



# Olmsted 200

Bicentennial Notes about Olmsted Falls and Olmsted Township –  
First Farmed in 1814 and Settled in 1815

Issue 38

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## Contents

Grand Pacific Junction Has a Big Imprint and Future Plans	1
Some of Peltz's Drug Bottles Are Still Around	5
Olmsted Had Big Bicentennial Celebration Four Decades Ago	7
Reader Has Fond Memories of Trolleyville, U.S.A.	10
Caves under Olmsted Spurred Interest and Precautions	10
Still to Come	12

## Grand Pacific Junction Has a Big Imprint and Future Plans

*This is the final part in the series of stories about the history of the buildings and other structures of Grand Pacific Junction that began in February 2015.*

Grand Pacific Junction has preserved much of the historic appearance of downtown Olmsted Falls by giving new uses to old buildings, but the effects that developer Clint Williams has had on that part of the city go beyond the stores and restaurants that attract so many people to the Junction. And he is hopeful his influence will live on long after him.

Williams owns several buildings in the neighborhood that are not listed on the Grand Pacific Junction roster. He holds onto them as a means of preserving the character of the district.

One building in the midst of the Junction buildings along Columbia Road actually came into his possession almost two decades before he started work on the Junction. It is the building at 8020 Columbia Road, the second one north of the railroad tracks on the west side of the road. It was built to be a replacement for the grocery store operated by Robert and Richard Fenderbosch until a fire that started in the basement on January 19, 1949, damaged the building beyond repair. The earlier building had stood there since the late 1800s.

In the early 1970s, Tom Kucklick operated an appliance store there. When he decided to retire and move to Florida, he called Williams.

“He was trying to sell his appliance business and couldn’t sell it, so I said, ‘I’ll buy it.’” Williams said. “So I bought his appliance business. So now I’ve got a new building and an appliance shop – repair washer machines, repair this, repair that – which I knew nothing about. But he had two guys that were good, so we kept them. Then I decided I wanted an office in Olmsted Falls. So I put a wall down the center of that building.”



*Clint Williams acquired this building at 8020 Columbia Road in the early 1970s, before Grand Pacific Junction.*

The Olmsted Falls office for Clint Williams Realty operated out of half of that building until 1978, when Williams converted a former Shell gas station at the corner of Water Street and Columbia Road to serve as his office. Now, two different insurance agencies operate out of the two halves of the building.

“And that’s quite a coup when you get two insurance companies side by side,” Williams said. “Isn’t that something?”



*A glance up at the front of the 8020 Columbia Road building reveals this colorful character.*

The building had sat empty for several months until one day when he suddenly received two expressions of interest. First, the owners of an Allstate Insurance agency looked at the building and agreed to lease half of it. Williams barely was finished reaching an agreement on that when the owners of a Farmers Insurance agency called to ask about moving into the same building. Fortunately, neither agency minded sharing the building with the other, so it has been what Williams calls “a good rental” for a long time.

Thus, Williams began his preservation work in downtown Olmsted Falls long before he had the vision for Grand Pacific Junction. He also acquired other buildings in the area with the intention of preventing anyone else from doing something that could detract from the Junction.



*This house at 8161 Orchard Street that Williams owns was built from a kit sold in the early 1900s by Sears, Roebuck and Company.*

“Everybody calls me,” Williams said. “I appreciate it.”

For example, he acquired the house at 8161 Orchard Street in 2013, not to turn it into another commercial establishment for Grand Pacific Junction but just to make sure it would not be a source of problems. He fixed

it up and now rents it to a good tenant. “See, when I own the building, I can control it,” Williams said. “This guy’s not going to call and complain about music over at the [Grand Pacific Wedding] Gardens.”

Before he bought it, it was “a disaster,” he said.

“Some of this stuff you buy to clean up because you’re surrounding it with good stuff and then you get the dump,” Williams said. When he inspected the house before buying it, he found “junk everywhere,” such as six empty toilet paper rolls in the lower bathroom – two in the tub, two in the sink and two on the floor. He took photos of the mess.

The house was built from a kit ordered from the Sears Roebuck catalog in the early 1900s.

