumgardner's** desire to do more than simply meet

the immediate needs of a population whose unemployment rate is often close to 100%, the classes are facilitated by Deacon **Mel Bryant** and Board Member **Nina Schnell**. Mel has an extensive background in the fashion industry, working with models, hair stylists, make-up artists and fashion stylists. Nina's desire to see these women make it was born of her own mother's strong devotion to ensuring that she and her sister were strong, independent women.

Each session, the girls cover a topic designed to address an area that will help prepare them for the work world in New York City's competitive market. When you are trans-identified, personal presentation often determines whether or not you are even given the opportunity to demonstrate your skills or knowledge in your field.

Professionals from design, hair and make-up, as well as volunteers skilled in crafting resumes and negotiating interviews, are all part of the "staff." Ellen Lawlor from Redken, Flora Kay from MAC, and Daniel Schnorbus and Kyle Kennedy from G.H. Bass are among those who have generously contributed their time and talent.

"I know it is a blessing to the women, because they say so," commented Rev. Pat, "but what really astounded me were the responses of the presenters and professionals. I think they've learned as much about what happens to us when we open our hearts and lives to one another, as the girls have learned about transitioning to the employed world. The eagerness, the honesty, and the courage of all the participants have created a very sacred space on that third floor."

Those who completed the first year of the Finishing School graduated in a special ceremony at the 11 am Sunday Celebration at MCCNY on June 17. The "valedictorian" received a new business suit specifically purchased and fitted for her. Plans are already underway for the next class!

NOTE: Terminology in this article and headline reflects the preferences and usage of the trans community of MCCNY.



TRANSITIONS

Rev. Margarita Sanchez De Leon, Director of Amnesty International for Puerto Rico, was installed as the Pastor of **ICM Cristo Sanador** (San Juan). Over 200 people attended, including clergy from more than 15 other churches. **Rev. Elder Arlene Ackerman** officiated and the Founding Pastor, **Rev. Pablo Narravo**, participated. The service was followed by an incredible fiesta! The congregation is now averaging 90 per week and is planning ways to reach out to the whole island and to assist throughout the Caribbean.

Rev. Jane Acuff was ordained at **Christ Covenant MCC** (Decatur, Georgia). The special service was followed by a barbeque. She did her training at **Bethel MCC** (Birmingham, Alabama) and will now serve as Christ Covenant MCC's Minister of Education.

The Appleton congregation of **Angels of Hope MCC** (Wisconsin) has a new home in the chapel of the First Congregational UCC across the Fox River from downtown.

Rev. Tammy Mills resigned her position as Associate Pastor of **Jesus MCC** (Indianapolis, Indiana). The church presented her with a book of letters.

Rev. Patrick Rogers was installed as the Interim Pastor of **MCC of Topeka** (Kansas).

Appalachian MCC has moved into their own space in St. Albans, West Virginia on a busy street, which will increase their visibility. This is the first time they have had a place with 24/7 access.

Markens Liljer MCC (Copenhagen, Denmark) is once again an official congregation of MCC! Hellig Grund, a ministry of the church, now offers an exciting alternative spiritual community for people there. **Rev. Mia Anderson** continues as Pastor.

Rev. Boon Lin Ngeo was ordained at **MCC New York** (New York). He will serve on staff there until the opportunity arises for him to begin ministry in Malaysia. MCCNY has begun a once-monthly Mandarin language service and an English-Mandarin newsletter. Boon is taking part in the current MCC ministry tour to Malaysia and Singapore.

MCC's new church plant in Chicago, Illinois, **achurch4me**, has now begun worship services. Visit their website to learn more about this amazing work! www.achurch4me.org

Rev. Dan Bennett resigned as Pastor of **Reconciliation MCC** (Grand Rapids, Michigan). **Rev. Bob Bond** is the Interim Pastor there.

MCC El Paso (Texas) has begun the pastoral transition process following the resignation of **Rev. Kellie Rupard-Schorr**.

Stedney Phillips is resigning as Interim Pastoral Leader of **Resurrection Beach MCC** (Costa Mesa, California) after three years of service. **Rev. Elder John Gill** and **Linda Gibbins-Croft** will be working with this congregation in an intentional church transformation process.

MCC Winston-Salem (North Carolina) held a Pastoral Installation Service and Celebration Reception for **Rev. Joseph L. Cobb**.

Wayne Self is the Interim Musician at **Peninsula MCC** (San Mateo, California), following **Caroline Smith's** move away from the Bay Area.

Elaine German is retiring as Chair of the Elders Nominating Committee.



SUPPORTING ONE ANOTHER

Ron Erickson, organist at **MCC San Diego** (California) for eight years and one of their Lay Delegates, passed away. He had been hospitalized for heart problems and died during a surgical procedure. The memorial service was May 20. lee@mccsd.org

Rev. Paul Fairley has been diagnosed with Stage IV cancer. He received 5 radiation treatments for the lesions in his brain, which had not invaded the actual brain tissue. He is now undergoing chemo for the lesions in his

lungs. For updates and to leave messages for him, go to
<http://www.carepages.com/ServeCarePage?cpn=pgfairley&extrefid=tlcinvoke>

Rev. Beth Goudy and **Carol Stevens** were joined in the Marriage of the Church (not the law) at **MCC Lehigh Valley** (Allentown, Pennsylvania).
stevens.goudywedding@mcclv.org

Bryan, the partner of **Rev. Jim Martin**, the new Interim Pastor of **MCC Charlotte** (North Carolina), suffered a heart attack. The doctors were able to successfully open the two blockages in his heart. They have just moved there from St. Louis, Missouri. revjmartin@mcccharlotte.com

Brenda Hurt, a Deacon at **MCC Detroit**, passed away unexpectedly in June. She leaves her spouse **Lois Schwartz**. MCCDetroit@aol.com (Note: this is not Rev. Brenda Hunt who pastored that church at one time.)

Congratulations to MCC staff member **Melanie Martinez** and her partner **Hannah Love**, who were joined in Holy Union at **MCC of Greater Dallas** (Texas) on July 28. **Rev. Dr. Cindi Love** officiated. MelinHannah@aol.com

Sr. Phyllis McMurray, OSB, the sister of **Rev. Joe McMurray**, was diagnosed with Stage III(c) cancer in June, which was far more serious than either she or her doctors expected. She has undergone a mastectomy, and will likely have both chemo and radiation, since the cancer has spread to the lymph nodes. RevJoeJMac@aol.com.

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