

# THE RIVER REVIEW

September 2017 Volume 11, Issue 9

*Photo by Mia Sanchez*



NEWS FOR THE RESIDENTS OF RIVER PLACE



SEPTEMBER 2017



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## *Heads Up...From the City*

### **Marburger Farm Antique Show-20th Year Fall Show Dates: September 26-30, 2017**

What is authenticity? It is real. It is character. It is quality. It is what you will find in the 20th year of the Marburger Farm Antique Show in Round Top, Texas on September 26 through September 30.

What is fake? It is flimsy. It falls apart. It depreciates in value. It is available everywhere —except at the 20th year of the Marburger Farm Antique Show in Round Top, Texas on September 26 through September 30.

When the opening bell rings on Tuesday morning, buyers will have traveled hours or days to reach the cow pasture that has become one of the great antique shows in the world. Whether they arrive by SUV or helicopter or horseback, they come for authenticity. “When people come from all over the world, they expect authentic antiques and vintage,” says the show’s Authenticity Advisor, Donald Cowan. “They are not looking for false-vintage reproductions or items in current mass-production.” Cowan works to help dealers correctly identify and describe antiques and vintage offerings—and to help ensure that new reproductions are not present in the show.

### **Peruvian Leaders Examined Accountable Governance in Austin, TX**

Five political leaders from Peru participated in an Open World program July 14 through July 20, 2017, in Austin, Texas, examining “accountable governance”. The Friendship Force Club of Austin hosted the delegation, with Global Austin assisting in the professional programming.

During their initial orientation in Washington, D.C., the delegates met with several members of Congress, including 31st Texas District Representative John Carter, as well as the Peruvian Ambassador. While in Austin, the delegates toured the Lyndon B. Johnson National Historic Park and library, swam in the iconic Barton Springs Pool, and visited with local and state government officials, UT professors, and community leaders. We were in the Capitol on the opening day of the special session, when the press photographers were busy with the other political visitors, namely protestors. **That day was the perfect LIVE demonstration of folks attempting to prove or to demand that our elected officials are accountable.**

Managed by the independent Open World Leadership Center, the Open World program introduces rising leaders of emerging democracies to legislative functions essential to democracy. Funded almost entirely by the U.S. Congress, Open World links members to their counterparts and is an instrument for Americans engaged in citizen diplomacy.

Kay Binder, Regional Director of Friendship Force International (FFI), and Anita Knight, current Leadership Council Coordinator for our Friendship Force Club, were honored to have been invited by FFI to host and plan the week. We were assisted by GlobalAustin, which works with the U.S. Department of State to deliver similar educational and cultural programs to visiting international leaders.

*(Continued on Page 6)*

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## **IMPORTANT NUMBERS**

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## **ARTICLE INFO**

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The River Review is mailed monthly to all River Place residents. Residents, community groups, churches, etc. are welcome to include information about their organizations in the newsletter. Personal news for the Stork Report, Teenage Job Seekers, recipes, special celebrations, and birthday announcements are also welcome.

To submit an article for the River Review please email it to [riverreview@peelinc.com](mailto:riverreview@peelinc.com). The deadline is the 15th of the month prior to the issue.

## *Let's Meet the Vierling Family*

Please join us in saying hello to Hsuu and Andrew Vierling as well as their nearly 3 year old son, AJ and their one year old daughter Aria. Hsuu works as an Accountant while Andrew is employed as an IT Consultant. And certainly not to be overlooked, there are two cats in the family, Boomer and Ei Ei.

The Vierlings originally moved to the Austin area from New York City four years ago and settled in River Place ten months ago. Prior to River Place they lived in the Hillside Condos but the additions of AJ and Aria to the family meant it was time to move to a larger home. The family now lives on Humble Cove and chose River Place for the schools, natural beauty and fantastic parks.

They like the great neighbors, community feel and fun activities sponsored by the HOA and MUD which the kids also really enjoy. They feel lucky to have found a great home on a quiet cul de sac

just a short walking distance from Woodlands Park.

