



I'd Like To Teach The Commodore To Sing...

-by Lenard R. Roach

It has come to my attention that there is somewhat of a rift between Commodore/Amiga users over how the Commodore Vegas Expo is supposed to be handled. What has come to the ears of us middle westerners is that a few "creature comforts" have to be deleted when CommVEx moves to a new hotel for this year. This has led to hostile feelings between FCUG and other attendees, so much so that some attendees are pulling out of the upcoming CommVEx 2017 and are accusing the CommVEx organizer (who is also the Commodore.ca forum moderator) of censorship and more. It has been brought to me that some individuals have even been accused of "flaming" the CommVEx organizer/moderator.

Ladies and gentlemen of Commodore, let's go to our neutral corners and study this one piece at a time ...

First of all, I myself am not attempting to take sides. The southern rock group, DeGarmo and Key, had a lyric in their song, "When It's Over," which rings true – "I'm not the judge, because the jury's still out." I'm not judging, I just want to analyze this and see where we are. It would be sad to see Commodore West Coast divide like so many churches I've seen over my life over

something that may or may not be small.

We all saw photos posted on the Internet of the new room. I personally was excited. Much larger space (no cramming) and an overhead projector than when I last attended 2 years ago. This appeared to be a much better venue. However, as previously stated, certain niceties were not there, like being able to leave items overnight in the showroom. Security? At \$15/hour (Kansas City prices) for a guard, that would have mutilated the CommVEx budget. A volunteer to watch the room overnight? With everyone not wanting to miss a minute of CommVEx, this would be hard to find. I understand that CommVEx attendees would have to tear down at night, take their wares to their respective rooms, and set up again the next day. I would like to suggest that in these upcoming months before CommVEx, this item be resolved either by the exhibitors of the show or by the hotel who is doing the hosting.

Hurt feelings. I could go into a tirade about how we're all supposed to be adults and not act up, but as a bipolar, I totally understand this sentiment. We supposedly were sold a basket of goods that did not measure up to what we saw on TV. I think the organizer who was left to choose the venue was just as surprised as everyone else when he got into the "fine details" of the contract with the hotel. I have to admit, I was so overwhelmed by the "elegance of the ocean liner that I didn't see the leak until the boat quickly started to sink."

Those with hurt feelings have the right in feeling the way they do. They probably felt lied to and definitely felt disaccommodated. What was to be fun turned into work. I would like to suggest that you work with the organizer of CommVEx to resolve the problems in these months before the show.

Flaming. I haven't heard this term since my days with The Pulpit. I really thought that with the freedom of speech given to us with media like Facebook, flaming was long gone, and yet it has returned. Maybe it's under a new name now, like

trolling. I don't know. All I can suggest about this is to post your comment into an email and send it directly to your intended person. The Proverbs say, "When a wise man and a fool argue, those observing can't tell who's who." Do you even remotely wish to be perceived as a fool? I didn't think so. Keep your comments private, please.

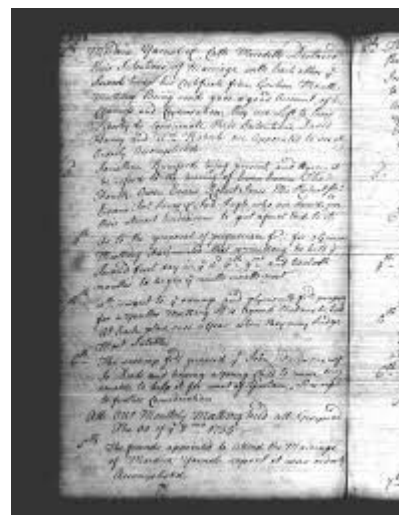
Censorship. This is as bad as flaming when used wrongly. Most censorship claims come from hurt feelings, but even taking that into account, some claims are legitimate. I tried to run The Pulpit as a free expression board, but one out-of-control user chased everyone out of the "Commodore-based digital church," leaving me with no options but to close the doors. Freedom running free isn't tolerance; it's anarchy. Charleston Heston in "The Ten Commandments" said, "There is no freedom without the law." I know many people are upset with the organizer/moderator and are screaming censorship. My suggestion to those hurt by the moderator's decision to ban some messages is to start your own forum and post your comments freely under your own rules. Remember, America was started by a handful of people who disagreed with the present administration of the day.

