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Thursday, September 17, 2020 | 8 pages | Volume 4 • Issue 170



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Mask mandate moves on

COUNTY ATTORNEY: Braden said passing regulation could encumber court system

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

LEE COUNTY – The Lee County Board of Health is one step closer to implementing a mask requirement for county residents.

At a public hearing this morning held via teleconference, close to 45 people listened, and about 18 of them commented against a countywide mask mandate.

Despite the concerns brought forward, the Board of Health unanimously voted to move the mask regulation

to the Lee County Board of Supervisors. Board of Health member Dr. David Wenger-Keller was absent from the hearing.

The hearing lasted one hour with several people making multiple comments saying the move is an overreach of authority, medically unnecessary, and impedes civil liberties.

Lee County Attorney Ross Braden said the regulation now goes to the Board of Supervisor for approval. Lee

See **APPROVAL**, page 8



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg

Fort Madison Mayor Matt Mohrfeld explains a point to people attending a hearing on the city's proposed vacant building ordinance Wednesday night at the Fort Madison Public Library.

VACANT PROPERTY REGISTRY

Residents question city's motive on program

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – A proposed ordinance that would require property owners to register vacant buildings in the city met with some opposition from a group attending

a public hearing Wednesday night.

The hearing was called by city officials to have communication with property owners about the new program.

The ordinance takes a look at what a vacant property is, when it would have to be registered, and

under what circumstances. A proposed fee schedule is also included in the proposal.

Fort Madison Building Director Doug Krogmeier said the program was not to generate funds for the

See **PROPERTIES**, page 7

HALL OF FAME

Central Lee inducts seven into Hall

Five alumni and two former staffers tapped for Academic Hall

DONNELSON, IOWA — The Central Lee Community School District has announced the 2020 inductees to its Academic Hall of Fame.

Five former students and two former staff members are being honored this year. Alumni inductees include Major General Timothy J. Lowenberg (Class of 1964), U.S. Navy Vice Admiral (Ret.) Gerald L. Hoewing ('67), Donald Lloyd Kirchner ('73), Dr. Carrie A. Schin-stock ('96) and Amber (Hohl) Conlee ('01).

Former staff member inductees are Deanna Lind Reynolds, who coordinated the district's Gifted and Talented program for 27 years until her retirement in 2008, and Marge Wilhelm, who served as a teacher, principal and superintendent for the district before retiring in 1992.

The Academic Hall of Fame was created as a means of recognizing, preserving and promoting Central Lee's rich history and tradition of excellence. The award emphasizes the importance of high-achieving graduates and staff who have contributed toward making the world a better place through their professional, military, public service, leadership and business careers.

"We are incredibly excited to honor these outstanding alumni and former teachers, who serve as role models for our current generation of young people," said Dr. Andy Crozier, Central Lee Superintendent.

"These individuals have made a significant impact on the people around them both during their time in our schools and in their other pursuits throughout their lives. It gives us great pride to honor them in this way."

See **CENTRAL LEE**, page 7



CROZIER

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WEATHER

THU 17 SepClear, 71° F/ 53° F
 FRI 18 SepPartly Cloudy, 65° F/ 49° F
 SAT 19 SepClear, 67° F/ 46° F

IOWA LOTTERY

MEGA MILLIONS 09/15.....25 28 38 59 62, Mega Ball: 22 Megaplier: 4
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Obituaries/Local News

OBITUARIES

MYRON W. PUNDT

Myron Wayne Pundt, 57, lost his year and a half long battle with cancer in Iowa City, Iowa, on September 14, 2020.

Myron was born in Bloomfield, Iowa, to Harold Pundt and Freda Thornton. He graduated in 1981 from Central Lee High School and then continued on to Hawk-eye Tech where he graduated with a Degree in mechanical engineering. He worked at Hawk Technology/ALM for just shy of 25 years and was the Vice President of Engineering at the time of his passing. Myron married his wife Kris in April of 1987, they were married for 33 years.



