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# The Arlington Connection

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## NEWS

# COVID-19: Not a Fair Fight

Regional perspective: pandemic exposes health inequality leading up to discrepancies in life expectancy.

BY KEN MOORE  
THE CONNECTION

Arlington's Latinx community makes up 15.8 percent of the county's population, but accounts for 55.5 percent of the positive COVID cases. And Arlington's black population which makes up about 1 in 10 people (9.6 percent) in the county accounts for almost 1 in 4 deaths (24.1 percent).

The population of Fairfax County is 16.8 percent Hispanic but Latinx individuals account for 65.3 percent of positive COVID-19 cases in Fairfax County.

By Sunday, June 14, months into the pandemic, African Americans accounted for 1,154 deaths, more than 41 percent of the total, in Maryland even though they account for 30.9 percent of the overall population.

In Alexandria, Latinx population, which comprises 16.8 percent of the City, has had 55.5 percent of Alexandria's positive cases.

Montgomery County's black population had the highest rate per 100,000 individuals (79). And the African-American population in Montgomery County was the only demographic that had a greater percentage of deaths than its demographic predicts.

**THE NORTHERN VIRGINIA** Regional Commission concluded that Latinos accounted for a disproportionate number of coronavirus cases in this area.

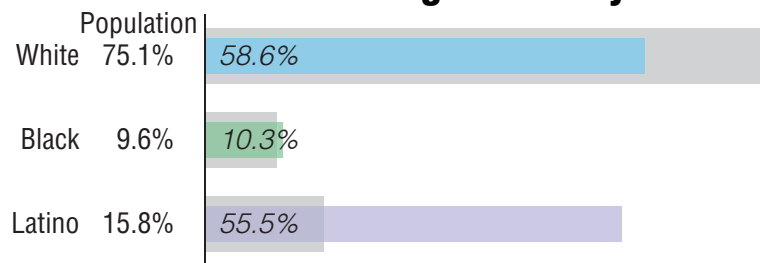
"The Hispanic or Latino share of cases in Northern Virginia is three-and-a-half times their overall share. All health districts in NOVA have significantly higher shares [for the Latino population]. This



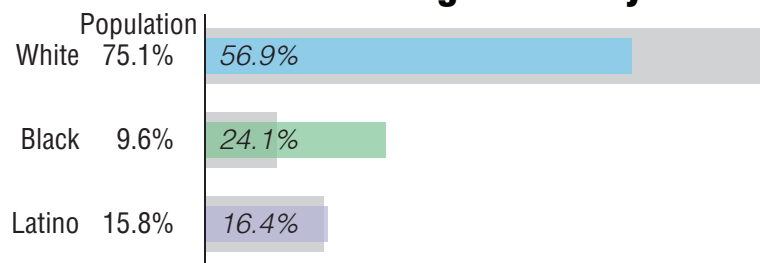
PHOTO BY SHIRLEY RUHE

Arlington drive-through coronavirus sample testing site on Quincy Street. By appointment only, between 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

## COVID-19 Cases in Arlington County



## COVID-19 Deaths in Arlington County



indicates significant ethnic disparities in COVID 19 cases."

Coronavirus cases by zip code in Northern Virginia also revealed disparities by race, ethnicity and economic status. In the City of Alexandria, zip code 22305 stood out for 579 cases.

"Although viruses do not discriminate, the COVID-19 virus disproportionately impacts vulnerable populations just as other diseases and health conditions do," according to the Alexandria City Government, explaining some disparities.

The zip codes with higher concentrations of poverty, lower education levels, and crowded housing conditions tend to have the highest rates of COVID. These people are more likely to work in jobs where they are underpaid, don't get paid sick leave, depend on public transit

and don't have telework opportunities, bringing more risk of exposure to coronavirus.

"Inequitable conditions have created disproportionate rates of chronic health issues resulting in large differences in life expectancy across Alexandria. Now, these chronic health issues also make people more susceptible to severe disease from COVID-19 infection," the city report said.

