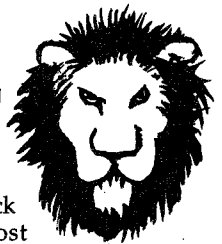




# CORNWALL CHRONICLE

VOLUME 5 : NUMBER 2 MARCH 1995



## NESDC to Schools: Reorganize

Dr. W.G. Zimmerman of the New England School Development Council, hired to tell us why we're at each other's throats come budget time, described Region One's governance structure to a group of Northwest Corner citizens gathered at the North Canaan School as "fundamentally flawed." Comparing our fragmented school system with more unified ones throughout the state, he sees the 4.8 members of the Region One central office as underpaid, overworked, and bogged down in clerical work. On the other hand, our teaching and clerical forces he judged to be underworked—that is, if economy of operation is our prime concern. Also overstaffed are our six local school boards, which he sees as cumbersome and overly concerned with day-to-day minutia.

Dr. Zimmerman had interviewed key citizens of the six towns in Region One, the principals of the seven schools, school-board members, and the administrators themselves. He had also held three focus-group sessions with interested voters to get a multi-dimensional picture of local thinking. Compilation of these interviews, cost and staffing figures from other school systems, and a two-week time log of administrators' daily routines were the raw materials he drew on for his report. He was aided by a volunteer,

Dr. P.T. Schoenemann of Harwinton, whose field of expertise is business management.

Their recommendations: hire an assistant superintendent and business manager post haste; pull the central administrative offices together for better communication and more efficient clerical support; rewrite job descriptions on two pages each; reduce the six elementary-school board memberships to three each and leave the principals out of their meetings; and—long-range—adopt a region-wide K-12 school system which the report's authors claim would save us "hundreds of thousands of dollars."

Copies of Dr. Zimmerman's report are available at the Town Hall.

—*Scoville D. Soule*

## Looking Back with Fred Bate

"Back then, if you could run the pump and hold onto a hose you were a fireman." Fred Bate chuckles. "Not so today. It takes six weeks of fire school to make Firefighter One. And that's just the beginning."

"Back then" was December 1939, when Fred, age 20, was sworn in as a member of the Cornwall Volunteer Fire Department. Fifty-five years and one month later, he talked about his days as a fireman and later as a member of the rescue squad, and about some of the changes that time has brought.

"When I started, our truck was a 1932 Sanford. It cost \$5,000. It had no cab, so Penn Higginson gave us a horsehide coat with a coonskin collar for the driver. Back then you could outfit a fireman for maybe \$50. Nowadays it costs over \$1,000 to put a man on the front line. Add an airpack, for going into smoke, that's another \$2,000."

Fred remembers every fire he fought: barn fires, house fires, brush fires. Some of the worst were in winter, like the mess-hall fire at Mohawk, when Bill Scius's boots froze to his feet, or Ted Starr's house fire on a night so cold "it took us a week to thaw out the hose."

"Before we had an ambulance," Fred continues, "you got to the hospital as best you could. Doc Walker had his car fixed up so he could drop the seat and lay the injured right in. He took me to Sharon once, when I broke my arm as a kid. Then sometime in the '60s we got our first ambulance. It was an old van that we bought from the Board of Ed for \$1 and fixed up. We kept a "steal list" on the dash when we went to the hospital, for things we needed—extra pillows, blankets, bandages. Our new ambulance, which we got last October, cost over \$100,000, not counting some \$50,000 worth of equipment.

"A little later Doc Reyelt over in Sharon decided if we were going to play doctor we'd better learn something about medicine, so he

(continued on page 2)