PUNDT

Myron lived in Aledo, Illinois for the last 20 years. He loved spending time with his family, doing projects around the house, riding horses, and boating. He was an extremely proud and loving father of two and was known and loved by many. One of his greatest joys in life was being "PaPa" to his grandchildren.

He is survived by his wife: Kris Pundt of Aledo; son: Justin Pundt of Aledo; daughter: Jessica Pundt (Justin Fuller) of Reynolds; father: Harold (Carolyn) Pundt of Keokuk; mother: Freda Thornton of Donnellson; father and mother-in-law: Marv and Fran Kroemer of Casa Grande Arizona; brother: Harlan (Lori) Pundt of Donnellson; sister: Denise Roberts (Aaron Nichols) of Donnellson; 5 grandchildren: Cason, Owen, Addison, Evelyn, and Holden and many loving nieces and nephews.

Friends may call after 12:00 noon Friday, September 18, 2020, at Schmitz Funeral Home in Donnellson where the family will receive friends from 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. that afternoon.

A Memorial Service will be held at 3:00 p.m. Friday, September 18, 2020 at Schmitz Funeral Home with Pastor Dean Graber officiating.

Those attending are required to wear a mask and social distance.

A Celebration of Life for Myron will be held at 3:00 p.m. Saturday, September 19, 2020, at Myron & Kris's in Aledo.

In lieu of flowers, a memorial has been established in his memory.

Schmitz Funeral Home of Donnellson is assisting the family with arrangements. Online condolences may be made to the family at www.schmitzfuneralhomes.com.

Pen City Current obituary policy

The Current runs obituaries at no charge to funeral homes and they run the day they are submitted in most cases. They are also run as submitted by the funeral homes.

City housing authority helps mom find home

Submitted by Pati Toops, Fort Madison Housing Authority Director

FORT MADISON – This doesn't tell all the struggles I've had since getting out of a destructive relationship but it's says from the heart. When the housing authority asked me if they could do a piece on me and my daughter about getting our own house. I thought, why me? I don't deserve to be recognized in any way. I was just trying to do better for me and my child. But then, that's what it is all about. Parents with children who for a variety of reasons need affordable housing and find it with the housing authority. I was lost! I didn't know how to move forward. I was determined to move forward and upwards. I desired my own home. It seemed to me that my whole life I just wanted my own space. I searched for the right opportunity.



Linda Patchett and daughter Hevin on the front steps of their new home

I finally found one. With my brother's co-sign and great friends to help with the move. I claimed a little house I could afford.

I'm grateful that housing was there when I had no options in my last rela-

See FMHA, page 7



“Most folks are as happy as they make their minds up to be.”

– Abraham Lincoln

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Local News

Fall getting ready to spring at FM Public Library

Full slate of activities planned for the fall season at the Fort Madison city library

BY SARAH CLENDINENG
FM Public Library Director

FORT MADISON - This month's Take and Make is a luminary incorporating leaves and flowers found in nature. The first step in this project is to go outside, take and walk, and see what pretty leaves, flowers and grasses you can find, the flatter, the better. I was lucky and, in addition to some late fall zinnias, I found a Hawk Moth that I incorporated into my project. I didn't kill it but I think it had an unfortunate run-in with a car.

There are many great places to walk outside in Fort Madison and Lee County. First, don't forget your neighborhood. The neighbors across the street from me have the most beautiful maple, whose leaves are just starting to turn and fall off. A block down, from me there is an evergreen tree with the most picture perfect little pinecones. If you want to step outside of your neighborhood, take a walk along the Port Trail (PORT trail (<https://www.fortmadison.com/visit-us/what-to-do/port-promoting-outdoor-recreational-trails/>)). Currently, the trail runs from Ivanhoe Park to Baxter Sports Complex around the middle school but extensions are planned, and under progress, to take it out west to the hospital and east past the High School up to Rodeo Park. Speaking of Rodeo Park, this is another

beautiful area to take a walk. Stick to the concrete sidewalk or take a dirt trail shortcut. The trees and bushes are beautiful.

