

Regional History Talk May 15th to Focus on Boomtown era 1890's -1920's

Monte Native Wayne Ostlie is working on a book of postcards from this era

A special regional history talk will be held on Saturday, May 15th at 7:00 p.m. at the Lac qui Parle County Park, eight miles northeast of Dawson on the Lac qui Parle River, featuring amateur historian, postcard collector and environmental scientist Wayne Ostlie. The title of Ostlie's talk is "*1890-1920 in the Upper Minnesota Valley: Railroads, Boom Towns and Hand Painted Post Cards*"

The event is free and open to the public. Guests are asked to bring their own lawn chairs and blankets. A pot luck supper begins at 5:00 p.m. A community grill will be provided for the grilling of meats. Camping is permitted. For more information, call CURE toll free at 1-877-269-2873 or visit: www.cureriver.org

Ostlie's talk will follow the pot luck supper in the shelter of the Lac qui Parle County Park. For the past several years, Ostlie has devoted his free time toward the collection of hand painted postcards from the Montevideo area that date back to the 1890's through the 1920's. He is now collaborating on a book that features those postcards and tells the stories behind them.

"It was during this time when all the small towns of the region were thriving and really promoting themselves," Ostlie said. "The view of life as portrayed by hand painted post cards tell us a lot about the optimism and pride that our forbearers had about this region."

As the son of local historian Evelyn Ostlie (who conducted extensive research on the lives of the Dakota Christian Women of the Lac qui Parle Mission), Ostlie has gathered a wide range of knowledge about the history of the Dakota people, the pioneer settlers and the railroad history of the Upper Minnesota River Region.

Ostlie lives in the Twin Cities where he works as the director of new initiatives and partnerships for Great River Greening -- an environmental organization based in St. Paul. Prior to coming to Great River Greening, Ostlie worked in a variety of capacities with The Nature Conservancy over the past 20 years. He has a Masters Degree in Biology with a Botany focus from the University of Kansas and an undergraduate degree in Biology from Luther College in Decorah Iowa.

After Ostlie's talk at 8 p.m., music making and story telling will begin around the campfire at the Lac qui Parle County Park. Old fashioned campfire sing along songs and famous ghost stories told by **Greg Wyum** are a highlight of this event. Fixings for roasting marshmallows and making smores will be provided. Everyone is encouraged to bring their own lawn chairs and musical instruments.

CURE is a locally based non-profit organization founded in 1992 to celebrate, protect and restore the Upper Minnesota River Watershed.

Biotech Crops Good for Farmers and Environment, Academy Finds

Fourteen years after genetically engineered crops began to take off in the United States, the overall benefits to farmers are clear, according to a new report from the National Research Council (NRC) of the National Academies. The shift from conventionally grown crops have paid off economically and environmentally, says the panel. "We can stop arguing about whether the environmental and economic impacts are significant," says agricultural economist Nicholas Kalaitzandonakes of the University of Missouri, Columbia, who was not on the panel.

The debate about impacts of genetically engineered crops on farms has been driven in part by the variability of agriculture. Whether a study shows that a farmer benefits from going biotech can depend on

the particular crop, location, and factors such as the abundance of pests. In the past, some researchers and advocates have cherry-picked data to back their views about whether or how much the technology helps farmers, Kalaitzandonakes says.

For the entire article, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/biotechcrops.pdf>

\$26M approved for parks, wildlife programs – Minneapolis Star Tribune

Forty-eight projects involving natural resources, energy research and state park land acquisition would receive \$26 million in 2011 in a package approved Monday by a legislative conference committee.

The money, from lottery proceeds, would pay for wildlife surveys, studies of carbon sequestration and grasses that can be used for fuel, and educational programs, among other things. It also would provide \$3.8 million to extend holdings at five state parks.

Approval of the package by the conference committee followed a process that included peer review and an assessment by the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR).

"I'm glad we could agree on something," said Sen. Jim Vickerman, DFL-Tracy, noting that the agreement came amid difficult negotiations over the larger state budget. The LCCMR money is constitutionally protected, meaning it cannot be used for other purposes.