**"AFFLUENCE** in Northern Virginia masks gaps in health and economic opportunity that have been exacerbated even further by the current coronavirus pandemic," according to the Northern Virginia Health Foundation.

"Although everyone is potentially susceptible to the virus, research shows that people of color and

SEE COVID-19, PAGE 3

## Vote by Mail: 6 Ways to Request a Mail Ballot

Applications can be submitted 12 months before an Election, and must be received by Tuesday, 5 p.m. 1 week before the Election.

Deadline to request mail-ballot for the June 23 Republican Primary is June 16.

Deadline to request mail-ballot for the July 7

Special Election is June 30.

Ballots are mailed 45 days before an election.

Ballots for the Nov. 3, 2020 Election will be available Sept. 18.

<https://vote.arlingtonva.us/absentee/absentee-voting-ballot-application/>



## Yorktown Graduation Parade



**F**orty-two vehicles filled with graduating Yorktown High School seniors lined up at Madison Center and escorted by motorcycle police they headed toward Glebe Road on Sunday afternoon. The cars and trucks were decorated with blue and white balloons floating through the sun-roofs and some with the names of the graduates on the sides of the cars. The sidewalks were filled with neighbors clapping and hooting as loud as the seniors in the cars. The motorcade parade travelled toward Williamsburg Boulevard, turned left on Ohio and then Little Falls and then ended up at the Yorktown parking lot. More than 500 seniors graduated from Yorktown in a virtual ceremony this year.

PHOTOS BY SHIRLEY RUHE  
THE CONNECTION



## COVID-19: Not a Fair Fight

FROM PAGE 2

low-income families are especially vulnerable and have higher death rates from COVID-19," said Steven H. Woolf, of Virginia Commonwealth University and the Northern Virginia Health Foundation. "They have greater exposure to the virus, are more susceptible to complications, have greater barriers to health care, are more vulnerable economically, and suffer from deteriorating health caused by deepening economic adversity."

Northern Virginia is a "seemingly affluent area" with good health statistics in general, but life expectancy varies by 17 years within the region, he said. "Economically marginalized communities face devastating wage losses, unemployment and food scarcity. Low income families will undoubtedly struggle the most to rebound."

**THE PANDEMIC** has magnified discrepancies that health officials already knew were there.

According to the Arlington County Government, "Arlington rightfully celebrates being highly ranked in many areas, like employment, education and health. However, looking be-

yond aggregate data and drilling into results in different geographic, ethnic, racial and other often-marginalized groups reveals that health disparities exist among Arlingtonians in these groups. Not everyone is thriving."

According to the Fairfax County health department, "The data does underscore some of the existing disparities in Fairfax which make certain populations more susceptible to exposure and to greater risks from COVID-19 infection, just as they are for other diseases and health conditions."

"Simultaneously, COVID-19 continues to showcase and exacerbate the disparities that exist in our most vulnerable communities," said Fairfax County Chairman Jeff McKay.

"Now more than ever, we know it is the role of our local government to achieve true structural change in our communities. We in Fairfax County must honestly ask ourselves, 'What actions are we taking?; What voices are we lifting up?;' and for me as your Chairman, 'Are our policies affecting systemic change in our community?'"

## Pick Up What You Need—Every Six Weeks

BY SHIRLEY RUHE

**R**onda Gilliam Clothing Bank, sponsored by the First Presbyterian Church, has reopened at the Arlington Methodist Building located at 716 S. Glebe Road. The clothing bank closed March 15 in line with government health restrictions.

The clothing bank offers free clothing, shoes, linens, kitchenware and toys. Annette Reilly, manager of the clothing bank, says the greatest need is for children's clothing, especially ages 10-12 who grow quickly and wear out their clothes fast. She adds that Arlington generally has a couple of spring clothing sales each year, which were cancelled this year, so the need is greater now.

Reilly says there is no limit on the number of garments, and families may return every six weeks. "We want to share the resources available." Anyone can come; there are no income limits but they generally serve a low-income and homeless community who are looking to stretch their income.