While they love traveling and have travelled throughout the world, that activity has certainly become more of a challenge with the little ones. During the rare instances of free time away from the children, the Vierlings enjoy playing tennis, running and dining at some of the great restaurants in the Austin area.

While Hsuu is originally from Burma and Andrew is a native Texan, the Vierlings met while living in New York City. They subsequently decided that Austin would be a great city to raise a family even though they do still occasionally miss the attractions and bright lights of the Big City.

Regardless, they feel blessed to have found such a wonderful place to live that provides them with so many things to do as well as top notch educational opportunities for the children. Who can argue with that?







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# RIVER REVIEW

*(Continued from Page 3)*

GlobalAustin, formerly the International Hospitality Council of Austin, has promoted “citizen diplomacy” since 1960. And the Austin chapter of FFI believes that “a world of friends is a world of peace”. The Peru delegation chose Austin, because we have had a Sister City relationship with Lima, Peru since 1981; and the new officers of the Austin-Lima Sister Cities committee were enthusiastic participants in the week’s activities. Source: Anita Knight

## How to Respond to Coyotes in Your Neighborhood

### Communications and Public Info Office, City of Austin Agency

As Austin grows, our interactions with wildlife increase. To keep coyotes and other wildlife wild, we can follow a few, simple preventative measures:

- Always keep trash and compost in a secure bin
- Keep your barbecue grill clean
- Keep the area under your fruit and nut trees free of droppings (a coyote’s diet can be up to 40% fruit in Texas)
- Avoid feeding pets outdoors (if you must feed pets outside, feed during the daytime and remove the uneaten food as soon as the animal has finished).
- Feeding wildlife and feral cats can attract coyotes. In addition to coyotes eating the food, mice and other animals will be drawn to leftovers, which can subsequently attract predators such as foxes and coyotes.

**Hazing:** To discourage coyotes from associating people with safety and food, eliminate the food sources around your yard and engage in hazing if you see a coyote on your property. Hazing is a process used to reinforce a coyote’s natural wariness without harming them. To haze, be big and loud: Wave your arms, shout, use noisemakers, throw non-edible objects in its direction (but not at it), or spray the animal with a hose. It shouldn’t take much for the coyote to get the memo -- just be persistent and maintain eye contact. Do not haze if a coyote is sick, injured, with pups, or is in its territory or out at night.

**Pet safety:** Keep small pets inside when possible and monitor them while outside. While walking dogs, use a secure, 4-6 foot leash and do not let dogs explore vegetation that you can’t see through. It is advised that pets be fed indoors. If pets must be fed outdoors, feed during the daytime and remove food as soon as your pet is finished.

For more information on hazing and pet safety, visit: <http://www.austintexas.gov/departments/coyotes-central-texas>. For questions, or to schedule a one hour presentation by a wildlife educator, contact Adrienne Clark at 512-978-0514, or [Adrienne.clark@austintexas.gov](mailto:Adrienne.clark@austintexas.gov). For immediate assistance, call 311.

## Higher Temperatures Don’t Have to Mean Higher Electric Bills

### Austin Energy, City of Austin Agency

Austin is in the middle of a typical hot summer and air conditioners

*(Continued on Page 9)*



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## In And Around River Place

**River Place Area Traffic Accidents Subside:** There has been a significant decrease in accidents just outside River Place on RM 2222 and Four Points Drive (the cut-through street from River Place Blvd. that comes out on RM 620 just north of the shopping strip that contains HEB and Starbucks.) The trends differ however.

Accidents on RM 2222 between River Place Blvd. and McNeil Drive have dropped more than 50%, from 39 to 19 for the first six months of 2017 compared to 2016. During the same period though, accidents on Four Points Drive increased from 4 to 7. The net effect is that accidents overall are significantly down.

There are no concrete explanations for these trends although subjectively, one might suppose that more folks have learned about the Four Points Drive shortcut so traffic has increased there while drivers, knowing the dangers of RM 2222, have become much more careful when driving through our area. Regardless, it is certainly good news overall and who can complain about that?

