

THE GAZETTE

“a news-sheet, a periodical publication giving an account of current events”

West Falmouth Religious Society of Friends **MAY – JUNE 2019**

Frances Lightsom, Clerk (508-548-9186; fran.lightsom@gmail.com)

Quaker Birthdays

MAY

Maggie Saab, 3
Dorothy Wheeler, 23
Rudi Scheltema, 27

JUNE

Cornelia Hanna McMurtrie, 13

Regular Events

Adult Discussion Group,

Sundays at 9 am (May 5, 12, 19, 26;
June 2, 9, 16, 23, 30)

Peace and Social Order,

2nd Sunday at 12 (May 12; June 9)
Larry Jordan, clerk (508-420-1738)

Growth and Learning,

3rd Sunday at 12:00 (May 19, *Harm and Healing Circle* led by Paula Blumenthal and Brenda Nolan; June 16, *Experiment With Light* led by Louise Luckenbill) Abigail Young, convener

Ministry and Counsel,

7:00 pm (May 21, June tbd)
Deborah Bradley, convener (508-564-4744)
Marilyn Brice
Martin Fido
Carolyne Jordan
Jonathan Joyal
Cynthia Rankin

Empathy Practice (NVC)

Usually 1st Sat. 9:30-11:45
(May 4; June 1) at 24 Althea Rd. N. Falmouth, Brenda Nolan, convener (508-274-2701)

Upcoming Events

New England Yearly Meeting

Junior Yearly Meeting Retreat, Grades 2 - 6, Friday, May 17, 5:00 p.m. to Sunday, May 19, 12:30 p.m. Woolman Hill, Deerfield, MA. Theme: “The more I wonder, the more I love” (quote from *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker). Local contact Cynthia Rankin.

Ministry and Counsel, May 18 (all day). Location tbd.

Exploring Prayer and Meditation, Friday, May 24, 4:30 p.m. - Monday, May 27, 2:00 p.m. Woolman Hill, Deerfield, MA. A three-day weekend for experimenting with various approaches to prayer and meditation. Opportunities to share experiences with partners and in small groups. Led by Marcelle Martin (Swarthmore, PA, Meeting), author of *Our Life is Love: The Quaker Spiritual Journey*. See <https://neym.org/events/8335>

Nurturing Faithfulness, a 9-month program in spiritual deepening in community, **August, 2019-May, 2020**, Woolman Hill. Residencies **Aug 30-Sep 3, Dec 12-15; April 30-May 3, 2020**. See <https://neym.org/news/nurturing-faithfulness-program-returns-2019>

New England Yearly Meeting Newsletter: <https://neym.org/newsletters>



West Falmouth

Mid-Week Quaker Meeting at Atria in Falmouth. **Wednesdays**, at 9:45 a.m., **May (1, 8, 15, 22, 29) and June (5, 12, 19, 26))**. Contact Gina Lyman.

Quaker Women Potluck and discussion **Tuesday, May 21** at Quaker House. Gather at 5:30 p.m., supper at 6, sharing 7 – 8:30 p.m. And the topic is...take a deep breath...Crisis! What, in your experience, constitutes a crisis? What resources do you turn to, or wish you had when faced with a crisis situation? Share your thoughts, experiences ... anything goes!



Adult Discussion Group



During May we will discuss Thomas Gates's *Members One of Another: The Dynamics of Membership in Quaker Meeting.* (Pendle Hill Pamphlet #371, 2004). We will learn how we can be more welcoming and more supportive of Friends at different stages of membership. There is a copy in the meetinghouse library and we can make more copies for Friends who are interested. Join us!

Other Events at the Meetinghouse

Monday evenings, 7 pm, Zen Meditation. Contact Fran Lightsom

Friday evenings, 7 pm, Narcotics Anonymous. Contact Sally Fritz

Congratulations!

Erica H. Adams is celebrating her fourth Legacy Gift venue at Sagemont Upper School in Weston, Florida. This exhibition represents several “firsts” for the Chiapas Photography Project traveling exhibition: the first school, the first self-funded and the first out-of-state venue. Curator talks were given by Erica on April 24, Diversity Day, at Sagemont, a “majority minority” school with students from Central and South America, the Caribbean and of Florida Seminole origin. The exhibition runs through May 22.

