



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TOMPKINS COUNTY

MARCH 2011

PRESIDENT: KAY SHARP 272-4748
lwvtompkins.org/

EDITOR: ROBERT SILSBEE 273-1436
MEMBERSHIP: DEBBIE LEVIN 273-7746

SOUP AND BREAD LUNCHEON

Saturday, April 16, Noon – 1:30

**Unitarian Church Annex
206 East Buffalo St.**

(more on page 3)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The meeting on healthcare went extremely well. It was well-attended. The community is hungry to hear about the impact the new health care bill will have on their lives. We need to communicate to our senators to save this bill. Thank you very much to the Healthcare Committee and Rebecca Elgie for expending all the time and energy to make this program a success.

April is our Annual Soup and Bread Luncheon. State Senators Seward, O'Mara and Nozzolio and Assemblywoman Lifton have been invited to join us. It will give them and us an opportunity to share our mutual legislative priorities.

Our State Legislative Agenda for 2011 is formulated. The state, with our input, decided to focus on four topics: redistricting, campaign finance reform, ethics reform and election reform. We as a League have already contacted our legislators about the importance of passing a bill on ethics reform. Last year New York State voted in a bill, but Governor Paterson vetoed it.

So we need to lobby again for this important legislation.

The registration materials for the State Convention in May are available. Again, I encourage you to attend. If you would like to go call me at 272-4748. It would be nice if we could car pool to Albany.

Cornell Law School is offering a 2011 Energy Conference March 31-April 2. They have a number of sessions planned on hydrofracking. It would be well worth your while to attend. It is open to the public and free.

I hope you all read the Sunday, February 27th New York Times article on gas drilling. It talked about the waste materials from hydrofracking, especially the radioactive byproducts. Hinchey responded in the Ithaca Journal by saying he advocates expanded regulation by the Environmental Protection Agency.

The League's history reveals staunch efforts to protect air, land and water resources. Since the

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1960s the League has advocated for effective regulatory programs. In a March 3rd article, the New York Times stated that it was evident that politics are “seen to limit the EPA in regulation of natural gas...More than a quarter century of efforts by some lawmakers and regulators to force the federal government to police the industry better have been thwarted, as EPA studies have been repeatedly narrowed in scope, and important findings have been removed.”

Earth Day is April 22. I hope we as a League will participate in the local celebration of that day. It is an opportunity for us to highlight to the community our positions on the protection of natural resources.

There are many opportunities for our League to have an impact on the community. I plan to expand the visibility of our League this year. I believe we have already started that with the Healthcare Program. We can have more impact by writing letters to the Editor in the Ithaca Journal and increase news coverage of our programs. Let's spring into action.

Kay Sharp

PROPOSED GOVERNANCE CHANGES

Changes in the Bylaws

A committee, Lucia Armstrong, Mary Berkelman and Bob Silsbee as chair, was charged with reviewing the bylaws of the LWVTC. The committee will submit proposed changes for a vote of approval at the annual meeting scheduled for May 2, 2011. A page on our website, <http://lwvtompkins.org/documents/LWV%20bylaws-3-15-11.pdf> (or go to the website, click on *About LWV-TC* and then click on *LWVTC Bylaws Draft Revisions*) gives the details of the proposed changes. A hard copy may be obtained with an email (RHS1@cornell.edu) or phone call (273-1436) to Bob Silsbee. The substantive changes proposed, most of which reflect current practice, are summarized here:

- The option of co-presidents instead of a single president is recognized;
- The position of third vice president is eliminated;
- The membership of the board of directors is reduced from six officers, six elected directors and up to six directors appointed by the board, to five officers, five elected directors and up to five appointed directors;
- To assure continuity of leadership, the current bylaws specify the officers and the number of directors which are to be elected each year; to allow more flexibility, these guidelines are changed;
- Section V.7 concerning voting by persons in shared positions is deleted, but addressed in changes to the Policy Sheet attached to the bylaws.

