

June 2004

Friends of Warrandyte State Park



Newsletter

Friends of Warrandyte State Park (FOWSP) Inc. P O Box 220 Warrandyte 3113

From the Government

Victorian Budget 2004/05

The Victorian Government released its 2004/05 State Budget on 4th May 2004. A range of environment initiatives have been funded including:

- A boost to Victoria's firefighting resources
- Ongoing projects in water conservation
- Improvements to the planning and titles systems
- Improved recreational facilities

Saving water and the environment for the future

Environmental programs are a key focus of the 2004/05 State Budget, with funding to support projects in fire, water, parks and the alpine region, the Minister for Environment, John Thwaites said today. "The Bracks Government is building a better future for Victorian families by protecting the environment for future generations," Mr Thwaites said. "We are taking on Victoria's number one environmental challenge – water conservation – to ensure every Victorian family can meet their water needs now and in the future," he said. "An additional \$67.5 million will go to the Victorian Water Trust for ongoing works that will be detailed in the Bracks Government's water White Paper to be released later this year. "Part of this funding will go towards meeting Victoria's commitment to the joint State and Commonwealth Living Murray initiative," he said.

"The Government is also committing an extra \$168 million to bolster fire-fighting and fuel reduction burning programs. And an additional \$5.2 million will be spent on Melbourne's parks and other recreational facilities in 2004/05.

"At the same time a range of programs will benefit from ongoing support, including Smart Farms, Healthy Rivers, Weed & Pest Control, and the Victorian Heritage program. "Every part of Victoria will benefit in one way or another from the Bracks Government's commitment to protecting the environment for future generations," Mr Thwaites said.

Funding boost for Melbourne's Parks

Melbourne's metropolitan network of parks, gardens, trails, waterways, bays and other significant recreation and conservation assets will receive a funding boost estimated at \$32.4 million over the next four years. This will ensure that Melbourne continues to enjoy world-class parks, gardens and recreational facilities well into the future.

Among the eligible recipients of the extra funding are Parks Victoria, Melbourne's three zoos, the Royal Botanic Gardens, the Shrine of Remembrance Trustees and associated conservation and recreation programs.

Parks Victoria manages 35 major parks in the metropolitan area, including Albert Park, Brimbank Park, Westerfolds Park and Lysterfield Park.

The new funding will come from modest rises in the annual Metropolitan Parks Charge. For the vast majority of householders located within the metropolitan area the charge will rise from the current minimum of \$46.70 to \$50 per year. Currently more than 90% of these properties pay the minimum annual rate.

Continued on next page

From the Government continued:

From 2005-06 onward the minimum charge will be indexed in accordance with the Monetary Units Bill 2004, which is currently before Parliament. This will provide for parks funding to keep up with inflation. The projected \$32.4

million over 4 years is in addition to ongoing commitments to regional areas made in last year's budget covering pest control (\$14 million over 4 years) and the employment of 50 new Park Rangers (\$16 million over 4 years).

Source: Victorian Government web site

From the Age

Worth Repeating

Parks cash inadequate

Money in Tuesday's budget for managing the state's national parks barely covered inflation and on some measures had decreased, environment groups said yesterday.

For the past year, the groups have complained of inadequate funding for national parks, with weeds and feral animals out of control in many areas.

Their hopes for more money were dashed when budget figures revealed a small increase, after post-bushfire funding was taken into account.

For a Government that casts elf as green and which has a surplus, it should be doing more to protect our national parks and conservation assets," Victorian National Parks Association director Charlie Sherwin said.

"We have a big challenge in maintaining infrastructure such as walking tracks, visitor

facilities and funding for threatened species protection."

Environment Victoria's executive director, Marcus Godinho, said money for water reforms and making rivers healthier was good, but it should not be done with money taken from parks. But Environment Minister John Thwaites said yesterday that there had been no cutbacks.

By Melissa Fyfe

Source: The Age 5/5/04

But what about the environment?

I looked and looked and I looked and looked, flicked pages back and forth, trying to find the environment in your reports on the state budget in Wednesday's paper. Just two short columns (bottom left, page 12). I presume it reflects the State Government's priorities.

How I long for the day when the thing that supports our whole existence is as prominent as "the economy", health and education.

Karen Alexander, Clematis

Source: The Age, Letters and Opinions 6/5/04

would you like to?

