

THE CAPITAL FLYER

The Monthly Newsletter of the
National Capital Bird Club
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<http://www.ncbc-dc.org>

July 2002

USDA Informs AFA That Animal Welfare Act Will Now Include Birds

The U.S. Department of Agriculture/APHIS/Animal Care (USDA) has recently received a verbal legal opinion that, contrary to the initial understanding, the final language in the amended Animal Welfare Act (AWA) indicates that birds and certain rats and mice (except for those forms bred specifically for research) are required to be covered under the Act. Thus, at this time, USDA is planning to proceed with a Proposed Rulemaking which will describe the scope of licensing requirements, minimum standards requirements, inspections of facilities and who will be covered under this new law. Breeders, dealers, transporters, exhibitors, and carriers are all included at present, but how these terms will be defined is critical. Representatives of all these categories need to provide input to insure that reasonable definitions and regulations are developed.

The AWA is one of the most significant laws that has ever been passed in regard to U.S. aviculture. USDA is scheduled to make the first public presentation regarding the status of this Proposed Rulemaking as it may relate to aviculture to those attending the

Annual Convention of the American Federation of Aviculture, Inc. (AFA). This Convention is being held at the Hyatt Regency at Tampa City Center, Tampa, Florida over 8-11 August 2002. This Convention provides an early venue for aviculturists and other affected parties to have an impact on the regulations that may result from the Act.

Dr. Chester Gibson, along with other USDA representatives, will make a formal presentation to AFA Convention attendees describing the status of this Proposed Rulemaking Friday, 9 August 2002. They will invite questions and comments at the end of their presentation. Further, they will also maintain a booth in the Exhibit Hall throughout the entire Convention in order to be able to provide additional information, answer questions and receive comments. We urge that you attend the AFA Convention and express your views. If you fall into any of the affected categories (breeder, dealer, etc.), it is critical to your operation and to the future of aviculture in the U.S. that your opinion be voiced. This is your chance to be heard early in the process and make a difference.

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FUTURE MEETINGS

July 14 *
August 4
September 8 *
October 6
November 10 *
December 8 **, **

* *Note date change*
** *Different Location*

Benny J. Gallaway, Ph.D.
President
American Federation of Aviculture,
Inc.

“Baby Birds” By Lori Pikkaart

In this, the spring of my first pregnancy, I was delighted and honored to have two birds' nests in our yard.

It all started when I noticed a male house finch sitting in the hanging geranium on the front porch, singing a sweet little beckoning song. Later, while we were out of town, our neighbor

informed me about the nest in the geranium basket.

Every day when I looked out our living room window, I could see the female house finch on the nest, her black eye looking back at me, vigilant mother that she was.

When the time came to water the

geranium her nest sat in, I carefully took the basket down and saw five slightly speckled white eggs. I took the spout off the watering can and carefully watered around the nest so it wouldn't get wet. As soon as I was done and in the house,

continued on page 6...

“Giardia... Conclusions” By Debbie Arbogast

We would like to wrap up our four-part discussion of Giardia by citing some statistics we have put together from the birds we tested through our mail-in clinic. Please note we feel that these statistics are significant in learning about the prevalence of Giardia, although we are not veterinarians nor trained statisticians, and these results are not scientific results, but observations of what we have seen through the clinic.

Over a period of about 18 months 140 birds were tested through the clinic. Of those, 28 tested positive using the 3-day fecal trichrome method. This yields a 20-percent positive rate across all species of birds. In addition to these 28 positives, there were 4 others that we call “assumed positives.” That is, these birds tested negative, but either later tested positive on a subsequent fecal trichrome test or were birds that had symptoms of Giardia *and* were housed with other birds that tested positive. These cases, we feel, were “false negatives” and therefore should be considered as positive. It should be noted that all four of these birds were treated for Giardia and did respond to treatment. If you include those birds in the total of positives, that brings the number of positives to 32, and the positive rate to 22.8%.

Since featherpicking is a major symptom of Giardia, and one of the key focuses of our clinic, we also separated out those birds who were being tested specifically for featherpicking. Interestingly, the positive rate for

featherpicking birds was lower than the overall positive rate, and was 17.2% (10 out of 58 birds). One possible explanation for this is that we only included those birds in this category where a definite reason of featherpicking was given. There were a number of birds tested where no reason was given, and one can assume that a number of these were featherpicking also..