## MARCH 1995

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<i>Note: Deadline for April Events &amp; Announcements and Calendar listings is March 15.</i>			<b>1</b> W.Cornwall Merchants Association 10 a.m. Cadwell's	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> Judy Gafney Children's Story Hour 10 a.m. Cornwall Library Town Meeting 8 p.m. CCS Gym (see p.2)	<b>4</b>
<b>5</b> Scott Cady 4 p.m. Cornwall Library (see p.4)	<b>6</b> Park & Rec 7:30 p.m. Town Office Board of Selectmen 7:30 p.m. Town Hall 	<b>7</b> Agri. Advis. Comm. 7:30 p.m. Firehouse Inland Wetlands 7:30 p.m. Town Hall*	<b>8</b> CCS PTA 7 p.m. CCS Lib. Special Olympics Comm. 7 p.m. Town Hall	<b>9</b> Board of Education presents budget to Board of Finance 7:30 p.m. CCS Library	<b>10</b> Judy Gafney 10 a.m. Cornwall Library	<b>11</b> Square Dance Benefit for Extras for Kids 7-10 p.m. CCS Gym (see p.4)
<b>12</b> Poetry Reading 8 p.m. Cadwell's	<b>13</b> HVRHS Bd. of Ed. 7 p.m. High School Art Show, Scott Zuckerman 3/13-4/8 Cornwall Library P & Z 7:30 p.m. Town Hall 	<b>14</b> Repub. Town Comm. 7:30 p.m. CCS Conf. Rm. Dem. Town Comm. 7:30 p.m. Town Hall Housatonic Riv. Comm. 7:30 p.m. CCS Library	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> Board of Finance 7:30 p.m. CCS Library Board of Education 5 p.m., CCS Library	<b>17</b> ST. PATRICK'S DAY Judy Gafney 10 a.m. Cornwall Library	<b>18</b> Cornwall Assn. 4 p.m. Prentices' 129 Lake Road
<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> Bd. of Selectmen 7:30 p.m. Town Hall 	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> Yale Glee Club Benefit for hospital in Haiti 8 p.m. Hotchkiss School (see p.4)
<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> ZBA 7:30 p.m. Town Hall* Conservation Comm. 7:30 p.m. Firehouse 	<b>28</b> Elderly Health Screening, CCS (see p.4)	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b> Comedy Night/ Spaghetti Supper Benefit for Special Olympics, HVRHS Call Gordon Ridgway for time,	

\*Check time and place at Town Office

(continued from page 1)

set up a first aid course. When the EMT program came in I got certified. I took the exam with both hands bandaged from having frozen my fingers in a fire. From then on I worked on the rescue squad. At first, some of the older doctors didn't think we knew much—we were farmers—and some of the nurses resented our getting into their territory, but after a while we were accepted.

"Cornwall was the first town in the state to have a woman in the fire service. Joan La Placa. Dick Dakin was fire chief, and at the monthly fire chiefs' meetings the other chiefs would talk about this new truck or that new firehouse and Dake would say, 'Yeah, and I've got the only pregnant fireman in the state of Connecticut.' There was some resistance at first to having girls on the squad, but I wasn't one. They're better at dealing with kids and elderly ladies than men, and besides, they're damn good at their jobs.

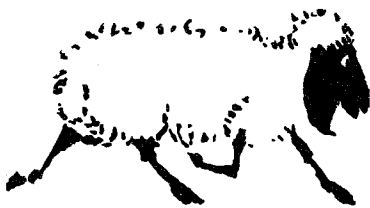
"I guess I've seen just about everything," Fred says, "shootings, stabbings, suicides, car and motorcycle accidents, drownings. About the only thing I've managed to avoid is helping deliver a baby, for which I'm just as pleased. I had the training for it, though. I remember Doc O'Connell telling us, 'You want to make sure you've got a good catcher's mitt, 'cause they're slippery little cusses.'

"In spite of all the bad stuff we saw, there were always laughs and good times, like the poker games in the firehouse. It's changed now. What with all the training and re-certification and classes in this and that, who has the time?

"Ever since I lost my leg in 1981 and could no longer work in the box [the back of the ambulance], I've been driving the ambulance. So I'm still active. But one of these days I'll turn in my radio and my pager and step down."

On February 1, Fred did just that.

—George Kittle



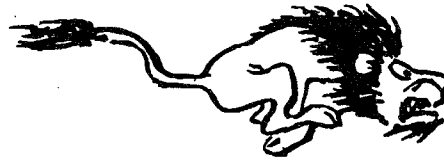
### CHC Marches On

The Cornwall Housing Corporation held its February meeting in the dining room of Mike DeGreenia's comfortable and attractive new home on Pierce Lane, the first of CHC's new housing on Pierce Lane to be occupied.

