



LWV of Albany County

October 2007

Educate

Participate

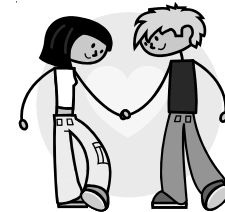
Advocate

Meeting the Challenge: Services for Children, Youth, Families and Seniors in Albany County



Thursday, October 25th
Bethlehem Public Library
451 Delaware Avenue • Delmar

6:30 pm Dessert and Coffee
7:00 pm Program



Speakers:

*Gus Thompson, Commissioner,
Albany County Departments of Children, Youth and Families*

*Vincent Colonno, Commissioner,
Albany County Department for Aging*

In 2001, Albany County created the Department for Children, Youth and Families. The county feels that the department has dramatically improved the way children are served by identifying problems earlier and treating youth more effectively. They feel that centralizing all services for children and their families has enhanced its outreach to the community it seeks to serve.

In the mental health area, the county created the Child and Adolescent Mobile Crisis Team, which responds to children's behavioral health emergencies to help avoid unnecessary psychiatric hospitalization. Several state agencies and neighboring counties came together to form this program; the county feels it fills a major service gap.

In the criminal justice area, Albany County has created a Youth Cabinet, comprised of youth who have had experience in the system. Cabinet members are intended to play a role representing their peers and influencing the way Albany County serves youth.

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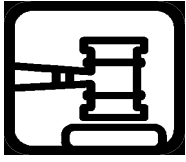
League of Women Voters of Albany County

Website: www.lwvalbany.org Email: lwvac@crisny.org

Lori Keegan-Brady and Maggie Moehringer, Co-Presidents

Susan Coleman (330-2992) and Audrey Kibrick (489-9931), Membership Co-Chairs

Laura Ladd Bierman, Newsletter Editor



From the Co-Presidents

It was wonderful to see all of you at the Potluck Supper! What a great way to start the year! Many thanks to Gael Vecchio and Ann Brandon who brought the evening and the speakers together for us, and to all of those who helped out.

Well, we must say that our forum for the Albany County Legislature candidates was the first such event where an alligator appeared with one of the speakers! Moderators' "training" just doesn't encompass what to do with an alligator (although Mary Berry handled it beautifully). In spite of the distraction of the alligator, from what the candidates said at the forum we became aware of the challenges and changes in the management and method of delivery of services for the aging and children, youth and families in Albany County, including planning for a new nursing home and long-term care services, and a relatively new Department of Children, Youth and Families. As the Albany County League, all of us who are interested in social services should be aware of what the county is planning and doing in these areas. New county departments and units are being and have been created to handle these areas in new ways. We have also become aware of the desire for collaborative ways of addressing these problems between the city and other municipalities and the county. We have built our October 25th program around these new county initiatives and challenges. Dessert and coffee will be served at 6:30 at the Bethlehem Public Library, speakers at 7:00, and other social service not-for-profits will be invited to stimulate the discussion. Bring a friend!!

We're taking a field trip to the Capital for a special tour just for us! Join us on Saturday, October 13th at 11:00 to see the wonderfully restored New York State Capital.

October is UN month, and the month before our visit to the UN on November 28th, and also the month before our consensus meeting on immigration on November 13th. Time to put our international hats on and **STUDY!** The topic for the special briefing for the League at the visit to the UN is "Women in the Time of War". You can learn about the UN topic at the web site of the International Committee of the Red Cross, (<http://www.icrc.org/Web/Eng/siteeng0.nsf/htmlall/women?OpenDocument>). Elsewhere in this bulletin we give you the directions to materials on the web related to the immigration study. Reading up on the topics will make the discussion more interested, but consensus meetings are for learning also, so plan to come to meeting even if you don't have time to study!

Candidates' forums are coming together for the general election – watch your email for announcements. And we are running the election for the Albany Housing Authority Tenant Commissioners, and need workers from 2-8 on October 9th. HELP, HELP, HELP!! If you can, contact Maggie Moehringer (475-0969), Mary Ann Lettau or Nell Stokes-Holmes.

Yours in League,
Maggie Moehringer
Lori Keegan-Brady

New Members

Joyce Lavery - Albany
Arlene Gilbert - Albany
Willard Skidmore - Delmar

Welcome!

