



NATIONAL LINK COALITION

Working together to stop violence against people and animals

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A monthly report of news from THE NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER



ON THE LINK BETWEEN ANIMAL ABUSE AND HUMAN VIOLENCE



www.nationallinkcoalition.org

[Phil Arkow](#), Editor

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ANIMAL ABUSE AND HUMAN SAFETY

HELP WANTED:

ASK THE FBI TO INCLUDE ANIMAL CRUELTY IN CRIME REPORTING SYSTEMS

Those of us who are concerned about the Links between animal abuse and human crimes and violence have been frustrated for many decades by a simple problem: after nearly 400 years of enforcing animal cruelty laws we do not know how many animal cruelty cases are charged, nor the disposition of these cases in court.

The reason for this lack of information is simple: there is no systematized process for capturing these data on the statewide level. Animal cruelty laws are enforced by a patchwork of local police, sheriffs, SPCA and humane society agents, and animal control officers. But because animal cruelty crimes are not included on the FBI's Uniform Crime Report (UCR), there is no incentive for local agencies to track these crimes.

Without accurate data, law enforcement agencies have no evidence upon which to allocate manpower, fiscal, training and investigatory resources to handle animal

National Sheriffs Association Launches Link Coalition



Sheriff John Thompson addresses the inaugural meeting of the National Coalition on Violence Against Animals in Washington, D.C.

A powerhouse cadre of 50 national and local agencies working on the Link between animal abuse and human violence convened in the nation's capital on Jan. 22 for the inaugural meeting of a National Coalition on Violence Against Animals.

The coalition, under the aegis of the National Sheriffs Association, aims to build upon the momentum of overwhelming evidence of the close relationship between animal cruelty and other crimes with a multi-disciplinary coordination of efforts. "Collectively, we can be a power working to end violence against animals as well as a neutral forum to exchange ideas and have candid discussions," said NSA Executive Director Sheriff Aaron Kennard.

cruelty cases – which are often predictor and indicator crimes linked with other crimes of violence including dog- and cock-fighting, bestiality, domestic violence, child abuse, elder abuse, bullying, juvenile delinquency, drugs, and a wide range of antisocial behaviors.

To correct this gap, the National Link Coalition is working with the National Sheriffs Association to ask the FBI, which is redesigning its UCR system, to include animal cruelty as a distinct crime on the UCR form. Adding the crime of animal cruelty to the UCR will send a signal down the line to all local law enforcement agencies that animal cruelty is a serious crime. It will provide an important tool to law enforcement and will prevent future crimes of violence. It is a simple change that will better target police activity and interventions that will reduce violence against people, communities and animals.

-- YOU CAN HELP! --

If you believe, as we do, that this change is needed to reduce violence against people, animals and communities, we ask your help.

Please write a letter of support for this proposal, either as an agency representative or as an individual. A sample template for a letter is at <http://nationallinkcoalition.org/get-involved>: feel free to modify it as appropriate.

DO NOT SEND THE LETTER TO THE FBI:
Please send the letter **no later than February 21** to John Thompson, Deputy Executive Director, National Sheriffs Association, 1450 Duke St., Alexandria, VA 22314, or to jthompson@sheriffs.org.

The mission of the collective – similar to the National Link Coalition but with a law enforcement focus – is to reduce violence against animals and its effect on violence against children, families and society.

NSA Deputy Director Sheriff John Thompson, who heads the initiative, noted a second goal of identifying gaps in current programs. An immediate project is to request changes to the Federal Uniform Crime Reporting Program so



Sheriff John Thompson

animal crimes receive a separate category that can be tracked and analyzed to allocate resources and training (*see accompanying article*).

Participants represented a diverse array of national and local organizations in such fields as domestic violence, child protection, juvenile and family court judges, sheriffs, police, prosecutors, animal control, and animal welfare. They presented extensive lists of ideas of what is currently working in the Link field, areas needing action, and the parties who can make these changes.

The National Link Coalition was represented by Phil Arkow, Randy Lockwood, Mark Kumpf, and Allie Phillips. Diane Balkin was unable to attend due to flight cancellations.

“We can make a change here and catapult what all of you are doing,” Thompson told the participants.