Now that we have your attention do please consider coming along to some of our committee meetings. Usually held mid-week they start at 7.30pm and usually finish by 9.30pm. Held at various committee members' homes they are relaxed and always finish with a pleasant supper.

A bonus is the chance to hear first-hand what the professionals are doing - our acting ranger-in-charge, Craig Lupton, comes along and provides a report for us.

We'd love a few more people to take on some of the many small jobs which will improve our (already fantastic!) organisation. There are plenty of ways we can help encourage the local residents

and our traders to realise how precious our remnants of original Melbourne are.

Last December two people resigned (Flora as she was moving away and Joan to focus on other aspects of FOWSP) and we've had one addition - the return of Geoff Speedy.

Nobody expects us to attend every meeting - indeed no-one ever does. We have students, part-time and full-time workers and 'retired' folk. So do please give it some thought - maybe you could be available for 3 or 4 evenings a year - whatever you can give will be welcomed.

Interested? Contact any committee member and have a chat or just turn up to the next meeting.

Joan MacMahon

Did You Know?

By Marion Thomson

Did you know that there are male and female *Lomandra* plants? I learnt this interesting fact when Josh Revell led seven eager Fowspians on a walk from Black Flat to Jumping Creek picnic ground, and back, on a very warm afternoon, after our mornings' work in the nursery.

The shady river track made walking very pleasant, but the dry autumn meant that we did not see orchid or lily leaves let alone orchid flowers normally familiar to the area at this time of the year, namely - *Chiloglottis reflexa* (Autumn Bird Orchid) and *Eriochilus cucullatus* (Parson's Bands). Their tubers may remain dormant this year because of the very dry conditions.

At Josh's request, we were looking for a marker - a certain rocky outcrop in the river. It was at the third sighting that he led us off the track onto an exposed, almost bare, rocky slope, about 3 metres above the river. He knelt to encircle, with one hand, a small, grey-green, grass-like clump and told us this was a very rare plant and the only one in Warrandyte State Park. It was a female *Lomandra nana* (Dwarf Mat-rush) plant. We wondered at such a small plant being

able to survive on such a barren site. But survivor it is, as proved when Josh's ruffling at the base of its foliage produced a sprinkling of seed. He scattered this onto near by ground.



Female flower of *Lomandra nana*

At the half way point - Jumping Creek Picnic Reserve - we rested, chatted, glad of our water bottles and trying to ignore the incessant attention of the European wasps. Luckily, we had no food to increase the intensity of their unsettling barrage. We had observed along the way that many tree hollows were occupied by wasp colonies and wondered at the reasons for the flourishing of these wasps over this drought period.

Pointing out the dark patches covering parts of the riverbed, Josh told us that there is yet another weed invader of the Park. The escapee is the popular, exotic aquarium plant, *Elodea canadensis* (Canadian Pondweed) and it is thriving in the moderate water temperatures of the Yarra River.

A slight deviation on the way back brought us to the Burgan clearing site where many of us have annually laboured over the past few years. We learnt that this *Kunzea* (Burgan) in the State Park has been identified as a different species from *K. ericoides* and is now called *K. leptospermoides*. One of the identifying features is the tendency to re-sprout from a cut base. Again, it had been too dry for signs of new growth in the caged, re-vegetation plants across the cleared site.

Interestingly, in the vicinity we did not hear the familiar bell tones of the Bell Miner (*Manorina melanophrys*) which has been blamed for the imbalance in the vegetation of this area of the Park. On the same walk two weeks previously I had heard them. Maybe the imminent change in the weather, with long awaited rains arriving about midnight that same day, had silenced them temporarily.

Now that the Park has received an initial wetting it will be interesting to walk the track again to see the invigorated vegetation, hear the bellbirds and look in on and say "Hello" to Ms. *Lomandra nana* as it must be a lonely existence.

Nursery News

- A visit by the Friends of Braeside to our nursery in April was very successful. The group were extremely interested and impressed with the work we do and we have been invited back to their nursery.
- Information for the Green Corps frog poster has been collated, but needs a little more work prior to publication.
- Plants have been donated to the Friends of Stony Creek
- We are in the process of producing membership cards. These can be presented when purchasing plants, confirming FOWSP membership so genuine members can receive their discount.
- We are currently receiving quotes for works at the nursery including replacement of poles in the green shade house, roof over potting area, replacement of racks in big poly house and an extra work bench and stool.

