

# The Thoroughfare

MARCH 1998

VOLUME VI, ISSUE I

## *The Unique Reality of an Island* THOUGHTS OF THE ISLAND MANAGER

I'm honored by being asked to write my first article for the Thoroughfare. The greatest challenge has been trying to decide on a subject. There are a multitude to choose from, for my first summer on Roque Island was notably eventful. As you all appreciate so well, boredom is not on the agenda on Roque. Therefore, I'd like to respond first to the question most frequently asked, "How does one go from the tropical paradise of Maui to the islands of Downeast Maine? And why *islands*?"

My love affair with islands began when I was a child growing up on the coast of Southern California. On clear, pre-smog days (yes, there was such a time!) I would look across to Catalina Island and wish to be there, solely because it was an island. In my early teens I was able to sail over and I found its seductiveness, its "islandness," to be as complete as I had desired. My choice of a college figured as much for its proximity to a new set of islands, the Channel Islands, as for its excellent geography department. Involvement with racing and sailing allowed me to indulge my island passion and visit the Channels frequently. Upon graduation, I was enticed to Maui, part of the most remote island chain in the world. There I sailed the ocean and immersed myself in the island's geology, geography and the unique biology of isolation for over twenty years. An excess of solar exposure forced me to leave Hawaii and we looked toward Maine with its 4000 islands, immense beauty and abundant natural life. We resided on Mt. Desert for two years until this

special opportunity presented and transported my family and me to a new paradise: Roque Island.

But...one question still remains, what is the allure of islands? If Roque were an 1800 acre ranch in the midst of a mountain range, would it be as beloved? I doubt it. A peninsula jutting into the sea? Probably not. The mystique of Roque attains from its history and innate beauty offset by its unique reality as an island. Articles on the psychology of the attraction of island living abound. Theories are numerous: physical isolation from the rest of humanity to a corporal demarcation of personal boundaries to simply being surrounded by the sea. As a professional captain, I've met people from many islands around the world and despite much discussion, the basis of island allure remains elusive. Perhaps, like the definition of God, the source of a love of islands must remain a mystery. It's no mystery though that every day Loretta, Dana and I spend on Roque creates family memories we'll treasure forever.

My first official year as Island Manager has, and continues to be, an adventure in numerous dimensions. I deeply appreciate the continuing support and guidance of the Operations Committee and all the Family members, especially those I've had the pleasure of meeting this year.

Last summer was dedicated to learning the ropes and pulling together a strong and positive staff in preparation for the coming year, which will bring much activity and many new beginnings. Besides the remodeling projects for all the houses, 1998 will mark the

first new residence built on Roque since the 30's and substantial care is being taken by all that the Manager's residence will be a complimentary, quality addition to the island.

On the farm front, we're thrilled to have the knowledgeable, mature and upbeat presence of Ed Harriman. Since Ed, and his wife, Gloria, came to Roque in September, they look forward to meeting everyone next year. Ed will also be introducing you to the new Beltie bull, Majesty, the new ram replacing Amos (named Rodney, and look out for him, he takes the job of RAM seriously!), a new milk cow, a new draft horse named Ike, which some of you have already met and last, but not least, two black kittens who are already dashing about the barn hunting down mice. The staff usually names the farm animals but we thought that in the case of the barn kittens we'd share the fun with you, so send in your suggestions and we'll pull two from a hat! There are 7 new lambs with lots more cuddly ones to come this spring and several new calves to be added to the four born late last year.

Sadly, Dawn the milk cow was put down due to old age, but she left us a beautiful calf named Dusk to carry on. Dusk thinks she's human, loves attention and also is waiting to meet the children of Roque this spring.

Fresh beef, chicken, pork and lamb are available for shipping right to your home via overnight FedEx. The price per pound for Tier III and Club Members will be approx. \$1.40 to \$2.00 which covers packing, dry ice and shipping costs depending on your location. Don't wait for summer to enjoy Roque Island

*continued on page 6*

# Squire's Point



*Preserving the farm has intrinsic value.*

The farm at Roque island has a utilitarian purpose. It sustains the staff and family with meat and dairy products, with fruit and legumes. The livestock are the vital part of a holistic system. They produce the manure which conserves the fields that yield the hay which feeds the animals. There is a synergetic element too. The animals provide purpose and companionship to the staff in the long winter months.