ASPCA Hands Over Reins of Cruelty Enforcement – to 34,000 Police



The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, which had been responsible for enforcing animal cruelty laws in New York City since its chartering in 1866, has [announced](#) a full citywide rollout of its strategic, pioneering collaboration with the NYPD. The new program, which had been pilot-tested for four months in The Bronx ([See LINK-Letter September, 2013](#)), is training some 34,000 NYPD officers who will provide broader and enhanced protection and quicker enforcement than the ASPCA's limited staff of humane law enforcement agents were able to do.



The change, affecting thousands of police personnel in 77 precincts, accelerates and widens police responses to animal abuse complaints and expedites the ASPCA's rescue and treatment of abused animals, said Matthew Bershadker, ASPCA President and CEO. The ASPCA will continue to assist law enforcement officials with veterinary forensics, legal services, field assistance, and ongoing training for patrolmen, detectives, district attorneys, the Housing Bureau, and the Legal Bureau.

Bershadker announced that the expansion has already dramatically increased the number of 911 and 311 complaints responded to and the number of arrests and animals rescued. "This partnership combines the breadth and expertise of two of New York City's most respected organizations serving victimized and neglected animals in every borough. We're already well on pace to saving four to five times as many animals each year than the ASPCA has done during any year in recent history," he said.

The new approach not only adds the full force of the nation's largest law enforcement agency to animal protection work, "but also signals the seriousness of animal cruelty and the need to prevent it," he said.

ANIMAL ABUSE AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Shelters Encouraged to Apply for Pet Safety Grants



Domestic violence shelters in 16 states are particularly encouraged to apply for grant funding available to help construct facilities for survivors' pets. The grants are being made available by [RedRover](#), a national nonprofit based in Sacramento, Calif.

RedRover is partnering with [SAF-T](#) (Sheltering Animals and Families Together) to achieve a goal of having at least one pet-friendly domestic violence shelter in each state by 2015. While any shelter may apply for funding, shelters in the following states are especially encouraged to apply: Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Nebraska, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, and West Virginia.

Seven such Safe Housing grants, totaling \$20,000, were awarded in 2013 to the following shelters:

- GreenHouse 17, Lexington, Ky.
- Clarina Howard Nichols Center, Morrisville, Vt.
- Harbor House Domestic Abuse Programs, Appleton, Wis.
- Rose Brooks Center, Kansas City, Mo.
- Operation Care, Jackson, Calif.
- Lake Family Resource Center, Kelseyville, Calif.
- Peace River Center, Bartow, Fla.

Veterinarians Shelter “Companions in Crisis”



Nearly 50 veterinary hospitals in Connecticut are providing anonymous housing for animals whose owners are fleeing domestic violence through a partnership between the [Connecticut Veterinary Medical Foundation](#) (CVMF) and the [Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence](#) (CCADV). The domestic violence mitigation program is a bridge, allowing victims to safeguard their animals for an indeterminate period while they evacuate to new, safe circumstances.

“The Companions-in-Crisis program operates much like a ‘witness protection program,’” reports Dr. [Arnold L. Goldman](#), CVMF President. “Domestic violence agency caseworkers, upon the request of a victim, may reach out to the program director on the victim’s behalf through a dedicated 24-hour telephone line and begin the placement process. Animals are then moved anonymously to participating hospitals across the state for temporary safekeeping.”



Companions-in-Crisis was inspired by a Connecticut Veterinary Medical Association board member whose hospital manager pointed out that not all disasters are large and that individuals enduring domestic violence often stay in dangerous situations to protect their animals as well as their children.

The program takes great pains to ensure that animals are housed neither in hospitals where they are patients nor in any clinic in the surrounding area, to protect anonymity. Transfers are made by agency employees at pre-arranged public venues and then the animals are moved to the selected hospital. Animals are admitted under assumed names and owners are not informed of the safeguarding location. Hospital staff do not have the owners’ contact information. Reports on animals’ status and needs are made through the program director and caseworker.

Hospital owners are responsible for the basic costs of boarding and feeding animals. The CVMF provides funding for necessary veterinary medical care on a case-by-case basis, Goldman reports.