If you are feeling even more adventurous and venture outside the Fort Madison city limits, Lee County has several parks with fabulous walking trails (<https://leecounty.org/facility.aspx?id=20901&catid=25>). My favorite is Wilson Lake with a trail that goes all the way around the lake and, just a little way past the RV camping area, is a place I have named "Turtle Point" because it's a wonderful spot to sit and watch turtles bask on their logs. You have to be very quiet, though, or you'll scare them away. Heron Bend has a very nice, circular walking trail, a little more than a half mile long. Finally, but certainly not least, Pollmiller is a beautiful lake to walk around, though the trail is not a complete circle.

If you're interested in exploring nature further, the library has some books with ideas for crafts and suggestions for the beginning naturalist:

The Amateur Naturalist by Gerald Durrell (574 DUR)

Enjoying Nature with Your Family by Michael Chinery (574.028 CHI)

Wreaths and Other Nature Crafts by Better Homes and Gardens (745.926 BET)

The Nature Connection: An Outdoor Workbook by Clare Walker Leslie (508 LES)

The Practical Naturalist: Explore the Wonders of the Natural World by Audubon (508 HAM)

Make it Wild! 101 Things to Make and Do Outdoors by Fiona Danks and Jo Schofield (790.1922 DAN)

Toad Cottages and Shooting Stars: Grandma's Bag of Tricks by Sharon Lovejoy (790.1922 LOV)

A Walk in the Woods: Rediscovering America on the Appalachian Trail by Bill Bryson (917.404 BRY)

Upcoming Events at the Fort Madison Public Library - Library Closed - The Library will be closed on Monday, October 12 for employee training.

Minecraft - 4:00-5:30 on Monday October 5 and 19. Space is limited and we are not taking reservations.

Hang Teen - Tuesday, October 6 and 20, 3:30-5:00, for ages 12-18.

Pre-School/Toddler Story Hour - Wednesday morning at 10:30 for toddlers and pre-school age children.

Wacky Wednesday - Craft day October 7, 21 and 28, 2:00-4:00 pm. STEM with Lee County Extension

Munching Mysteries from 2:00-2:45 October 14. Wacky Wednesday Encore from 11:00-12:00 on Saturday October 3, 17 and 31.

Thursday Crafternoon - Thursday, 3:30-5:00, for ages 12 and older, including adults. This program involves a month long activity so we recommend joining at the beginning of the month in order to have time to finish the project.

All Booked Up! - The library's book discussion group meets on the first Thursday of the month at 1:30 p.m. On Thursday, October 1, we will be discussing "Olive Kitteridge" by Elizabeth Strout. Copies of the book are available at the library for check out. Join us for a lively discussion. On November 5, we will be discussing "Sacred Hearts" by Sarah Dunant.

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Sports

Hounds want to bring County Seat back to FMHS

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – It's homecoming week again, as much as it can be, and with all things red and black at FMHS, the Bloodhounds are focused on a purple and red chair.

The "County Seat" is up for grabs again as the Keokuk Chiefs (2-1) come into Richmond Stadium to tangle with the 2-1 Hounds on Jim Youel Field.

The Chiefs won 28-20 last year and swiped the chair from Fort Madison who'd had it the two previous years.

FM Head Coach Derek Doherty said the Chiefs are better team than 2019, but so are the Hounds.

The Chiefs return senior signal caller Corey Skinner who's accounted for 775 yards of offense and seven scores in just three games. His favorite target is Anthony Potratz, who has 179 yards and three of four Skinner touchdown tosses.

"Skinner and Potratz hurt us big time last year. They were a major part of the game last year and here they are again," Doherty said.

"We feel they're better than they were last year, but we feel we're better than we were in the secondary last year, so it should be an interesting matchup,"

Saying the Hounds are better in the secondary is an understatement. Fort Madison has nine interceptions for 171 yards and a couple scores and they are very

opportunistic and quick to the ball when it's in the air. "Our secondary is wired different. If it's checker's they want to win and we enjoy that. The dropped balls early on is frustrating, but you have to look at the positives. We're in the right spot, jumping routes and we just need to keep finishing the plays," Doherty said.