When we broke down the birds by species type, we found that the three types of birds that avian specialists indicate have a high rate of Giardia, did indeed have a high positive rate. Cockatiels came in at 20 percent, Lovebirds at 50 percent, and Budgies at 62.5 percent. While current literature states that other species are *insignificant* as far as rates of Giardia are concerned, we found fairly high positive rates in a number of species. Of the species of birds that had a fair number tested (5 or more), Conures had a 33.3% positive rate, Quakers 33.3% positive, Macaws 27.2% positive, African Greys 22.7% positive, Cockatoos 14.2% positive.

The following birds tested had no positive results (with number of birds tested in parentheses): Poicephalus (6), Pionus (3), Caique (3), Parrotlet (8), Amazons (2), Eclectus (6), and Jardines (1). There was one Princess of Wales tested which was positive.

Over the past few years the treatment of choice has been Flagyl (metronidazole). According to *Avian Medicine: Principles and Application*, the recommended oral dosing is 10-30

milligrams per kilogram of body weight twice a day for 10 days, although different avian vets use different methods of dosing (strength and length of time) and administration with success. We have also seen success with featherpickers who have been treated with Flagyl, even with negative fecal trichrome tests.

Recently ronidazole has become available in this country as an alternative to Flagyl, and some vets are beginning to look into its use, as it is thought that perhaps some birds are becoming resistant to treatment with the Flagyl. There have been reported successes with this drug, and is another treatment choice you can discuss with your vet.

We feel the information we have gathered through our clinic is significant enough to make companion bird owners aware that this problem is a greater problem than is currently thought throughout the avian community. With a positive rate of around 20 percent, we feel that constitutes a major health problem to companion birds, and one that should not be ignored. We offer this information not only to the avian community as a whole to consider as one more thing to think about when dealing with a bird exhibiting symptoms of Giardia, especially featherpicking, and to consider a round of treatment for these birds, even when they have tested negative for Giardia. As always, you need to discuss these issues with your avian vet.

New Parrot Species?

It has been reported that a new parrot species called the Bald parrot, or Pagagio careco, in the Mato Grosso region of Brazil has been discovered. Only one has been seen, but it has been photographed and filmed.

Since it resembles the Vulturine

Parrot, which is a native of Brazil, there is speculation that it is not a new species but rather a unique Vulturine Parrot. It is lacking feathers on its head, thus the name “Bald Parrot”.

Even if it does turn out not to be a new species just the speculation of

finding a new parrot species is very exciting for bird enthusiasts worldwide. It demonstrates the need to protect remote areas of wilderness from development and exploitation so that possible unknown species can be preserved for the future.

“Willie and Me” By John Davey

A small history lesson: Willie Sutton was by far the absolute best bank robber and safe cracker that ever trod this earth. He will live on forever in quotation books because of his response to a reporter’s question: When asked why he spent his life robbing banks, Willie

responded: “Because that’s where they keep the money.”

I guess about this time, you are probably beginning to wonder what in the world Willie Sutton and his proclivity for robbing banks has to do with birds or psittacines or parrots. Well, I can answer that question with one simple word: Mice.

Maybe I had better start over. By now, you probably know that the two Davey family birds – Old Teddy Bird, the plucked nekkid Quaker Parakeet, and Bilbo Bob Bird, the stubborn Meyers Parrot – spend the daylight hours of the Northern Virginia spring, summer, and autumn months sharing a large cage on the screened-in back porch of our home. It’s really a great location – lots of fresh air, protection from the rain, indirect sunlight, a chance to be outdoors without the dangers that most wild birds face each day.

This year, however, we have encountered a small problem with the back porch “parrot heaven on earth.” Our neighborhood is what Older Son’s realtor girlfriend calls “Suburban Rural.” Our lot backs up onto forested parkland, and we have all sorts of flora and fauna making regular visits – infesting our lawn and eating our shrubs, etc. etc. Now ... we bought into this situation, and we all realize that the plants and animals were here long before we were. But occasionally, a man has to draw a line.