Lonnie Carter's house on Town Street will be completed in March. The homes of Debra Tyler and Sally O'Shaughnessy are under construction on Pierce Lane and should be occupied by midsummer.

The four leaseholders have obtained mortgages through the helpful cooperation of the New Milford Savings Bank.

—Ken Keskinen



### Tightening the Budget Screws

The first draft of the selectmen's 1995/96 operating budget, as detailed to the Board of Finance on February 16, earned high marks from that body. The bottom line shows a two percent reduction as compared to 1994/95. The capital expense side is more conjectural at this point but looks to be equally encouraging. "Impressive" and "hard work" were some of the accolades thrown at presenter Gordon Ridgway. He attributed the hard work to all those involved in the budget process.

In other business last month the selectmen, in conjunction with the Board of Education, called a town meeting for Friday, March 3 (8 P.M.) to vote on some proposed changes in the Board of Education's election regulations: (1) reduce term of office from six years to four (to provide time off for good behavior?); and (2) have open elections without regard to party affiliation in order to increase competition, the only proviso being that no more than four members of a given party may serve on the board at one time. This ordinance would be phased in over a four-year period.

Tentative plans for expanding the town offices at the present site have been prepared pending the outcome of Marvelwood negotiations and voter decisions. A town meeting on this matter is anticipated in April or May.

—Scoville D. Soulé

### The Steppes of Cornwall

There were ten of us walking along River Road that day—six adults, two small children and two dachshunds. We had just reached the railroad crossing at the foot of the long, gentle hill (at the top of which is a red house), when suddenly six enormous dogs burst into view and came running down the hill at top speed, piloted by a man in a four-wheeled cart. We stared transfixed as they barreled down the road, moving to the left and right as their master yelled "gee" and "haw" at them (or "ahead" for straight ahead or "hike" for go faster). We cowered as they whirled past us and then disappeared down the road. We felt as if we had been in a scene from a Russian novel.

We did a little research and found out that the intrepid driver was Justin Hajek of Sharon and that he became interested in dog sledding nine or ten years ago when he read about the northern outdoors in books by Jack London and others. His dogs are Alaskan huskies and he is training them for the national championships in Sprint Mushing that will take place in Lake Placid this month. Each team will have to go five miles a day on three consecutive days. Their times will be added up and the team with the best (shortest) time wins.

When there is no snow, Justin trains with his cart, but when there is snow he uses a dogsled. If he is not training around Sharon and Cornwall, Justin, a student at Middlebury College, trains his dogs at the college, where he keeps them on a campus baseball field.

This shows that in Cornwall, you never know what is going to surprise you around the next corner.

—John Zinsser

### "Poetry and Song" a Winner

Pews packed with appreciative listeners applauded Sam Waterston and the Litchfield County Children's Choir at their performance on Sunday, February 12, at the United Church of Christ. The rapt audience relished Sam's versatile and sensitive reading of some

of his favorite poems; and they enjoyed the choir,

which includes Cornwall singers Maja Gray, Davina Piker, and soloist Kate Sandmeyer. The choir, directed by Christopher Shepard, sang a variety of challenging selections with composure and élan.

The program netted more than \$3,500, which is to be used to carry on the partnership begun last year with the Jubilee School of Philadel-

phia. Several Cornwall children and parents will visit the school this month, and 45 students and teachers from the Jubilee School will come to Cornwall for a five-day stay in June—all made possible by the support of the community.

—Ken Keskinen



### Goodbye to a Friend

George A. Bouteiller

### Land Transfers

Estate of Ronald H. Strohl to F.S.B. Associates, L.L.C., 10 acres of land on Kent Road for \$70,000.

### Restoring Church Records

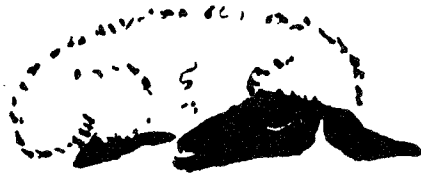
The Cornwall Historical Society has undertaken a special conservation and restoration program for old church records that it now holds. Some are on loan from the United Church of Christ for safe storage in the society's vault; these include an item dating from 1755, and later ones from the First and Second Churches. Other items are from four Methodist and Baptist churches that once existed here. Some items are in such poor condition that they can no longer be made available for public examination until restored.