She says for the last few months the immediate need has been for food and rent but now with the season changing, people are turning to clothing. The clothing bank also offers kitchenware, towels



**Ronda Gilliam Clothing Bank, from 2016. Left is Annette Reilly, manager of the clothing bank. Next is Ronda Gilliam's god-daughter and a friend.**

and linens which are often donated from estate sales. "Towels go especially fast."

The clothing bank is open on Wednesdays from 1-3:00 p.m. and on Saturdays from 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Reilly says they usually serve 15-25 families each day. No appointments are necessary but face masks are required.

Reilly adds, "The clothing bank can store off season items, and some people like to donate here because we don't charge for the

clothes." She says they support all sizes and make sure the clothes are clean and wearable.

The clothing bank was established in 1970 by an African American Presbyterian elder and school teacher who noticed that children weren't coming to school because they didn't have warm clothes.

"I have volunteered on and off since 1973 because I can see the need is continuing, and I want to keep it going."



# Arlington Gently Ventures into Phase 2 Reopening



A YMCA Tai Chi class is held in the Central Library parking lot.

The gelato case sits empty at the Italian Store on Washington Blvd. but this three-year-old has lucked out with an entire pint of gelato from the frozen food section. Eighty percent of the current business is curbside delivery but as part of phase two they have made indoor window counter space available with bar stools situated six feet apart and opened up outdoor tables on the patio and in the parking lot in case customers want to eat their subs outside.

PHOTOS BY SHIRLEY RUHE  
THE CONNECTION



Evan McGurrin, manager of Upton Hill Regional Park on Wilson Blvd., is checking the batting cages which are set to open in a couple of hours Friday, June 12 as part of phase two park facilities. The miniature golf course opened last week, and the trails have been refurbished as more people have been relaxing outside. But McGurrin says the outdoor swimming pool will not open this season. He says they will ask customers to wear masks and all staff will be wearing them as well.



David, manager of Jon David Salon at Lee Heights Shopping Center, is running the shop at 50 percent with customers sitting in every other chair in two separate rooms. He says they wash the capes and wipe down the chairs "and everything" between customers.

## A Book A Day Keeps the Coronavirus Away

BY SHIRLEY RUHE  
ARLINGTON CONNECTION

Moms Demand Action volunteers delivered hundreds of new and gently used books and games June 9 to children participating in the weekly Barcroft Elementary School food distribution program. Each week since school closures, around 100 families in need have been given a bag of fresh groceries as well as other essential items such as books and household/personal items.

The Moms Demand Action effort is part of a national focus each June called Wear Orange that supports communities and raises awareness of the toll gun violence takes on families and loved ones. This year because of the pandemic the group decided to focus on community members in need.

Celia Slater, Moms Demand



Kaydee Myers, left, who leads community outreach efforts for Moms Demand Action Arlington and Jackie Pippins, Barcroft Elementary librarian.

Action Arlington Co-Lead says, "So far we've collected more than 1,000 books and games for the Plant Hope Drive to brighten the

summer for kids participating in elementary school food drives and Doorways families. "The Barcroft principal and librarian were

thrilled because so many students are lacking resources for the summer." In order to add a boost for local participating businesses during the coronavirus pandemic, Moms Demand Action teamed up with small Arlington businesses to create customized bundles of books and games for donors to purchase. Partners included Busboys and Poets, One More Page Books, One Two Kangaroo and Urban Farmhouse.

"Supporting children who are facing uncertain summers due to the pandemic and partnering with small businesses that may also be struggling seemed like a win-win for the whole community," said Kaydee Myers, who leads the community outreach efforts for Arlington's Moms Demand Action group.

Jodi Rosenbaum, Barcroft Elementary School Site Coordinator, SEE A BOOK A DAY, PAGE 6

The  
Arlington  
Connection

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An independent, locally owned weekly newspaper delivered to homes and businesses.

Published by  
Local Media Connection LLC

1606 King Street  
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

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## OPINION

### Arlington for Justice Urges Arlington County Board to Reform Policing

Dear Arlington County Board:

On behalf of Arlington for Justice, we are writing to share our concerns about the role of the Arlington County Police Department, especially its recent actions on June 1, 2020 to remove nonviolent protesters who were lawfully protesting in DC, and our recommendations for reform.

