



CORNWALL CHRONICLE

VOLUME 9 : NUMBER 10 NOVEMBER 1999



Tractor Champ

On September 18, while his father Fred was giving hayrides to kids at the Cornwall Ag Fair, FFA Star Farmer Stephen Scoville, 19, was driving a John Deere 5100 at the Eastern States Exposition in Springfield, Massachusetts. Stephen was the top young tractor driver in the state of Connecticut, having placed first in three previous events: on the local, district, and state levels. Now he was driving yet another tractor he'd never seen before to compete against drivers from nine other states for the regional championship.

First Stephen had to take a written test. "It was pretty hard," he said. "They asked for the boiling point of oil." After safety-checking the tractor out loud for the judges, he ran it through two ten-minute obstacle courses, first with a four-wheeled trailer, and then hitched to a two-wheel ("brand new!") manure spreader. He had to slalom between fences and through gates, back the spreader into a forty-foot long alley that tapered from six inches of clearance at the opening to three inches at the far end, and then position the back of the spreader to within one and a half inches of the back wall before driving forward to the finish line. A contestant could be penalized not only for touching obstacles or lines, but also for going too fast or too slow, for rough clutching, for sliding his wheels on the grass. Ten penalty points could

be added for each extra try he made, 25 points for every half-inch he was off center in the alley. Stephen placed second, losing by only 20 points to the Pennsylvania driver who was, it turns out, familiar with that John Deere; Scovilles favor Fords.

So don't get impatient if you find yourself behind that manure spreader on Town Street. Consider it an honor. —Ella Clark

No Parking!

For the first time in its history, Cornwall has an ordinance regulating parking on town streets as a result of a vote at the Annual Town Meeting on October 22. In response to complaints concerning unruly behavior and especially haphazard and dangerous parking by visitors to Dudleytown, the Board of Selectmen proposed, and the town residents approved, an ordinance calling for fines and towing for parking violations.

While the town has always been able to put up signs forbidding or regulating parking, such regulations had no teeth without a properly enacted ordinance, according to First Selectman Gordon Ridgway. Furthermore, such an ordinance empowers the State Police to operate on our town roads. Now designated town officers or, most likely, the State Police can ticket and levy fines (of \$35 to \$100) on vehicles that are illegally parked.

Moreover, vehicles parked in a No Parking area which may be blocking access to emergency vehicles can be towed at the owner's expense.

The hope is that visitors to (and residents of) Cornwall, whether they park near Dudleytown or on any other of the town's narrow roads, will become more alert to the local need for vehicular access as they enjoy their hikes and picnics in this part of the Northwest Corner. —Barbara Gold

Election Correction

Last month we identified the various candidates running for the Board of Education and made a mistake. We failed to note that Catherine Tatge is an incumbent, having been appointed to the Board to replace Robin Freyberg, who resigned.

The election is Tuesday, November 2, and the polls will be open from 6 A.M. to 8 P.M. —The Editors

Building Committee Named

At the Annual Town Meeting on October 22, voters approved the establishment of a School Building Committee and the appropriation of \$25,000 from unexpended bond proceeds for that committee's work. The committee is charged with developing preliminary plans and cost estimates for renovations to Cornwall Consolidated School. (continued on page 2)