Nan Garrett-Logan was recently honored by the Massachusetts Coalition to Prevent Gun Violence for her advocacy work in support of Massachusetts’s Extreme Risk Protective Order, newly passed nonpartisan legislation. Nan received a copy of the legislation signed by Governor Charles Baker at the April meeting of the Grandmothers Against Gun Violence, a Cape Cod nonprofit organization that works to raise public awareness about gun safety. See Falmouth Enterprise, April 26, 2019, p. 5.



Meet New Member -- Barbie Jane Gale, Yarmouth Preparative Meeting

Barbie was raised on a Jersey dairy farm in Bucks County, PA, and attended Lower Makefield Meeting as a young child. She was active in various sports as a youth as well as in the 4-H club. Since her 4-H leaders were Quaker, members of Wrightstown Meeting, the club spent a great deal of time doing community service. Barbie graduated from Newtown Friends School, and then went on to George School, a Quaker boarding school in Bucks County. She graduated from the University of New Hampshire with a degree in Ornamental Horticulture.

Following college, Barbie returned to the George School as a member of the teaching staff where she spent 28 years in various positions, among them physical education teacher, coach of numerous sports, class sponsor, Assistant Athletic Director and many others.

In 2006 she realized a dream she'd had as a teenager-- running a Bed and Breakfast. In partnership with her nephew, she spent 8 years as the owner of a 19-room, full restaurant and pub, Country Inn in Northern Pennsylvania.

While at the Inn, she was unable to attend Meeting regularly as she was usually checking guests out. Hence, at around 4:00 p.m. on Sunday afternoons, her meetinghouse was a large rock in the middle of the Loyalsock Creek, surrounded by a huge cliff covered with large spruce, maple and white pine trees. While quite picturesque, spiritual, and peaceful - listening to the flow of the water and watching the hawks, eagles and other birds – she missed the human interaction and vowed that wherever she landed, the area must have a meeting.

As a member of YPM, Barbie clerks Peace and Social Concerns; executes four themed 'special hospitalities' each year; spearheads grounds cleanups and decorative plantings; and has developed an emergency call list and a process for spontaneously opening the Meetinghouse when current events beg for prayer and comfort.

Yarmouth Preparative Meeting feels profoundly blessed to have Barbie as a member and hopes the larger Sandwich Monthly Meeting will experience her loving attention in the days to come.





Martin A. Fido 1939 ~ 2019

A Memorial Meeting for Worship for Martin Fido was held at the Meetinghouse on Saturday, April 13.

In the weeks since his sudden death, Friends have spoken gratefully about Martin, a beloved member of our meeting. One Friend cited the Malian author Amadou Hampate Ba's observation that when an elder passes "it is a library burning" and noted that "Martin *was* a library." At the memorial meeting, several Boston University colleagues also spoke of Martin's wide-ranging intellect and generous spirit, and reflected on how he had educated them about

Quakerism. Martin's loving dedication to our children and the children of the monthly meeting was remembered. Martin's Falmouth Chorale colleagues shared memories of him and, led by John Yankee, joined in a very moving *Dona Nobis Pacem*. A reception hosted by his children followed at Martin's home.



Religious Education – Youth

Spring Brings Progress to the Children's Garden

(Hans) Esteban Hernández



We saw the results of the soil test and learned that the soil did not need any additional minerals. The soil test also told us how much carbon was in the soil so we can measure again when we have our plants to see if our gardening was at least 'carbon-neutral.' In preparing the garden we learned about how far apart and how deep the plants should be planted. We have planted strawberry plants, red lettuce, green lettuce, carrots, radishes, beans and peas. The radishes have already sprouted. We planted four beds with the same plants, to compare the results: to one we added composted manure, to one we added a special soil mix, to one we added soil mix plus compost and one we didn't add anything to. We set up a soaker hose to water the plants on the days when we are not there.

We learned that beans and peas like to have a certain kind of bacteria that helps them grow.

We mixed a solution of water with the bacteria, then we soaked the bean and pea seeds in the solution. Then we planted those seeds. You may be asking why they need that bacteria: it's because the bacteria provide nutrients (nitrogen) for the plants and produce a smell that the plants like (ammonia). The bacteria like it because they can feed off the plants' nutrients. In this way the bacteria and the plants help each other! Steve says this is called symbiosis. This is what we have done so far in the garden.