As Arlingtonians, we have protested, marched and held vigils to raise our concerns over the recent police murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, and the hundreds of police killings all over the country for decades. We condemn these police murders and acts of violence.

It is with this backdrop that we were especially distressed to learn of Arlington County Police Department's involvement in removing people from Lafayette Park in Washington, DC on June 1, 2020 as reported in The Washington Post and other news outlets. These individuals were exercising their First Amendment rights and lawfully protesting against police brutality. We were surprised to learn that Arlington's police officers were part of an effort to squash the constitutional rights and limit the voices of dissent against the federal government.

We are outraged by our police department's action. It raises serious questions about the use of mutual aid agreements, and more fundamentally, about the role of law enforcement in our community and how resources are allocated to meet the most basic needs of residents in our community.

We urge you to adopt these recommendations:

(1) Leadership: We understand that Arlington Police Chief Farr will be retiring from his position at the end of 2020. This provides an opportunity to reconsider the police chief's role. We urge you to:

- ❖ Conduct a nationwide search with an emphasis on finding a police chief who is committed to justice system transformation, eliminating bias, and implementing new methods of policing.

(2) Revamped Role: We expect that you will engage the community and its stakeholders in deciding the future role of our police force to ensure that it is attuned to community needs. Towards that end, we urge you to:

- ❖ Eliminate the School Resource Officers Unit in the Arlington County Police Department.

- ❖ Reduce over-reliance on policing by establishing alternatives to calling the police and educational efforts and alternative approaches to responding to mental health crises.

ses.

- ❖ End policing of minor offenses that do not threaten public safety, such as fare evasion, possession of marijuana, and driving with a suspended driver's licence.

- ❖ Repeal the ordinance that criminalizes failing to identify oneself to a law enforcement office (Arlington Code 17-13(c)).

- ❖ Establish enforceable protections against racial profiling to prevent police from intervening in community members' lives and reduce over-policing in Arlington communities.

- ❖ End Arlington law enforcement's participation in the federal 1033 Program that provides military weaponry to local law enforcement.

- ❖ End mutual aid agreements with federal agencies such as the Park Police, the National Guard and ICE.

(3) Invest in community over law enforcement by reallocating resources

As the police budget has increased by 35% in the last decade, we recommend that you:

- ❖ Reallocate funding from eliminating the School Resources Officers Unit to fund more school social workers and school psychologists.

- ❖ Reallocate at least 10% of Arlington County's Police Department's \$74 million per year budget.

- ❖ Freeze increases for Arlington County Police Department for the next five years.

- ❖ Reallocate the resources from these budget revisions through a participatory budget process that would allow Arlington's residents, especially communities most impacted by the criminal justice system, to democratically decide how to allocate funds towards services and programs, such as:

- ❖ Alternatives to calling the police

- ❖ Pre-arrest diversion programs

- ❖ Health care services

- ❖ Substance abuse and drug and alcohol addiction treatment

- ❖ Mental health care services

(4) Oversight: To expand oversight of our police force, we ask that you:

- ❖ Create a Community Review Oversight Board with subpoena power and a Community Complaints Office.

- ❖ Remove barriers to reporting police misconduct.

- ❖ For all stops by a police officer, require officers to give community members their name, badge number, reason for the stop and a card with instructions for filing a complaint to the Community Review Oversight Board.

(5) Policy and Practice Reforms: SEE ARLINGTON, PAGE 7



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**NEWS**

# DOJ Filing Supports Major Expansion of Arlington National Cemetery

## Expansion would link Arlington National Cemetery with U.S. Air Force Memorial.

The Department of Justice Monday filed a civil action on behalf of the Department of the Army for the taking of roadways owned or operated by Arlington County by eminent domain for the purpose of expanding Arlington National Cemetery.

The taking and relocation of these roadways, together with future planned acquisitions from the Commonwealth of Virginia, will establish a single, contiguous parcel of land south of the existing cemetery. The incorporation of this land into the cemetery will create a 49-acre contiguous parcel available for cemetery development.