From 1908 until 1940, Americans could buy from Sears, Roebuck and Company not only merchandise to put in their homes and fix them up but also kits to build the houses themselves. They could order them by mail and have all the pieces shipped to them

**A PRETTY LITTLE HOME**

**The RODESSA** Home-Kit **\$907.00**  
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See Description of "Home-Kit" Homes on Page 9.

At the above price we will furnish all the material to build this four-room bungalow, consisting of lumber, lath, Five-Chief Shingle Roll Roofing, mill work, porch ceiling, siding, flooring, finishing lumber, building paper, ceasing trough, down spout, nails, hardware, medicine case and painting material. We guarantee enough material to build this house. Price does not include cement, brick or plaster.

It is hardly necessary to say that this is a most attractive little home. The illustration proves it beyond a doubt. Furthermore, the price is also attractive. Much thought and expert advice have been expended in designing an exterior that will make this bungalow appeal to lovers of artistic homes, while the floor plan appeals to all people desiring the utmost economy in space. This plan is very popular with our customers, as proven by the sales of other houses with a similar arrangement. If you have only a moderate amount to expend on your home and wish to secure the biggest value for your money with the greatest results in comfort, convenience and attractiveness, you can make no mistake in purchasing this house.

**Main Floor** A glazed front door opens into the living room. A door leads from the living room to the dining room, and door leads from the dining room to the kitchen. Doors lead into the rear bedroom and bathroom, which has medicine case. Two good size closets. Rooms are 9 feet from floor to ceiling.

We furnish our best "Quality Guaranteed" mill work, described on pages 120 and 121. Interior doors are five-cross panel, with trim and flooring to match, all yellow pine, in beautiful grain and color. Windows are made of clear California white pine, with good quality glass set in with best grade of putty. Porches have fir edge grain flooring.

Paint for two coats outside, your choice of color. Varnish and wood filler for interior finish. Stratford Design Hardware, see page 119.

Built on a concrete block foundation, enclosed basement. "Home-Kit" frame construction and sided with narrow level clear cypress siding. All framing timbers are of No. 1 quality yellow pine.

**OPTIONS**

Steel Floor and Plaster Finish to take the place of wood lath, \$15.00 extra.  
Glazed Doors and Windows, \$15.00 extra.  
Sewer, \$10.00 extra.  
This house can be built on a lot 12 feet wide.

Our Guarantee Protects You—Order Your House From This Book  
Price Includes Plans and Specifications.

**SEARS, ROEBUCK AND CO. CHICAGO**

*This is the ad from the Sears catalog for the kit for the 8161 Orchard Street house.*



by rail. The lumber was cut carefully to fit together, and the kits contained all the other materials needed for assembly. They turned out to be remarkably sturdy, and many are still in use today.

The house at 8161 Orchard Street was built from a kit called “The Rodessa,” which was available from 1919 to 1929. A page from the Sears catalog that Williams keeps in his records says that the kit cost \$907.00. It includes this description of the house:

*It is hardly necessary to say that this is a most attractive little home. The illustration proves it beyond a doubt. Furthermore, the price is also attractive. Much thought and expert advice have been expended in designing an exterior that will make this bungalow appeal to lovers of artistic homes, while the floor plan appeals to all people desiring the utmost economy in space. This plan is very popular with our customers, as proven by the sales of other houses with a similar arrangement. If you have only a moderate amount to expend on your home and wish to secure the biggest value for your money with the greatest results in comfort, convenience and attractiveness, you can make no mistake in purchasing this house.*

Over the years, Williams has bought most of the buildings and vacant lots along Orchard Street from Mill Street to Bagley Road. One of the first was the tan building at



*Williams has owned this building at the corner of Bagley Road and Orchard Street since the early years of Grand Pacific Junction.*

the northwestern corner of Bagley and Orchard – 25630 Bagley Road – home of the insurance agency owned by Ron Smith and previously by Greg Monin.

Williams bought that property in 1992, as well as the adjacent lot

now used for parking. As other properties nearby came up for sale, he bought them, too.

Williams said he is still “having fun” with Grand Pacific Junction and the properties around it. But he has been in the real estate business for more than half a century and some people are wondering about the future of the Junction.

When the previous mayor asked, “Clint, what’s going to happen when you’re gone?” Williams said, “I don’t know.”