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan citizen organization that promotes the informed and active participation of citizens in government, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. Any person of voting age, male or female, may become a League member.

This newsletter is published by the League of Women Voters of Albany County, 12 Coventry Road, Glenmont, New York 12077 and mailed to League members. The frequency of publication is as follows: one mid-summer issue followed by nine monthly issues from September to May.



League in Profile

Ann Brandon

What does one do with a toddler and new baby on the way? She joins the League of Women Voters! I did that in 1961 in Knoxville, Tennessee, and have been hooked on the league ever since. Soon after I joined, the president asked if I'd chair the study on foreign trade. Huh? But I was persuaded to say yes. I knew this would be right up my alley after majoring in music in college. I learned about leading a study committee, being a discussion leader, resource person, and many other skills that the league is so good at teaching.

Then came Utica, NY; another child, another league. From the league I became involved in the Antipoverty Community Action Organization. Then we moved to Albany (and another child) where I was delighted to find a lively League with women ready to take on issues of a political system that had outlived its usefulness.

My first job was to take notes at hearings for the state Constitutional Convention. Then it was a study for fair housing in Albany. After that we worked for an elected school board for Albany. That campaign brought many strategic sessions with lawyers, going all the way to a successful court case in the Court of Appeals. In the early 1970's we began a major push for passage of a county charter for Albany County. Among other things, we collected over 16,000 signatures to get a Charter Commission appointed. This led to a coalition of many organizations that I chaired after serving as president of the league from 1972-74. I still remember marching into the Times Union offices with Audrey Price to get publicity for our cause. Very exciting times! The charter passed in 1973, followed by election of our first County Executive.

My work with the judicial studies of the league led to my job in the 1980's as the first Capital District Coordinator for the Fund for Modern Courts. It also led to my interest in criminal justice and a return to school for a Master's in Criminal Justice in 1984, followed by a position with NYS Dept. of Correctional Services.

In retirement, I returned again to the league as off-board specialist for the state death penalty study leading to a position against the death penalty and action when needed. Now I've come full circle as chair of the immigration study and member of the Albany County League board - working with other leaguers who are the same kind of great people I met back in the '60's.

Election Night Poll Reporting Help Needed

Marggie Skinner

Do you want to be part of the action? The first to know how the vote is going in Albany County? Our annual exercise in participatory democracy, observing the closing of the polls and calling the results into the media is on the horizon.

I have already contacted everyone whose e-mail address I have. If you didn't hear from me and are available from 8:45 to about 9:30 on election night, please e-mail me at marggies@earthlink.net. Put election poll reporting in the subject box as my spam filter will screen you out until I tell it to let you into my inbox. If you are not an e-mailer, call my cell phone 518-461-8226 and leave a message with your name and phone number.

Let me know where you live and if you have a preference about which district you'd like to staff. Some sites have several machines and it helps if two or three people can work together, so let me know who's available to work with you, if that's the situation. This is a fairly easy way for the league to make some money every year and it does give us visibility with our local politicians and the board of elections, but it does require a lot of participants. If you are interested, please let me know.

Immigration Facts: Did You Know?

Ann Brandon, Chair, Immigration Study Comm.

1) The 1965 diversity requirement set a maximum for each country of 7% of the total immigration in a year, leading to de facto quotas. As a result, legal immigration from Mexico, China, India and the Philippines is markedly lower than it would be if entry from a country were proportionate to those who wanted to come.

2) Twenty-five to 40% of unauthorized immigrants are individuals who have overstayed temporary visas.

3) Trade agreements and immigration laws and policies can be spectacularly out of sync. Since 1994 NAFTA contributed to the substantial increase in trade between the U.S. and Mexico, while immigration from Mexico to the U.S. grew more restricted and more problematic.

4) The percentage of immigrants today in terms of current population figures is no larger than it was in the late 1800's and early 1900's.

5) Children born in this country are U.S. citizens, with all the rights of U.S. citizens. But because proof of citizenship is now required to receive treatment under Medicaid, treatment could be denied to a newborn infant until proof is verified; this could take several weeks.