The conferees' approval is expected to be echoed by the full House and Senate and sent to Gov. Tim Pawlenty. Pawlenty has indicated he is "troubled" by seven of the projects, worth about \$1.3 million combined. He can veto individual projects, and their funding would go to other LCCMR proposals.

Streamgages: The Silent Superhero

Whether you drink water from your tap, use electricity or canoe down your local river, chances are you benefit from USGS streamgage information. So what is a streamgage and what does it do for you? This CoreCast episode gives you the inside scoop on your silent superhero. -

<http://gallery.usgs.gov/videos/170>

What's all the fuss over those shoreline weeds?

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) growing emphasis on maintaining and improving fish habitat provides a broad framework to guide policies and practices. But where the rubber really meets the road is where the water meets the land – and most of that is private property.

That means much of the responsibility for maintaining healthy fisheries falls to lakeshore owners and the guidance of the DNR's Aquatic Plant Management program (APM).

The APM program sets standards for the management of aquatic vegetation and establishes permit requirements for removing plants growing below the ordinary high water line. It works to strike a balance between preserving aquatic vegetation and allowing lakeshore property owners reasonable access to and use of the water.

"Some folks wonder what's the fuss over all those weeds along their shoreline," said Sean Sisler, DNR metro area APM specialist. "But a weed to one person is, to a fish, a home, a nursery and a grocery store. Get rid of all the 'weeds' and you're also eliminating what the fish need to survive and thrive."

Many of Minnesota's most sought-after fish species depend heavily on aquatic vegetation throughout their life histories. Yellow perch, northern pike, muskellunge, panfish, and bass all depend on aquatic vegetation to provide food, spawning habitat, and nursery areas. Juvenile fish of most species feed on small crustaceans and insects that are abundant in stands of aquatic vegetation. Waterfowl, frogs, muskrats and numerous other critters also rely on shoreline plants for habitat.

But the value of healthy aquatic vegetation extends beyond fish and wildlife. Aquatic plants help reduce erosion from wind and waves. Their roots stabilize shoreline. They improve water quality by preventing the re-suspension of lake sediment and by taking up nutrients that can cause algae blooms.

Because of their value to a lake's ecosystem, aquatic plants growing in public waters are considered state property under Minnesota law, and their removal is regulated.

Lakeshore property owners generally may clear up to 2,500 square feet of submerged vegetation (e.g. coontail and elodea) to allow for boat docking or a swimming area, provided the area cleared extends no more than 50 feet along the shoreline, or one-half the shoreline, whichever is less. A boat channel 15 feet wide may be cleared through floating leaf vegetation (e.g. waterlilies) to allow boaters to reach open water.

Any removal of emergent vegetation, such as cattails or bulrushes, requires a permit, as does the application of any chemical herbicide or the use of an automated mechanical plant control device, such as a weedroller.

Keep in mind, too, that the aquatic plant regulations cover anything growing below the ordinary high water line, even if, as is now the case in some areas, water levels are low and shoreline is exposed. More information is available at www.mndnr.gov.

"The littoral zone, or area where plants grow, can be a small part of some lakes, but it's critical to the health of all lakes," Sisler said. "Lakeshore owners who care about clean water and good fishing should try to work with nature, rather than against it."

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Web Site Redesign

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency has redesigned its Web site. You will still access the new "Home" page at www.pca.state.mn.us. If you have bookmarked pages on it, you may need to reset them.

We're excited about the changes. The site's new design provides more integrated content and simplified navigation. We are continuing to work on improved "search-ability" of the site. You will also see a new look for the site.

We encourage your feedback and suggestions.

Take a look. You can send your comments to webteam.pca@state.mn.us

MPCA ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS TOTAL MORE THAN \$1.3 MILLION IN FIRST QUARTER OF 2010

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) concluded 46 enforcement cases totaling \$1,332,727 in penalties during the first quarter of 2010. The cases occurred at facilities in 28 counties throughout Minnesota.

Occasionally, parts of enforcement penalties are dedicated toward Supplemental Environmental Projects (SEPs). During the first quarter of 2010, two cases included SEPs totaling \$741,000. Corn Plus of Winnebago will spend \$691,000 to install more efficient lighting to reduce energy consumption, and install a closed-loop heat transfer system that will significantly reduce the facility's water use and discharges to the Winnebago wastewater treatment facility. Chippewa Valley Ethanol Company of Benson will spend \$50,000 toward a project yet to be determined. The company will submit a project proposal to the MPCA for approval later in May. SEP totals are in addition to paying civil penalties.