**Replace That Old Heating & Cooling System:** Many River Place homeowners have already replaced their original heating & cooling units as most are approaching 20 years since being installed. Some folks however, are still nursing their older units, spending quite a bit on maintenance to keep them running. This might just be the more expensive route though.

With newer technology and the newer type chlorine-free R-410A refrigerant, new systems are much more efficient and more environmentally friendly. This can result in significantly lower energy bills, offsetting the cost of installation, eventually at least. One homeowner reported experiencing a greater than 40% reduction in their electric bill for July 2017 over July 2016 after replacing their system. And this July was a very warm month with quite a few days at 100 degrees or more.

Of course, check with a reputable A/C & Heating company and have your system evaluated, especially if it is giving you occasional problems. Just be aware that there are significant benefits to replacing that old system and the monthly savings thereafter might even pay you back within a surprisingly reasonable time period.

**Free ACT/SAT Practice Tests:** Krysta Aguilar of River Place once again reminds us of free ACT/SAT practice tests: For High school Juniors: Free practice ACT/SAT tests will be given all year long at the Northwest Hills College Tutors Learning Center! The exam mimics the setting and timing of the actual tests, and families will have a chance to meet with one of our experts to go over the scores in detail. Reserve your spot now: Online: <http://goo.gl/forms/3e2cmzOkAF> Call: 512-372-8385 Email: [austintx@collegetutors.com](mailto:austintx@collegetutors.com)

**Next session:** Saturday, September 16, 2017, 9:00 am - 1:00 pm

**Address:** 3908 Far West Blvd. Austin, TX

**Holistic Counseling and Wellness Opens in River Place:** Located at 6611 River Place Blvd., the service offers a personalized holistic approach to counseling to help clients find balance in their lives. Improved relationships and self-awareness are outcomes that can be sought through talk therapy, relaxation, mindfulness meditation, home practice and exercise explains Kimberly Nelson, a licensed professional counselor.

Besides Kimberly, the office includes a psychiatrist, a licensed clinical social worker and a licensed marriage and family counselor. They each have independent practices as well. Let's welcome them to River Place and wish them the best of luck with their new practice!

**The Annexation Situation –Not Good:** While this may well be old news by the time this issue is published and received, annexation reform bill HB 6 ended up in the House after the Senate approved SB 6 during the special legislative session but language pertaining to River Place was removed while in the House.

Tim Mattox, a River Place resident has been instrumental in the process of keeping residents informed and encouraging them to write and call to try to get Rep. Paul Workman's amendment language back in the bill. This language would allow River Place residents to have a vote on annexation. Apparently Democratic representatives want to disallow our vote because some water facility expenditures have already been undertaken by the City. Others counter by arguing that the City has actually made money on River Place thus far and that the capital investments were needed anyway. Stay tuned to Tim Mattox (and others) on Nextdoor to keep abreast of annexation news.

**Annexation Update:** As of this writing in mid-August, SB 6 was passed and forwarded to the Governor. It applies to cities over 500,000 in population. And even though Senator Campbell claimed it to be a great victory, it was passed without the Workman amendment which leaves River Place residents without a vote. A last ditch effort might be to legally challenge our predicament as unlawful and unreasonable based on the direction and intent of the change in the law.

**Kayaking to Work From River Place:** Hadley Hudson reports in Four Points News that Jason Dzubinski of River Place apparently kayaks to work in West Lake Hills. He got the idea when he saw an inflatable back pack kayak on Amazon. He had long been complaining about the increased difficulty and time involved in driving to work, which is only just across Lake Austin from River Place.

It took Jason about a week to figure out his 10 minute route rowing across the lake and then his hike to work through some residential neighborhoods. If he drives, it takes an hour. The difference says Jason, is his mindset once he arrives at work. He feels more productive and less stressed. Could this be the start of a new trend?