At Sunday's Meeting for Business, Allison Diana proposed that the Children's Garden be renamed Martin's Garden. Angela then explained that Martin had given a lot of time and care to the Children's Meeting and that they wanted to honor that gift. Meeting gave heartfelt endorsement to this plan. So, the garden will be called Martin's Garden, although one Friend later observed that Martin's garden is the children themselves.

Readers Write

Passing in Water: A Poem to Leary

Leary (pronounced Larry) was the eldest of three sons of my friends, Earlston and “Diz” Doe who, in spring, 1981, invited me and my older daughter, Genie, to go cruising with them throughout the British Virgin Islands. Two weeks on their 42-foot ketch, the *Ercildoune* --an unforgettable experience. We learned something about crewing!

Only after we returned home did we learn that in our absence Leary, a college student, had apparently committed suicide by drowning. The Does’ reaction was to undertake what they had long planned—a sail through the Norwegian fjords. I wrote this poem hoping somehow to help console them.

Alta Mae Stevens



Wikipedia image

To Leary

Passing in Water

The mourning doves are billing and cooing
in the oak tree. Below the bookshop eaves
baby birds are peeping.
We are willy-nilly in spring.

And water, gracious mother,
is trickling, pouring, cascading
onto the dry ground.

Suddenly these things happen
without you,
without your quiet glance.

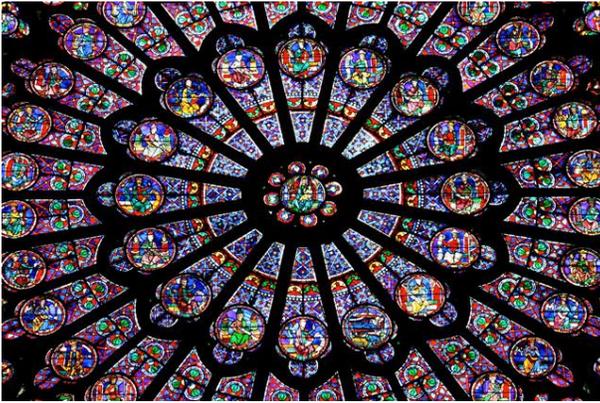
Lifted, distilled into a mist
you become the fat globules
on rosy-tipped tulip shoots.

Like mercy you lie
on the hunched shoulders
of small brown animals.

And in the silent transactions
between ocean and wind
you have found a new home.

Notre Dame

Maggie Saab



It was so very sad to see Notre Dame cathedral in flames, that majestic structure full of symbols, relics, and the beautiful stained-glass creations portraying the Catholic faith. I visited the cathedral two decades ago, and attended the most inspiring organ concert. The music shook my soul. The echo vibrated the walls, and all the while my eyes were closed! I did not look at anything to inspire me, but felt my spirit rejuvenated! My point is we don't need material things to increase our faith in God. I feel the Society of Friends is very straightforward to believe in The Light in each of us. So much expense, buildings, etc., all of which can come down very easily and quickly. The more I

age, the more I believe in my soul which is guided by the Divine Power.

Letter to West Falmouth Friends

Heidi Blocher, West Falmouth Preparative Meeting

Friends –

I was asked by the editor of your newsletter to share a little about my essential experience here in Phoenix, AZ where I live.

As you know, this immense (and still growing) city is not very far from the Mexican-American border. The issue of our southern border is much in the news and on American minds these days, but this doesn't mean we Phoenicians are continually concerned with it. The question of immigration and the suffering of migrants are on many hearts and minds, and then again not. "We have lives to live," as an honest young person once put it to me.

It's a Cape Cod friend who sent me a new book about the border, one that apparently has met with much attention, as it has with mine. The writer, born a Mexican-American, as a young man decided to join the Border Patrol to learn firsthand what goes on at the border. The small and very readable "vignettes" in which he shares his experiences (and some history about the border and what happens on the other side that compels people into migration) are, in their sensitive, detailed observation, conveying a sense to the reader of what the people affected by the border's present "political condition" go through, how they are affected both inwardly and outwardly, including the young agent himself. It is this sense, of course, that we need so as to know *what we are doing*, and to find what we *should* do.