Changes in the Policy Sheet

Our local League is governed by a combination of the bylaws, amendable by the League membership, and a “Policy Sheet,” which may be changed by action of the Board of Directors. In addition to the administration of the League through decisions by the Board of Directors and its officers, much of the activity of the League is managed by chairs (or co-chairs) of various committees: membership, voters service, publicity, bulletin, and committees focused on action or study in specific areas: natural resources, health, etc.

The Board of Directors has approved modifications of the Policy Sheet which clarify the relationship of these chairs or co-chairs to membership on the Board of Directors. In order to promote continuity in the Board, the revised Policy Sheet encourages the continued participation of the immediate past president of the Board as an elected or appointed director. Also changed are the minimum contribution for Friends of the League and the per diem and mileage allowances for travel. The revised Policy Sheet may be seen at

<http://lwvtompkins.org/documents/LWV%20bylaws-3-15-11.pdf> (or go to the website, click on *About LWV-TC* and then click on *LWVTC Policy Sheets*). A hard copy may be obtained with an email (RHS1@cornell.edu) or phone call (273-1436) to Bob Silsbee.

Bob Silsbee, Bylaws Committee

PROGRAM REPORT

I'm sorry that it was necessary to cancel the March program, ELEANOR ROOSEVELT: A WOMAN OF INFLUENCE. Thank you to Kay Sharp, Linda Duttweiler, Paul Miller of the History Center, Natasha Tall and Leslyn McBean-Clairborne who worked to help with the planning and preparation, especially after I fell and broke my shoulder in January. The time and energy we spent, consulting with possible speakers, reading the League archives, reviewing documents and photos at the History Center and searching web sites, was not a wasted effort, however. We will keep the materials we gathered and if there is enough interest we'll have a program on Eleanor Roosevelt and her relationship with the League, in March 2012.

April — Membership Meeting

The Soup and Bread Luncheon will be held on Saturday, April 16, noon to 1:30 p.m. in the Annex, upstairs, of The First Unitarian Church, 206 East Buffalo St.

Board members will provide home made soups, special breads, fruit and dessert, coffee and tea. The cost is \$5.00 at the door. Please call Florence Smith at 273-6147 to reserve your place at the table.

This year our legislators are invited to share the meal with us. It will be a good opportunity to talk to our elected officials about our concerns, listen to their views and educate them about the work of the League.

May — Annual Meeting

Mark you calendars for the Annual meeting, which will be held the evening of Monday, May 2, in the Borg Warner Room of the Tompkins County Public Library. Check the next bulletin for times. We will enjoy dessert with our annual business meeting for election of new officers and directors, approval of a revision of the bylaws and approval of a budget for 2011-2012 (see page 9 for the proposed budget).

The business meeting will be followed by a program, The Long Term Economics of Hydrofracking, which will be open to the public. Speakers will be Susan Christopherson, Cornell, and John Schwartz, Ithaca College, with Don Barber, Town Supervisor for Caroline, serving as respondent. The presentations will be followed by an open question and answer session. There will be a \$5.00 charge for desserts and beverages.

Florence B. Smith

LWV-TC CALENDAR—2010-2011

(tentative programs in italics)

| | | | | |
|---------------|------------|---------------------------|--|-------------------------------|
| Mar 26 | Sat | | MEETING CANCELED | |
| Apr 4 | Mon | 7:00 pm | Board Meeting | Silsbee |
| Apr 16 | Sat | 12:00 noon | ANNUAL SOUP & BREAD MEETING: MEET OUR LEGISLATORS | Unitarian Church Annex |
| May 2 | Mon | <i>dessert at 6:30 pm</i> | ANNUAL MEETING: NATURAL RESOURCES — THE LONG TERM ECONOMICS OF FRACKING | <i>B-W room, TC Library</i> |
| Jun 6 | Mon | 7:00 pm | Board Meeting | Sharp |

FEBRUARY 16, LWVTC MEETING SUMMARY

The Impact of Health Care Reform: Where Are We and Where Do We Go From Here? was the topic of a panel discussion sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Tompkins County (LWV-TC) on Wednesday evening, February 16, 2011. The panel discussion and audience question and answer session were facilitated by Fran Helmstadter, LWV-TC Health Care member.