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(Continued from Page 6)

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- Take advantage of our rebate programs for energy efficiency at [austinenergy.com/go/rebates](http://austinenergy.com/go/rebates)
- Set your thermostat at 78 and when you leave for more than two hours, raise it to 85
- Install LED light bulbs; they generate less heat and energy
- Use fans to cool rooms, but remember to turn them off when you leave the room
- Keep your AC coils clean; make sure debris and high grass are cut away from the condenser
- Close shades and curtains on windows with direct sunlight
- Avoid using the oven to cook
- Unplug appliances and electronic devices when not in use

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## HOMEOWNER'S CORNER

### Homeownership in the Crosshairs

Major reforms to the tax code shouldn't come at the expense of current and prospective home owners according to a recent statement by the National Association of Realtors. For over a century, America has committed itself to home ownership with targeted tax incentives that help mainly lower and middle-class families. The mortgage interest deduction and the state and local tax deductions make home ownership more affordable, while 1031 exchanges help investors keep inventory on the market and money flowing to local communities.

These tax incentives are at risk in the recently proposed tax plan. As it stands, homeowners already pay between 80-90% of U.S. federal income tax. Without tax incentives for home ownership, that percentage will rise even further. Current homeowners could very well see their home values plummet and their equity evaporate if tax reform nullifies tax incentives they depend on – while prospective home buyers will see their dreams pushed further out of reach. Home ownership is one of the last vehicles for upward mobility and wealth building for all Americans. Let's preserve it.

### Appraisers & Home Prices at Odds

A recent study showed that, throughout the Midwest, appraisals in April were, on average, 1.9% lower than what home owners expected. This means that a home in the two to three hundred thousand range would be appraised for thousands less than their owners would expect. The same was true of appraisals in the Eastern part of the country. And worse, according to the latest National Quicken Loans Home Price Perception Index, this gap between appraiser and home owner views on price is spreading wider. April marked the 5th consecutive month this gap had widened.

Why is this important? The appraisal can impact how much money a buyer needs to bring to closing, or the equity that is available to the homeowner on a refinance loan. What does this mean for us? While the trend has spread, that same study also showed that while appraised values were lower than expected in the Midwest and the East, recently at least, they were higher than expected in the West and Texas! That's a relief! Let's hope this West trend continues.

### Homeowner Trends: Paint Covers All

When it's time to ramp up your curb appeal, it's easy to overlook the most affordable design remedy on the planet: a bucket of paint. A simple splash of color can transform your home's exterior!

1. **Freshen up the front door.** If your door is painted, a fresh coat of paint will help it stand out. If stained, fresh stain will work as well.

2. Give your porch swing a pop of color. Be tastefully bold! A porch swing is an unexpected spot to find color, and can freshen up the look of your whole house.

3. **Paint your porch light.** Porch swing too much? How about your porch light fixture(s)? Using metallic paint, such as copper paint, can restore luster to an old light and is a fantastic way to enhance curb appeal.

4. **Jazz up your house numbers.** Use accepted accent colors and

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creatively arranged wood or metal to show some personality through an otherwise perfunctory part of a home's exterior. Also consider your doorknobs, handles and hand railings.

5. Repaint your concrete porch. Your neighbors will never believe its just paint until they step on it themselves!

6. Paint your garage door. For many homeowners, it's not the actual front door that welcomes them home every day – it's that drab looking garage door. Why not put as much thought into where you park your ride as you do into where you welcome guests?

## Home Safety Tip: Install CO Detectors Yourself

A carbon monoxide (CO) leak in your home can spell serious harm for you and your family since it can be impossible to detect without a warning device. Make your home a safer place with CO detection.

While you can have a sophisticated system installed in your home and spend a great deal doing so, you can also accomplish this task by a visit to your local Home Depot or Walmart. For around \$20 or maybe even less, you can purchase battery operated CO detectors that are easy to mount and will do the job just fine. Usually they're mounted on just two screws that are provided. Simply install one just outside each bedroom door and you're done! Why not be safe when it's so easy to accomplish yourself?

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The goal is to fill in the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 through 9. Each digit may appear only once in each row, each column, and each 3x3 box.