The following is a brief summary of all 46 cases completed during the first quarter of 2010:

- \$891,000 – Corn Plus, Winnebago, for water quality violations. (Penalty amount includes \$691,000 SEP)
- \$120,000 – Chippewa Valley Ethanol Co., Benson, for air quality violations. (Penalty amount includes \$50,000 SEP)
- \$65,600 – MINCO, Fridley, for hazardous waste violations.
- \$60,000 – Melrose Dairy Proteins LLC, Melrose, for water quality violations.
- \$19,500 – Central Sandblasting Co., Mounds View, for air quality violations.

- \$10,000 – Archer Daniels Midland/VP Oilseed Processing, Red Wing, for above ground storage tank violations.
- \$10,000 – Itasca County, Grand Rapids, for stormwater violations.
- \$9,175 – Otter Tail Ag Enterprises, Fergus Falls, for air quality violations.
- \$9,100 – Hardrives Inc., North Branch, for air quality violations.
- \$8,250 – Magnolia-Earl Street Paving, St. Paul, for stormwater violations.
- \$7,000 – Valley Craft Inc., Lake City, for air quality violations.
- \$7,000 – Gregory Froslee Farm, Vining, for feedlot violations.
- \$6,500 – Clifford Wolle-Watonwan River Bank Construction Project, Watonwan County, for stormwater violations.
- \$6,250 – William Marceau-Arrowhead Development, Duluth, for stormwater violations.
- \$6,000 – Terry Schmidt-TC Lighting, Bemidji, for hazardous waste violations.
- \$5,872 – Harlan Peck-A-1 Excavating & Septic Service, Austin, for individual septic treatment system violations.
- \$5,314 – Oak Terrace Senior Housing, Montag Development, Inc., Gaylord, for asbestos violations.
- \$5,275 – Andersen Corporation, Bayport, for air quality violations.
- \$5,250 – Minnesota Department of Transportation, Woodbury, for stormwater violations.
- \$5,070 – Osmundson Bros. Petroleum Inc., Adams, for solid waste violations.
- \$4,750 – Shafer Contracting Co. Inc., Woodbury, for stormwater violations.
- \$4,500 – RJ Ryan Construction Inc., New Brighton, for stormwater violations.
- \$4,228 – James Wencil Plumbing and Heating, Owatonna, for individual septic treatment system violations.
- \$4,200 – LJP Enterprises, St. Peter, for solid waste violations.
- \$3,750 – Aitkin Agri-peat Inc., Cromwell, for water quality violations.
- \$3,750 – Spartacus Ventures LLC, New Brighton, for stormwater violations.
- \$3,500 – Ace Surfaces NA & Life Time Fitness, Eden Prairie, for water quality violations.
- \$3,250 – MielkeMark LLC, Brainerd, for stormwater violations.
- \$2,499 – City of Madison, Madison, for water quality violations.
- \$2,275 – Washington County Public Works, Grant, for stormwater violations.
- \$2,100 – Anderson Brothers Construction Co., Brainerd, for stormwater violations.
- \$2,000 – Cottonwood County Sanitary Landfill, Windom, for solid waste violations.
- \$1,750 – Dresel Contracting Inc., Grant, for stormwater violations.
- \$1,425 – Clipper's Septic Inc., Tyler, for water quality violations.
- \$1,294 – Phil Gervais Farm, Slayton, for feedlot violations.
- \$1,030 – Dale Springman-D&S Excavation, Lismore, for individual septic treatment system violations.
- \$750 – Tim Landborg-Landborg Properties, Brainerd, for stormwater violations.
- \$570 – Loosbrock Digging Service, Wilmont, for individual septic treatment system violations.