6) A large group of immigrants enter this country illegally - many by covertly crossing the U.S. border with Mexico. Originally this group was largely male and highly transient - with workers making frequent trips to and from Mexico. Because illegal border crossing has become more publicized and difficult, return trips have decreased and migrating groups often include entire families. As a result, more children of unauthorized immigrants have been born in the U.S. and permanent residence has become a more likely prospect for their families.

Adapted from *Overview: Federal Immigration Policy and Proposed Reforms* by Deborah Macmillan, www.lwv.org. For those of you who would like to prepare for the immigration study consensus meeting, there are materials out at www.lwv.org to help you do so. Go to "For Members", and then click in the box in blue on the right hand side of the page. That will get you to a wealth of information about immigration policy and the League's study. See you at the consensus meeting in November!

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Meeting the Challenge

Albany County intends to create a Child Advocacy Center, which is meant to provide an integrated, child-friendly approach to the investigation of child abuse and treatment of child victims, and to coordinate interviews among child protective services and law enforcement. The Center is intended to connect mental health staff and advocates with victims and their caregivers.

It is the county's intention to do for seniors and people with disabilities what has been done for children, meaning a holistic approach to long term care. The county feels that this approach will not only serve people better but will free up resources to serve more people. Albany County has always played a role in providing long term care, particularly at county nursing homes. It feels, however, that the manner in which it does things must change, and that alternatives that can allow individuals to continue to live independently, in their homes or in less restrictive settings like adult homes and assisted living facilities are preferable to nursing facility care.

The county has created a Long Term Care Council to develop these options, comprised of representatives of consumer groups, community-based and residential service providers and advocacy groups. The county is moving to organize and operate a Long Term Care "Point of Entry". The Point of Entry is intended to provide individuals and their families information and access to long term care services that meet their needs. Albany County must also build a new, and smaller, nursing home facility, consistent with the Berger Commission report, that is supplemented by and coordinated with community based long term care options. Right-sizing the facility will be a challenge. The county is considering the creation of another new department, dedicated to coordinating aging and long term care services.

We invite all of you who are interested in how services are provided to children, youth, families and the aging in Albany County to come to our October meeting, where county departmental managers and staff will present their programs and invite questions and comments. Dessert will be served, and other not-for-profit social service agencies in the area will be invited to participate in the discussion. It should be a very interesting evening!!

State Board of Elections Must Not Allow Untested DREs into New York's Polling Places

(LWVNYS Press Release Sept. 19, 2007)

Citizen advocacy organizations announced opposition to the New York State Board of Elections proposal to allow touch screen voting machines, or DREs, in polling places in 2008. The groups expressed grave concerns about the Board's proposal to allow DREs to be used as accessible ballot marking devices in 2008 by disabling the device's vote counting functions and using the Voter Verified Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) as the ballot. In August, at a meeting of the State Board of Elections and county commissioners, Co-Executive Director Peter Kosinski stated that DREs used for this purpose would be subjected to a "truncated certification process."

The groups strongly support implementing accessible voting in all New York polling places in 2008 but are opposed to any plan that allows DREs to be used as accessible voting machines.

"The League of Women Voters supports the goal of fully accessible voting for all people, but using uncertified, untested and inaccessible equipment does not bring that goal any closer to being met," **said Aimee Allaud, Elections Specialist, NYS League of Women Voters.** She added, "voting machines used by all voters should be treated equally during the NYS mandated certification process and subjected to the same performance standards for their security, accuracy and reliability."

"Citizens with disabilities just want to exercise their right to vote on an accessible, secure, and verifiable voting system - the same as all other citizens," **said Cliff Perez, Systems Advocate with the Independent Living Center of the Hudson Valley.** "But voters with visual impairments cannot verify a VVPAT produced by a DRE."

"The State Board of Elections apparently is looking to sneak untested DREs into every polling site across the state in the guise of allowing them to temporarily function as "Ballot Markers" — machines that are designed to help

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Election of Supreme Court Justices

New York has 12 judicial districts, which often include multiple counties. Trial courts within these districts at the Supreme Court level are presided over by justices who are elected for 14 year terms (or until they reach age 70, whichever comes first). Voters in almost all of the state judicial districts will elect one or more justices to these positions on November 6th.