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## TENNIS TIP OF THE MONTH

### Improving Your Doubles Game

Some of us are primarily singles players and it can be quite an adjustment when playing doubles. Sometimes singles players try to employ the same strategy when playing doubles. While our strokes remain the same, doubles can be a completely different game. Listed below are some different strategies to help your doubles game.

#### Tennis Tips:

1. Make your opponents uncomfortable by taking their second serves early and attacking the net. This can work effectively by using slice or topspin, and especially against weak servers. You want them to feel the pressure immediately after they serve. It doesn't mean you have to cream a winner but attacking to a large target and coming in rushes your opponent to come up with a good passing shot or lob. This is a great tactic when the game score is in your favor as a returner (15-40, 0-40, 30-30, 30-40, add out.) These times are when the server is feeling the most pressure and you are likely to draw an error or get an easy volley. This tactic is all about making the server uncomfortable.

2. Many tactics in doubles are designed primarily to make the opponents uncomfortable and this is yet another one. Lobbing off the return creates instant chaos on the other side of the net. In many cases it forces a change of position for your opponents and gives your net player a chance to pick off a weak reply. If you have opponents who bear down tight on the net or whose serves are drawing weak returns, throw up the lob return to mix things up. As a general rule with the lob, try to keep it over the non-dominant shoulder of the net player (Right hander: Left shoulder. Left hander: Right shoulder.) This way your partner is less likely to get hit with a monster overhead. When the server is serving and volleying, lobbing the net man throws them way out of position as the server must run down the lob.

3. Serve down the middle on your first serve. Unless your opponent has a clear deficiency on one side, serving to the T is a good strategy. If you serve out wide you are making it easier for the returner to hit cross court. Usually angles create more angles. If you serve down the T, your partner is more likely to get a chance to poach because the angle of the return is reduced.

4. Fake the poach when your partner is serving. Sometimes if you fake poach to the middle, you can get the returner to try the down the line return. He or she may end up giving you an easy volley or miss the return altogether.

5. Aim for your opponents' feet. If you keep the ball low, you force them to hit up. This often results in an easy put away.

Following these tips will help you win doubles matches you didn't know you could! Email me if you have any questions. Ed, **River Place Tennis**, edny20@yahoo.com

*"Tennis: All it takes is all you've got."* ~ Author Unknown

## Dine Well, Do Good

*with Water to Thrive at Chef's Table Austin 2017*

Chef's Table is Water to Thrive's signature fundraiser that provides our supporters with a unique opportunity to spend an evening with some of Austin's top culinary experts. Guests may bid on creative menus and outstanding meals prepared by the participating chefs, and bid winners will schedule a private dinner party with their Chef. Our chef lineup for 2017 includes: David Bull of Second Bar + Kitchen, Yesica Arredondo of Cannon + Belle, Bryce Gilmore of Barley Swine, Takuya Matsumoto of Kemuri Tatsu-ya, Steven Meese, Michelin and Celebrity Chef, Brian Moses of Olive & June, Wolfgang Murber of Fabi + Rosi, Janelle Reynolds of @t Large, Ben Runkle and Bryan Butler of Salt & Time, Rob Snow of Greenhouse Craft Food, and Andrew Wiseheart of Chicon.

Our sixth annual celebration will be held on Thursday, September 21, 2017, at the beautifully rustic Hotel Van Zandt from 7:00pm-9:30pm, with a VIP Reception from 5:30pm-7:00pm. All proceeds will benefit Water to Thrive operations. Along with our spirited live auction, we will have a silent auction, open bar, heavy hors d'oeuvres, and opportunities to get to know community members, as well as Austin's top chefs.

Tickets for this year's fundraiser are on sale now. For just \$75, or \$125 per couple, you'll get access to the main event which features the silent and live auctions, food and drink, and chances to win prizes. Or, you can purchase VIP tickets for \$150 each or \$250 per couple, which will get you early entry to the event, exclusive silent auction items, one-on-one time with our chefs, front row seats for the live auction, specialty appetizers, and more.

For more information about Chef's Table Austin and to purchase tickets, go to [www.chefstableaustin.org](http://www.chefstableaustin.org). Here you will also find photos, chef bios, and sponsors from past years of this event. Check our website and Facebook event page for updates and promotions leading up to the event.