The penalties for the following cases are all forgivable:

- \$3,500 – Hearth & Home Technologies, Lake City, for air quality violations.
- \$3,500 – Wells Fargo Corporate Trust Services, St. Paul, for asbestos violations.
- \$3,500 – Clinton Ag Service Inc., Clinton, for solid waste violations.
- \$3,500 – Twin City Powder Coating, Lino Lakes, for water quality violations.
- \$3,100 – Minneapolis Concrete Recyclers LLC & Ramsey Excavating, Minneapolis, for air quality violations.
- \$2,425 – D Joseph Properties Inc., Moose Lake, for stormwater violations.
- \$2,425 – Gobel Excavating & Aggregate Inc., Moose Lake, for stormwater violations.
- \$1,000 – Tidy Green LLC, Mankato, for solid waste violations.

A complete summary of environmental enforcement actions and news releases can be found on the MPCA's News Media Center Web page at www.pca.state.mn.us/newscenter/index.html. For questions on specific enforcement cases, contact Stephen Mikkelsen, Information Officer, at 218-316-3887, or toll-free at 1-800-657-3864.

Free road signs available to rural residents

Rural residents can show their concern for wildlife by displaying a "Roadsides for Wildlife" sign available from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) regional office in New Ulm.

Roadsides provide valuable wildlife nesting habitat, especially during the peak nesting season of May, June and July. Rural residents are urged to delay mowing and other disturbance along roadside ditch bottoms and backslopes until after Aug. 1. Road authorities mow the first eight feet for safety reasons.

Signs will be distributed free while supplies last. They are to be placed on private property along grass roadside cover managed for wildlife. Signs are to be mounted on a post or private fence.

They are not to be within any portion of the road right-of-way including the roadside ditch or on any fence owned by the road authority. The sign notifies passersby that the roadside is left undisturbed for nesting wildlife such as pheasant, gray partridge, waterfowl and grassland songbirds.

The aluminum, yellow signs are 10½ inches by 13½ inches with black letters. They depict a meadowlark, prairie grasses and wildflowers with the message "Roadsides for Wildlife – No Unauthorized Mowing, Spraying, Haying, ATV Operation or Wildflower Collection." Landowners are responsible for mounting the signs on a post or private fence.

A second sign is available to landowners who have native prairie growing in their roadsides. Native prairie remnants along roadsides are becoming quite rare in Minnesota. These signs are similar in size and format but say "Native Prairie" along the top. A third sign is available for people who have planted native prairie plants in their roadsides and want the new plantings protected. These signs say "Prairie Planting." All three signs list the Minnesota statutes that apply.

Contact Larinda.Burg@dnr.state.mn.us or 507-359-6035 for signs, or contact the DNR Regional Office at 261 Highway 15 South, New Ulm, MN 56073-8915.

Job Opportunities:

Student Worker Position - Mankato or Marshall Office of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

Support MPCA biologists, hydrologists, and watershed project managers by conducting fieldwork; and managing, analyzing and interpreting biological, water quality, and landscape data. Conduct small research projects related to historic and present-day land use and landscape conditions. Upper level undergraduate or graduate student with major or some coursework in Natural or Environmental Sciences, Mathematics, Statistics, or Civil Engineering and a 3.0 or better GPA. Start date is May 2010. Hourly rate of \$12.21-14.28 with up to 20 hours/week. Interested students may build and/or post a resume at any time to <http://www.careers.state.mn.us/>.

Events:

May 15th & 16th (Saturday and Sunday) is the 19th **Annual River and History Weekend** at Lac qui Parle County Park (Nash's Grove) on the Lac qui Parle River. Line up your canoes and kayaking partners, get that camping gear dusted off and plan on attending CURE's premiere outdoor event of the season. For more information, www.cureriver.org

May 20th (Thursday) is a **Trail Planning Regional Workshop** from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the McColl Pond Environmental Learning Center (13550 Dakota Avenue South) in Savage.

June 6th (Sunday) is the **15th annual celebration of the Earth Sabbath**. The day begins at 1:00 and features Sabbath Sites: Blacksmithing, Weaving, Miniature Horses, Walking the Evolving Universe Story, tours, DVD "Story of Stuff", Live Music, Silent Auction and much more..... At 6:00 join us for the Sabbath Ceremony followed by an Earthrise grown and roasted turkey, baked beans, tabouli, garden greens and rhubarb crisp. Following this meal we will feast on the beautiful concert music of Sara Thomsen. We'd

love to have you come. If you need to stay overnight we will soon be listing accommodation places on our website <http://earthrisefarmfoundation.org/>. More information is also included on our website. Please bring a loaf of your favorite bread to share and call or e-mail us if you think you can stay and eat supper with us. Admission for the events of this day is \$15.00 per adult or \$25.00 for the entire family.