The current process to nominate Supreme Court justice candidates is by party Judicial District Nominating Convention, separating the voters from direct involvement in the nominating procedures. On primary day, this September 18th, you were presented with a slate of delegates, by party, for whom to vote, not the judicial candidates themselves. If the party slate is unopposed, the names may not even have appeared on your ballot. Delegates are typically individuals who are active in their respective political party organizations, and party rules govern conduct of the conventions.

In January 2006, this partisan method of selecting nominees was held unconstitutional by a Federal District Court, and upheld by the Second Circuit, as violating the first amendment rights of both voters and judicial candidates. The decision calls for legislative action to change the selection system. If the state Legislature fails to act, Supreme Court judicial candidates must run in open primaries, as do candidates for most of the other New York State courts. The U.S. Supreme Court recently decided to hear an appeal of this case, and delayed implementation of the decision until it has issued its ruling.

There are many opinions about how the process should be changed. Some support an amendment to the State Constitution so that justices are appointed through a qualification-based appointive system, not elected; some wish to preserve the influence of the political process and continue to elect judges. If the U.S. Supreme Court upholds the District Court's ruling, debate will take place in the NYS Legislature about how to change the process. Stay tuned!

The League of Women Voters of New York State (LWVNYS)

in association with

The United Nations Department of Public Information

AAUW-NYS (*American Association of University Women*)

WBASNY (*Women's Bar Association of the State of New York*)

(*additional co-sponsors to be named at a later date*)

INVITE YOU TO ATTEND BRIEFINGS ON THE EFFECTS OF WAR ON WOMEN AROUND THE WORLD

on Wednesday, November 28, 2007 from *1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

LWVNYS Registration Desk will be open from 9:00 a.m. until 12:30 p.m., Briefings will start promptly at 1:00 p.m.

10:00 - 11:00 Optional Tour (\$12)

11:30 - 12:30 Optional Lunch (\$35) *jeans, shorts, sneakers will NOT be permitted.*

1:00 - 3:00 Briefings (\$63 members)

Discounted fee of \$100 for the Tour, Lunch and Briefings.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL: 518-465-4162

SPACE IS LIMITED, SO RESERVE EARLY

REGISTRATION DEADLINE IS NOVEMBER 10, 2007



Tour of the State Capitol October 13 at 11:00 am

We have reserved the Tour of the State Capitol for Saturday, October 13 at 11:00. Tours are approximately one hour long and free of charge. We can have a maximum of 35 people for the tour. We will meet at the Empire State Plaza Visitors Center in the North Concourse by 10:50 am. If you want to make a reservation to this tour, please call or e-mail Lori Keegan-Brady, 475-0396 or Lkeegan-Brady@nycap.rr.com. If you need any special accommodations, please indicate that as well. After the tour, for those that want to we can enjoy lunch together downtown.

Sitting majestically atop Albany's State Street hill, the New York State Capitol has served as the seat of government for New York since the 1880s. The building is a marvel of late 19th century architectural grandeur. Under the direction of five architects, the Capitol was built by hand of solid masonry over a period of 25 years. When Governor Theodore Roosevelt declared the Capitol complete in 1899, its cost had exceeded twenty-five million dollars. (<http://www.ogs.state.ny.us/visiting/cultural/tourscapitol.html>)

Explanation of the Ballot Proposal to be Voted on in the General Election, November 6th

FORM OF SUBMISSION (how the proposal will be presented to you on the ballot).

Amendment to Article 14, section 1 of the Constitution, in relation to the use of forest preserve lands for wells for a municipal water supply in the hamlet of Raquette Lake, Hamilton County.

The proposed amendment would allow the State to convey one acre of forest preserve land to the town of Long Lake for public use as the site for drinking water wells and necessary related equipment for the municipal water supply for the hamlet of Raquette Lake. In exchange, the State would receive at least twelve acres of land that is at least equal in value to the land conveyed to Long Lake. The land the State receives would be incorporated into the forest preserve. The Raquette Lake reservoir would be abandoned as a source of drinking water supply. Shall the proposed amendment be approved?

What will this amendment do if approved?