These records reflect the pervasive role that religion has played in Cornwall's his-

tory, as well as the history of its churches. They also contain information often not available elsewhere on baptisms, marriages, and deaths, of great interest to persons seeking their roots.

The program will proceed on an item-by-item basis subject to available funding, giving priority to items in greatest need of restoration. Conservation and restoration measures are costly, well beyond present means. The Society has therefore established a special fund, to which it and the United Church have made initial donations. Persons interested in joining this effort may send contributions, designated for "Church Records Fund," to the Cornwall Historical Society, P.O. Box 115, Cornwall, CT 06753. All donations are most welcome, no matter how small. Together we can preserve this part of our town's history.

—Michael Gannett



## Writing Woes

Discussing the disappointing writing scores achieved by Cornwall Consolidated School students in this year's state mastery tests, Principal William Oros said bluntly, "It was a tactical error on our part. We wanted them to do quality work, but quantity won out." Oros explained that CCS students are taught to outline, then do a rough draft, and finally write their finished version of an assignment. In the mastery tests' 45-minute time span, many of the fourth graders—the youngest group tested—were cut off in mid-sentence.

"Next year, we'll coach them, for the purpose of this test, to skip the rough-draft stage, to organize quickly, and then to just write like crazy," Oros said.

As they have in past years, CCS students chalked up the highest scores in Region One in math and reading.

—Barbara Klaw

## P&Z Gets Slowly Back to Work

Even after a two-month vacation due to lack of applications needing review by the Planning and Zoning Commission as a whole, the February meeting lasted only half an hour. Business accomplished included setting public hearings for March 13, at 7:30 P.M. on a resubdivision for Ella Clark on Town Street to create an additional building lot; and on a use clarification for Trinity Conference Center—it is proposed that use be limited to certified nonprofit organizations, under Special Permits, section 3.3.1.f of the regulations.

—Ginny Potter



## Letters to the Chronicle

### ORGANIZE FOR CABLE TV

February's article "TV or DTV?" prompts this Laurel customer from just over the Warren line to offer some advice: organize!

Buying cable TV isn't at all like taking electric service. It's like ordering in a restaurant. Cornwall residents can greatly influence what they get if they make clear now that they won't order the service if they don't get a good menu.

We get some great programs in Warren: for about \$26 a month Laurel sells us the three major networks, PBS from Hartford, the Discovery Channel, Arts & Entertainment, Weather, CNN, C-Span, movies, music video, sports channels, home shopping, etc. But Laurel does NOT offer us some other terrific stuff, such as alternative children's programming, history and foreign language programs, and so on. Channel space is limited, yet we have TWO NBC stations, TWO home shopping services, TWO music video channels, and more made-for-TV movies than you'd believe even existed. But we don't get a PBS feed from New York, which has superior programming.

Cornwall is in an excellent bargaining position if it stands together and says what it wants and doesn't want. Why don't you set up a small working committee to investigate: 1) what Laurel intends, and 2) what else Laurel could supply if it had to—and also what DTV could supply. Then the committee could report back to the town.

—Stephen Chodorov

### BACK TO PRESS

The Cornwall Yellow Pages, the free guide to local businesses and services published by the Cornwall Association last fall, is going into a second edition. Those not listed in the first printing can get in on the new one by clipping and filling out the sign-up form in the front of the Yellow Pages; mail it to the address shown on the form. Or you can call. Charles Osborne at 672-6296. If your listing was incorrect, we are sorry; send a copy of the page, with corrections, to Cornwall Association, P.O. Box 128, West Cornwall, CT 06796.

—Charles Osborne

### SKUNKS AND SKUNKLETS

I have never numbered skunks among Cornwall's more lovable wildlife, not, that is, until one wonderful day as I sped along Route 128 toward West Cornwall, and there, right in the middle of the busy thoroughfare, I saw a distracted mother skunk, desperately trying to shepherd innumerable little miniatures to the safety of the Klings' vegetable garden. Back and forth, back and forth she nuzzled first one, then another, until she disappeared into the underbrush with about half her troop.