[Note: The upset people have brought their uncensored messages to the Atariage and Lemon64 forums.]

How would I sum all this up? I think that if CommVEx was handled poorly in 2016, then those with complaints should try forming their own convention in 2017 and those with the opposing view should buckle down and get ready for a smaller CommVEx turn-out, but please let's put aside any bickering or disputing and come under the banner of fellowship that is Commodore. Some of us like the VIC, some like the Amiga, still others the PET or 64 or the 128, but we can all still meet on the last full weekend of July in Las Vegas in a luxurious hotel and share our love of these machines. To paraphrase the Leonard Nimoy action figure in an episode of "Robot Chicken," "You forget the entire meaning

of fandom. We should enjoy our love of the product, not be divided by trivialities." Just because the doll said this while holding a 9 mm gun doesn't change the meaning of the statement.

As a postscript, let me say that I'm sure there are some reading this piece who will think that my comments are unfair or even downright wrong. I always welcome your comments to my comments, so please give me your opinion, and I will be glad to hear you out and respond to you if you so desire. Please send me good old-fashioned snail mail (my email is full of spam due to a hack several years back, and I don't want to lose your letter in the delete party I have nightly) to: 6025 Corona Avenue, Kansas City, Kansas 66102-1339



MONTHLY MEETING REPORTS

November 2016

-by Robert Bernardo

At the November meeting, president Robert Bernardo arrived on time a few minutes before vice-president Roger arrived. As usual, the systems had to be set up, and Robert and Roger attended to that immediately. Eventually, members Louis, Vincent, and Greg showed up, and we ordered our food. Near the end of lunch, Robert asked for old and new business. Robert

gave the latest update on the June Pacific Commodore Expo NW at the Living Computer Museum in Seattle, remarking that he would make a trip in the spring to the LCM to check up on how preparations were going for the show. Also he mentioned that November marked the 35th anniversary of the Fresno Commodore User Group, and in celebration, he brought a German chocolate cake from Save Mart. The cake was quickly wolfed down by all the members!

In general conversation, we talked a great deal about Commodore, Amiga, and non-CBM hardware.

Though Roger had bought his various ram expanders for the VIC-20, we did not have time to go through the latest and/or rediscovered games for the VIC-20. Instead, we concentrated on the various C64 games which Robert obtained while at the November SC3 Arcade Party in Claremont, California. One of those was the fighting game, Bruce Lee, and a lot of time was spent on that.

For the classic Amiga, Robert showed the various games and applications picked up from the October Amiwest Show. These were freely obtained! At the Saturday Amiwest Banquet, various programs were left on the tables as gifts for the banquet goers. Many left the programs sitting there on the tables, but Robert had picked up those leftovers. One of those was the desktop publishing program, Page Setter for Postscript printers. Because Robert had Postscript printers, this program would be useful for him.

December 2016

-by Robert Bernardo & Dick Estel

All our regular members were in attendance except Greg Dodd, but to help make up for his absence, we had an unexpected guest and possible future member. Bruce Nieman started with a MS-DOS machine but became an Amiga user in 1987.

He hadn't used it lately but had an A2000 that he'd like to get back in service. He planned to join us again in January.

His presence naturally triggered lengthy discussion of all things Amiga, including the need to replace the battery in his machine, since old Ni-Cad batteries have had a 100% failure rate over the years, leaking all over the computer's innards and pretty much destroying it.

On his laptop, Robert brought up the page for a new game, Unknown Realm. In 2012, game programmer Bruce Gottlieb showed this then top-secret game to the attendees at the Commodore Vegas Expo. Available for the Commodore 64 (NTSC and PAL), Windows, and Mac, Unknown Realm is a new, 8-bit, role-playing game in the style of Ultima RPG's. It was so secret that no one from outside his team was allowed to photograph or videotape his session. The CommVEx attendees saw a potential game full of fun, and they were excited that it was to be released.

That early version of Unknown Realm is now graduating to the release version, "Unknown Realm: The Siege Perilous," and Bruce is putting it up on Kickstarter. There you can see all the details of the game release, including video shots, screenshots, and screen animation. Also at the page, you'll be able to see the many and various pledge amounts to get this game released.