This amendment will make constitutional an action that has, in fact, already taken place. In 2004, the State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) gave extraordinary permission to the town of Long Lake to drill wells on Adirondack forest preserve lands, an action that requires a constitutional amendment.

Arguments For:

The hamlet of Raquette Lake in the town of Long Lake had been using unfiltered water from the local reservoir, and was under orders from the State Department of Health to begin filtering the water or find an alternative ground water supply. The town determined that a filtration plant was an option it could not afford.

The water supply issue became a serious health and safety problem. The levels of potential carcinogens were elevated. Problems with water quality escalated to warnings to residents from the Department of Health to boil their drinking water. Because the hamlet is surrounded by forest preserve lands, it could not, without a constitutional amendment, constitutionally drill wells for ground water on that land. Hence, DEC granted extraordinary permission for the drilling, in anticipation of the passage of necessary legislation to put a constitutional amendment on the ballot. In order to do so, the legislation had to be passed by both houses of the State Legislature by two separately elected legislatures (two legislative sessions). It has done so, and will be on the ballot in November, 2007.

Environmental and civic organizations are supportive of this remedy to what was a serious and persistent public health issue. Since the amendment is specific to this situation, it does not give broader constitutional permission to other such solutions; each would require another constitutional amendment.

The League of Women Voters of NYS could not identify any organizations or opinions in opposition to this very specific amendment.

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State Board of Elections

voters mark and print out a paper ballot,” said NYPIRG Legislative Counsel, Russ Haven. “Like the residents of ancient Troy, we should beware of such Trojan Horses from the Board.”

“Other states have had endless problems with their touch screen voting machines and are rapidly abandoning multimillion dollar investments in this bankrupt technology.” said Bo Lipari, Executive Director of New Yorkers for Verified Voting. “Why does the State Board of Elections want to allow these broken machines into our polling places in spite of the abundant evidence that DREs are a failed experiment?”

HELP! Election Workers Needed October 9th

LWVAC did such a good job with the Albany Housing Authority Board member election that we've been invited back to do it again! It's a lot of work, but it is a great fund raiser for the League, helps out the city, and really goes to the core of our mission.

The election is **Tuesday, OCTOBER 9TH**, and takes place in 9 polling places throughout the city. We will need two poll workers at each site at all times from 2:00pm to 8:00pm. The poll workers preside over the marking and collection of the ballots and make sure that the election is conducted according to regulations – simple! Dinner is provided. If you can work the whole six hours, that's wonderful and makes it easier for us, but half shifts are possible. If you'd like to work with a friend (need not be a League member), that's also fine – let us know. If you worked the last time and want to go back to the same location, let us know that also. So, bring a book, a deck of cards, bring friends, help us recruit others, and help the city and the League at the same time!

Thanks to those of you who have already volunteered to help the League of Women Voters out, 2-8 pm on October 9th for the Albany Housing Authority Tenant Commissioner Election – you know who you are, and we will be or have been in touch with you to set up your locations and shifts (if you can't work the whole day). We need a total of 18 full shift volunteers and we still have a need for volunteers! This is a great way to help out the League (we are paid for this service) and get to know Albany Housing issues. There will be a training for volunteers on October 3rd (if you can't make that we'll train you some other way). Please HELP, and THANKS J!!!

Nell Stokes-Holmes (nstokes1@nycap.rr.com)
Mary Ann Lettau (mlettau1@yahoo.com)
Maggie Moehringer (mmoehrin@nycap.rr.com, or 475-0969)
Co-Managers, AHA Election Poll Workers

State Board and Local League Working Together

Make your reservation to join members from your state board when they come to the Capital District on November 15th to facilitate training, dialogue, and an active networking opportunity among local Leagues. **Share information and a light meal** with state League president, Martha Kennedy, VPs Marcia Merrins (membership), Maggie Moehringer (Voter Service), and Betsey Swan (development) as well as other state board members.

Workshops are hosted by local leagues who make arrangements for food at a price of \$5 per person. To show our appreciation for their efforts on behalf of all, please RSVP as soon as possible. Contact the State LWV office (see below) if you have any questions.