NOVEMBER 1999

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
VOTE on Tuesday!	1 National Iron Bank Scott Zuckerman's Art for Month of November Bd. of Selectmen 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	2 ELECTION DAY Polls Open 6 A.M.—8 P.M. Early Dismissal at CCS 1 P.M. (p.4) Park & Rec. 7:30 P.M. Town Office	3 Play Group 10-11:30 A.M. Every Wed., St. Peter's Ch. Stretch Exercise 5-6 P.M. Every Wednesday Town Hall Early Dismissal at CCS 1 P.M. (p.4) Inland Wetlands 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	4	5 Preschool-K Story Hour 10 A.M. Library	6
7	8 Blood Pressure Clinic, 3-4 P.M. UCC Parish House (p.4) Cub Scout Pack 15 Parents' Meeting 7 P.M., UCC Day Room P&Z, 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	9 Democratic Town Comm. 7:30 P.M. Town Hall Republican Town Comm. 7:30 P.M. CCS Housatonic River Comm. 7:30 P.M. CCS Library	10 CCS PTA, 7 P.M. CCS Library	11 VETERANS DAY CCS Not in Session Green Party 7:30 P.M. CCS Library	12 Preschool-K Story Hour 10 A.M. Library	13
14 Caribbean Whale Songs 4:30 P.M. Town Hall (p.4)	15 Deadline: December Chronicle Copy Friends of the Library 4 P.M., UCC Day Room Region One Bd. of Ed. 7 P.M. HVRHS Library	16 Bd. of Selectmen 9 A.M. Town Hall	17	18 Bd. of Ed. 5 P.M. CCS Library Bd. of Finance 7:30 P.M. CCS Library	19 Preschool-K Story Hour 10 A.M. Library Kindergarten/Thanksgiving Dinner for Parents & Grandparents, Noon, CCS (p.4) Judyth Hill Poetry Reading 7:30 P.M. Library (p.4)	20 Cornwall Association Annual Meeting 4 P.M., Cornwall Bridge Firehouse (p.4)
21	22 ZBA 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	23	24 Early Dismissal at CCS 1 P.M. Cornwall Vol. Fire Dept. 8 P.M. W. C. Firehouse	25 THANKSGIVING DAY	26 Cornwall Talent Show 7:30-9 P.M. UCC (see insert)	27 Bus Trip to New York City 8 P.M. CCS departure (p.4)
28	29 Xmas Crafts for Kids 10 A.M.—Noon West Cornwall Firehouse	30 Classes Resume at CCS after Thanksgiving Recess				

(continued from page 1)

cent focus has been on the need for a new, larger gymnasium and for more space for classrooms, computers, and conferences.

Appointed to the committee by the Board of Selectmen were Alec Frost, Jane Giddens-Jones, Phil Hart, Bill Hurlburt, Ian Ingersoll, Roger Kane, Brian Kavanagh, Anne Kosciusko, and Jim Terrall. —Barbara Gold



Our High School Population

All the recent speculation about the potential growth of Cornwall Consolidated School and the need to expand its facilities got me curious about our kids in the local high schools. So, I did a little research and, thanks to Sue Gingert (CCS) and Bunny McGuire (HVRHS) and their computers, came up with some figures.

Cornwall currently has a high school population of 69 boys and girls with the majority, 48, attending the regional high school: 17 freshmen, 13 sophomores, 7 juniors, and 11 seniors. The cost to Cornwall for these 48 students is \$561,224.16 or \$11,692.17 per student per year. The 17 freshmen came from a CCS graduating class of 26 last June. There are currently 18 eighth-graders and 19 seventh-graders who will be graduating and going on to high school in '00 and '01. Most will attend HVRHS. Some may go to Oliver Wolcott Technical in Torrington, which is a state-run high school and costs nothing directly to the town. There are six Cornwall students now at Oliver Wolcott.

There are another 15 Cornwall students currently attending local prep schools, including four at Kent, three at Hotchkiss, and the remainder spread among Berkshire, Canterbury, Choate, Loomis-Chaffee, Marvelwood, and Millbrook.

There are elementary school pupils from town who attend the Washington Montessori School in New Preston, Indian Mountain in Lakeville, and Rumsey Hall in Washington and who, down the road, may be joining Cornwall's high school population.

So you can see that education is probably the biggest "industry" in town. It certainly is our most important because it involves our greatest asset, the next generation of adults who will be looking out for us as we reach various stages of senility in the years to come. —John Miller

Our House

(October's Cornwall House Tour was a smashing success, grossing \$10,600 for Prime Time House. We asked Ann Schillinger to reminisce about living in one of the houses on the tour, now owned by Jane and Stephen Garmey. This is part one of her two-part memoir.)

There was no insulation. Heating upstairs was imaginary. The attic was occupied by

squirrels—or possibly rats. Several interior doors would not close; and to balance this, one outside door would not open. The porch was too narrow and baked by the sun on hot summer afternoons. Most of the house had no cellar; the water pump was partially outside and froze in the winter. The septic tank could not be found. Chickens belonging to our neighbor Bill Bierce occupied a shed at the back of our lot. Our parents, city people, wanted a simple little weekend home in the countryside; they bought the house on Cogswell Road next to the North Cornwall Meeting House from Amy Barnes in 1945 when I was 15 and my brother Ren was 10. To own a house in Cornwall had been their dream.