*This house at 8158 Orchard Street is another one that Clint Williams owns. He bought it in 2015.*

Jokingly, he said, he is making everyone guess. But seriously, he has been planning for a time when he won't be there. He said the Grand Pacific Hotel is one of the keys to keeping Grand Pacific Junction going.

“My thinking would be to do two family foundations,” Williams said. One would be for what he calls the “hub” of buildings from the Wedding Gardens to

the Wedding Chapel. The Moosehead building and the new one he built, the replica of an 1800s train depot, on Columbia Road just south of the railroad tracks, could be spun off.

“The reason I say they could be off to themselves – they’re not integral to anything here,” Williams said. “They’re moneymakers to help. But this [hub] would support itself. Going to have to have a director, going to have to hire people to do stuff, and you got to collect the rents.”

In other words, he said, it would take more than one person to replace him. “I’ll tell you that because I’m working about 14 hours a day right now, but I enjoy it,” he said. During Olmsted Heritage Days, it is not unusual for Williams to help clean up in the evenings until almost midnight.



*This wagon and sign mark the Orchard Street entrance to the Junction from Bagley Road.*

## **Some of Peltz’s Drug Bottles Are Still Around**

The series about the Peltz and Simmerer families that ran in *Olmsted 200* during the first half of 2016 included several references to Joseph Peltz’s work as a druggist from the late 1800s until 1920, when he moved to California. It turns out that some of those medicines – or at least the bottles they came in – are still around. A few shelves full of them were handed down to Philip Simmerer's son, Carleton, and continue to be passed down in his family. Doug Peltz, the great-great-grandson of Joseph, acquired photos of them from one of his Simmerer relatives.





“Pretty amazing to see, huh?” he said.

A look at the labels on the bottles provides an idea of what druggists were selling a century ago. For example one bottle is labeled as containing “fluid extract taraxacum.” Taraxacum is another name for the common dandelion.

*These are some of the bottles of medicine from Joseph Peltz’s store from about a century ago.*

According to several sources, dandelion historically was

believed to have a number of medicinal benefits, especially for treating digestive disorders. Among the compounds it contains that are pharmacologically active include flavonoids, caffeic and chlorogenic acid.

*The bottle in the center of the photo to the right is for fluid extract taraxacum, which was made from dandelion. Note that it came from Parke, Davis & Co. of Detroit. At one time, it was the world’s largest pharmaceutical company and built what is considered the first modern pharmaceutical laboratory, which now is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. By coincidence, the bottle in the photo to the left of the taraxacum contained chloroform that came from Charles Pfizer & Co., which became the Pfizer, Inc., of today. In 1970, Warner-Lambert acquired Parke-Davis. In 2000, Pfizer, Inc., bought Warner-Lambert.*





*The bottle just right of center in the above photo contained Gombault's Caustic Balsam.*

The label on another bottle from Joseph Peltz's collection says it contained Gombault's Caustic Balsam. That was a well-known French veterinary medicine. It became widely used in the United States through marketing by the Lawrence Williams Company of Cleveland. It was essentially a counter-irritant medication. One source indicates that it included croton oil, cotton seed oil, oil of camphor, oil of turpentine, kerosene and sulfuric acid.

An 1893 advertisement for Gombault's Caustic Balsam called it "the safest, best blister ever used. Takes the place of all liniments for mild or severe action. Removes all Bunches or Blemishes from Horses and Cattle. SUPERCEDES ALL CAUTERY OR FIRING."

Thus, it seems that Joseph Peltz sold medicines not only for people but also for animals at his store in Olmsted Falls.

## **Olmsted Had Big Bicentennial Celebration Four Decades Ago**

Forty years ago this month, Olmsted Falls and Olmsted Township spent four days celebrating the nation's bicentennial with music, dancing, speeches, poetry, a parade and, of course, fireworks.

The celebration began on Friday, July 2, 1976, with a square dance at 8:30 p.m. at the parking lot by the library (which then was in the house on Main Street that Newton Loomis built in 1834) and a round dance at 9:00 p.m. at the Village Green. Those events were held by the Olmsted Falls Parks Board.

On Saturday, July 3, a joint Olmsted Falls-Olmsted Township Bicentennial Parade began at 10:00 a.m. Floats, marching units and bands assembled at Olmsted Falls High School. Bicycles and wagons assembled at the Middle School parking lot. They proceeded down Bagley Road to Mapleway Drive, then Cook Road and Columbia Road. The parade disbanded at All Saints Lutheran Church and Columbia Mobile Home Park.