Family Law Practitioners Learn About Domestic Violence/Animal Abuse Links



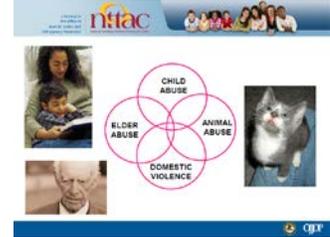
Christine L. Mott

Family law practitioners had an opportunity to bolster their legal strategies based upon mounting evidence of animal cruelty as an indicator of domestic violence and possible child abuse/neglect at a webinar on Feb. 4. [Christine L. Mott](#), Chair of the Animal Law Committee of the New York City Bar Association, reports that the webinar, “Linking Animal Cruelty and Domestic Violence: A Family Law Perspective,” offered Continuing Legal Education credits. The webinar provided participants with information about The Link, relevant state laws and cross-reporting requirements, and research that can improve client counseling and aid in the issuance of protection- from-abuse orders for family pets.

ANIMAL ABUSE AND CHILD PROTECTION

OJJDP Webinar Attracts Hundreds

The U.S. Department of Justice’s Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) added its support for Link programming by hosting one of the largest webinar trainings in history on January 28. Over 550 individuals registered for the event, and 398 participated, in the 90-minute program entitled “When the Abuse of Animals Co-Occurs with Child Abuse.”



Allie Phillips, Director of the National District Attorneys Association’s National Center for Prosecution of Animal Abuse and Deputy Director of its National Center for Prosecution of Child Abuse, conducted the program. National Link Coalition Coordinator Phil Arkow served as moderator.

The webinar was presented by the OJJDP’s National Training & Technical Assistance Center (NTTAC). It covered such topics as research and theories on the Link between animal and child abuse, multi-disciplinary team responses, programs to assist families escape abusive situations, and investigation and prosecution strategies. NTTAC will make a copy of the program available shortly on its [online archives](#).

OJJDP’s involvement with Link activities includes a seminal research paper published in September, 2001. Frank Ascione’s *Juvenile Justice Bulletin* report, “Animal Abuse and Youth Violence,” is still widely cited. The report is available on the [National Link Coalition’s website](#).

Link Protections for Children Enacted in U.S. Farm Bill

The long-awaited [Farm Bill](#), signed by President Obama, includes a provision making it, for the first time, a federal crime to attend or bring a child under age 16 to an animal fighting event. The provision fortifies federal law against organized dog- and cock-fighting rings and creates liability for fight organizers.

ANIMAL ABUSE AND VETERINARY MEDICINE

Bill Would Facilitate Treatment of Abuse Cases



Sens. Jerry Moran (left) and Angus King

The U.S. Senate has passed the Veterinary Medicine Mobility Act (S. 1171) which will enable veterinarians to more easily perform life-saving services for animals that have been abused or that are in crisis. Introduced by Sens. Jerry Moran (R-KS) and Angus King (I-ME), the bill would allow veterinarians to transport and dispense Drug Enforcement Agency controlled substances while practicing in the field. Currently, vets can dispense controlled drugs only in a fixed address, such as a clinic, that is registered with the DEA.

“Mobile veterinarians work in irregular and unpredictable locations,” said Nancy Perry, Senior Vice President of ASPCA Government Relations, in praising the Senate’s action. “Mobile spay/neuter and vaccination clinics, disaster responses, and animal cruelty investigations necessitate travel to remote and underserved communities. We thank the Senate for ensuring that mobile veterinarians across the nation can continue to serve their patients wherever animals need care.”

The bill now goes to the U.S. House. Similar legislation (H.R. 1528) has been introduced in that chamber by Reps. Kurt Schrader (D-OR) and Ted Yoho (R-FL), the only two veterinarians serving in Congress.

THE LINK IN THE LEGISLATURES

South Dakota Could Become Final State with Felony Cruelty



South Dakota could become the 50th state to make some forms of animal cruelty a felony crime if the legislature passes **SB 46**. Currently, inhumane treatment of animals in South Dakota is still only a misdemeanor: 49 other states have enacted felony levels for some types of animal abuse, mostly since the 1990s in the wake of growing evidence of how animal abuse frequently leads to human violence. The South Dakota legislature has repeatedly rejected such measures amid concerns from livestock producers. The current bill was sponsored by the Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources at the request of the Animal Industry Board.