That left a confused mass of skunklets still milling around helplessly in the middle of the road. I rushed to the rescue. Unable to bend down and pick one up, I tried to guide them to

safety with my cane. Six or seven volatile little puffs of fur raised stiff black tails straight up in protest against such indignity (the tails, fortunately, were as yet unarmed). No sooner had one skunklet reached the bank than his brother would reverse course and scurry back.

Into the midst of this drama, along came two cars. Their drivers observed a nutty old woman plunk in the middle of the road, waving her cane officiously at the noonday traffic while she played with unidentifiable whatever, but being good Cornwallers, they waited politely, not even honking, until the last little tail had disappeared down the bank into the underbrush and the crazy old woman and her cane had retreated to her car.

—Mary Schieffelin

### UNAFFILIATED VOTERS

This letter is directed at Cornwall's largest group of voters—those who choose to be unaffiliated. Most of you, I'm guessing, are not interested in participating in town government. But there must be some who are highly qualified and interested in serving on our elected and appointed boards and committees. I and my fellow Democratic Town Committee members think you are being overlooked under our present system (in which nominations for town offices are made by the local party organizations). We would like to know who you are because your talent and interest are being wasted. Please contact me or anyone else on the Democratic Town Committee. I suspect some of our Republican friends may agree with us. Please let's hear from you.

—Marie Prentice

### CHICKADEE FOLLOW-UP

It's worse than I thought. One of my chickadees thinks he's a woodpecker. I caught him in the act the other day. A bona fide red-head was hammering on an old wasp's nest on the side of my house when this chickadee dive-bombed him and began pecking away furiously with his tiny beak. Obviously bonkers. Not only has he forgotten where he stashed his food, he's forgotten what kind of bird he is.

What's next? A chickadee that hoots like an owl? Walks like a duck?

Maybe I'll go away after all.

—George Kittle

### TAX FORMS AVAILABLE

In the past, the treasurer's office has been happy to provide employer tax forms to townspeople who are faced with ugly IRS deadlines and have nowhere else to go to find them. However, this year we almost ran out.

The 1995 order forms for these various tax forms are in my office. Drop in and pick one up so that next January we're not all having nightmares about driving to Danbury at 11:45 on the night of January 31 to find missing forms.

—Lisa Lansing

## Events and Announcements

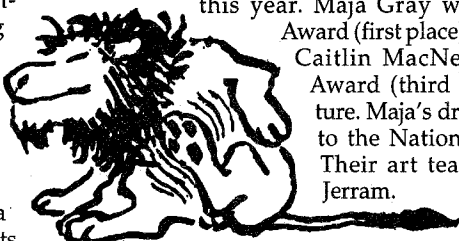
**Raffle for Youth Fishing:** It is time for young fishermen to get that fishing tackle ready for opening day. The Fishing Committee of the Cornwall Conservation Commission has been busy getting permits, ordering fish, and, best of all, getting the prizes ready for our annual raffle on April 15. These prizes are all high quality stuff—a \$300 fly-fishing outfit from Orvis, a selection of hand-tied flies, and a quality landing net. Raffle tickets (\$1 apiece) can be obtained from Susie Williamson or Jim Bate at Northwest Lumber, or from Steve Hedden, Scott Zuckerman, or George Brown. All the money from the raffle goes towards the stocking of Mill Brook and the Youth Fishing Program of the Conservation Commission. If you can't make it here for the raffle but would like to participate, mail a check (any amount) to Youth Fishing Fund, P.O. Box 205, Cornwall, CT 06753.

**Stretch and Tone Class:** Utilize small hand weights to firm and tone upper body. Stretch slowly and methodically (to beautiful music) to increase flexibility. Sponsored by Park and Rec. Everyone welcome—no age limit. Instructor: Alice Cadwell. Thursday evenings, 5:15 to 6:15, Town Hall.

**Property Tax Credits:** Cornwall property owners who were 65 or older by December 31, 1994, or who are receiving Social Security disability payments, may be eligible for credit on their property tax. The property must be their principal residence and total income including Social Security must be less than \$21,200 (single) or \$26,100 (married). Applications may be filed in the assessor's office until May 15 and, if approved, will apply to the July billing. The office of the assessor, Barbara S. Johnson, has both application and reapplication forms. (Once in the program one must reapply every two years; forms have been mailed to homeowners who must reapply this year.) Office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9 A.M.—noon; and Wednesdays 1 to 4 P.M.