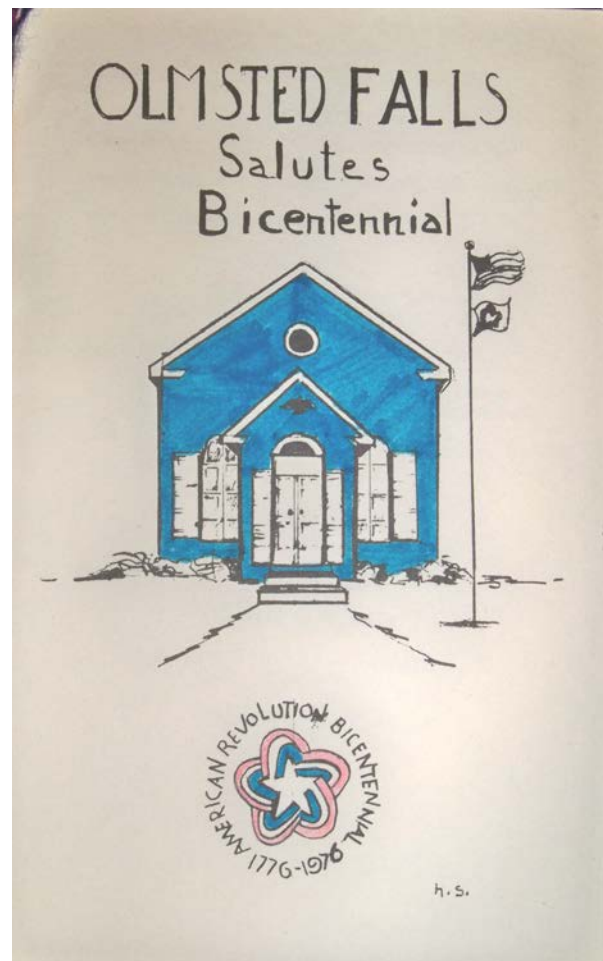
From 1:00 to 5:00 p.m., a Village Potpourri was held at the Village Green. It included games, food, historical displays, craft demonstrations and a bicentennial quilt display.

The big day was Independence Day itself – Sunday, July 4. Activities started at 2:00 p.m. with a program at the Village Green. It began with a medley of patriotic songs from the Olmsted Falls Bicentennial Fife & Drum Corps, followed by the raising of colors by the American Legions Color Guard with David Leski raising the American flag and Lora Hirschberg raising the bicentennial flag. Then trumpeter Bill Bosch played a fanfare leading into a reading of the Declaration of Independence by Mayor Allan Mills. After that, bagpiper William Stanton played “Amazing Grace” and then Molly Stanton danced to “Highland Fling” and “Swords.”

Next was a “Salute to US” with Clo Stuebe as chairman. The Village Green was encircled with state flags provided by the fourth-grade class of Paula Hugel from Falls Elementary School. Each person present was asked to register by the flag of his or her native state. Refreshments then were served.

After that, the Olmsted Falls High School Chamber Ensemble, under the direction of John Wrabel, performed several songs including: “Chester,” “How Firm a Foundation,” “All-American Girl,” “Coney Island Baby,” “Drill Ye Terriers,” “Shenandoah,” “Soon-Ah Will Be Done” and “The Star-Spangled Banner.” Next, Dr. William Mahoney, who would serve as mayor years later, read charges against King George. The Olmsted Community Church Men’s Choir, directed by Robert Scarr, sang “Testament of Freedom” and “Battle Hymn of the Republic.”