Each year, when the weather gets cold, we experience a subtle invasion of field mice into our garage and occasionally into our basement. Little brown boogers that can squeeze through

the tiniest crevice to escape the cold and make a dishonest living for themselves – eating our laundry detergent and my woodworking glue. They only come in the cold weather, and I usually make short shrift of them, setting out a trapline like the mountain men and voyageurs of old. They go back into the wood and I don’t have any problems when it’s summertime and the livin’ is easy.

But this year has been different. Over the past few weeks, as I carried the birds out of their sleeping cages in the bedroom dormer window and down to the large cage on the back porch, I have noticed droppings – mouse calling cards – in the two food dishes in the cage. Very unusual. We just don’t get mice in the summer – and certainly never on the back porch!

Some smart creature has discovered the mouse food bonanza in the parrots’ feed bowls and in the cage tray and has moved in for a stay on easy street.

So, I set out a new trapline, on the back porch. I had recently discovered a new brand of trap – sleek, deadly, with hair triggers. Over the past week, three of these wicked marvels had resulted in three clean kills. I laid off after the third kill, figuring that I had wiped out my adversaries. But after a day or so hiatus, the droppings returned!

Not to be outdone, I broke out a new trap and baited it with the best extra-crunchy peanut butter bait that money could buy. Lethal. The next morning, the birds and I were greeted with a shiny clean, still-cocked trap and more droppings in the food dishes. That Willie Sutton of a mouse had made a mockery of me any my traps! Now, even Babe Ruth struck out occasion. Even the Red Baron occasionally returned from a patrol without a victory. I rebaited the cleaned-off trap, which snapped as soon as I touched it, and set it out the next evening.

The following morning the birds and

I were faced with the same picked-clean, still cocked trap and fresh (?) droppings in the feed bowls. The trap again snapped as soon as I touched it. Something was going on. Willie Sutton Mouse was back! That evening, I took the offending trap down to my workbench and set to work on the trigger mechanism with my set of files (rather appropriately called “rat tail files”). With a little work and a little experimentation, I modified the trigger so that the trap would spring with a puff of air. The only problem that I had was arming and setting out the trap without it springing shut on my fingers. The next morning the birds and I again came down to that same licked clean, still cocked trap that actually snapped as I walked to it across the porch. (You should see the birds jump when the trap went off!)

I am now facing the Willie Sutton of mice. Old Willie has now bobbed and weaved through three nights and (accumulated) six traps – all picked clean and still armed. It’s now personal. It’s Willie or it’s me. Such are the indirect joys of birdkeeping. I know that somewhere – in some comfortable hole – Old Willie is laughing at me. And if you could ask him why he continues to tempt fate, he would tell you: “Because that’s where the food is.”

“My Adoption Follow-Up” By Dawn Case

Occasionally the NCBC newsletter has birds listed that are in need of a new home. Well, I have adopted 2 birds within the last 8 months that were advertised by our newsletter, and I thought the members might be interested in hearing what happened to a couple of rehomed birds.

The first bird I adopted was a little yellow male parakeet. A club member had taken him in from a neighbor that lost interest in her 3 birds. A few months prior to this, I had to put my much-loved 10 yr old parakeet to sleep, because of a tumor. I missed her and wanted another parakeet, but I did not want to go to a pet store and buy a bird, knowing there are so many homeless birds out there. I knew it would only be a matter of time before I found a needy parakeet. It turned out I adopted Virgil 2 days before the World Trade Disaster, so I will never forget when he came into my life.

My new parakeet was very much afraid of me. I don't know what his previous owner did with him, but it took quite a few months for him to settle in. (Of course his 2 new roommates might have been somewhat intimidating to the new kid) I did not try to handle him, except to trim wings and nails. He came with a little mirror in his cage and I let him keep that. He adores his reflection and chatters away at the funny bird in the mirror. It took him several months to feel comfortable in his new cage, and I was especially thrilled when I caught him playing with a toy for the first time just the other day. I have offered him all kinds of people food, but he is only interested in bread at the moment. However, he has agreed to sample some pellets I put in a separate dish for him. Actually, I think he likes to throw them around more than eat them, but I do think he is much brighter and perkier since he started playing with his pellets. I imagine he is benefiting from the vitamins and minerals in the pellets and he finally

feels good enough now to sing. He makes me smile with his sweet chatter everyday, and I hope someday in the future when he trusts me enough.... I'll get to scratch his head.