In official business, we voted to make our annual donation to St. Jude Children's Hospital, in the amount of \$50. We also voted to re-elect by acclaim all present club officers. We also agreed to change the January meeting date to January 22, since Robert will be arriving in Florida from the Star Trek cruise on the regular meeting date.

Dick brought in several binders of old newsletters for the members to look at, including the very first issue from February, 1983. He also showed us a binder containing printouts of hundreds of Print Shop Graphics, available in the club library for both Print Shop and Printmaster.

Having concluded lunch, general conversation, and business, we moved to the equipment tables for our demonstrations. Robert had brought a large collection of Loadstar disks and hoped to run some Christmas programs. Unfortunately, the index disk would not work, and we were forced to try and find December disks by guesswork, since they are only numbered, not dated. From the 1986 Loadstar disks, we ended up settling on a Koala image of Halley's Comet, looking at an astronomical program which plotted the course of Halley's Comet with respect to the horizon, and listening to 15 minutes of Mozart music. Not Christmasy but more fun was Aces, in which the player has 255 bullets and must target as many enemy planes as possible. Louis proved to be our best fighter pilot.

For the expanded VIC-20, we looked at Minisketch, a drawing program with which we used a Flexidraw light pen. The results were mixed artistically, although Vincent eventually managed to create a respectable "FCUG." The Flexidraw light pen may have been too sensitive; Roger said he will take the program and test it with his VIC-20 and less sensitive McPen light pen.

Robert plugged the Moses Assembler cartridge into the VIC, and we were able to look at the menu; we didn't really have anything to assemble except for the sample programs in the manual nor was anyone familiar with machine language programming.

Next we tried VIC-20 educational games. First up was the business and marketing game, In the Chips. What we first thought was a failure to read the instructions proved instead to be keyboard problems. One of the bad keys was the space bar, which was used to trigger various steps in the game, so we may be watching Louis replace the keyboard at the next meeting.

Then we tried Spills & Fills, a game which taught proportion and coordination. This one did not

need any keyboard commands, everything being controlled by joystick. The user had to fill various-sized beakers, move the beakers by using the game's "winch", and pour their contents into various-sized containers. Fill the container correctly, and points would be recorded. Overfill the container, and the user would be greeted by a nasty beep and points would be subtracted. Louis really got the hang of the game and was using it smoothly and expertly.

For the AmigaOne G4, we played around with the OS 4.1 game, Deathchase3d, described as a "very fast, 3d, Star Wars game based on Star Wars VI". It was more of a simple-looking, 3-D driving game in which the user shoots the speeder bike ahead. With its stark landscape and the look of the trees flying by, Robert was reminded of the C64 game, Encounter.

At the end of the meeting, Robert passed out the gifts that were originally supposed to be distributed at the October picnic dinner. Dick got an audio Y-adaptor cable, Roger received a LED puck light in the shape of a blue pig, Louis got a USB charger, and Vincent received the best one, a selfie stick, which he immediately made use of by attaching his cellphone to it and taking our photos.

Unknown Realm link:

<https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/stirringdragongames/unknown-realm-an-8bit-rpg-for-pc-and-commodore-64>

The Next Issue Of "The Interface" Should Be Ready For Publication Sometime Around March 15th



The CBM Engineers Talk About the C65

(Recently on Facebook, when Commodore Business Machines engineer Bil Herd talked about his going to the 2016 World of Commodore show, he and fellow engineers Fred Bowen and Dave Haynie started talking about the Commodore 65, CBM's attempt to make a successor to the C64 and even the C128. Here is the engineers' very revealing conversation, edited to leave out the side comments by other Facebook friends.)

November 16 at 9:33am

Bil Herd: I will be a guest speaker at the World of Commodore in Toronto December 3rd. The show runs December 3rd and 4th (I am going for both days) and is put on by the Toronto PET Users Group (TPUG). Hope to see you there! (Just don't ask me about the C65 unless you want an earful.)

Fred Bowen: Earful of what? I spent many birthdays at past Toronto WoC shows. Have fun ;-)

Bil Herd: Recently I have started quoting you about the C65 being just makeshift work while they were trying to sell CBM. Is that accurate enough of a statement?

Didn't know you caught any shows. I thought you tended towards the recluse side of publicness.