Dr. William Klepack, Family Practice Physician and Medical Director of the Tompkins County Health Department talked about the impact of the *Patient Protection Affordable Care Act* (PPACA) on physicians, patients, and the social agencies. Beverly Chin, the Health Access Co-Coordinator of the Health Planning Council of the Human Services Coalition of Tompkins County spoke about the impact of the legislation on seniors and the uninsured. Martha Robertson, Chair of the Tompkins County Legislature, discussed the Health Care Consortium and Medicaid Reform. Rebecca Elgie, Chair of the LWV-TC Health Care Committee discussed the impact of PPACA on States.

Dr. Klepack noted that the "*Patient Protection Affordable Care Act*" (PPACA) is an important step forward in improving health care in the United States... and its support is "consistent with the principles adopted by the American Academy of Family Physicians." PPAC will improve access to health care in the private sector, increase the demand for preventative health care, and eliminate insurance industry practices such as denying coverage or renewal because of pre-existing conditions, rescinding coverage when a person becomes ill, and imposing limits on coverage. Reform includes a Medicare *Physician Compare* website to help consumers get information about physicians, quality of care and patient experiences. The health reform legislation also addresses the

shortage of primary care physicians by providing incentives such as scholarships, loan repayment, expanded training program, increased graduate education funding, and increased payment for primary care physicians. However, the reform fails to reduce administrative costs associated with a multiplayer system that has no standardized rules for coverage, it does not provide for input from health care providers on issues such as services that should be covered and reimbursed, it fails to disconnect insurance from employment, and it fails to pool medication purchasing to reduce costs of medications.

Beverly Chin pointed out that many Tompkins County residents, especially the working single adults and early retirees, "fall into an insurance gap where they are ineligible for public programs but are unable to afford other available options." Health reform should bring these consumers more realistic choices for coverage. Reform provides extended coverage for young people, allowing them to remain on their parents' insurance policies up to age 26 years. Increased minimum income levels (133% poverty) will increase eligibility and allow more people to receive Medicaid. The Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage gap or "donut hole" will be phased out by 2020 and as of 2010 seniors receive rebate checks as they hit the gap. The Bridge Plan, a temporary program, will allow coverage for individuals with pre-existing conditions who are currently uninsured. Insurance will be made available for individuals without insurance through state insurance exchanges. Enrollment will be simplified and will use uniform income standards. Four standard benefit plan options vary in the percentage of coverage payment vs. payment by the individual.

Martha Robertson cited the July 2009 Urban Institute Report that evaluated four systems of insurance and redesign of the NYS Medicaid program as recommending now as the ideal time to have input and move the state toward a single

payer system and get funding for new software to standardize the basic enrollment system. The Urban Institute Report, initiated under former Governor Spitzer, showed that a single payer system would decrease costs and improve access to care. She reported on the new Tompkins County Health Care Consortium, the first in NYS, which is a model for shared municipal services that will decrease costs, especially to small municipalities, and decrease the growth in costs. Robertson urged people to lobby their state legislators, the chair of the insurance committee, and Assemblywoman Barbara Lifton, to work to change the state law so that small businesses and non-profits could join the consortium.

Rebecca Elgie agreed that the reform will provide more people with insurance coverage and does address some of the insurance industry's most egregious practices, but feels there is a need to continue to lobby for changes that move the country in the directions of an "*Improved Medicare for All* so that everyone will have comprehensive, portable health care coverage that is publicly financed and privately delivered by your own doctor." She highlighted several states, including Vermont, Maine, California, Pennsylvania, and Hawaii, that are considering plans which would be universal, comprehensive and would save money. She stated that the LWV does not support the repeal of the PPACA health reform legislation, but does support lobbying for changes that move in the direction of *Medicare for All* legislation and pointed out that HR-676 was recently introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives. She also paid tribute to New Roots student, Sara Jane Roenke, for the research poster entitled Health Care is a Human Right on display and encouraged people to read Beverly Livesay's proposal on health program consolidation and simplification. The program will be aired on Cable Access Channel in a couple of weeks.