June 8th (Tuesday) is a **Trail Planning Regional Workshop** from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the Bryant Lake Park (6800 Rowland Road) in Eden Prairie.

June 9th (Wednesday) is a **Trail Planning Regional Workshop** from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at Southwest Minnesota State University (1501 State Street, Room 117, Conference Center) in Marshall.

June 12th (Saturday) is the launch of the **Minnesota River Paddler Patch Program** at 9:00 a.m. below the Rapidan Dam (on the Blue Earth River west of Rapidan in Blue Earth County). Canoe rides, information booths, and music. Post-paddle ceremony and music starts at 2:00 p.m.

June 17th (Thursday) is a **Trail Planning Regional Workshop** from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at South Central College (1920 Lee Boulevard E119 and E121) in North Mankato.

June 22nd (Tuesday) is a **Cottonwood River Paddle** from County Road 11 to Flandrau State Park in New Ulm sponsored by Redwood-Cottonwood Rivers Control Area (RCRCA). Please register by June 16th by calling RCRCA at 507-637-2142, ext. 2.

June 24th (Thursday) is a **Redwood River Paddle** from County Road 6 to Lake Redwood sponsored by Redwood-Cottonwood Rivers Control Area (RCRCA). Please register by June 16th by calling RCRCA at 507-637-2142, ext. 2.

Check out additional upcoming events and workshops on the Minnesota River Calendar at: <http://mrfdc.mnsu.edu/calendar/index.html>

Environmental/Conservational Articles:

[New group aims to make Mankato bike friendly](#) (Mankato Free Press). A Mankato area bicycling group is forming to hold biking events, teach people to ride safely and work with cities to create space for bikes. Oh, and they like walking, too.

[Chris Niskanen: House speaker's upcoming actions will say a lot about where she stands on conservation](#) (Pioneer Press). Last August, during a warm afternoon at Game Fair, House Speaker Margaret Anderson Kelliher was among seven gubernatorial candidates (or their representatives) quizzed about their support of hunting, fishing and conservation.

[Legacy parkland purchase approved](#) (Pioneer Press). The Washington County Board of Commissioners on Tuesday approved buying parkland with Land and Water Legacy funds.

[Patrick Moore: Environmentalism isn't extreme](#) (Agri News). A man who was arrested for sitting on a baby seal in an effort to shield it from a hunter's club spoke against what he calls environmental extremism at the University of Minnesota Agriculture Awareness Day.

[Turning Minnesota's farm fields into sources of energy](#) (MinnPost). There's a wide range of agricultural jobs growing in fields of energy. Scientists, plant managers, transportation specialists, lab technicians and others are working together to achieve new energy goals.

[Mixed reaction to Ojibwe fishing protest from outdoors groups](#) (MPR). There's mixed reaction from Minnesota outdoors groups on plans by some northern Ojibwe band members to assert hunting and fishing rights they believe are guaranteed by a treaty from the mid-1800s.

[The big build at Arboretum](#) (Star Tribune). Renowned environmental sculptor Patrick Dougherty this week is gathering raw materials and inspiration at the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum for his newest creation: A giant and unique outdoor "stick" sculpture that he will assemble over the next three weeks during his "Big Build residency."

[The 10 worst man-made environmental disasters](#) (MinnPost). The oil slick in the Gulf of Mexico is now about the size of Puerto Rico. It's already reached the marshes of Louisiana. Oil-covered wildlife are starting to show up along the shores. Shrimp, fish and oyster harvest areas have been closed. Residents of Mississippi and Alabama are just waiting for the oil to hit.

[Efforts to shrink Gulf's 'dead zone' face serious setbacks from oil spill](#) (MinnPost). The massive environmental disaster unfolding in the Gulf of Mexico — oil gushing uncontrolled from a damaged well — threatens to compound a different problem that originates 1,200 miles north of the Gulf in Minnesota.