We city kids were offered a complex new world of our own to expand into. There was the Franklin stove in our sitting room and a potbellied stove named Daisy in the kitchen. We could bring up water with the cast-iron hand pump from the old dug well outside. By removing the plate over the upstairs opening of an old stovepipe hole, we could call down to the kitchen, where our voices emerged weirdly from behind Daisy. We could eat apples and plums from our own trees where they grew without any special effort of ours. We admired those chickens and the O'Donnell cows that came down the hill to check us out. Exploring the fields nearby, we found in a tiny cemetery graves that were said to hold the bodies of residents who had died of smallpox a long time before. We could even find our house on the 1854 maps of Cornwall.

We discovered other wonders. A streak of luminous paint on a bedroom doorframe, invisible by day, glowed in the dark when all the lights were off. One of the floor registers was loose. When soundlessly lifted it gave us access to the space between floor and ceiling where we could hide things from prying authorities. Upstairs we found a rat-proofed closet (wow, rats!) with chicken wire embedded in its plaster. Downstairs, coal was delivered into a dusty bin by a chute poked through the little window of our cellar. There we observed our businessman father, without his suit and vest, stoking the furnace with a long-handled shovel.

Heating was difficult from the first. My brother and I found it very rugged and adventurous to have the upstairs chilly in the cold weather even with the little stove roaring, but our parents did not see it that way. There was a ductless furnace and heat from it was supposed to spread through the whole structure by way of well placed, well meant floor registers. (Unfortunately, none of those registers was set where we could eavesdrop on really inter-



esting grown-up conversations, so Ren and I got even less Cornwall gossip than we did heat.) A big grating at the bottom of the stairs had been positioned to warm the upper hall but its benefits never reached the bedrooms. Another register, in the upstairs bathroom, had been installed over the Franklin stove to conduct heat upwards and prevent the pipes from freezing in winter. That worked fine for the pipes, but the opening into the sitting room from the bathroom was not popular with the adults, so it was sealed off below when we installed a better system. When the Franklin stove was removed, insulation was blown into the walls, heating ducts appeared in odd places, and soon Daisy was used for burning trash. Thus the comforts of the house multiplied, even at the cost of romance.

—Ann Schillinger (to be continued)

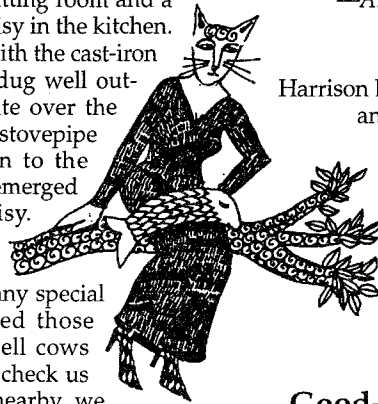
Welcome

Harrison Beers Martin to Brad Martin and Heather Abrames

Sophia Snowden and Owen Lee to Chris and Cassandra Hiland

Ezekiel John Homer to Phoebe Prentice and Peter Homer

Sara Kate to Trevor and Lee Ganshaw



Good-bye to a Friend

Ernest H. Kenniston

Congratulations

Edward Baird to Ruth Ohmen

Justin Moyer to Tina Hernandez

Leslie Whitney to Heidi Scott

Alexander LeDuc to Caroline Dorsen

Donald Polk to Jennifer Boyd

Land Transfers

Carl M. and Martha K. Coppola to David E. Voelpel, house and land on Bunker Hill Road for \$143,000.

Theodore S. Rogers to Ann Phillipoff, one-half interest in 66.5 acres on Lake Road for \$130,000.

Judy L. Mallanik, Tr. and Philip H. Welch, Tr. to Edward L. Pitcher, land on Hollenbeck Road for \$10,000.

Rest in Peace

Appropriately for a month that sees ghosts and gravestones as its symbols, the North Cornwall Cemetery on Rattlesnake Road was a place of unusually lively activity on a recent October Saturday as members of the North Cornwall Cemetery Association worked at the ongoing task of maintaining the restful spot.