Ranger's Report

By Craig Lupton, Acting Ranger In Charge

Natural Values Management

- Rangers Cam Beardsell and Conrad Annal have just completed the first Pindone carrot run at Warrandyte State Park. Rangers will be delivering certain aspects of the rabbit control program in house, particularly in areas where existing rabbit action groups are concentrating baiting and harbour control efforts. Four bait stations have been established in areas where non-target wildlife including wallabies and wombats are present. These areas include the Gravel Reserve, Stane Brae at Stillwell's Gully, the Sigma site and the Common. Staff from Plenty Gorge Parklands have provided equipment and their expertise to assist rangers to lay carrot bait trails throughout Pound Bend (around the office area), along Pound Bend Road and off Boys Road, and at Yarra Brae at the Market Garden Bend. The first Pindone feed has been undertaken. There is a further two poison feeds to lay over the next 10 days.

- Contractors have completed rabbit baiting at Pound Bend, Stane Brae and Mt Lofty. Rangers will be conducting spotlight transect counts in the near future to assess the effectiveness of the program.

Human Resources

- Ranger David Van Bockel is on annual leave for the month of May, and Colin Bromiley for the month of June

Visitor Services

- Works are about to commence on the upgrade works to Gold Memorial car park. The car park has been experiencing high levels of rubbish dumping, cars performing circle work and there has been a long history of anti-social behaviour occurring in the car park over night. Local residents have worked with rangers to devise a plan to reduce the inappropriate activities. This will involve creating sleeper car parking bays, providing a bus parking sleeper lane and closing off the steep entrance/exit ramp. This will reduce the inappropriate vehicle activities and hopefully make the car park less attractive to the current deleterious activities.

Our Year in Warrandyte

By Jan Smids

During the middle of 1996, we were told by an Estate Agent of vacant land for sale on Fourth Hill in Warrandyte and seeing it as an opportunity not to be missed, we decided to take a look. As we loved the open space, the abundance of big eucalypts, its close proximity to the State Park and the presence of birdlife, we bought the land and planned to build our new house within a couple of years.

Time marched on and the land remained unoccupied! On a warm summer's day during February 2003, we finally got to celebrate our move to Warrandyte.

Since living here for just over a year now, we have grown to really love the place and the Warrandyte area. We have regular visits from very vocal, active Rosellas and Rainbow Lorikeets that sit in, on and around the bird feeder out the front, while a large Kookaburra sits majestically on a eucalypt branch waiting for its next feed. Ducks can be seen swimming, diving, feeding and preening themselves in a neighbour's dam, alongside a lone Ibis or Egret who feeds around the water's edge or just lazes around on the bank.

Some time ago, we had a brief but interesting visit by a Koala, and more recently an Echidna

took up residence at the base of a eucalypt at the rear of the house, including a Kangaroo who stayed for several hours watching and listening every movement on and above the ground.

Our walks along the riverbank, or into the State Park are very enjoyable and a great way to see and learn more about the many wonderful indigenous plants in the area, including my Thursday morning visits to FOWSP where I'm surrounded by people with a vast knowledge of these plants.

Finally, our most recent wildlife experience was quite a surprise – a one metre long Tiger Snake decided to settle at the back of a retaining wall about 2 metres from the house. We sought the help of a reptile person from Melbourne Zoo who, along with equipment and lots of digging, managed to capture, bag and remove it. We all breathed a sigh of relief at that moment!

It has certainly been an interesting and eventful year so far and we look forward to many more.



FOWSP Committee 2004

Pat Coupar	9844 1650	Newsletter Editor	<u>Wildlife Rescue</u>	
Ray Clarke	9841 8507	Treasurer	Julie Pryor	9722 1117
Sue Shepherd	9844 3754	Assistant Treasurer		
Peter Curry	9844 0958	Secretary	<u>Market</u>	
Geoff Speedy	9437 0894		Marie Krause	9712 0498
Lee Speedy	9437 0894	Membership Secretary		
Mike Coupar	9844 1650			
Melanie Birtchnell			<u>Park Office</u>	9844 2659
Karen Reynolds	9712 0797			
Michelle Hanslow	0402251577		<u>Nursery Manager</u>	0408800026



Manningham City Council Environment Seminars 2004

1st July - John White "Bird Friendly Cities"

John will look at the composition and type of habitat in urban woodland parks and open space, its affect on bird populations and how we can help to create bird friendly cities to avoid further species loss.