SB 446 would make it a Class 6 felony to intentionally, willfully and maliciously inflict gross physical abuse on an animal that causes prolonged pain, serious physical injury, or the animal's death. Neglect, abandonment or mistreatment of an animal would remain a Class 1 misdemeanor. The bill would expand current prohibitions against dog fighting to include any form of animal fighting, such as cock fighting, as a Class 6 felony, with a Class 1 misdemeanor penalty for attending an animal fight.

Similar to many other states' statutes, the bill acknowledges agribusiness interests and clarifies that standard accepted livestock-raising practices are not mistreatment.

"What it really comes down to is that the ag groups have taken charge of this. Instead of being on defense, they've decided to be at the table in drafting this legislation," State Veterinarian Dustin Oedekoven told the [Rapid City Journal](#).

Other Bills We're Watching:

Animal Abuse in the Presence of a Child



Massachusetts SB 1914, the PAWS Act (Protecting Animal Welfare and Safety), would define animal abuse committed in the presence of a child as "extreme atrocity and cruelty" with enhanced penalties. It would mandate veterinarians to report suspected animal cruelty with immunity from civil and criminal liability for good-faith reporting. The bill would create a statewide animal abuse hotline and registry of animal abuse offenders. The bill was referred to the Joint Committee on the Judiciary on Nov. 6.



New York A-706 would include animal cruelty in the presence of a child as an element in endangering a child's welfare, and within the definition of a neglected or maltreated child. As of Jan. 24, 2014 it was in the Codes Committee.

Reporting and cross-reporting:



District of Columbia B20-0153 would amend the DC Official Code to incorporate veterinary medicine as a health profession. Under this new classification, veterinarians and veterinary technicians would become mandated reporters of suspected child abuse and neglect.



Massachusetts SB 767 would allow any person to file a nuisance suit against another person or entity that subjects an animal to conduct which poses a risk to its life, health or safety.



New York A-3766 would require anyone who enforces animal cruelty laws to report suspected child abuse or maltreatment, and any person mandated to report child abuse or maltreatment to file a report of suspected animal abuse or maltreatment. The bill is in the Social Services Committee.



New York A-3283 would require any employee of a veterinary hospital or clinic, boarding kennel, shelter or rescue center, or facility that provides services for animals to report an animal's injury, illness, or condition to the police if animal cruelty or abuse is suspected. Employees who reasonably and in good faith file such reports would be immune from civil or criminal liability. The bill is in the Agriculture Committee.



Wisconsin SB 199 would require veterinarians to report all suspected animal abuse, with immunity from civil liability for good-faith reporting. Currently they are mandated to report only suspected animal fighting and lack immunity. The bill is in the Judiciary and Labor Committee.

Advocates for Animals



Connecticut HB 5677, HB 6690 and HB 6310 would have appointed a State Department of Agriculture veterinarian to act as an animal advocate in family relations matters, civil cases, and criminal proceedings (including cruelty cases) that involve the care, custody and well-being of animals. **HB 6690** passed the House and was in the Senate Judiciary Committee when the legislature adjourned.

Animal Hoarding



Pennsylvania HB 860 would establish a new crime of animal hoarding, a third-degree misdemeanor, and require a psychological evaluation prior to sentencing. The bill is in the House Judiciary Committee.

Animal Abuse and Other Crimes



Massachusetts HB 1594 would replace the archaic definition of bestiality as “the abominable and detestable crime against nature, either with mankind or with a beast,” with more contemporary terminology making it illegal to “commit a sexual act upon an animal, use an object to sexually abuse an animal, or knowingly permit a sexual act with an animal.”



South Dakota SB 46 would make some forms of animal cruelty a felony and expand illegal dog fighting crimes to include any animal fights.

Therapeutic Interventions for Child Abuse Victims



New Jersey A-2155 would establish a three-year pilot program within DCF to provide animal-assisted therapy to victims of childhood violence, trauma, or children with behavioral healthcare needs.