There is an historical imperative to the farm. This is to maintain the continuity to a tradition expanding back well over 100 years. Isolated as it has always been, our island farm has become a living historical representation of a bygone rural way of life. Preserving the farm, maintaining traditional skills, has intrinsic value.

In the new age of conservation, the value of the farm has been well documented by our Natural Resources Study. On the island chain from Canada to Mt. Desert Island, Roque represents the only large cultivated area attracting migrating birds. The gardens, orchards and fields are attractive habitats for all manner of wildlife.

On a moral level, the farm represents an embodiment of rural simplicity and virtue, of values needed to stave off the vanishing past and rescue the future. To preserve traditional practices and sustainable communities is to preserve some core beliefs in the cultural geography and history of our region.

Philosophically, nature left to itself is incomplete. With cultivation and practical intelligence, man brings forth the potential abundance of creation.

The farm buildings themselves are a central part of the architectural ensemble of the *ferme ornée* in which the animals provide visually pleasing moving landscape.

As if to summon our attention, there are recreational and educational values as well. Never more than today has the farm proven to be as great a magnet for the young and a first step in their awareness of the necessities of conservation.

*George G. Herrick*



*Jennifer Donaldson cataloging recent mushroom finds.*

A Humboldt Field Research Institute mycological class came to the island for a mushroom foray on September 19th. They identified 76 different species of mushrooms and produced also a supply of chanterelles and edible Boletus for the table. A copy of their report will be bound for the library. They also gathered some "blue wood," wood on the forest floor colored by fungi, something highly prized in Renaissance Italy and used to decorate special rooms. A warming trend in spring brings out many fungi but the number drops to its lowest point in late spring. A cool spell in August with some rain will bring out puff balls, chanterelles and the first Boletus. The largest number come with the first cooling in September and for the first time mushrooms on wood appear. The season ends when temperatures dip below freezing in October.

*Jottings - 1997*

# Notes from the Trustees

On 4 and 5 October (1997), for the second year running, a Trustees Meeting was convened on the Island. Decisions ripened like apples in the orchard and the juiciest ones were picked with care. Good spirit prevailed all around and the staff gave three fine presentations.

At the Old Farm House, Nannette Herrick authored a feast of Clear Consommé, Roque Island Roast Chicken, Parslied Carrots, Roast Baby Red Potatoes, and Apple Crisp.

Approval was granted for the making of a documentary film about a year on Roque Island. Go ahead was granted to explore commercial possibility of using some mature Red spruce to make instrument grade matched wood pieces for guitars and violins, a conception that sprang full blown from fertile brain of John Donaldson. Can it be that a commercial product, low in volume and high in value, has been growing all these years before our eyes? There were productive discussions too, on the new building program, farming operations, the boat yard, and controlling costs for members.

*George G. Herrick, Chairman  
Jottings - 1997*

As time goes on, we are continually faced with making decisions that will both enhance the Island and maintain costs at a viable level for its members. This challenge comes in many forms —from the basic infrastructure to addressing various governance issues.

*"As the illustrious LaFayette wrote to Benjamin Constant on July 26<sup>th</sup> 1830,*

*'There is a terrific game here —our necks are on the line. Come and bring yours.'"*

*Quoted by our chairman during his opening toast to fellow trustees at their annual meeting at Roque Island.*

At the last two Trustees meetings some interesting decisions were made: purchase of a portable band saw so that rough lumber can be cut for on-island projects thus, minimizing costs and transportation challenges; purchase of a new engine for the *Loon* which will be primarily used by the staff during the high season, leaving the *Buzz Boat* for use by the family; the addition of a "handyman" to the full-time staff (again to alleviate reliance on off-island help); reconfiguration of the laundry & milk room in the Farmhouse; change in

annual billing from retroactive to in advance (allowing for us to get away from a deficit-approach to financing Island operations); and the development of the Trustee Nominations/Elections Committee to further outline policies and to solicit interested family members. The Operations Committee continues to work very closely with the management of the Island and is in the process of helping the staff develop an Annual Plan (timeline of projects) and a Procedures manual for Island operations and services.