Safety Will Larson has four picks on the year. Brock Califf, Gavin Wiseman, Tate Johnson and Calem Maclearn all have picks on the year. Wiseman is out with a broken ankle from two weeks ago.

Doherty said Califf is playing as well as he ever has. "It all starts in his head. He doesn't miss weights – doesn't miss opportunities," Doherty said.

"He wants to be good and we love that about him. In the weight room his numbers are freakishly awesome and it shows in his power output. Even though he's not very tall he can't get up there. He's a dude that we're really proud of"

Califf gets his hands on the ball on offense and shores up the secondary on defense while also returning punts and kicks.

Despite having less than 50 yards in total offense last week against Washington, the Hounds have had production moving the ball in the previous two games with close to 600 yards in offense.

Larson has thrown for 272 yards and a touchdown and has a rushing touchdown. The Hounds like to spread things out and have thrown to seven different receivers. Junior Tate Johnson has two scores in just under 100 yards through the air.

Senior Keaton Poe leads the Bloodhound rushing attack with 119 hard yards on 16 carries. Junior Jakob McGowan is still looking to break out and has 71 yards on 27 attempts.

But the Hounds defense, which has been opportunistic and staunch most of the year, that could be the key to a Bloodhound homecoming win Friday.

Doherty said the secondary will have to keep an eye on Potratz and stop any big plays, a task they've handled pretty well so far.

"They have a quick jitterbug in the backfield in Equilius Lee, that kid can go, no doubt about it and Skinner's a great quarterback. He's a kid who wants to make plays," Doherty said.

"He's gonna run the ball hard and then all of a sudden he's gonna put one up for Potratz who's a fantastic receiver. So we have to limit the big plays and then take advantage of our opportunities."

Fort Madison will need a better start than last Friday when the dug a hole quick on a safety on the first possession. Doherty said that can't happen again on Friday.

"We said it halftime to our guys. We played probably the worst football you could play in the first half. You're starting off the first series and you get a safety after a negative 13-yard pass play. Couldn't have started much worse than that," he said.

"But I was proud of our guys for digging down and continuing to battle when things weren't going well."

Despite being down 15-0 at halftime of last week's 29-7 loss to No. 5 Washington, Fort Madison continued to put stops on the Demons' offense and scored two touchdowns in the fourth quarter. The first of which was called back on Hound penalty, after Johnson got loose on sideline route, shaking off two tackles to the endzone.

"I think we're showing growth on the mental side of game. In the past we've been known for folding, and you know – we didn't fold, we didn't concede. We kept playing and fighting through adverse situations and I'm proud of our guys for that," Doherty said.

"It's growing pains. We're understanding the offense more and more every week. Coach Menke called a great game (Friday). The things he was calling were there, but we have an execution problem right now."

Kick off is set for 7 p.m. following senior night activities. A voucher attendance system is in place again to help with social distancing at the game. No attendance will be allowed without a voucher. Coaches and athletes were given vouchers to hand out.



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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Executive Director Position – Fort Madison Housing Authority (FMHA) of Fort Madison, Iowa, is seeking qualified applicants for the position of Executive Director to lead the Authority in its management of its Public Housing and Housing Choice Voucher Program. The FMHA administers 134 units of Public Housing, 70 Housing Choice Vouchers, and management / maintenance of 22 units for the Lee County Housing Initiative Program. The Executive Director is responsible for all aspects of its Public Housing and Voucher Program including but not limited to supervising a staff of six employees.

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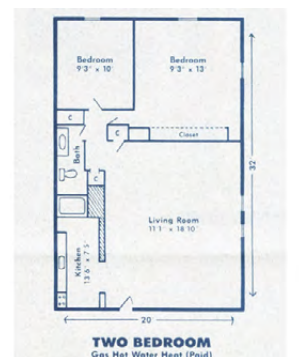
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From the Front/Local News

Opponents claim move is a money grab

PROPERTIES - Continued from Page 1

city, but to cover the cost of the program.

He said there are about 400 vacant properties in the city and there are 50 that need to be demolished right now at a cost of just under \$1 million.