A group of future "residents," including Tom Barrett, John Dutton, Jim Longwell, Bob Stetson, Lee Taliaferro, and Association President Charlie Gold, painted the ornate iron fence around the monument of Oliver Burnham, Revolutionary War veteran and one of the earliest burials at the cemetery.

While the painting progressed, John LaPorta and his crew and cemetery sexton John O'Donnell moved the rocks and dirt behind the front stone wall. The wall was possibly built by Nathan Cogswell, whose sons are buried in the cemetery, and who constructed many of the old walls of North Cornwall. The wall had been shoved out of line over the years; the dirt and stones buried behind the wall (more than make up the wall itself) had to be dug out, the huge dressed granite stones of the wall maneuvered into place, and stones and gravel to aid drainage reburied behind it.

Other stones—gravestones—have also been repaired. Over the past two years stones which had been heaved over by frost and/or cracked have been repaired and reset.

The cost of this maintenance is covered by dues paid to the Association by members, who are often descendants of those buried in the cemetery. Proceeds from the sale of plots for future burials also subsidize these capital improvements for this quiet corner of Cornwall. —Barbara Gold

Land Trust Update

The Cornwall Land Trust was fortunate this year to connect up with Laurie Boynton, a lawyer formerly with the Nature Conservancy. She started her own organization to help land trusts in Litchfield County because "the Northwest Corner has some of the most beautiful and ecologically important land in the state." She is always available to us regarding all matters involving the protection of open space.

Some of the property held by the Land Trust has been given outright, and in other cases owners have given a permanent conservation easement. The latter is a flexible land use practice under which owners continue to pay town taxes on the property rights retained (for example, the rights to hunt, graze livestock, take hay or firewood) while taking a charitable deduction for those rights surrendered in perpetuity, such as the rights to subdivide, mine gravel, clear-cut timber, etc.

A short while ago, Sara Paul gave the Land Trust 10 acres. It is beautiful land, wooded and with seasonal brooks. We've also been fortunate this year in obtaining a conservation easement from Ella Clark: 7.9 acres of fields, marsh, and woodland.

Knowing what The Land Preservation Alliance, Laurie's organization, calls "the beneficial effects of land preservation on the local tax base," we no longer feel constraint about becoming more active. And we are pleased that a number of people have been discussing options with us that may lead to protecting more land critical to Cornwall.

—Anne Zinsser

Letters to the Chronicle

HOUSE TOUR SUCCESS

What an incredible day October 9 turned out to be! Cornwall opened its doors for the first of what we hope will be many house tours for the benefit of Prime Time House. Over 300 people toured seven homes and buildings which exemplified different architectural styles and periods: the North Cornwall Meetinghouse, the Van Doren Mill Studio, the homes of the Franks, Garmeys, Nelson/DePolos, Prentices, and Sams/Rashbaums. The Board, staff, and members of PTH extend their thanks to the owners of the buildings for their gracious hospitality and willingness to have strangers wandering through their halls and to the nearly 70 Cornwall volunteers without whom we would have been lost. Special thanks go to Becky Hurlburt for the use of Cornubia Hall and to Emilie and Joe Pryor for hosting the post-tour reception.

—Tim Prentice, Amy Cady, Tom Whelan, and the Benefit Committee

UNYIELDING DRIVERS

Inspired by Ann Peterson's letter in the October issue, I would like to point out another intersection where drivers rarely yield and where more accidents are waiting to happen.

At the northern fork of the intersection of Routes 7 and 45, there is a modest Yield sign which is rarely observed save apparently by the few of us who know that it is there. In the last ten years I have seen two collisions between cars coming from the south (which have the right of way) and from the north (which don't). This summer I was struck from the rear by a driver



who not only was not yielding, but was not even looking as well. We have suggested to the town that a Stop sign replace the unheeded Yield sign, but no luck. Will we just have to wait for another accident to happen? —John Leich