*Clockwise from left:*

*(back row of carriage)*

*Luke Barden, Caitlin Guerra, Rebecca Lee Barden, Michael Guerra*

*(front row of carriage)*

*St. Julien Foster, Michelle Guerra, (tending Ike) Dana, Loretta, and friend. of Dana's*

...it's time to *really* think about the value of some of the very obvious delicacies at Roque Island.

## 1998 Produce and Naturalist Club Memberships

Relish fresh lettuce on your B.L.T., rosemaryed little red potatoes with your roasted turkey, or picking delphiniums whose brilliance only matches that of the skies...



### GARDEN CLUB

\$50

*Vegetables, herbs, fruit & flowers*

Omelettes the color of sunshine with flavor reminiscent of crisp sea air and a warm hearth or a dollop of fresh sweet cream on your wild blueberries...



### DAIRY & EGGS CLUB

\$100

*Milk, cream, butter & eggs*

Quandaries over having crisply seared lamp chops or marinated roast leg of lamb... the smell of bacon, a 1/4" thick, sizzling in the frying pan...



### MEAT CLUB

\$150

*Poultry, lamb, pork, and beef*

Unquestionable bliss of sun rays filtering through the spruce trees as you make your way down the lane with the warmth of a friend at your side in the carriage or the feel of cool leather under your fingertips coupled with the relaxing smell of a noble and kind beast...



### HORSE CLUB

\$150

*Horseback and carriage rides*

Especially, if you ever fantasize about all of the above...



### FARM BENEFACTOR

\$1,000

*Membership at this level entitles you to all of the above and ensures that the farm will be there for the future, preserving a traditional way of life and providing high quality produce to the family.*

The feel of cool, plush moss under your bare feet or just simply walking through the woods, occasionally spying a view of the bay, seemingly alone in the world except for the creaking and sway of the trees and the lone eagle circling above...



### ROQUE NATURALIST

\$200

*Membership in this category helps maintain the trail system, upgrade equipment, rebuild bridges, support conservation projects, fund environmental research projects, and add to the Family Room collection of books and artifacts.*

# Roque Island Produce 1998



GARDEN



June-July

peas, lettuce, radishes, spinach, herbs, mustard greens, scallions, and flowers

Late July to Mid-September

cucumbers, green peppers, specialty peppers, herbs, corn, zucchini, yellow squash, bush beans, beets, broccoli, cauliflower, red & green cabbage, carrots, onions, celery, and flowers

Fall

red potatoes, pumpkins, acorn squash, buttercup squash, baby hubbard, brussel sprouts, and turnips



DAIRY & EGGS



Butter, cream, skim milk, & whole milk



HORSES



Hey Boy, Reebok, and Ike

...and Dana, a worthy guide & teacher, on Angel



MEAT



Beef

top round sirloin steaks, t-bone steaks, ny sirloin steaks, short ribs, london broil, chuck steak, ground beef, assorted roasts, stew meat, and liver

Pork

country-style spare ribs, ham steak, bacon, sausage, roasts, hocks, pork chops, and liver

Lamb

ribs, lamb chops, legs and shoulders of lamb, round bone, stew meat, and liver

Chicken

broilers are available either in pieces or whole

Turkey

whole turkeys will be available in September



NATURALIST PROJECTS



Rebuilding of the Paradise Cove bridge, planting of maples along the lane, fertilizing of fields, cataloging of archeological finds, restoration of the Beech Forest, compilation and preservation of historical artifacts, trail maintenance and use of the new Mule for trail maintenance and forestry projects

## Policies and Privileges of Club Memberships

1. Farm produce will be available to members only
2. Membership entitles you to a reasonable\* amount of available produce at no extra cost
3. Voting privileges and input into Farm and Conservation/Naturalist issues
4. Sign-up and payment for club memberships will be on your annual bill OR send a check made out to RIGHC to the offices at 45 Exchange Street, Suite 400, Portland, ME 04101
5. Members who wait to sign up on the island will be billed 20% more than the above rates

\* Depending upon availability and demand, Farm Benefactors are welcome to take (or order) farm produce for use at their homes. Other club members may purchase additional produce for their homes at market value. If you have questions about this, please contact Sandy Bowers (tel 303.371.3731) or Jennifer Donaldson (tel 207.865.0438).



produce! Just give us a call to arrange shipment.