During the “Olmsted Falls Salute to the Nation,” attendees were asked to reflect silently on the country’s history and heritage. Then vocalist Kenneth Halstead and accompanist Robert Miller performed “Ode to Olmsted.” The program for the celebration included these words to that piece:



*The front of the community’s bicentennial program featured a depiction of what then was one of two city halls Olmsted Falls had. This was the south hall, the former West View Village Hall, which originally was a school built in 1880.*



### **“Ode to Olmsted”**

*O Olmsted Falls we sing to thee  
And pledge our love and loyalty  
Your homes, your streets, your lofty trees  
Will ever haunt our memories  
Your churches, schools, the Village Green  
Will help to keep our lives serene.*

*Plum Creek, the river, two village halls  
All add their charms to Olmsted Falls,  
The library, station and the mill  
And Turkey Foot – forever still,  
Some day we’ll have no noisy planes  
Or rough road crossings blocked by trains.*

*So raise your voices, let them ring  
For Olmsted Falls and every thing  
That’s good and true and wins a nod  
Of silent blessing from our God –  
And now Kiwanis wants to share  
The knowledge that it pays to care.*

By Bert Lewis

Following that performance, Mayor Allan Mills read a “Summary of Declaration.” For the finale of the afternoon’s activities, the Kiwanis Kwintet with guitarists Maureen Stanton and John Koza led a sing-along using song sheets that were distributed.

At dusk, the community gathered for a fireworks display behind Falls and Lenox elementary schools. The Olmsted Falls Firemen’s Association, Olmsted Jaycees, the Kiwanis Club of Olmsted Falls and the Olmsted Township Fire Department sponsored the fireworks.

The weekend’s activities concluded on Monday, July 5, with an “Old-Fashioned Fourth on the Fifth” beginning at 10:30 a.m. It included a watermelon-eating contest for students, a pie-eating contest for students, a cakewalk for adults, a penny scramble for pre-school children, a sack race, a candy scramble and balloon toss plus “other goodies.” The Olmsted Falls Parks Board sponsored it.

The Olmsted Falls Bicentennial Commission included: chairman Beverly Smith, vice chairman Lois Ryan, secretary Gerry Geist, treasurer Gordon Johnson and publicity chairman Karen Rauch.

## **Reader Has Fond Memories of Trolleyville, U.S.A.**

The story about Trolleyville, U.S.A., in Issue 36 of *Olmsted 200* from May stirred memories for many readers. One nice response came from Patrick Carroll.

“I enjoyed the article about Trolleyville,” he wrote. “Right after we graduated in '72, I needed a job before I joined the Navy. I went to work as a restoration carpenter apprentice with Gary Royer and Stanley Stone for Gerald E. Brookins. We helped do minimal apprentice work, yard work, and maintenance in the ‘car barn’ on the many streetcars he had at that time.”

Further, Carroll wrote, “It was a wonderful experience to be part of that. My Paternal Grandmother also lived in the trailer park and I would ride the streetcars around the park with Gary, and have lunch with her. She lived at 3 Oak Drive, which was the end of the park in 1960 when she first moved there!!! Such Memories-please keep bringing them back!”

## **Caves under Olmsted Spurred Interest and Precautions**

One *Olmsted 200* reader, Sally King, wrote recently asking for more information about a cave in the park in Olmsted Falls.

In his 1966 Olmsted history book, Walter Holzworth wrote: “A cave or rather a wide rift or crevice in the sand stone bed was an attraction to local spelunkers who could wriggle their way far back in the passage. Old timers told of exploring this cave as far back as the present intersection of Water Street and Columbia [Road], and hearing faint rumble of trucks above. However, the entrance was sealed off to forestall a possible tragedy of a child getting lost in it.”

Bernice Offenbergl had more to say about the cave in her 1964 book, *Over the Years in Olmsted*. She wrote about three caves, but one was especially big:

*Edward Kidney said that in the early eighteen seventies when the men in the quarry were “quarrying out” the sandstone on the south side of Water Street, their tools went through the roof of this cave.*

*In the early eighteen eighties Norris and Archer Kidney, Levi Alcott, Charles Adams and Ed Sabins explored the big cave under Water Street. The entrance was under Water Street Bridge on the west side of the river. When they were in the cave at the farthest end at the west they could hear William Mead at work pounding rivets into harnesses on an anvil in his Harness shop, which was located where Schady’s Shell Service Station is today on Columbia Road. In about the center of this cave (which would be near Main Street) they could hear horses trotting over Main Street Bridge as it was paved and the rest of the roads in this vicinity were dirt*

*roads. The boys had Ed Sabins stay above ground in his father's barn, which was at the southwest corner of the Sabin Place that is now 7650 River Road. The rest of the boys went into the cave toward the north. Ed Sabin pounded on the big iron kettle that was in his father's barn and the boys heard the noise in the cave below.*

*In 1961, Mr. Hugh Otterson said much the same about the big cave. He said that they could walk through the entrance, at times water stood in the middle of the cave and the top was as smooth as any plastered ceiling in a house.*

*Several people say they can see the outline of the cave entrance as the dirt has washed away in places. There are two smaller caves also. One is under the town hall sheds with a small entrance but with room enough for a boy to stand up inside. There is a smaller cave that is near Sulphur Springs, which is on the north bank of Plum Creek, back of Mrs. Harry Harding's home.*

In regard to that last cave, a 1914 postcard seems to show its entrance but offers no other information about it.