Questions and comments from the large audience in attendance included: challenges to

the health reform legislation; defunding strategies aimed at undermining the reform legislation; the recent Pense amendment introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives that would disenfranchise a target population for access to health care; views of those present on whether the legislation should be repealed; what the best path is toward a single payer system; the variation of Medicaid funding and benefits from state to state; how to reduce administrative costs; the use of electronic health records to decrease costs; and how to improve quality of care by improving communication and access to patient information by providers. The general feeling was that the health care reform legislation should not be repealed because of the increased access to care, increased benefits and emphasis on prevention, greater control over the insurance industry, consumer protection, and expansion of provider workforce and training. Amendments to disenfranchise target groups should not be allowed. There should be continued work at the federal and state level toward a comprehensive, universal, portable single payer system (publicly financed, privately delivered plan) to ensure quality, comprehensive health care and decrease administrative costs.

Kathleen Yen

LWV-TC MEMBER DIRECTORY

The 2011 member directory is included with this March issue of the bulletin. For members receiving the bulletin by snail mail the directory is included in a separate pair of pages. For email recipients the directory is sent as a pdf attachment for you to open and print.

Please check your own entry in this directory and report any needed corrections to Bob Silsbee rhs1@cornell.edu or 273-1436. We would like to get our records as accurate as possible.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Earth Day is coming up Friday, April 22. Since the weekend immediately after Earth Day is Easter weekend, the group planning Ithaca events will likely hold them on the previous weekend (April 16 and 17). The Natural Resources Committee is hoping to participate in these events and encourages all of you to join us. The Ithaca events are still in the planning stage, but a parade is one possibility. So put this on your calendar and come join the fun.

If you would like to help with the planning and/or producing posters and other materials get in touch with Kay Wagner (cmw18@cornell.edu, 539-3322).

Our committee continues its study of Horizontal Hydrofracking. This spring we are focusing on the economic aspects of gas drilling. The program at the Annual Meeting on May 2 will have a panel of speakers (see page 3), knowledgeable about many aspects of the economic pluses and minuses of hydrofracking, who should have a lot to teach us.

We were pleased to see a very thorough and well-documented study by Ian Urbina of the New York Times, which looks at some of the issues surrounding disposal of the flowback water from the gas wells. The article plus interactive materials are available on the New York Times website under the title "Drilling Down".

A conference on Hydrofracking will be held at the Cornell Law School on Friday April 1 and Saturday April 2, with a special community forum on Thursday, March 31 at 6:30 p.m. It will be a great opportunity to learn more about the many different issues related to hydrofracking. Check the schedule to see the specific topics to be discussed in the course of this conference. You can register for the conference or listen to it live on the web. There will also be a recording of the sessions on their website for later viewing. The speakers and panel members should be very interesting. To

learn more about the conference go to:
<http://www.lawschool.cornell.edu/research/ELS/index.cfm>

Kay Wagner

FIX NEW YORK STATE NOW!

New York State 2011 Legislative Agenda:
 Steps to a New and Better State Government

Redistricting

Create an independent redistricting commission to draft the New York State legislative and Congressional district lines for the 2012 elections.

Campaign Finance Reform

Support lower contribution limits, increased disclosure and public financing. In particular, support stronger and effective finance enforcement with increased civil and criminal penalties for violations.

Ethics Reform

Put in place a new independent ethics oversight agency and tougher enforcement. Make the legislature more open and accountable through continued rules reform.

Election Reform

Improve election processes to extend, encourage and protect voting, including Election Day registration, better ballot design, improved polling place management/poll worker training, and measures to ensure the integrity of all ballots.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Welcome new League member, Julie Ann Dickens. Not only is Julie Ann a new member, but she is also the new secretary of the Board of Directors.

Debbie Levin

STUDENTS INSIDE ALBANY CONFERENCE

Each year the Tompkins County League of Women Voters sponsors a student to attend the "Students Inside Albany" (SIA) conference which is held in Albany, New York. This year the selection committee unanimously chose Patrick LaBuff from the pool of outstanding student applicants. He will represent Tompkins County at the April 10-13, 2011 conference.

The four-day SIA program, sponsored by the League of Women Voters of New York State Education Foundation, Inc. (LWVNYSEF), is designed to increase high school students' awareness of their responsibility in representative government and to provide them with the tools necessary for meeting that responsibility.