Mark and Alecia Tenney, who joined the staff in July, have exciting plans to expand the garden and utilize it to its fullest. Seedlings will be started in the greenhouse in the spring, and planted as soon as weather allows so fresh vegetables will be available much earlier this year. As well as being the island handyman, Mark continues to film "Life on Roque" with expertise and humor, including footage of the removal of the sheep from Lakeman's, Dusk's birth, and the first blizzard of the year. It's almost a shock when one views the exquisite beauty and unusual activity of Roque when captured on film through a professional's eye. The finished film, if the rough cuts are any indication, promises to be amazing and amusing and will become a treasured addition to the archives.

Most recently, we ventured forth to continue a time-honored Roque tradition: cutting ice. By the time we were done, we had cut and stored 72 blocks of ice. Each block weighs 322 lbs. +/-, so we cut and stored 23,184 lbs. of ice or 11.5 tons or 750,000 ice cubes!

Captain Doug and Amy, already familiar faces to most, are surviving the challenges of a new day on Roque. They've ridden out the changing of the guard with forbearance and good humor and after a busy summer they've put the boats and houses to bed for the winter. In the upcoming year, Amy is switching to the position of Farmhouse Cook, and Gloria Harri-man (Ed's wife) will assume the position of House-keeper.

So, 1998 awaits with many new faces, lots of new animals and grand adventures to be added to those special memories of your magical island. We all look forward to a peaceful, organized 1998 season with lots of fun, laughter and shared smiles!

Capt. Owen Drumgool, Island Manager



Loretta, Dana, Owen, Amy, & Doug  
(July 1997)



**Dylan Campbell Bowers** was born on November 10, 1997 in Denver Colorado. Dylan is son to Sandy & Phil Bowers, grandson to Bill & Sue Monks and great-grandchild of G.Gardner & Katherine Monks.



**The Mansion (Monks) House** is planning to have some foundation and **remodeling work** done throughout the 1998 season. Please note that this may cause a squeeze on reservations at the Red House.

The **construction** of the **Manager's House** (within the farm yard compound) will be going on through out the season.

The Trustees and families involved apologize for any inconvenience these projects may cause.



There are two new **barn cats** (see Manager's article) - black "coon" cats - that **NEED names!**

Please send or e-mail thoughts to the staff.



Due to addition of 911 system, Roque Island now has a **new mailing address**, please make note of the change:

243 Shoppee Point Road  
Roque Bluffs, Maine 04654

Roque Island now has e-mail, but remember the phone lines are not *always* reliable!

[right@nemaine.com](mailto:right@nemaine.com)



**Additions to Roque Island Bird List**

Rough-legged hawk      King rail  
Yellow-throated warbler      Black-billed cuckoo

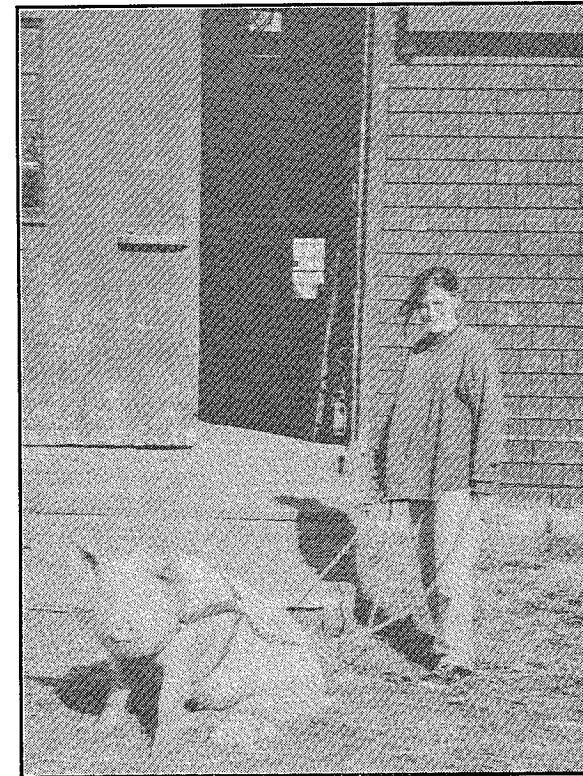


If you are interested in **household help** during your stay at Roque, please contact Owen at least a few weeks in advance of your arrival at the Island.