"We already know those properties. We've already got those properties that people aren't going to take care of and we're going to take them to court with the other process," Krogmeier said.

"It's not those, it's those that are almost there. We want to make sure if somebody moved out, who's maintaining it. If you're not going to maintain it, do something with it," Krogmeier said.

Several in attendance suggested the move was a money grab by the city.

Darrell Davolt, a property owner in the city got after Krogmeier immediately and said the city could save money by eliminating Krogmeier's position and let Fire Chief Joey Herren do the job.

"Don't handcuff us with this big money and inspections and stuff. I don't need you in my property," Davolt said.

Larry Haynes, a rural

Donnellson resident, said the city will make more off a dilapidated structure on the tax rolls than not having the structure.

"You're gonna make more tax base off a crappy building than you are off an empty lot," Haynes said.

Fort Madison Mayor Matt Mohrfeld said the city has to do something to remove the blight and keep the city from shouldering the burden of mitigating dilapidated structures, for what Herren called absentee ownership.

"From a management standpoint, you have to do something," he said.

Davolt responded that the city didn't need to do anything all.

"If you say, 'Not at all', am I supposed to let the town go to s**t," Mohrfeld said.

"One thing I want everyone to be sensitive to, with all due respect to those that disagree with me, but sitting here looking at trying to improve the curb appeal and quality of life and quality of housing stock in Fort Madison. You can't ignore 400 vacant properties."

The city is considering an adjustment to the proposal that if property owners have

insurance on the property they wouldn't have to pay the fees, but would still be required to register the property.

Under Iowa law, Herren said insurance companies have to hold back \$20,000 on policies to cover city responsibility for cleaning up the property if it caught fire or was damaged and the ownership abandons the property.

Mohrfeld said doing nothing is letting a cancer spread in the city.

"Bad properties are a cancer, they are a blight to a neighborhood and we all know that. We can see bad properties bring neighborhoods down much quicker."

Davolt told Mohrfeld he already had his mind made up.

"I certainly have a thought process about it," Mohrfeld said.

Mohrfeld said he wanted input to getting the city's dilapidated structures cleaned up, and not just opposition.

Haynes pushed city officials on definitions about vacancy and what constitutes vacant. He asked the city

take the word vacant off the proposed ordinance and just call it a dilapidated property ordinance.

Fort Madison resident Kelly Mahoney supported the new program saying she feared for her safety in her neighborhood.

"I live in fear of some of these houses and they need to be gone," Mahoney said.

"I can't go in my back yard after dark because there are too many raccoons because of these empty houses across the alley. There are totally stripped out of copper and everything from squatters," Mahoney said.

She said neighbors take turn watching the alley at night because of squatter activity.

Herren said the city would take the suggestions from the group back and consider them as the ordinance comes together. He said the city would hold another hearing on the ordinance before it goes to the council for a vote.

Any ordinance requires three readings by the council before approval.

FM Housing authority helps mom, daughter find home

FMHA - Continued from Page 2

relationship. Me and my child needed a transitional living space. One that was suitable and affordable. I am also very happy to be a new homeowner. So it needs paint. It's a work in progress that's all. We really do love our little home.

The Fort Madison Housing Authority is happy to have helped play a role in Linda and Hevin's journey. The FMHA wishes them many happy and healthy years in their new home. Best wishes!!! Plant and gift certificate to local DIY store as a happy house warming present from the Fort Madison Housing Authority.

School already looking for additional nominees

CENTRAL LEE - Continued from Page 1

Earlier this year, Central Lee CSD launched its new Academic, Athletic and Fine Arts Halls of Fame, which are part of the district's alumni recognition program. Families, staff, alumni and community members are encouraged to nominate individuals for recognition. A Hall of Fame committee then reviews all nominations and determines each year's inductees.

For individuals to qualify for a nomination, they must have graduated from Central Lee schools or have been a staff member. They also must be at least five years removed from their time in the district. The nomination form is available at <https://bit.ly/CLHOFNomination>.