*This postcard from 1914 labels the entrance of one cave as "SULPHUR SPRINGS OLMSTED FALLS."*

In her inquiry about the biggest of the three caves, Sally King wrote that her late father, Fred Shirey, had told her that he and two other men closed the entrance in the late 1930s because they were afraid children would go into it and get injured.

"I didn't really believe his story until I attended my class reunion in 2004," she wrote. "Jack Husted, one of my classmates from our class of '59, and I were talking, and he brought up the subject. He told me he had uncovered the entrance to the cave when he was operating a large piece of excavating equipment during the construction of the new bridge across the river at Water St. He also verified my father's story since the other men who helped my father close the cave were his father and Al Martin's. He also said he had taken pictures and that Al had crawled up into the cave as far as he could go after Jack had located it. It had silted in over the years, so Al couldn't get very far into it."



If anyone has more information on any of the caves in Olmsted Falls, please share it with *Olmsted 200* by emailing: [wallacestar@hotmail.com](mailto:wallacestar@hotmail.com). Any old photos would be especially welcome.

## Still to Come

The next issue of *Olmsted 200* will include a story about newly discovered letters that Joseph Peltz wrote after he moved to California. They include references to Olmsted Falls.

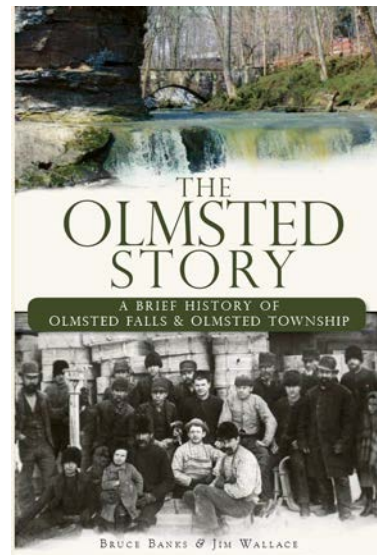
If you know of other people who would like to receive *Olmsted 200* by email, please feel free to forward it to them. They can get on the distribution list by sending a request to: [wallacestar@hotmail.com](mailto:wallacestar@hotmail.com). *Olmsted 200* has readers in several states beyond Ohio, including California, Colorado, Texas, Louisiana, North Carolina, West Virginia, Florida, Massachusetts and Maine, as well as overseas in the Netherlands and Japan.

Your questions and comments about *Olmsted 200* are welcome. Perhaps there is something about Olmsted's history that you would like to have pulled out of *Olmsted 200*'s extensive archives. Or perhaps you have information or photos about the community's history that you would like to share.

If you have missed any of the past issues of *Olmsted 200* or want to share them with someone else, all of them can be found on Olmsted Township's website. Go to <http://www.egovlink.com/olmsted/docs/menu/home.asp> and click on "Olmsted 200."

Except where otherwise noted, all articles in *Olmsted 200* are written by Jim Wallace. Thanks go to Mary Louise King for helping to proofread and edit many issues. Written contributions and photos, as well as comments and questions about items in this newsletter, will be considered for publication. Send any correspondence by email to: [wallacestar@hotmail.com](mailto:wallacestar@hotmail.com).

*Olmsted 200* is written, researched and edited by Jim Wallace, who is solely responsible for its content. He is co-author (with Bruce Banks) of ***The Olmsted Story: A Brief History of Olmsted Falls and Olmsted Township***, published in 2010 by The History Press of Charleston, S.C. ***The Olmsted Story*** is available at Clementine's Victorian Restaurant at Grand Pacific Junction, the Berea Historical Society's Mahler Museum & History Center and through online booksellers.



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