A researcher from the Maine Medical Center Research Institute in Portland visited to inspect for **lyme tick disease**. The adult ticks are most active in the fall. they meet and mate on a mammal host (deer, squirrels, dogs), drop off and crawl down into leaf litter and emerge the next spring, laying 2,000 eggs. Seventy-five small mammal traps were put out and several areas were "flagged" on the Island. **No evidence of ticks was found.** To use the technical term, Roque Island was "naive."

## Flotsam



Dana, just after training one of the pigs to sit.

## Annual Work Week June 6-14

We are again planning a Work Week for Juniors and others, June 6-14. There are a lot of good projects to work on. Bryan Monks is keen to do some bridge building and will be our point man at the beginning of the week. Nina Herrick will be coordinating things until then, so do call her and sign up (202.337.6699). Remember that the per diem charges are waived while you are there, and this year we'll also provide the groceries.

*"The Work Week aims to engage junior members in the working life of the island. It has a secondary, perhaps unanticipated function: this work week brought together members of the family who did not know each other. ...After the week, I felt comfortable with the cousins and friends that I met and look forward to seeing them in the future. In my opinion, these relationships are vital to the future success of RIGHC."*

Nick Kearns on the 1997 Work Week

## A Farmer's Perspective

I am fascinated by the beauty of Roque Island and the commitment that has been made over the past one hundred and fifty years to maintain a diversified working farm. Roque Island Farm is not large by today's standards, but it is certainly adequate to produce the vegetables, poultry, livestock, and livestock products to meet the demands of the island owners and staff, and to provide the working farm setting which adds greatly to the attraction and beauty of the island.

The tillable land on the island has much potential and some limitations, as does land everywhere. It does not have an adequate supply of calcium, and the pH of the soil is surprisingly good. With regular additions of fertilizer and organic matter, reseeding of badly "run out" areas, there is no reason why Roque Island should not be self sufficient in hay and pasture for all of its livestock needs. The buildings seem to be more than adequate, and a nice line of farm equipment has been provided to enable effective and efficient production.

Having been raised on a rural Maine farm, and having worked in agriculture in Maine for the past 40 years, I am fascinated with the opportunity to operate a general purpose farm which includes diversity of enterprises not often found in today's highly commercialized farm community.

Most of my time so far on Roque has been devoted to getting acquainted with the land, the machinery, the buildings, and the enterprises now in existence. The basic fencing is excellent, but some repair is, of course, necessary, and additional interior fences needs to be constructed to control livestock in a system of rotational grazing to allow for harvest for the early season surplus forage for winter use. Plans have been made for spring fertilizer application and reseeding of needed areas. If logs were milled on the island, the sawdust would be very useful for animal bedding and production of compost to add organic material to the soil. Two flocks of broilers were raised this year in addition to the turkeys, and they have done very well.

We look forward to an interesting and productive 1998 season.

Ed Harriman, Farmer

Prof. David Sanger, a Univ. of Maine archaeologist, confirms that bones of the Great Auk have been identified from digs at Great Spruce and Indian Landing. The Great Auk, which became extinct in 1844, can now be added to the Roque Island Bird List.



## The Manager's House: What Do We Name It?

The picture below is taken from a design book, there will be minor modifications to both accomodate look and function.



The 1<sup>st</sup> floor has a country kitchen, livingroom, study/office, and a half bathroom.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> floor has 3 bedrooms, and one full bath.

An attached shed will be built off the north side of the house to accomodate utilities and a mudroom-type entrance (due to ledge, it is impossible to put in a basement)

Send name ideas to Ari Gregg ([ariana@midcoast.com](mailto:ariana@midcoast.com))  
52 Main Street, Thomaston, Maine 04861



Alecia Tenney after evening chores (summer '97)

And so, another year on Roque Island drew to a close. As twilight deepened over the pastures and meadows, and the lamps were lit in the Farmhouse, there was much to look back on and much to anticipate. Once again Roque Island proved to be a cultural acquirer feeding the springs of hard work and agreeable leisure, of renewal and progress, of historical imagination and vision for a productive and meaningful future.