The second bird I adopted wasn't planned. I was at the vets office and a woman in the waiting room started talking to me. When I told her I had birds, she immediately asked me if I wanted another. I told her no, but could not help asking what the problem was. She told me she had a Sun Conure that she just didn't have time for anymore. She said it was kept in the basement and she only went down there occasionally to do laundry, so it was left alone all the time. I heard the word Conure and I immediately thought LOUD! I was sure I didn't want one, but I just felt so bad for this bird all alone in the basement. I got her number and offered to run an ad in our newsletter to find it a home.

While I waited for the next newsletter to come out, I couldn't help thinking about the bird. I already had a 7 yr old Timneh named Zoey and a bossy 6 yr old male Quaker named Sydney. After I adopted the parakeet Virgil, I didn't want another bird, but I just couldn't turn my back on this unseen bird. So, I convinced my husband that I needed to get her out of the basement and into our house, and then I would do the work to find her a new owner.

So I went to rescue this bird one bright sunny day. The bird was indeed in the basement, (a very nice finished basement), but in a corner with no light and it appeared she was covered most of the time, probably to keep her quiet. On the ride home she saw the sun out the car window for the first time in a long time.

Well, she can be loud, but within a day I fell in love. I decided right away I had to keep her! She bonded with me and I adore her. She won my heart the minute she stepped out of her cage and

whispered “Oh Boy.” Sometimes she almost purrs when she is on my shoulder.

As much as I wanted Sybil to be a part of my activities with my other birds, I had to let her go at her own speed. Some days she wanted to go downstairs with the others for breakfast, but on several occasions she was too nervous and wanted to stay in her cage. She desperately wanted attention, but the fear of her new surroundings was overwhelming. Everyday got better and I think she grew more comfortable once she learned the routine of the day. I even got her to switch to pellets and now sunflower seeds are used as training rewards instead of her main diet.

Did I mention she is beautiful! And boy does she love to take a bath! One day while brushing my teeth, she went down my arm to get a closer look. I cupped my hands together under the faucet and she ran down and put her head directly under the water rushing into my hands. It's become a daily routine and she gets soaked to the skin, but we both love it.

She is not half as loud as she used to be. But it's relative. She did try to get my attention by screaming, but I only reassured her when she screamed. I did not pick her up. She has been such a delight and I am so glad she came into my life. I would love to bring her to a Club meeting, but she is still rather timid and does scream if she is afraid. We are still working on that issue, but it takes time to undo the years of neglect.

I hope my experience convinces someone that adopting a second hand bird can be very rewarding. It does take lots of patience to build a relationship of trust with a bird, but I certainly feel it's worth it!

AFA 2002 Convention Registration Form

AFA Convention 2002 August 8 – 11, 2002 Hyatt Regency at Tampa City Center

Printable

Registration Form

Full Registration includes lectures, workshops, exhibits, a banquet ticket and all specialty

meetings. Fee does NOT include tours, proceedings or hotel accommodations. **Full payment must be sent with this form.**

Refunds: Postmarked on or before June 29, 2002, 100%. Postmarked on or before July 20th, 50%. Refund requests MUST be in writing and mailed or faxed to the AFA business office. **Hotel Accommodations are not included.** AFA Convention rate of \$89 single or double & \$114 triple/quad if reservation is made by July 16th 2002. Call 1-800-233-1234 for reservations. Make sure you state AFA affiliation to get the rate.

All minors attending the AFA Convention **must be accompanied** at all times by a registered adult participant. AFA is not responsible for minors who attend without proper adult supervision. AFAMember NonMember

Early Bird must be **postmarked by** June 28, 2002. Indicate banquet choice below: V = vegetarian or N = non-vegetarian \$195
\$225 \$_____

Indicate banquet choice - V = vegetarian or N = non-vegetarian | Type: _____

Full Registration June 29TH thru on site. Indicate banquet choice below: V = vegetarian or N = non-vegetarian. \$235 \$265
\$_____