Domestic Violence/Pet Protection Orders



Iowa SF 2118 and a companion measure, **HF 286**, would allow judges to include pets and companion animals (but not commercial livestock) in domestic violence protection-from-abuse orders. The bills have cleared the Judiciary Committee and are awaiting a vote by the full Senate.



New Hampshire HB 1410 would include household and domesticated animals under the domestic violence protection statutes by adding animal cruelty to the list of conducts that constitute a credible threat to the petitioner's safety or which reflect an ongoing pattern of behavior which causes the petitioner to fear for her or his safety or well being. Courts could grant petitioners exclusive care, custody or control of any animal and order defendants to stay away from any animal.



Ohio HB 243 and **SB 177** would allow courts to include companion animals in domestic violence, anti-stalking and temporary protection orders. **HB 243** would also require children adjudicated as delinquent for committing animal cruelty to undergo psychological evaluation and counseling, and adult offenders to be sentenced to probation supervision. The bills have been referred to the House Judiciary and Senate Criminal Justice Committees.



Michigan SB 285 would make it illegal to kill, torture, maim, disfigure, or poison an animal with the intent to cause mental suffering or distress to another person or to exert control over another person. The bill passed the Senate on Nov. 13 and was referred to the House Committee on Criminal Justice.



New Jersey A 916 would have authorized courts to include animals in domestic violence restraining orders. The bill was in the Assembly Judiciary Committee when the legislature adjourned.



Vermont HB 342 would hold a person who intentionally kills a pet liable to the pet's owner for non-economic damages for emotional distress resulting from loss of love, companionship and affection of the pet.

THE LINK IN THE NEWS

Bad Breakup Leads to Cruelty, Burglary and Harassment Charges

A Columbia, Mo. man who allegedly broke into his girlfriend's residence and killed one of her cats was arrested on Jan. 2 and charged with burglary, animal abuse, harassment and property damage. The Columbia [*Daily Tribune*](#) reported that Matthew G. Greaver, 23, was also accused in separate cases of harassing the woman after their relationship had ended and breaking a security camera at her residence. Prosecutors said Greaver went into her residence in October and assaulted her cat, causing internal injuries, and tried to drown another cat. One month earlier one of her cats that he was caring for was found dead when she returned from out of town. The harassment charge stems from unwanted social media communication she received in November after she tried to end their relationship. Greaver allegedly threatened to kill himself and distribute nude pictures of her if she did not respond to him.



Sex Offender Charged with Killing Police Dog

A Pittsburgh, Pa. police dog has died after being stabbed in the back by a fugitive sex offender, according to police reports. Rocco, an eight-year-old German shepherd, was on the job Jan. 28 with officers who were trying to serve John Rush with warrants for probation violations and failing to register as a sex offender.

Police say Rush, 21, one of Allegheny County's most wanted fugitives, stabbed Rocco in the back and wounded two officers before being taken into custody. Rocco was rushed to a veterinary hospital but succumbed to his wounds on Jan. 30.

Fellow K-9 officers saluted Rocco's flag-draped coffin with bagpipe music and a procession of flashing lights en route to a memorial service. Pittsburgh Mayor Bill Peduto ordered flags to be flown at half-staff to mark Rocco's death. Rush could face third-degree felony charges for Rocco's death. Two Pennsylvania state senators have called for stiffer penalties for those accused of killing a law enforcement animal. The FBI does not keep statistics on the number of police dogs killed in action but could include these data as a result of a forthcoming review process, the [Pittsburgh Post-Gazette](#) reported.

LINK TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Feb. 13 – (online): Diane Balkin will discuss "Pretrial Motions: The Framework for Evidence at Trial," in a [webinar series](#) presented by the National District Attorneys Association's National Center for Prosecution of Animal Abuse, in partnership with the ASPCA and the Animal Legal Defense Fund.

Mar. 7 – Murfreesboro, Tenn.: [Allie Phillips and Diane Balkin](#) will present on animal abuse and The Link for Rutherford County PAWS.

Mar. 9 – (online): Phil Arkow will conduct a webinar on "Practical Guidance for Veterinarians and Their Staffs for an Effective Response to Suspected Animal Cruelty, Abuse & Neglect" for the [Veterinary Information Network/Veterinary Support Personnel Network](#).