A number of times the writer touches on the kindness and generosity he has experienced in Mexican people, even in situations of utter distress. I myself often experience this characteristic in these people, and am attaching a little "vignette" of my own to share an example of this with you – one that impacted me deeply.

The book: Francisco Cantu, *The Line Becomes a River: Dispatches from the Border*. NY, NY: Riverhead Books, 2018.

The wedding feast

(This account was written as a letter to the founder and leader of an organization attending deeply to the Mexican population in Phoenix most in need. She has encouraged me to share this account with others.)

Dear Kit,

I felt close to your heart tonight, in an experience I would like to share with you.

I had tried to write a letter to a friend about my experience in the elder complex where I'm living, and how challenging it is to me, and then felt I didn't need to do that, to repeat all those

complaints. It was sunset time. I glimpsed some pink in the sky and decided to go for a walk. I went over to Polk Street beyond Grand Ave, to an open place I've come to like by the old "University Park." There is a tiny elevation in the sand there under some palm trees which I've dubbed "the hill of Mizar" (from psalm 42). It's good to stand there. The sunset had grown very red, and there were spectacular reflections in the high-rise buildings to the east, and great beauty all around the poor neighborhood, and I thought how stupid I was to ever not consider Phoenix and my place in it the most wonderful spot I could possibly be in. I became aware of some beautiful music I was hearing, and as I walked up Grand Ave, I saw it was coming from the Mexican church called *Cristo Viene*. I had once witnessed a great wedding party in their parking lot bordering directly on the sidewalk, and again it was filled with tables and chairs wrapped very elegantly in white and tied with great pastel-colored sashes and bows. And again, like last time, I noticed the quiet of the many guests, a gentle solemnity and earnestness in their sitting, a peace, not the noisy or frantic turmoil I associate more with white parties. And, of course, the many dressed-up children moving around happily with the freedom Mexican children have.

I stood for a while near the opening in the fence on the side where the band was playing, listening to the music and the singer. A few young boys, all elegant, came out of an alley and freely addressed me. I think they were inviting me in. I asked if it was a wedding party, and one boy, in a dark suit with a white posy in his lapel, beamingly shared: "It's my *Mom's* wedding!" He clearly was very happy.

Suddenly there was a matron who gestured strongly to me to follow her inside, "Comida! Comida!" A little confused, I stammered that I wasn't dressed for the party! I could easily be taken for a homeless, the way I was dressed, and maybe I was. She wouldn't let up and ushered me, who was still hesitant, through the crowd all the way to the door of the kitchen, where a plate of hot food was loaded up for me. Another woman, dressed in sparkling white, led me to the guest tables, asking where I wanted to sit. I was still more confused and said, "wherever you say." She was unsure for a moment, then indicated an empty table, pulling out a chair for me. (Most guests had already gone over to the band, where they stood clapping their hands.) I sat down, receiving also a canned soda. The woman brought me a cup of ice and offered to pour the soda into it. Then I sat alone, eating my meal. I didn't feel the least bit self-conscious. It was unusual, but no longer strange. (At first, it can be a little disorienting when you suddenly drop into the Kingdom.) Later she brought more soft flour tacos, warm and wrapped in foil. Then she appeared with a large elder gentleman, groomed and in a suit, introducing him as her boyfriend. He spoke English. I thought now the questioning may begin: "Are you homeless? What are you doing here? Where do you live?" But no. He extended his hand to me, warmly: "Welcome! Thank you for coming!" I was like the guest of honor – and suddenly had no problem accepting this.

After I ate, I found the woman in white again and thanked her again before leaving. She pressed my hand, then suddenly closed me into her arms. I left and walked home in the dark, carrying my left-over soda.

I do experience miracles quite often on my walks. But this was something special. While I sat with my meal, tears rose in me. How can we treat these people the way we do, who treat us in this way? Whoever they thought



I was, they could see I was white (the only white person there). It meant nothing to them. They saw a stranger at the door, looking in with hungry eyes. If it was not hunger for physical food, I think any joyous celebration we find ourselves outside of opens eyes of deep hunger in us.

"Welcome! Thank you for coming!" I suddenly had a vision of another border where hungry people stand. What if we invited those with these words: "Welcome! Thank you for coming?" Our entire country and culture would turn by 180 degrees.

Why were they welcoming me? What could I bring to the party? They didn't ask. I was there, outside, looking in.