Indicate banquet choice - V = vegetarian or N = non-vegetarian | Type: _____

Extra Sat. Aug. 11th Banquet Tickets | Type: _____ \$45 \$45 \$_____

SINGLE DAY REGISTRATION AND SPECIAL EVENTS

Thursday Aug. 8th Florida Fish Feast with open bar & DJ. **No reservation taken after July 31st.** Includes transportation. \$40
\$40 \$_____

Friday Aug. 9th fee includes lectures, exhibits, & specialty meetings. \$75 \$90 \$_____

Saturday Aug. 10th fee includes lectures & exhibits. Banquet is NOT included. \$75 \$90 \$_____

Sunday Aug. 11th 8 am – noon Avian Workshops \$75 \$90 \$_____

Advance purchase of proceedings by Aug 3rd (pick up at registration desk only - will be \$30 on site) \$20 ea. \$20 ea. \$_____

Convention T-Shirts for Pick up at AFA Booth - Size Med, L, XL, XXL | Size: _____ \$25 ea. \$25 ea. \$_____

If you are not yet a member join now for full privileges: Individual \$40 Family \$45, Supporting \$75, Commercial \$125
\$_____

Use one form per person. Name of registrant, as it is to appear on badge. Date: _____

PLEASE PRINT Name: _____ Phone: _____ Fax _____

Aviary/Business name _____

Address _____ Member # _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

If you are an AFA Officer, or State Coordinator enter state, region. If you are a Club Delegate, please name club.

Title: _____ Region: _____ Club: _____

Make checks payable to AFA or provide credit card information. Check enclosed ___ MC ___ VISA ___ AMX ___ Total due
\$ _____

Name (Please Print) _____ Authorized Signature _____

Credit card # _____ Expiration _____

Mail to: American Federation of Aviculture (AFA), P. O. Box 7312, N. Kansas City, MO 64116

Phone (816) 421-BIRD (2473) | Fax (816) 421-3214 | E-mail AFAOffice@aol.com | web site <http://www.afa.birds.org>

CLUB NEWS

Treasurer's Report July 2002

Beginning Balance:	\$3460.01
Total Income:	\$0.00
Total Expenses:	\$0.00
Ending Balance:	\$3460.01

Membership Report May 2002

Exchange Memberships	18
Single Memberships	39
Family Memberships	20
Total Memberships	77

“Baby Birds” continued

I worriedly checked to see that the mother came back to her nest. She did.

Often, I would hear the male out on the oak tree in front of our house, singing prettily, as if to encourage his mate while she spent countless hours warming her eggs. Periodically, he would come around to feed her, and she would greet him enthusiastically, both verbally and physically, with her wings folded away from her body, quivering with delight and, I think, appreciation.

Additionally, when I would go out back to water my tomatoes, I began to notice a female robin fussing at me. She sat in the grass in front of the deck and persistently scolded. I couldn't imagine where the nest was until I saw it nestled under the deck floor atop a horizontal beam. I could see three blue robin's eggs from above through the slats of the deck floor. Not much time went by before the mother robin came to recognize me as the frequent visitor with the water hose. She no longer fussed, and sat patiently atop the fence until I finished watering the plants.

I felt a kinship with these birds, all three of us expectant mothers, waiting with that timeless motherly patience and wondering what our babies would be like. I became fond of privately referring to them as “mother bird” every time I encountered them outside.

Several weeks later, on a Wednesday, it was time to water the geraniums. This time, the bottom of the finch's nest was covered with fuzzy, fleshy baby birds that wiggled a little upon the movement of the basket. These newborns were huddled so closely together, I couldn't tell one bird from another. It was the most precious sight. They were directly from the hand of God. I treasured that picture in my head the rest of the day, and it brought a smile to my face every

time I thought of those little babies. As soon as I was done watering and inside the house, I made sure to note that the mother came back to the nest.

I was away from the house most of Thursday, but on Friday, I noticed that there was no longer a vigilant black eye watching from the geraniums. Finally, I couldn't stand it anymore and took the plant down to look inside the nest. It was empty! I was confounded.

I couldn't stop asking questions. What could have happened to those babies? Who or what could have climbed down from the house or leapt up to the basket? An owl? A hawk? A rat? I was haunted by these unanswered questions. That night I went to bed feeling melancholy.

A day or so later, I realized that the robin wasn't around either. She didn't sit on the fence and wait for me anymore. I looked into her nest. It too was empty.