Students from across the state learn about New York State government and the process by which citizens can participate in the policy making arena by attending workshops, touring the Capitol and shadowing their legislators. The program is paid for by LWVNYSEF and co-sponsors. The local League pays for bus/car transportation.

The selection committee members included Mary Berkelman (retired teacher and current LWVTC member), Carolyn Corson (retired high school social studies teacher), Jim Dennis (retired teacher and current Tompkins County Legislator), and Gary Stewart (Deputy Director/VP of Cornell University Government and Community Relations).

Kathleen Yen

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TOMPKINS COUNTY: BOARD 2010-11

LWV NYS website
LWV US website
LWV-Tompkins County

leave message at 272-4748

www.lwvny.org
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| V.P. — Membership | Debbie Levin | 273-7746 | dlevin01@twcny.rr.com |
| Secretary | Julie Ann Dickens | 589-4053 | dickens.julie@yahoo.com |
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| Immediate Past President | Marnie Johnson | 257-2948 | |

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| | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------|----------|--|
| Natural Resources — Chair | Kay Wagner | 539-3322 | cwm18@cornell.edu |
| Webmaster | Michael Duttweiler | 277-0006 | mduttweiler@twcny.rr.com |
| Health Care — Chair | Rebecca Elgie | 272-0621 | healthylink@earthlink.net |
| NYS Consolidation — Chair | Alene Wyatt | 257-1894 | alene@lightlink.com |

FROM THE NEW YORK STATE LEAGUE

ReShapeNY

ReShapeNY, a campaign to achieve redistricting reform organized by Citizens Union, with the League and NYPIRG on the Leadership Team, was launched this month in a simultaneous announcement in Albany and New York City by its distinguished co-chairs and diverse coalition of thirty member organizations.

The campaign seeks to end partisan gerrymandering in New York State and create a fair and independent process to draw state legislative and congressional district lines in time for the 2012 elections. It is a broad-based campaign made up of 9 distinguished New Yorkers serving as co-chairs, and 30 civic, issue advocacy, business and labor organizations. The campaign will lobby legislators and engage in public education across the state to ensure redistricting reform is realized. See more at www.reshapeny.org.

Lobby Training Day

Over 20 people attended our first Advocacy Training day on February 7th. We invited all Issue Specialists, Lobby Committee members and Lobby Corps members to come to Albany for the day. Barbara Bartoletti, Legislative Director, and Sally Robinson, VP for Issues and Advocacy, provided training on our advocacy agenda and process and answered lots of questions about our issues, local advocacy, etc. The group toured the Capitol and then attended committee meetings or watched the legislative session from the gallery. (Our Natural Resources chair, Kay Wagner, was scheduled to attend, along with members of other local Leagues working on fracking issues, but the combination of bad weather and good decision making forced a cancellation.)

State Convention: May 20-22, 2011

The State Convention will be held at The Desmond Hotel in Albany from May 20-22, 2011. **Registration Kits have been distributed and are on the state website.**

Register now! PreConvention workshops are open to all members; you don't have to be coming to Convention – just join us on Friday!

We are once again organizing a Silent Auction which will be available online and at Convention so everyone, not just attendees, can participate. Donations can still be made and forms are available by calling the state office. Watch for the posting of the items on the state website – and instructions on how to bid. Everyone can participate!

New Way to Buy Merchandise, Donate or Join LWVNYS!

The League is pleased to announce new pages on the website to donate to the League or the Education Foundation, to join the League and to view and purchase merchandise from the LWVNYS. Take a look at our t-shirts, mugs and pins available for sale on our website. Just click on Merchandise on the left side of the homepage. You can donate or join the League from website, too!

Education Testimony

On February 15, 2011, the League submitted testimony to the Joint Legislative Public Hearing on the 2011-2012 Executive Budget Proposal on Elementary and Secondary Education. This testimony, which was prepared by President Betsey Swan, emphasizes League positions on financing education and property taxation and calls for:

- Adding the final two years of foundation aid into the budget prior to application of the Gap Elimination Adjustment;
- Replacement of the STAR program with a STAR circuit breaker, which would provide more meaningful relief to taxpayers according to need;
- Defeat of tax caps until the state fully implements the foundation aid approach to financing education.