GOALS

1. Foster strong relationships between the LWVNYS and LWV local Leagues, boards and members
2. Foster strong relationships among local Leagues within regions
3. Problem solve among local and state LWVNYS leaders.
4. Identify the best ideas/ people to move LWVNYS forward
5. Provide a consistent annual platform for open and intimate dialogue, problem solving and visioning

Capital Region Workshop
November 15 4:00pm – 8:00 pm
At Shenendehowa Senior Citizen Center
6 Clifton Common Court, Clifton Park

The web site has the registration form:

[http://www.lwvny.org/localLeague/
IdaTragerRegistration2007.pdf](http://www.lwvny.org/localLeague/IdaTragerRegistration2007.pdf)

Please mail the form and your check to: **LWVNYS, 62 GRAND STREET, ALBANY, NY 12207. For any questions please call 518-465-4162.**





Book Review:

Silent Travelers: Germs, Genes, and the "Immigrant Menace"

by Alan M. Kraut

Review by Tina Lord

"A prominent American once said about immigrants, 'Few of their children in the country learn English...The signs in our streets have inscriptions in both languages...Unless the stream of their importation could be turned they will soon so outnumber that all the advantages we have will not be able to preserve our language, and even our government will become precarious.' Voicing this grievance was Benjamin Franklin. And the language so vexing to him was the German spoken by new arrivals Pennsylvania in the 1750s, a wave of immigrants whom Franklin viewed as the most stupid of their nation." (Kenneth C. Davis, NYTimes, July 3, 2007)

According to Professor Kraut, every wave of immigrants has been accused of causing certain epidemic diseases: the Irish with cholera (1832, 1849), Germans with yellow fever in Philadelphia (1793), the Chinese with bubonic plague in California (1900) Italians with polio (1916) Haitians with AIDS (1980s). In vivid language geared to the general reader, Kraut presents the history of this double helix of concern for health and fear of foreigners. Reviewers have cited this book with its historical perspective as being crucial to understanding today's debate about immigration policies.

Reviews: "...a skilled historian has provided us with a provocative and important contribution"..."illuminates crucial aspects of this critical process"

2008 Presidential Primary, Feb. 5th

New Yorkers will go to the polls for the 2008 presidential primary on February 5th. You must belong to a political party in order to vote in the primary, and you will vote only for the candidates in the primary of the party to which you belong. If you wish to join a party or change your party affiliation for the February primary, you must file a New York State voter registration form postmarked or submitted in person by October 12th, 2007. The change will take effect in the week after the 2007 General Election on November 6th.

Membership 2007-2008 Join & Make a Difference

Name: _____ Telephone: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

- Individual Membership \$45/year
- Household Membership \$60/year
- Student Membership \$15/year
- Contribution in support of my local League
- Please send me more information

Mail to: League of Women Voters of Albany County
PO Box 611 Slingerlands, NY 12159

Or Contact: Susan Coleman Tel: 330-2992

League Calendar

<u>WHEN</u>	<u>WHAT</u>	<u>WHERE</u>	<u>MORE INFO</u>
Oct. 2, 5:45 pm	Board Meeting	Albany Public Library	
Oct. 9, 2-8:00pm	Albany Housing Authority Election	Volunteers Needed	see page 8
Oct. 13, 11:00 am	Tour of Capitol	State Capitol	see page 6
Oct. 15, 7:00pm	Immigration Comm Mtg.	Ann Brandon's Home	see page 4
Oct. 24	Deadline for Nov. Bulletin	LBierman@nycap.rr.com	
Oct. 25, 6:30 pm	Meeting the Challenge: Albany County Services	Bethlehem Public Library Delaware Ave., Delmar	see page 1
Nov. 6, 5:45 pm	Board Meeting	Albany Public Library	
Nov. 6	Election Day POLL REPORTING	VOTE VOTE VOTE	
Nov. 9, 12 noon	Lunch with the League	Albany Pump Station	
Nov. 13	Immigration Consensus Meeting "Souper" Supper	Bethlehem Public Library Delaware Ave, Delmar	see page 4
Nov. 28	UN Day in NYC		
Dec. 4, 5:45 pm	Board Meeting	TBA	
Dec. TBA	Annual Luncheon: Paid Family Leave		

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF ALBANY COUNTY
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