Dr John White is a Lecturer in wildlife ecology at Deakin University. His recent research has focused on the influence of urbanisation on bird communities.

5th August - Jeff Jeanes "Orchids of the Melbourne area"

Jeff will provide us with a brief overview of this captivating group of plants, He will focus on the various habitats of orchids in the Melbourne region, their biology, ecology and conservation, and some of the immediate threats to their survival.

Jeff Jeanes has been studying and photographing orchids for nearly 30 years. He is co-author of two books on Victorian orchids and is currently working on the *Australian Virtual Herbarium Project*.

2nd September - Suzie Moore "Wetland Ecology and Management"

Suzie will explore every aspect of wetland ecology and reveal key driving processes behind these fascinating ecosystems, as well as outlining general principles of their management.

Dr Suzie Moore is a Director of Ecos Environmental Consulting. Suzie has worked in the areas of aquatic ecology and water quality management for over 15 years. Her doctoral research focused on the ecology of herbivorous Australian waterbirds and identified important waterbird habitat requirements of wetlands.

The seminars are free and no bookings are required.

Supper provided.

Time: 7:30pm

Venue: The Function Room Grand Hotel 120 Yarra Street, Warrandyte. (Melways Ref. 23 E11)

To join us for dinner at the pub before the seminars, book a seat in the Bistro on 9844 1199.

For further information contact:

Cathy Willis on phone: 9840 9122 or cathy.willis@manningham.vic.gov.au

Deadline for July Newsletter is June 27th

FOWSP THURSDAY PROGRAM

We meet for propagation and other nursery activities every Thursday morning at 10.00am at the Warrandyte State Park depot, Pound Bend Road, Warrandyte (Melway 23 C10), unless otherwise stated below. When there is no scheduled afternoon activity we often go on a spontaneously organised walk. Propagation takes place from 10.00am to 12 midday followed by lunch. No prior experience necessary - there is always someone available to show you the ropes.

The nursery is open for plant sales (by donation) every Thursday 10.00am to 12md and the first Sunday of each month 2.00pm to 400pm.

Important Notice

Please note the nursery is only open for plant sales during the above times. Some members and non-members have been turning up for plants (and advice) outside these hours without prior arrangement. If you find it impossible to come during official opening times please contact the nursery manager first.



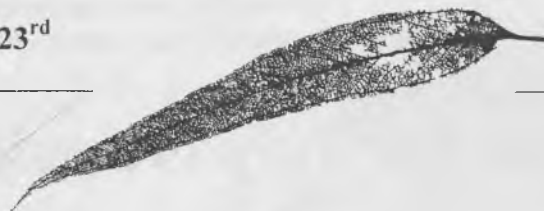
New Prices

Members: 60 cents per forestry tube
Non-members: \$1 per forestry tube

Thursday Afternoon Walks

On the fourth Thursday of every month there will be a short walk (about one hours duration) somewhere in the Park. If you would like to attend either bring your lunch and stay on after the propagation morning or meet at the nursery at 1.00pm.

Walks will take place on: June 24th
July 22nd
August 26th
September 23rd



When I turn 80 the things I'll do

By Alwynne Buntine

Conservative I've always been but,
When I turn 80 I'll change that scene
I think of all the things I'll do,
Might even dye my hair bright blue.

I'll go to Western Australia and climb their highest tree,
I wonder if my insurance then still would cover me?
What the heck, it wouldn't matter if I had a fall,
At least they'd know that if I died, I did it having a ball

I'd paint my nails and pierce one ear and buy a motorbike,
One of those big three wheelers that look more like a trike.
I'll go off trekking in India and the Himalayas too,
I know I'd drive the family mad, but they'd be nothing they could do.

I might go bungy jumping because when you're at that stage,
The condition of your retinas has been determined by your age.
Or perhaps hitch hike to Brisbane, even Alice Springs,
I could just set out along the road and see what the journey brings.

I know I should be dignified and sit in my rocking chair
But why should I? There's a world of adventure out there.