PROPOSED BUDGET FOR 2011-2012**Income**

| | budgeted for current year | through 3/5/2011 | projected to May | total for 2010- 2011 | difference to budget | Projected for 2011/2012 |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Income from dues | \$ 5,277.00 | \$ 5,002.00 | | \$ 5,002.00 | \$ (275.00) | \$ 5,000.00 |
| income from donations | | \$ 57.50 | | \$ 57.50 | \$ 57.50 | \$ 50.00 |
| payment for mailed newsletter | \$ 350.00 | \$ 340.00 | | \$ 340.00 | \$ (10.00) | \$ 340.00 |
| fundraising (greeting cards) | | \$ 183.00 | \$ 50.00 | \$ 233.00 | \$ 233.00 | |
| income from fall luncheon | \$ 50.00 | \$ 22.50 | | \$ 22.50 | \$ (27.50) | \$ 50.00 |
| income from annual meeting | | | \$ 450.00 | \$ 450.00 | \$ 450.00 | \$ 600.00 |
| Election result reporting | \$ 150.00 | \$ 150.00 | | \$ 150.00 | \$ - | \$ 150.00 |
| income - other | \$ 550.00 | | | | \$ (550.00) | \$ 150.00 |
| total | \$ 6,377.00 | \$ 5,755.00 | \$ 500.00 | \$ 6,255.00 | \$ (122.00) | \$ 6,755.00 |
| Income (Comm. Found) | \$ 400.00 | \$ 705.00 | | \$ 705.00 | \$ 305.00 | \$ 700.00 |

Expenses

| | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| Bulletin | \$ 350.00 | \$ 295.93 | \$ 50.00 | \$ 345.93 | \$ 4.07 | \$ 350.00 |
| Convention (National 2010/ State 2011) | \$ 850.00 | \$ 2,141.62 | | \$ 2,141.62 | \$ (1,291.62) | \$ 2,000.00 |
| Voter Services | \$ 578.00 | \$ 342.28 | \$ 30.00 | \$ 372.28 | \$ 205.72 | \$ 300.00 |
| Administration | \$ 125.00 | | | \$ - | \$ 125.00 | \$ 125.00 |
| Membership | \$ 100.00 | \$ 66.86 | | \$ 66.86 | \$ 33.14 | \$ 100.00 |
| Meetings/Programs | \$ 780.00 | \$ 749.09 | \$ 200.00 | \$ 949.09 | \$ (169.09) | \$ 800.00 |
| Annual Meeting | \$ 340.00 | | \$ 340.00 | \$ 340.00 | \$ - | \$ 350.00 |
| Health Care committee | \$ 50.00 | | \$ 50.00 | \$ 50.00 | \$ - | \$ 100.00 |
| Natural Resources Committee | \$ 100.00 | | \$ 50.00 | \$ 50.00 | \$ 50.00 | \$ 100.00 |
| Projected new study | \$ 50.00 | | | | \$ 50.00 | \$ 100.00 |
| PMP National* | \$ 2,366.00 | \$ 1,470.14 | \$ 1,470.14 | \$ 2,940.28 | \$ (574.28) | \$ 2,608.00 |
| PMP State* | \$ 1,780.00 | \$ 1,336.50 | \$ 445.50 | \$ 1,782.00 | \$ (2.00) | \$ 1,575.00 |
| Membership (CFWO) | \$ 158.00 | \$ 114.00 | | \$ 114.00 | \$ 44.00 | \$ 120.00 |
| Internet | | | | | | \$ 120.00 |
| total | \$ 7,627.00 | \$ 6,516.42 | \$ 2,635.64 | \$ 9,152.06 | \$ (1,525.06) | \$ 8,748.00 |
| PMP adjustment * | | \$ 6,516.42 | | \$ 6,790.92 | \$ 274.50 | \$ 6,656.50 |

* 50% Of State and National PMP is paid out of Community Foundation Funds, reducing the total expenses paid out of regular League funds

YOUR REPRESENTATIVES IN CONGRESS

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