Then there's Terrence Ryan (1) who says he can't remember working at CBM outright, just some fuzzy images and the word Shiraz. (2)

Fred Bowen: No, the C65 wasn't "makeshift" work until after CBM was on the block. I continued working on it between dog-and-pony shows in the MOS building (that is, when I wasn't helping Greg Berlin build a deck behind his house.)

Bil Herd: Where did the concept come from? Did someone look at the market and think an 8-bit could be sold during the time of the Amiga and PC? Was the thought about trying to do something cheap during a time of confused Amiga strategy?

Dave Haynie: The way I heard it, Bill Gardei (3) was pushing for this, and since no one else in the chip group wanted to work with him, they just let it happen :-)

Bil Herd: Heh, same could be said about us. I 'spect no one really wanted to tell one of the animals "no". (4) And then the thought of bonuses for the managers took hold....

Fred Bowen: Roughly, the origins of the C65 began with a desire for an improved, cost-reduced C64 system incorporating a C64 and floppy drive. I began work on the C64D system design and software in the fall of 1987, initially with Bill Gardei working on combining chips in silicon and T. Tokuda (5) doing board layout at CJL (Commodore Japan). Total cost under \$100, December 1988 availability. Marketing desires grew over that year, and the system was enhanced to first the C64DX, and then the next year, and finally ta-da! the C65. The last tally put the cost around \$129 at the time, I think. Maybe \$139. Anyhow, it evolved because each year someone said, "We've got only one shot to revise the C64 and this is it." Until it wasn't.

1) CBM engineer Terry Ryan

- 2) CBM engineer Shiraz Shivji
- 3) CBM engineer Bill Gardei
- 4) Bil Herd's engineering group was nicknamed the "C128 animals".
- 5) CBM Japan engineer Teraj Tokuda



Adelaide Amiga and Retro-Computing Meeting

September 2016

-by Stephen "Epsilon"

Today I am covering the September 2016 Adelaide Retro Computing group meeting with an Amiga theme. For this meeting we had special guests Trevor Dickinson from A-EON Technology and Robert Bernardo from Fresno Commodore User Group fly in especially for the event!

Before the meeting, I met up with Trevor (freshly flown in from New Zealand) and took him to Rundle Mall to grab a bite to eat. Rundle Mall is the main shopping district in the Adelaide CBD (Central Business District).

We then made our way to the meeting venue. As we were a bit later than usual, George and Theo from the group committee helped out a bit earlier with the table setups ahead of our arrival. I then

had to quickly assemble a very large array of Amiga stuff I brought for the meeting!

I decided to bring an AmigaOne X1000, AmigaOne A1222 (Tabor), MiST FPGA (Minimig AGA), and a CD32 with the brand new Classic Amiga CD32 game called Reshoot I received this week - doesn't get much newer than that!

It took a long time for me to set up, everything before the attendees arrived, but Trevor was very keen to start using the systems once I did!

I first met Trevor at AmiWest 2014, and it was fantastic to have him here in Adelaide to enjoy our Amiga-themed meeting this month!

Trevor also brought in and distributed interesting Boing Ball, recycled-page notebooks at the meeting! Thanks for these; I am sure our attendees are as glad to have them as I am! :-)

As mentioned, Robert Bernardo from the Fresno Commodore User Group also flew in from the USA to be here; he is also attending the Amiga User Group in Melbourne and Sydney Amiga User Group events while he is here.

Robert had me meet together with a keen attendee, Jane VosKamp, running her own business called JMV Grafix which produces documentation and graphics for Commodore 64/128 GEOS. She had an example book from JMV Grafix, with the samples being available for purchase on the night.

Given the Amiga theme for tonight's event, we had no shortage of Amiga systems on display, both Classic and Next Generation. A rare Amiga 500 Plus model with memory expansion and internal cpu mounted hard disk expansion was brought in - very rare to see one of these Amiga 500 Plus machines in Australia. Aron brought along his trusty Amiga 600 along with doing his usual soldering table duties (thanks for this,

Aron!). The Amiga 600 was running very nicely indeed with wireless internet access via a PCMCIA wireless adapter card. Running not so nicely and receiving attention from Aron during the evening was an Amiga 2000HD system that was brought in. Mick brought in his NG Amiga - a Sam 440-Flex system running AmigaOS 4.1 Final Edition: Mick works on and contributes lots of Amiga OS4 software ports, and so he is quite active in the NG Amiga community.