Mar. 20 – (online): Jennifer Rallo, Asst. State's Atty. with the Baltimore City State's Attorney's Office, will discuss "Investigating and Prosecuting Juvenile Animal Abusers," in a [webinar series](#) presented by the National District Attorneys Association's National Center for Prosecution of Animal Abuse, in partnership with the ASPCA and the Animal Legal Defense Fund.

Mar. 22 – Austin, Texas: Phil Arkow will present on how The Link can be used to "Learn What the Monster Likes and Feed it" at the [Texas Unites for Animals](#) conference.

Mar. 27 – Huntsville, Ala.: Allie Phillips will train on "When the Abuse of Animals Harms Children" and "Therapy Animals Helping Maltreated Children" at the [30th Annual Child Abuse Symposium](#).

April 1 – Millersville, Penna.: Phil Arkow will speak on the Link between domestic violence and animal abuse at the Millersville University [Psychology Club](#) and at a panel discussion.

April 3 – Grand Rapids, Mich.: Allie Phillips will lead workshops on “When the Abuse of Animals Harms Children” and “Therapy Animals Helping Maltreated Children” at the National Center for Prosecution of Child Abuse’s [Equal Justice for Children conference](#) with the Prosecuting Attorneys Assn. of Michigan.

April 5 – Gainesville, Fla.: 10 speakers will address “Animal CSI” at the 2014 [Maddie’s Veterinary Forensics Conference](#) with training on recognizing non-accidental injuries.

April 7 – Richmond, Va.: [Allie Phillips](#) will present a workshop on “When the Abuse of Animals Harms Children” at the Prevent Child Abuse Virginia conference.

April 8 – Tampa, Fla.: Phil Arkow will present on “Species-Spanning Violence Prevention” to the Annual Meeting of the [American Association of Geographers](#).

April 17 – (online): Chris Risley-Curtiss will discuss “Intervening with Children Who Are Abusing Animals,” in a [webinar series](#) presented by the National District Attorneys Association’s National Center for Prosecution of Animal Abuse, in partnership with the ASPCA and the Animal Legal Defense Fund.

April 22 – Seattle, Wash.: Allie Phillips will present on The Link and sheltering pets of domestic violence survivors at the [International Conference on Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence & Trafficking](#).

April 25 – Stratford, Ontario, Canada: Phil Arkow will present on Domestic Violence and The Link for [Optimism Place Women’s Shelter](#).

May 2 – New Orleans, La.: Phil Arkow will present on “Species-Spanning Connections at the Intersections of Child Maltreatment, Domestic Violence and Animal Abuse” at the [19th National Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect](#).

May 20-21 – South Bend, Ind.: Phil Arkow will train the [St. Joseph County Prosecutors Office](#) on The Link between Violence to People and Violence to Animals.

July 19 – Kobe, Japan: Phil Arkow will present on “The Cycle of Violence: The Connection between Violence to Humans and Animals” at the [3rd International Conference on Animal Care](#).

Aug. 28-29 – Williamsburg, Va.: Phil Arkow will discuss “Women’s Best Friend” and “Animal Therapy for Sexual Assault Victims” at the 6th Annual [Historic Triangle Conference on Crimes Against Women](#).

Permission to Reprint

The news items and training opportunities contained in *The LINK-Letter* are intended to disseminate as widely and as freely as possible information about the connections between animal abuse and interpersonal violence. Permission is hereby granted to re-post these articles in other newsletters, websites, magazines, and electronic publications provided that appropriate credit is given to the National Link Coalition and with links to www.nationallinkcoalition.org.

To subscribe to *The Link-Letter* (*it’s free!*) – Just send an e-mail to Coordinator Phil Arkow (arkowpets@snip.net) and tell us what organization(s) you’re with and where you’re located.



ABOUT THE NATIONAL LINK COALITION



The National Link Coalition is an informal, multi-disciplinary collaborative network of individuals and organizations in human services and animal welfare who address the intersections between animal abuse, domestic violence, child maltreatment and elder abuse through research, public policy, programming and community awareness. We believe that human and animal well-being are inextricably intertwined and that the prevention of family and community violence can best be achieved through partnerships representing multi-species perspectives.

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