CORNWALL CUP

Congratulations to West Cornwall, winners of the Cornwall Cup Softball Games, and many thanks to all those who helped make it a fun day. Special thanks to team captains Dave Cadwell, Bill Dinneen, and Craig Simons, who not only organized teams, but gathered equipment and, with the help of Don and Connie Hedden, prepared the field for the games. Lots of kids had fun in the bubble tubs, thanks to Barbara Stone and Extras for Kids. Sincere thanks to Diane Coe and Sharon Sawicki from Park and Rec., who offered the children the opportunity to make some terrific sand bottles and beaded necklaces. Thanks also to Susan Williamson and Trisha Collins, who represented the eighth grade class and sustained us with delicious ball park hotdogs. And, of course, my eternal gratitude to Cynthia Bianchi, Ray Augustyn, Margaret Bardot, and other members of the Cornwall Drug & Alcohol Prevention Council for their help in coordinating this annual event. Looking forward to Cornwall Cup 2000! —Jill Gibbons

The Black Spruce Bog

Governor Rowland recently designated 19 acres containing a small black spruce peat bog on the top of Mohawk Mountain as a Natural Area Preserve. It is the only such bog on public land in Connecticut and is of special interest because of the unusual plants and shrubs that grow there.

Black spruce bogs are common throughout Northern New England and Canada but rare this far south. They developed in what are called kettle hole lakes, formed in depressions left by melting ice after the last glacial period, 12,000 to 15,000 years ago. Gradually, layer upon layer of dead plants filled the lake from the edges toward the center. Because there was almost no inflow or outflow of water, the lack of oxygen and highly acidic conditions resulted in little decay. These dead plants formed the solid organic mass called peat moss which we use as a soil conditioner today.

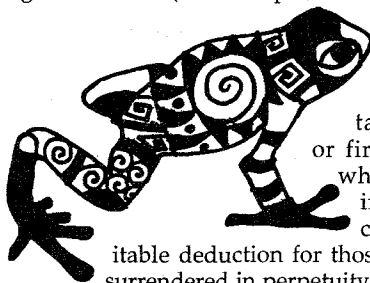
In 1946 a park ranger took soil samples from our bog that showed a depth of 40 feet of peat before solid bottom was reached. Four years later, the Tolland bog in Denmark made headlines when peat cutters discovered the body of a man 70 feet below the surface, perfectly preserved, even to his whiskers! Since then, more than 100 "natural mummies" have

been found in European bogs.

Our small two- or three-acre bog is situated across the road from park headquarters in the Mohawk State Forest about a mile and a half from the Route 4 entrance. A modest sign erected in the late seventies gives a brief natural history and lists some of the rare plants found here. One day last summer, after a short walk through red pine trees and a bower of tall mountain laurel, I reached the boardwalk that extends 150 feet into the bog. There is no longer open water here, but a boardwalk is essential because bog vegetation is easily destroyed by trampling on the spongy sphagnum moss carpeting the area. The air felt cool and moist even though my thermometer at home registered 89 degrees. If there was any odor at all, it was one of freshness—very different from the smell of decay emitted from a marsh I visited recently on a bird walk. Black spruce trees were everywhere, with a scattering of tamaracks. Sheep laurel was still in bloom and through the trees, I spotted on foot-long stems two dark red flowers of a pitcher plant.

Department of Environmental Protection botanist Ken Metzler tells me that a management plan will soon be in the works to deter-

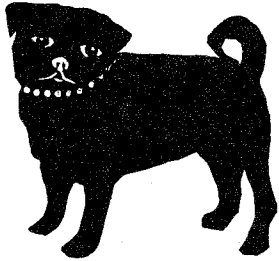
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mine what is needed to maintain the highest level of preservation possible without closing the area to the public. One improvement will be to lengthen the boardwalk into a loop so that visitors can see more of the rare shrubs and plants that grow here.

—Carla Bigelow



Antient Cornwall

The Cornwall Historical Society has published extracts from the papers which the Rev. Timothy Stone, pastor of the First Church in Cornwall from 1803 to 1827, had collected for a second volume of his description of the history, landscape, and first settlers of our town. Long-time Town Historian Michael Gannett, recently retired as President of the Cornwall Historical Society, has read these hundreds of papers in the hope of bringing them into some sort of order. The result of his efforts is *Cornwall and its Antient (sic) Settlers*. "Antient" is an 18th century variant of the now preferred spelling "ancient." The 61-page book is a summary of a great number of facts and details of the lives, dwellings, and possessions of the first landowners in Cornwall.