The Jottings - 1997

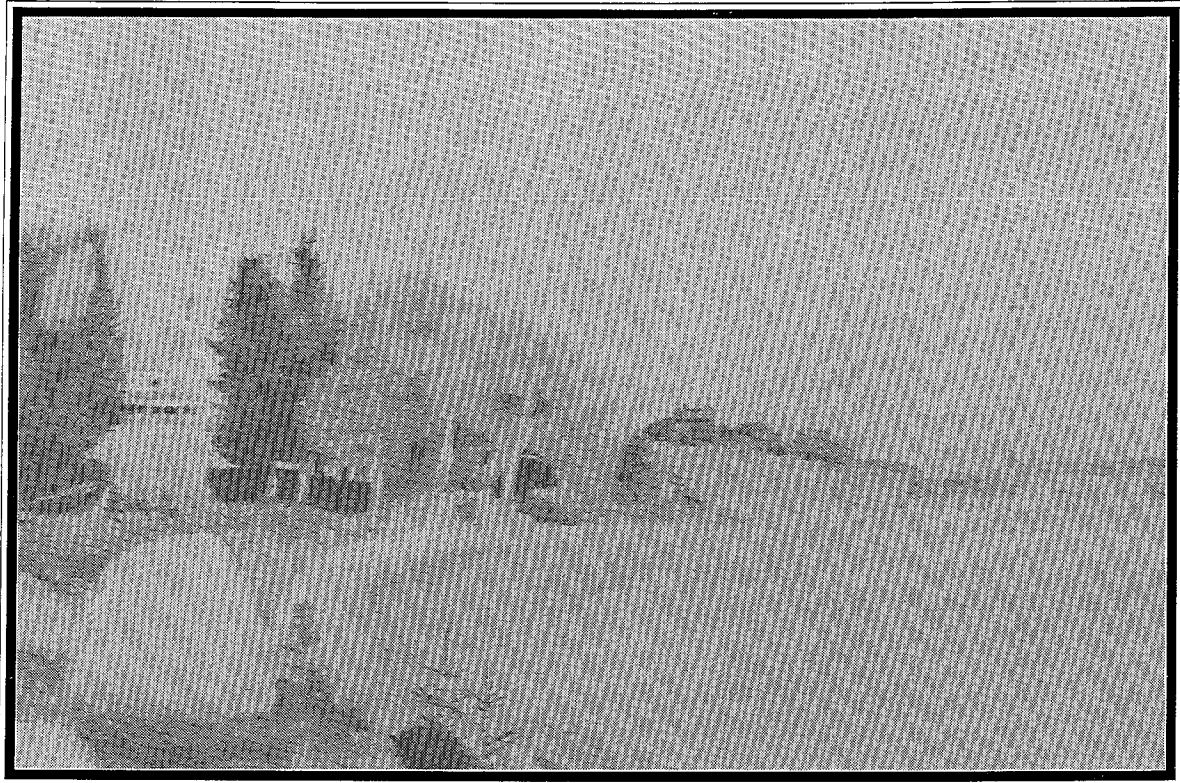
The Dollhouse from the Mansion House leaves the island for restoration. Carried gingerly by Capt. Dodge and Bryan Monks while Bill Monks and Valerie Monks await on the float. (early summer 1997)



Sunshine is delicious, rain is refreshing, wind braces up, snow is exhilarating; there is no such thing as bad weather, only different kinds of good weather.

John Ruskin



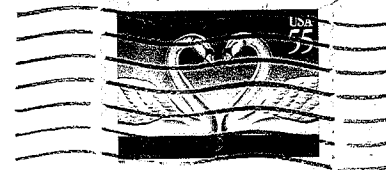


"Roque Island" by John L. Gardner [oil painting, 20"x13"]  
*This painting was given by John L. Gardner to caretaker Herbert Long's daughter, Bertha Hanscom, in 1898.  
She would later pass it on in 1968 to Long's grandson, Elwell A. Perry, the present owner of it.*

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THE THOROUGHFARE  
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*for  
Tatiana's files*

## In this issue...

- The Unique Reality of an Island
- Squire's Point
- Mushroom Foray
- Notes from the Trustees
- Produce & Naturalist Club Memberships
- Roque Island Produce 1998
- Flotsam
- A Farmer's Perspective
- Annual Work Week
- Bones of the Great Auk
- Design of Manager's House

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