I remembered then an experience I once had at a religious gathering at a church near me. I saw a homeless man outside by the low wall. We had a lot of food inside. I went and asked him if he would like to eat. He nodded. He was a Native, not clean, smelling of alcohol. I went inside and brought him a plate loaded with food and invited him to sit there to eat. When I returned, only the potato salad was eaten and he was gone.

I had not invited him in.

I realized the difference tonight.

Although I've had strong experiences around the border situation before I got to know Neighborhood Ministries, your class, Kit, on activists led by the example of Christ surely has done much to sensitize me more to the situation, and perhaps helped me to accept tonight's invitation as I did.

I felt no shame for it. I did not feel I deceived them with a "false" identity. I was in another kingdom, where these things do not apply.

God rescued me tonight from the dark thoughts I had wanted to spread out in my intended letter.

This morning, after sitting with a few friends over a piece of the gospel, we talked about how we experience Mexican society. We all had the same impression of the sense of community, warmth, connectedness, sweetness among them, something we didn't even quite know how to name. We wished we, the "dominant" strand of American society, were willing to learn from them. And the best way to do this is to be among them, perhaps best of all on the receiving end, as I was privileged to be last night.

I have lately meditated again on how both giving and receiving increase love in the world. Which is what is needed.

Love, who uses us sometimes in unexpected ways!

Messages

Molly Cornell

I don't know if other people do this, but when I come across a quote that I like --- say, on a calendar or a tea bag tag --- I drop it into an odd drawer, usually in the kitchen or maybe at my desk. I run into these messages again at unexpected times. They come out of the blue, somewhat like messages given in meeting for worship. Here's one that popped up yesterday:

"We are not human beings having a spiritual journey. We are spiritual beings having a human journey." Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955)

I saved this one from The Motto Calendar! The paper's pretty old, so I guess it's been in the drawer for a while. It was tucked underneath the utensil tray, out of sight.



50 Years of Resistance

Based on materials provided by Lewis Randa and Alan Burt, East Sandwich Preparative Meeting

Tracing his peace journey that began over 50 years ago as a conscientious objector, Lewis Randa of Duxbury shared his life story with fellow Quakers at the recent Quarterly Meeting of the Society of Friends in East Sandwich, MA.

From founding (and still directing), The Life Experience School for children and young adults with disabilities in 1972 to creating the Peace Abbey in Sherborn in 1988, Randa has pursued a life which has given form to many of the dreams he has for humanity. Honoring extraordinary contributions to peace, social justice, human and animal rights, and disability rights through the International Courage of Conscience Award is perhaps the most internationally recognized of his efforts to do good in the world. He also created the Pacifist Memorial in Sherborn which is, by anyone's definition, the Peace Movement's answer to Arlington National Cemetery. This memorial with its 9 foot bronze statue of Mahatma Gandhi stands out as his most enduring effort to do good by recognizing the efforts of great pacifists throughout the world.



With slides and segments from news coverage, he shared his story with others who are no strangers to bringing about social change through peaceful efforts. When asked what was the most important transition he has made in his life towards true peace, he unequivocally stated, "giving up a meat-centered diet and embracing a vegan life style 25 years ago."



Lewis believes "[a]ll peacemaking that is linked to one's dinner plate links one's altruism to one's vision, one's vision to one's actions, and most importantly, one's actions to one's soul and the soul of the planet." He noted that "[i]f we can't wean ourselves off of killing animals for food, we will never wean ourselves off of going to war. For this reason alone, there is a persistent thread of pessimism in my otherwise optimistic view of the future of humanity."

Alan Burt, who attended the presentation noted that Lewis has invited us to visit the Life Experience School, just as Mother Teresa and other world renowned pacifists and healers have before us. Speaking of his own visit to the school, Alan said, "I felt as though I were standing on holy ground and felt so very blessed to be with the students there who are among the most loving human beings I've ever met." Alan encourages all to contact Lewis and arrange for a visit. He suggests allotting at least half a day to visit the Peace Abbey where you will be so inspired as you read the many stories and quotes from dozens of famous peace activists who have walked upon the earth and have left it a better place for their efforts. The two things there that he loved the most were the life size statues of Gandhi and Emily the Cow. As Lewis once said to Alan. "My prayer is that someday there will be more Peace Memorials than War Memorials."