## Changing Shapes

On Wall Street, the bear is turning into a bull, and in Cornwall the March lion should start looking more lamb-like each day. The *Chronicle's* treasurer is also a changeable sort; he's been known to grow hair on his hands and howl at the full moon when our bank balance falls to a certain level. So please send in your tax-deductible contribution and keep him in the shape we like him.



**Young Artists Honored:** Congratulations to Maja Gray, Caitlin MacNeil, Adam Rosenback, and Winfield Wilson for being selected to enter the statewide Scholastic Art Awards Competition. We have two winners this year. Maja Gray won a Gold Key Award (first place) in drawing, and Caitlin MacNeil won a Place Award (third place) in sculpture. Maja's drawing will go on to the National Competition. Their art teacher is Cynthia Jerram.

**Return Cards Please:** Jayne Ridgway and Lisa Cruse remind all registered voters in Cornwall to return their canvass cards promptly by mail.

**Screening for Preschoolers:** Early childhood screening continues at the Cornwall Consolidated School on a monthly basis, offered by Regional School District One. It is open to all three- and four-year-olds. Each child's developmental level is assessed in the areas of motor skills, language development, cognitive skills, and social development. If your child has already turned three and you are interested in this service, please call Martha Bruehl at 672-2939 to schedule an appointment.

**Songs for Haiti:** At 8 P.M. on March 25, there will be a concert at Hotchkiss School by the Yale Glee Club to raise funds to buy a truck for the Albert Schweitzer Hospital in Haiti. The concert will be sponsored by the local Rotary Club, of which Peter Hammond is vice-president. John Leich, Paul Baren, and Tom Bechtle are other Cornwallians in charge of the arrangements. The concert will consist of classical, traditional, and popular musical numbers. Tickets, \$15 at the door, may also be reserved by calling John Leich, 672-6193.

**ATM Comes to Cornwall:** The Cornwall Bridge branch of the National Iron Bank has opened an automatic teller machine. Area residents can now get cash 24 hours a day. Cardholders from the National Iron Bank or from any member bank of the NYCE or Cirrus networks can use the machine, which is mounted just before the drive-up window.

**Benefit Concert:** On Sunday, April 2, at 8 P.M. in Cornubia Hall, Anne Chamberlain, pianist, and her niece, Katherine Hannauer, violinist, will give a concert for the benefit of Prime Time House, a Northwest Corner rehabilitation center (located in Torrington) for those recovering from severe and persistent

mental illness. The music of Mozart, Ravel, Scriabin, and Richard Strauss will be featured. A reception will be held in the hall following the concert. Tickets are \$12 and can be purchased from Ann Schilling, 672-6862.

**Calling All Speakers:** Alice Cadwell wants speakers in her travelog series. Anyone who can give a talk on an interesting place, please call Alice at 672-6316.

**Elderly Health Screening:** There will be a screening on Tuesday, March 28, at the Cornwall Consolidated School for Cornwall residents age 60 and over. A wide range of tests is offered, including hearing, vision, height/weight, blood pressure, urine, blood, stool, glaucoma, electrocardiogram, and PAP/pelvic/breast or prostate exam, as well as health education. The suggested donation is \$20 (or \$25 with PAP test). For an appointment, call your Agent for the Elderly, Jill Gibbons, at 672-2603 or 672-0033.

**Swing Your Partner:** Cornwall Extras for Kids is throwing a square dance on Saturday, March 11, 7-10 P.M. at CCS. Adults (\$5) and kids (free) may do-si-do to the music of Rob and Dave Paton on various instruments and Scott Heth on piano. Caller Jim Gregory will give instruction for the first half hour to any who want to brush up on the energetic art of quadrille. Refreshments will be served.

**Cady on Israel/Palestine:** At the Cornwall Library, on Sunday, March 5, at 4 P.M., Scott Cady, pastor of St. Peter's Lutheran Church, will talk about the people and politics of Israel and Palestine. Cady will be reporting (with slides) on his 12-day study trip to Israel and the West Bank (he was there the day Yasir Arafat returned to Gaza). Sponsored by the Friends of the Cornwall Library. Everyone invited.



## CORNWALL CHRONICLE

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