[Dennis Anderson: Bracing for the worst in Gulf oil spill](#) (Star Tribune). Tom Moorman is director of conservation planning for Ducks Unlimited Southern Region. In the interview below, he underscores the threat posed to ducks and other birds, as well as marine life and coastal wetlands, by the Gulf oil disaster. The region is recognized as one of the world's most fragile, and threatened, ecosystems.

[Spring, and a farmer's fancy turns to manure](#) (Star Tribune). Look around Minnesota and you see many signs of Minnesota's commitment to recycling. Containers of newspapers, bottles, cans, cardboard and plastic are left at the curb for the recycling truck. Homeowners are recycling grass clippings and even kitchen scraps to fertilize their lawns and gardens.

[Entenza focuses on green energy potential](#) (Pioneer Press). Democratic candidate for governor Matt Entenza on Thursday outlined a plan to create "tens of thousands of jobs" by redirecting the money Minnesotans spend on energy produced outside the state to locally generated clean energy.

[Here's your chance to see the real Woody the woodpecker](#) (MinnPost). You have to be a certain age to understand why an odd laugh — ha ha ha HAA ha — echoed in my mind as I read an invitation to see a red-headed woodpecker up close on Saturday at the University of Minnesota's Cedar Creek Ecosystem Science Reserve in East Bethel.

[Nuclear-plant ban lifted in Minnesota House](#) (Pioneer Press). The Minnesota House approved an energy bill Thursday that lifts a 16-year ban on new nuclear power plants but applies such tough conditions that opponents say it doesn't change the landscape much.

[Gulf spill no hazard to birds in Minnesota, but that could change](#) (MinnPost). News reports about BP's big oil blowout in the Gulf refer routinely to the hazards posed for migrating birds.

[Minneapolis named America's best city for biking](#) (MinnPost). In a surprising choice, the May edition of [Bicycling Magazine](#) named Minneapolis America's best city for biking. The city still trails Portland, Oregon, in the percentage of commuters who bike to work (4.3 percent to 5.9 percent, respectively, according to the most recent American Community Survey), but Minneapolis has been gaining momentum.

[Expo aims to get kids hooked on the outdoors](#) (Star Tribune). Like many others, Jeff Hughes has witnessed the decline in hunting and fishing by youths -- and the overall decline in outdoor activity by young people -- a nationwide phenomenon.

[Increase in wind turbines concerns conservationists](#) (MPR). The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recently released new guidelines that aim to limit destruction of wildlife habitat when new wind farms are built.

[DNR stocking boosts quality of area lakes](#) (Mankato Free Press). South-central Minnesota may not be a land of loons, dark pine forests and pristine waters but one only has to glance at a map to understand why many anglers still choose the Mankato area as an angling destination.

[DNR's Valiant tabs top area lakes for opener](#) (Mankato Free Press). The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources' Waterville Fish Hatchery is responsible for about 100 lakes within its nine-county area.

[This fishing opener, catch walleyes, not zebra mussels](#) (Star Tribune). As we enter the week of the fishing opener, Minnesotans are going to start bringing their watercraft to lakes and rivers. But they may be contributing to the spread of invasive water species such as zebra mussels.

[Klobuchar, Oberstar get aerial tour of Gulf oil spill](#) (Star Tribune). Members of Minnesota's Congressional delegation toured the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico on Friday in advance of hearings on capitol hill next week.

The difference between animals and humans is that animals change themselves for the environment, but humans change the environment for themselves. - Ayn Rand

The Minnesota River Watershed Alliance (Watershed Alliance) is an organized network of citizens, public agencies, and private organizations dedicated to communicating the benefits of an ecology healthy Minnesota River Watershed to others and are actively working towards its improvement and protection. We meet four times a year and encourage landowners and recreational users of the river to be part of the effort. For more information on the Watershed Alliance:

<http://www.watershedalliance.blogspot.com>

Please register at the Minnesota River Watershed Alliance's bulletin board at <http://mail.mnsu.edu/mailman/listinfo/mrwa> to receive regular updates on what is happening in the Minnesota River Watershed.

Thanks,

Scott

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