Life is not a practice, it's the only chance you get,
I plan to be outrageous so I'll never have any regret.
I don't want to think of things I've never done,
Looking back in hindsight, realising they might have been fun.

I know a little saying and I'll make sure that it comes true,
"Live long enough to be a problem to your children."
And my word that's what I'll do, I might not wait until I turn 80!

Forthcoming Events

Pound Bend Planting Morning

Thursday June 24th
Meet at the depot at 9.30am
For a planting morning in the Pound Bend Reserve

Norman Reserve Planting Morning

Thursday July 15th
Meet at the depot at 9.30am or Norman Reserve at the end of Bradleys Lane at 10.00am

Warrandyte Environment Day

This inaugural event will be held at Stane Brae where Fowsp has had a long association.
Sunday June 20th
Meet at Jumping Creek Reserve – Sandy Bay car park at 9.30am. BYO lunch, a BBQ will be available. Ranger Cam Beardsell has organised the day and will be on hand to assist. Come for the morning or stay on for an afternoon stroll.
We hope that Warrandyte Environment Day will become an annual activity.

Wildlife Rescue

By Julie Pryor

Several birds have needed attention lately and I have referred them on to other shelters or to local Vets, as I am unable to take in birds.



A joey Wombat was brought in to care, he weighed around 3K and he was found in his dead mother's pouch. He was passed on to another shelter and after a slow start he is now doing well. Thankyou to all the people who care enough to stop their car when they see a dead animal on the side of the road. You may remember Dally the Joey Koala I raised was found in the same way, a motorist stopped and found her in her dead mother's pouch weighing 400Grams and not injured. A joey can live in dead mother's pouch for up to 48 hours so it's always worth a look.

Two female Eastern Grey Kangaroos have been hit by cars on Jumping Creek Road this week, both were carrying joeys, if somebody had stopped when the animals were hit we may have been able to save the little ones, in both of these cases we were too late to be able to help.

Dal the joey Koala has been taken in by Healesville Sanctuary. She is now out of quarantine and has been out to meet the public. I was with her last Monday at the Sanctuary Koala

talk, as there were a lot of people around only the children were allowed to touch her back gently. Dally appeared to enjoy this, her eyes stayed bright and her ears stayed up, she was very alert to what was happening around her. People have asked why a Sanctuary and not the wild.

Dally was the third joey Koala I have raised, the fourth was Cam and they were raised together. When Dal was in my care I thought there was something different about her, I still can't put my finger on the problem, but a Koala not fussed on gum leaves could be part of the problem. I know and trust the keepers at Healesville and they will be able to watch her diet far better than I could if she were released into the wild.

Cam was released back into the wild on April 9th. After a rough start he has been doing well. On release we selected a tree, but Cam had difficulty climbing past the bark and fell several times. He was not injured and eventually found a good place to steep. I returned 3 hours later only to find he had gone, we were unable to find him. The next day there was no sign of him. The following day we went back and found him in a bush, we talked to him and left him there.

From here until the 29th of April we were able to find him easily. I have now lost sight of him. He was doing well, moving from tree to tree, he looked very comfortable and his pellets looked good. We will keep looking for him for a few weeks, but then he will be on his own.

The Battle for Fourth Hill

By Steve Munro

A Sunday morning walk through Fourth Hill in early May was punctuated by a dramatic battle. The battle was not conservationists versus Council, nor walkers versus bikers; two wallabies were locked in a fierce encounter.

We stumbled on the battling wallabies on Fiddler Gully track a few hundred metres from the Webb Street carpark. For most of the fight they were upright with heads thrown back and front paws mostly thrashing the air, looking for a grip on, or a slash at, the opponent's face or throat. They rocked back frequently on their tails, back legs lashing out, searching out an unguarded piece of abdomen.

From time to time one or the other stumbled or slipped to the ground. When this happened, the opponent went for the throat or face of the downed foe and jumped on the body with the full weight of their hindquarters. The five or six times I saw this happen, the downed foe was able to struggle free and hop away a pace or two before

they resumed their upright boxing match.

The battle was curiously quiet. There was very little growling, grunting or other noisy intimidation, just furious wrestling and boxing.