A very cool expanded Amiga 600 system with built in CD drive was on exhibit. This Amiga 600 had a ACA620 accelerator installed, as well as a special modified laptop power supply, which bypassed the need to use a normal brick power supply. The star of the machine for me, though, was the built in slot load CD drive - there is so little space inside A600.

In addition to my own CD32, someone else also brought in a boxed CD32 and CRT t.v, running the Alien Breed/Qwak game CD.

Of course we also had other systems, too, for example, an older PC laptop running Amiga emulation was brought in.

Robert brought a signed Commodore 64, autographed by Jack Tramiel, Leonard Tramiel, and Chuck Peddle, and put that also on display. Also for the Commodore 64, a company called RGCD is continuing to produce new games on cartridge for the Commodore 64 in 2016; Robert brought Bomberland to display at the meeting.

Theo brought in his Altair system. Also interesting was this Intel SDK-85 system, displayed at the event. The Intel system was then powered on to show it did actually still work.

The event was well attended, and people quickly got chatting about all things Amiga and retro-computing!

As this was the first time an AmigaOne A1222

had been displayed in Australia, Trevor was keen for people to see the system is a very capable system; it was busy running Amiga emulation, productivity apps and games too!

Some interesting Commodore 16 systems and music making hardware for the C16/64 was also brought in. George brought in his SX64 portable system to try the music making software and CMK-49 hardware out, with Robert involved too.

We then started out main presentation for the evening, with Trevor Dickinson covering A-EON Technology's current projects for Next Generation and Classic Amiga in 2016. Needless to say we were all fascinating to here all about what A-EON Technology is working on.

One of the projects A-EON Technology is working on is the A.L.I.C.E laptop, which is A Laptop Incorporating a Classic Amiga Experience. It runs on a standard Acer x86 laptop and can run the Classic Amiga and AmigaOS 4.1 experiences alongside your normal Windows or Linux installations. It can also run Linux applications in a way (called Rabbit Hole) that integrates with the Classic Amiga setup, which is running AmiKit X. Trevor is used Libre Office running on the Classic Amiga environment for the notes he used during the presentation.

After his presentation was finished, he kindly fielded questions from the attendees for quite a while, covering topics from Classic Amiga add-ons like the Prisma Megamix, where he explained the technical software development reasons for the delay of shipping this product (which makes perfect sense), and where A-EON is at with the AmigaOne X5000 and A1222.

He even hinted at some future projects that he didn't expand on, but needless to say he is committed to the NG and Classic Amiga platforms in 2016 and beyond. It is wonderful to have new systems and software being produced by him! It was a great presentation and we are

very grateful to Trevor for taking the time for fly in especially for our event!

Let's take a closer look at the A.L.I.C.E system Trevor brought in. There is the boot menu where you can select from Windows, Ubuntu Mate Linux, Classic Amiga (Amikit X) and AmigaOS 4.1 Final Edition Classic environments to boot from. The AmigaOS 4.1 Final Edition Classic environment is actually running under FS-UAE on a Linux distribution that boots directly into the environment from power on (you can press F12 to see the FS-UAE control options while it is running).

Next, I tried booting it into the AmiKit X environment, which is a highly customised AmigaOS 3.1 build with the new Rabbit Hole functionality. With the Rabbit hole functionality, you can launch Linux applications, like Libre Office, Firefox, Skype, VLC, etc, all from within the Classic Amiga environment, and they integrate seamlessly with it. Libre Office, running within the AmiKit X environment, was snappy and performed well while I was mucking around with it.

This is an exciting development, as it means we will be able to buy a standard laptop that can run other normal day to day computing needs in 2016 but can function as a Classic Amiga while doing it! Exciting indeed, and I look forward to when we are able to buy one!

Moving back to the meeting itself, my NG Amiga table setup was getting quite the workout by this time; I had the brand new AmigaOS 4.1 game, Amiga Racer, with my requested Australian Holden Commodore HSV car being raced quite a lot on the night!