The joy of the baby birds no longer graced our house. A robbery had taken place that I could not explain. It was like gentle, lovely springtime had gone, and the indifference of summer had come to take her place.

But now, it is the middle of June, and I have heard the male house finch singing in our oak tree out front. He and his mate have been scoping out our geraniums again, and I am optimistic that they will be back to nest. I am also encouraged to see that these birds, despite their loss, did not stop to feel sorry for themselves, but instead have gone on with their lives with the same enthusiasm they had before. The wisdom of these small creatures leaves me with awestruck inspiration, and in this way it is comforting to see that life truly does go on.

CLUB INFORMATION

President

Tammy Ellison 301-946-3511
 elton.tammy@verizon.net

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Tom Marshall 703-777-3252

Treasurer

Wayne Porter 703-751-5717

Secretary

Carol Rees 301-277-9846
 carol.rees@usa.com

Audit Committee Chair

OPEN

Hospitality Committee Chair

Elizabeth Moore 703-751-5717

Library Committee Chair

Silvia Tennison 301-474-1883

Newsletter Committee Chair

Carol Rees 301-277-9846
 carol.rees@usa.com

Publicity Committee Chair

OPEN

Ways & Means Committee Chair

OPEN

AFA Delegates

Tom Marshall 703-777-3252

NCBC is affiliated with the American Federation of Aviculture, Bird Clubs of Virginia, and Bird Clubs of America. NCBC is dedicated to education and aviculture with respect to all types of birds.

Annual **DUES** are payable on January 1 of each year: Individual - \$20; Family - \$25. After June, dues are one-half the above amount. Make checks payable to NCBC and send to: National Capital Bird Club, 4615 Harvard Road, College Park, MD 20740.

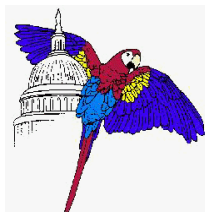
Club **MEETINGS** are normally held the first Sunday of each month at 3:30p.m. at the McLean Government Center, 1437 Balls Hill Road, McLean, VA; (703) 356-0551.

DIRECTIONS TO MEETINGS:

From Capital Beltway (I-495): Exit onto Rt. 123 EAST (toward McLean). Follow Rt. 123/Dolly Madison through watching for small blue sign that says "police substation." Turn left onto Lewinsville Road. Take immediate right on to Balls Hill Rd.

BIRDS are normally welcome at meetings; however, NCBC assumes no responsibility for their safety or welfare.

REFRESHMENTS: Please bring a snack to share at the meetings whenever you can. It doesn't need to be fancy or handmade, store-bought is fine.



DONATE USED MAGAZINES:

Please donate your old magazines to the Club Librarian when you are finished with them.

NCBC Advertising Policies

Advertisements appearing in *The Capital Flyer* are not endorsed by NCBC unless stated otherwise. NCBC assumes no responsibility for advertiser's claims or the quality of their product or service. NCBC reserves the right to refuse any advertisement it considers inappropriate. Advertisements must be prepaid.

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<i>Ad Type</i>	<i>Member</i>	<i>Non-Member</i>
<i>Line Ad</i>	<i>Free</i>	<i>15¢/word - \$ 3 min.</i>
<i>Bus. Card</i>	<i>\$3</i>	<i>\$ 5</i>
<i>¼ page</i>	<i>\$5</i>	<i>\$10</i>
<i>½ page</i>	<i>\$8</i>	<i>\$15</i>

**Your new membership card
 is stapled here for paid members.**

UPCOMING EVENTS

August 8-11, 2002

AFA Convention 2002

Hyatt Regency Hotel - Tampa City Center

Tampa, FA (816) 421-BIRD

<http://www.afa.birds.org/convention/index.html>

August 25, 2002

Mid- Atlantic Bird Mart

Tysons Westpark Best Western

McLean, VA (703) 771-9678

October 27, 2002

Mid- Atlantic Bird Mart

I-95 & Rt #3

Fredericksburg, VA (540) 786-8321

December 1, 2002

Mid- Atlantic Bird Mart

Tysons Westpark Best Western

McLean, VA (703) 771-9678

*National Capital Bird Club
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