Both were, for a long time, oblivious to a very interested spectator and spouse keeping a respectful distance. After five or six rounds of boxing, each punctuated by a fall and ground-level wrestling, they took a breather and noticed they were not alone. After another short round, they hopped away almost in unison but not in harmony. The fight resumed as a running battle, every few metres they stopped for a tussle, separated, then hopped on for a few metres more.

The foes seemed to be full-grown, standing almost as tall as an average man. If a female was the prize, she was keeping well out of sight. If it was a battle for territory, it was still unresolved because they were still close together when they disappeared from sight. If they were two young males trying their strength, they had a good workout. In spite of the fierce endeavour shown by both, neither seemed to have drawn blood, and there seemed to be no obvious broken limbs.

Sunday mornings are not always peaceful on Fourth Hill!

Worth Repeating

Birds of a brilliant feather flock to the food-rich city in their thousands

By Melissa Fyfe
Environment Reporter

Rainbow lorikeets are bucking the trend. While humans opt for the city-to-country seachange, these rowdy parrots are choosing the big smoke. And they're loving it.

The flashy lorikeets are moving into Melbourne, Adelaide, Brisbane, Sydney and Canberra in greater numbers than ever before - well adapted, it seems, to the urban lifestyle.

Reasons behind this shift are being unravelled by the Australian Research Centre for Urban Ecology and the University of Melbourne. The puzzle is of particular interest in Melbourne because for decades the bird disappeared from the city.

Common in Melbourne when the settlers arrived, by the 1920's the rainbow lorikeet had gone. Sightings after that were thought to be aviary escapees.

In the 1970's the parrot came back. They are now more abundant in the city than before white settlement.

One reason for this population explosion could be that these tropical and sub-tropical birds are attracted to the 'heat island' effect of the city's warmth-radiating tar and cement. "Conditions in Melbourne have become more subtropical and much warmer than surrounding areas," said ecology honours student Pavlina Shukuroglou. "I think they are liking that."

Another reason is food - a smorgasbord of it. The urban forest of fruit trees and flowering shrubs and trees are a gourmet's delight. The

well-watered plants bloom longer and more profusely.

Councils have also planted non-Victorian eucalypts that provide more food for parrots as well as other nectar-eating birds and the city's grey-headed flying boxes.

People also feed the parrots. "A lot of people love them because they are such pretty birds," Ms Shukuroglou said.

Birds Australia, however, warns people not to feed the lorikeets. The often aggressive birds are not yet considered a threat to other native birds. But feeding will only increase their numbers, and dangers to their rivals.

"The population explosion might get out of hand," said Chris Tzaros, research and conservation officer with Birds Australia.

They are also incredibly noisy and can hang out in flocks of up to 1000. And they never shut up.

Where do they gather? Using data from Birds Australia, Ms Shukuroglou has worked out the likelihood of seeing them in your suburb.

Lorikeets like places where roads are not too closely spaced and tree cover is not too sparse. They like the woody eastern suburbs, and areas such as Ringwood, Altona, Balwyn, Mentone and even Preston and Northcote.

One of her most intriguing discoveries was about the birds' breeding habitat. Rainbow lorikeets need tree hollows to breed and Melbourne has few - one for every 12 hectares in the suburbs.

"The rainbow lorikeets are probably breeding outside Melbourne because I can't find anywhere they would be breeding in Melbourne," Ms Shukuroglou said.

So it seems the city is for hanging out with mates and grabbing something to eat. The country is for having kids.

Source: *The Age* 19/4/04



FOWSP has received the following two reports: **'Melbourne's Rivers and Creeks 2004'** and **'Results of Platypus Live-trapping Surveys along Mullum Mullum Creek Oct 2003-April 2004'** Both reports are available for loan from the library located in the Rangers office at Pound Bend depot.





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Nankeen Night Heron

In the 18th century the city of Nanking in China produced a reddish-buff cloth for British hunting jackets. Two similarly coloured Australian birds now bear the name of that cloth. One is the Nankeen Night Heron, the other is the Nankeen Kestrel.

Nankeen Night Heron's are occasionally seen in Warrandyte resting on a branch beside the river. They feed at night on fish, frogs and aquatic invertebrates.

FOWSP Membership Form

Name

Address

.....

Tel. no.

Family \$20

Single \$15

Concession \$10

Send to: FOWSP PO Box 220, Warrandyte 3113

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