We hope you'll join us for Chef's Table Austin 2017, and help us continue to bring safe, life-changing water to the beautiful people of East Africa!

- Jazzy Schwolert, Outreach and Communications Coordinator



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## NATURE WATCH

### THE VALUE OF VIPERS

by Jim and Lynne Weber

Throughout human history, fear of snakes has been one of our most common phobias, arising from our learned ability to detect threats to our survival in the wild. While most snake species are relatively harmless to humans, those in the Viper Family can pose a serious danger. Vipers are defined as venomous snakes with large hinged fangs, a broad head, and a stout body with a darker pattern on a lighter background. While vipers are venomous and must be treated with proper respect and caution, it is important to understand that they also exhibit many useful characteristics and are vital to keeping a healthy ecosystem in balance.

Vipers that can be found in Central Texas include the Western Diamond-backed Rattlesnake (*Crotalus atrox*), Broad-banded Copperhead (*Agkistrodon contortrix laticinctus*), and Western Cottonmouth (*Agkistrodon piscivorus leucostoma*). By far the most abundant and widespread viper, the Western Diamond-back



*Western Diamond-backed Rattlesnake*

On average, this snake grows between 3 and 4 feet long, and can be found in the wooded hills and plateaus north and west of Austin.

The Broad-banded Copperhead found in our area is an uncommon subspecies in Central Texas, occurring near woodland streams in live oak-juniper forests in the west to Blackland Prairie and Bastrop in the east. Growing 2 to 3 feet long, this snake is



*Broad-banded Copperhead*

stout-bodied and marked with wide, reddish-brown crossbands that alternate with narrower tan to pale brown crossbands. A heavy-bodied snake with a stubby tail, the Western Cottonmouth is named for the bright-white skin lining its open mouth, but it is also known as 'water moccasin.' It is generally restricted to the woodland borders of rivers such as the Colorado, but can be found in cool, shallow springs a short distance away from main waterways. This snake averages 2 to 3 feet in length, and typically appears almost all black with a bit of brown, but ill-defined grayish-brown crossbands can sometimes be seen, especially on the sides.



*Western Cottonmouth*

All of these vipers eat rodents, so they are beneficial in keeping rat and mice populations down, which is often the reason they can be found around homes and yards. They will also eat birds found on the ground, as none are very good climbers. As snakes that live in or near water, the copperhead and cottonmouth will also consume amphibians and fish. Vipers can also be prey for other animals such as owls, hawks, and even other snakes. Finally, chemicals found only in viper venoms have a distinct value to humans, as they are used to treat many serious health ailments such as cancer, heart disease, stroke, Parkinsons, and many more. Now that's the value of vipers!

Send your nature-related questions to [naturewatch@austin.rr.com](mailto:naturewatch@austin.rr.com) and we'll do our best to answer them. If you enjoy reading these articles, check out our books, *Nature Watch Austin* and *Nature Watch Big Bend* (both published by Texas A&M University Press), and our blog at [naturewatchaustin.blogspot.com](http://naturewatchaustin.blogspot.com).



## Attention KIDS: Send Us Your Masterpiece!

Color the drawing below and mail the finished artwork to us at:  
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DUE: September 30th

Be sure to include the following so we can let you know!

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**September 10: Colin's Hope Kids Triathlon**

Colin's Hope will host the annual Kids Tri on Sunday, September 10. The event is limited to 400 athletes, and will close quickly! For more information visit [www.colinshope.org](http://www.colinshope.org)

**September 24: Colin's Hope Got2Swim**

Looking for our annual Got2Swim? Join Colin's Hope and Open Water Planet on Sunday, September 24 for a 10K solo, 2, or 3 person relay on Lake Travis!



**Thank you to our sponsors, donors, and volunteers for their year round support!**

A special thank you to Peel, Inc. Their support helps us to raise water safety awareness to prevent children from drowning.

\*Source: Texas DFPS, Watch Kids Around Water

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