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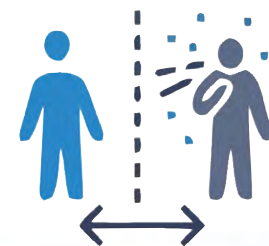
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From the Front

Authorities want supervisors to vote down mask rule

APPROVAL - Continued from Page 1

County Auditor Denise Fraise said the resolution will be in front of the board on Tuesday.

“They have authority to approve it or shut it down. It’s not effective yet,” Braden said.

He said Wednesday morning that he hopes the supervisors vote against the measure because the courts are already log jammed and this would add additional pressure to that situation, as well as putting law enforcement in contact with people not wearing masks.

Braden said he plans on attending Tuesday’s Board of Supervisors meeting to speak on the proposed regulation.

“I hope they don’t (pass it). The current positivity rate for 14 days is down to 8.3%. When this was brought up we were north of 17-18%. Maybe it should have been done in July or August,” he said.

“This is going to force substantial contact with people not wearing masks, but from my perspective we have a huge backlog from March when everything shut down. Jury trials just began this week statewide. We are swamped, the court system is swamped, and it would be incredible to me to further bog down the system with something like this.”

Board member Dr. Philip Caropreso said it’s the mission of the board to protect the health of all county residents. He said he appreciated the opinions of everyone on the call, but said that represents about .004% of the county.

“The mission of the Lee County Health Department is to protect health, prevent disease and promote the well-being of all persons in Lee County,” Caropreso said.

“The original action of the board was to follow those tenants and there was no other intention.”

As a former physician Caropreso said he’s dealt with masks as much as anyone and has evidence and literature to support their effectiveness. He also said the regulation does no more to infringe on civil liberties than other socially acceptable laws.

“If people want to discuss further, let’s talk about red lights, driving on the right side of the road... speed limits, do they impede our civil liberties? Wearing clothes? Nudity is not an acceptable action. We must wear clothes,” he said.

The board did change language in the penalty section from the word “shall” to “may” to allow for greater discretion on the part of law enforcement in Lee County. Violations of the regulation would be simple misdemeanors.

The mandate does not require all people to have masks on all the time. There are exceptions to include: those executing proper social distancing in public, while driving alone or with household family, eating in public places, moderate to high intensity workouts, anyone under the age of 2, or those with medical exemptions.

Fort Madison resident Tom Schulz called the move an overreach of regulatory powers, and said numbers of positive cases around the county are reducing.

“The virus is following same patterns as nationally. You’ll see the same rate of cases on any state or national map. This is unnecessary and a significant overreach of regulatory powers,” Schulz said.

Jennifer Marshall of Donnellson said healthy people getting COVID is what makes the virus less damaging to those that are susceptible to its more severe impacts.

“If I get COVID, I get it and the next person will

get it less. Viruses become weaker as they pass through the population,” Marshall said.

“We’re not letting the virus go through. I know some people are going to get sick, and nobody wants that, but we have to let healthy people get this virus so it’s not so critical to others.”

Jim Steffen of Argyle told the board if the resolution was passed he was going to propose civil action against those responsible for putting in place.

Lee County Sheriff Stacy Weber pleaded with the board to, instead, enact a recommendation to wear masks and educate the public on the benefits, a move originally offered by Lee County Health Department Administrator Michele Ross.

“Allow us to concentrate on things that are very important to us, like making sure we’re out here on the highways and making sure we can answer the calls,” Weber said from his cruiser on Hwy 2.

“If this passes I’m also concerned that people will cram up the 911 lines and hinder the help someone will be getting. I just don’t think this is something we can enforce.”

Gary Seyb Jr., from Keokuk followed up and said if the mandate isn’t going to be enforced, it’s no mandate at all. He also pointed to no one at the hearing speaking in favor of the proposed regulation.

“The board should consider the number of calls and not one person has called in supporting the mask mandate. Not one,” He said. “Consider everything that has been said. I have not talked to maybe one or two people in the county that are for it. People understand this disease and they are looking at it.”

The regulation would require masks in public or outside when one cannot social distance at six feet, in retail outlets, schools, and other public settings that are not one’s place of residence.



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