I also had Tanks Furry, Wings Battlefield, Reshoot, Amiga Racer game boxes and games running on the night:

My AmigaOne A1222 got plenty of looks and

plenty of questions to me and Trevor about it during the evening. I covered the case and build of the AmigaOne A1222 extensively; the new A500-style case is worth checking out for the people (and there were many) that loved the case I put it in and wanted to know where to get it. Also pointed out to me from one of the guys who made them originally was a 3.5 inch external floppy drive made in Adelaide for the Classic Amiga: Never actually seen one of these drives myself before, so I was glad to see it tonight!

The second hand tables were doing good business as usual.

It was great to see the kids really enjoying playing new games on the AmigaOne X1000, like the game, Voxelnoid.

It was a truly great evening and I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone who came to the event and especially to our special guests Trevor and Robert! I had a great time and I am really looking forward to the next meeting!



Member Biographies Vincent Mazzei

“Memory Lane,” our series of articles honoring former members, is complete, and we have now moved on to current members. The interviewer is Dick Estel and he is responsible for any errors or misunderstandings that get printed.

Now let's get to know Vincent Mazzei.

The Interface: Please provide brief biographical data: Place of birth, family status, occupation, current place of residence.

VM: I was born 01/10/02 in Visalia, CA, but I live in Farmersville. I'm 15 and a student at Farmersville High School.

TI: What is your first memory of being aware of home computers (not necessarily using one; just any knowledge of their existence)?

VM: I've been around computers ever since I was born.

TI: Do you recall a time when computers were not a common fixture in most homes? Elaborate to your heart's content.

VM: No. We've always had computers in the house.

TI: What is your earliest memory of using (or trying to use) a computer – your own, a friend's, at work, in a store.

VM: Trying to play Microsoft Train Simulator when I was like three years old and was successful.

TI: When did you get your first computer and what was it? When did you get your first Commodore computer and what was it?

VM: My first computer was my VIC-20 that I got in 2011.

TI: What computers have you owned?

VM: Commodore VIC-20, C-64, SX-64, Alienware Alpha, TI-99/4a, a couple of iMacs, netbooks and my current PC.

TI: How often do you use a Commodore computer - daily, weekly, monthly, rarely?

VM: Not every day, but sometimes I make my TI have fits in BASIC.

TI: Did you ever use a Commodore of any kind at school or for school purposes?

VM: No.

TI: Do you use a computer at work/school, and if so what type? How do you use it or what do you use it for? (If retired, answer based on your final year or two of work).

VM: At school I use awful Dells that crash every two minutes.

TI: What computer-type devices that are not specifically a laptop or desktop do you use (iPad or other tablet, smart phone, other)? Have you used any in the past that you no longer have or use?

VM: I have an iPhone and I used to have an iPad, but it broke.

TI: Which person in your family uses a computer at home the most?

VM: Me.

TI: 11. What Commodore magazines did you subscribe to or read, and which did you find most helpful?

VM: None. (Editor's note: Vincent is too young for the heyday of Commodore magazines.)

TI: What are your predictions or expectations for the future of Commodore brand computers?

VM: I hope that the Commodore brand gets revived into a modern computer line while keeping the classic, retro feel.

TI: 14. When did you join FCUG?

VM: 2011, after gaining possession of my VIC-20.

TI: Any final thoughts?

VM: Negative.

is granted provided credit is given to the source, and when identified, the author. Club members are encouraged to submit articles, tips, or ideas for articles.

Disclaimer – The club, its officers, members, and authors are not responsible for the accuracy of the contents of The Interface or the results of actions based on its contents.

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Our disk library contains over 3,000 public domain programs for the C64 and C128. Members are entitled to copies of these disks at no cost if a blank disk is provided. We do not deal with pirated, copyrighted, violent, or obscene programs. Please call our attention to any programs found in our library which may violate these standards.

-The Small Print-

The Fresno Commodore User Group is a club whose members share an interest in Commodore 8-bit and Amiga computers. Our mailing address is 185 W. Pilgrim Lane, Clovis, CA 93612. We meet monthly in the meeting room of Bobby Salazar's Restaurant, 2839 North Blackstone Ave., Fresno, CA. The meetings generally include demonstrations, discussion, and individual help.

Dues are \$12 for 12 months. New members receive a "New Member Disk" containing a number of useful Commodore 8-bit utilities. Members receive a subscription to The Interface newsletter, access to the public domain disk library, technical assistance, and reduced prices on selected software/hardware.

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