Gannett has included a very useful map with the modern names of the streets and house numbers to indicate old houses (or their cellar holes) that still exist today and are mentioned in the text. He has also published the Grand Lists for 1742 and 1744, as well as the amount of taxes (in pounds, shillings, and pence) landowners paid on themselves (head tax) and on their property. For example, Joseph Allen, father of Ethan, was taxed on one head (his own), two oxen, two cows, two horses, and one swine; whereas Benjamin Bissell, probably an ancestor or distant relative of Marie Bissell Prentice, was taxed only on his own head and on his one cow.

The book is on sale at the Historical Society, the Library, and Barbara Farnsworth's bookstore, at the cost of \$10 a copy.

—John Leich

Speaking of Arms

No, we don't like it either—putting the arm on some body. But there may be a few of you who need to remember that a friendly check addressed to the *Chronicle* will do us more good than a disarming smile. Thanks.



Events & Announcements

Songs of the Deep: On Sunday, November 14, at 4:30 P.M., the Library will host a lecture-demonstration on Caribbean whale songs by Paul Knapp, accompanied by Nicholas Jacobs and Leslie Elias. Paul has been recording the songs of the humpback whale every winter for over ten years, using special hydrophones and digital recording equipment. He will play some of his recordings, which are in the collection of the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute. Nick and Leslie have joined Paul on many of his expeditions and will share some of their experiences. Everyone is welcome—children enjoy whale singing too!

Early Dismissal: Students at Cornwall Consolidated School will be dismissed at 1 P.M. on Tuesday, November 2, and Wednesday, November 3, because of Parent/Teacher Conferences on those days.

Blood Pressure Clinic is scheduled for Monday, November 8, 3 to 4 P.M. at the UCC Parish House. This service is sponsored by the Town of Cornwall, Visiting Nurse and Homecare Northwest, and UCC. All ages are welcome on the second Monday of each month.

Cornwall Association: The Association's fourteenth annual meeting will take place on Saturday, November 20, at 4 P.M. at the Cornwall Bridge Firehouse. The Community Profile event and its outcome will be discussed. Lynn Werner of Housatonic Valley Association will talk about the issues surrounding Housatonic River flow as Connecticut energy companies deregulate in coming months. Skip Hunt will be honored for his service to the town as a pillar of Park and Rec. Directors will be elected in a short business session, and refreshments will be served. All are welcome.

School Holidays: CCS will not be in session Thursday, November 11, Veterans Day. Thanksgiving recess will begin with students' dismissal at 1 P.M. on Wednesday, November 24. Classes will resume Tuesday, November 30. (On Monday, November 29, teachers will be attending workshops.)

A Christmas Fair will be held Saturday, December 4, from 10 A.M. to 3 P.M. at the United Church of Christ. In the Parish House, there will be crafts by local artists, evergreen wreaths and decorations, and rooms for children to make simple ornaments and to shop for and wrap presents for the family. A soup and sandwich lunch and holiday foods will be available in the Day Room of the church. To reserve wreaths, which must be ordered in advance, call Joan Edler at 672-6789.

Thanksgiving Dinner will be enjoyed by students in the Kindergarten/Transition class, their parents, and grandparents at CCS on Friday, November 19, at noon. With the guidance of teachers Darleene Wadhams and Joyce Samson, the children, costumed as Pilgrims and Indians, will prepare, serve, and clean up after the meal—as well as eat!

Poetry Reading: Judyth Hill, a Western poet and director of the poetry project Tumbleweeds, will perform and discuss her poetry Friday, November 19, at 7:30 P.M. at the Library. Admission charge of \$10 will benefit the Library operating budget.

Xmas Crafts for Kids: Come to the West Cornwall Firehouse Monday, November 29, from 10 A.M. to noon, and have fun making presents and decorations. Sponsored by Park and Rec.

A Day in the City: Our bus leaves at 8 A.M. on Saturday, November 27, from CCS and departs from the city at 4:30 P.M. You can see the Christmas tree at Rockefeller Center, have lunch at the Central Park Zoo, shop at Macy's and more. Cost per person is \$14 round trip. Those who wish to go to Radio City Music Hall must purchase tickets separately by telephone. Call Carla Bigelow, 672-0283, for reservations and more information. Sponsored by Park and Rec.



CORNWALL CHRONICLE

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