Not in Our Name *An Open Letter from Abigail and David Young*

Friends, the two of us feel called to witness against sexual-orientation discrimination in Friends United Meeting (FUM).

West Falmouth Preparative Meeting is of course a part of Sandwich Monthly Meeting, which is in turn a part of New England Yearly Meeting. NEYM is affiliated with both Friends General Conference (FGC) in Philadelphia and Friends United Meeting (FUM) in Indiana.

Some years ago, FUM instituted a personnel policy forbidding the employment of anyone engaged in sexual activity outside marriage. At that time, same-sex marriage was generally illegal, and the policy was understood as being discriminatory towards members of the LGBTQ community. Many Friends, especially in those yearly meetings like NEYM with dual membership in FUM and FGC, were upset and felt something had to change.

As an attempt at compromise, NEYM allowed its member meetings to withhold the portion of their assessments to NEYM that NEYM would then contribute to FUM, an action that our monthly meeting has not taken. As we have looked more closely at NEYM's policy, we find that the option is not at the meeting level, but at the individual level: our treasurer is to withhold that portion of NEYM's per-person assessment for as many individuals as are minuted by the monthly meeting as making that choice. Therefore, we can only withhold our contribution from being given to FUM if Sandwich Monthly Meeting agrees to a minute permitting it.

We feel led to request this withholding in the names of the two of us at West Falmouth's Meeting for Business in late May, for transmission to Sandwich Monthly Meeting for action the following week.

If others are moved to join in this witness, we would welcome it, and the Meetings for Business and the Treasurer would probably find it convenient to make these arrangements once, rather than several different times.

We feel compelled to take this step for several reasons. FUM's personnel policy not only discriminates in hiring but also refers to FUM's "understanding of marriage as between one man and one woman," thus rejecting LGBTQ people throughout FUM and leading many in that community to believe that **all** Quakers reject them. (One can quibble that FUM "hates the sin but loves the sinner," but when the sin is love expressed in an innate way, that is not very convincing.)

The two of us cannot accept this as a Quaker position, and we are loath to be complicit in it. We understand the desire to help FUM see the light. For decades, progressive Friends have struggled with FUM to change its position, without success. The history of race issues in America shows that patience and compromise with bigotry are seldom effective, and that intolerance must be confronted directly.

Our understanding of Quakerism is that it is a non-credal group whose one foundational principle is that there is that of God in everyone. No exceptions. We understand that, while FGC is primarily a first-world community, FUM is majority third-world. We are not asking FUM to force the third world to change its attitudes (about which we probably know less than we think we do), and imputed third-world attitudes are no excuse for FUM to **require** discrimination.

We also understand that FUM does good charitable work in the third world. So do many other organizations to which we have no ties.

When the two of us were members of Madison (WI) Meeting, we were actively involved in Northern Yearly Meeting, which was not a member of FUM. NEYM's membership in FUM makes us much less likely to participate in it, nearly to the extent of feeling we do not have a yearly meeting.

We realize that our action will have no material effect on FUM, but we must be able to look our friends in the LGBTQ community in the eye.

What We're Reading

Fran Lightsom:

Beyond Consensus: Salvaging Sense of the Meeting
by Barry Morley, Pendle Hill Pamphlet 307 (1964)

For a decade, I have believed that Quakers have a gift that the world needs now, without being able to say what it is. In this pamphlet, Morley names that gift: sense of the meeting, a traditional Quaker practice for making decisions that he carefully distinguishes from consensus. For example, Morley quotes an unnamed Quaker who said:

Consensus is an outward process in which a vote is taken without saying either yea or nay. It involves listening to all concerns, and then, through a negotiation process, finding the best solution. Sense of the meeting hears all of the concerns, then moves beyond the verbal expressions to hear the spirit of the concern in order to discern what is 'right' for the group.

This pamphlet is easy reading. Morley uses stories to illustrate his points and to demonstrate that sense of the meeting is a skill that can be learned, and that unity and strength flow from this way of making decisions.

Morley, Barry. *Beyond Consensus: Salvaging Sense of the Meeting*, Pendle Hill Pamphlet #307. Wallingford, PA: Pendle Hill Publications, 1964.





The Gazette is published by West Falmouth Preparative Meeting's Peace and Social Order Committee
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