When completed, the Arlington National Cemetery Southern Expansion Project will provide for approximately 60,000 additional burial sites, including an above ground columbarium. The expansion will extend the timeline for Arlington National Cemetery to continue as an active military cemetery. The total project cost, including the related Defense Access Roads Project, is estimated at \$420 million, and Congress already has appropriated \$280 million in project-related funding.

The DOJ release says the expansion project will benefit Arlington County and its residents by, among other things, burying overhead power lines and incorporating the Air Force Memorial and surrounding vacant land into Arlington National Cemetery. The project will transform Columbia Pike from South Oak Street to Washington Boulevard by re-aligning and widening it. The project includes street-scape zones with trees on both sides of Columbia Pike, adding a new dedicated bike path, and widening pedestrian walkways. The project also provides for the construction of a new South Nash Street.

June 15, 2020 marks the 156th anniversary of Arlington National Cemetery, which was established as a military cemetery in 1864 during the American Civil War.

Congress authorized the Department of the Army to acquire land, including acquisition by condemnation, if necessary, for the expansion of Arlington National Cemetery. Congress gets its authority from the U.S. Constitution that allows the taking of public county property for a public use. In turn, the government must pay just compensation for the property. Acquisition by condemnation is an open and transparent process that assures fair treatment for landowners and taxpayers alike. The government here is providing just compensation in the form of substitute facilities, including a realigned and redesigned Columbia Pike and the construction of a new South Nash Street.

# A Book A Day Keeps the Coronavirus Away

FROM PAGE 4

Communities in Schools of NOVA says, "The hundreds of books and activities donated by Plant Hope Drive are providing a summer full of learning and enjoyment for families in need who have been affected by the coronavirus closures." Contact president@barcroftpta.org to help with the critical need for monetary donations, food and grocery gift cards to keep the school grocery distribution program going through the summer.

Moms Demand Action volunteers are also delivering about 75 new activity books to Doorways for Women and Children for children in their programs. Anna MacNiven, Doorways Development Associate says, "These supplies will go a long way to keeping our kids entertained and happy during this stressful time." Doorways is



PHOTO BY SHIRLEY RUHE

Sandy Gould, co-owner of The Urban Farmhouse on Wilson Boulevard in Arlington, shows a sample of a placemat with crayons donated by customers for the Moms Demand Action Plant Hope book drive for needy families in the community. About 20 were purchased which "was for a good cause."

a non-profit organization established in 1978 to give women and families a way out of violence and homelessness and empower them to create a brighter future through crisis intervention, counseling, employment, and housing.

Moms Demand Action for Gun

Sense is a non-partisan grassroots movement of more than five million Americans demanding common sense solutions to the gun violence that endangers our children, families and communities. Arlington is one of more than 20 chapters in Virginia.

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# OPINION

## Arlington for Justice

FROM PAGE 5

To expand best practices and reduce disparities, we urge you to: Conduct a comprehensive review of Arlington County Police Department's "use of force" policy and update it by September, 2020 to ensure that it aligns with best practices, including banning knee holds (See Campaign Zero model use of force policy).

❖ Ensure that dash cameras are installed and properly functioning in all police vehicles, and that police vehicles are not utilized when the camera is not properly functioning.

❖ Immediately require Arlington County Police Officers to wear body cameras and establish effective policies governing their use (See ACLU Model Policy) as well as penalties for individual officers who turn off their camera.

❖ Consider & undertake additional practice and policy reforms such as in the extensive recommendations in this report from national civil rights leaders: [https://civilrights.org/wp-content/uploads/Policing\\_Full\\_Report.pdf](https://civilrights.org/wp-content/uploads/Policing_Full_Report.pdf)

(6) Recruitment and Staffing: To increase the number of police officers who reflect the neighborhoods they serve in our community, we recommend that you:

❖ Develop and publicly report a plan by 2021 with strategies such as providing housing assistance.

❖ Expand successful community policing strategies in the Green Valley community throughout Arlington.

(7) Accountability: To ensure more accountability in our police force, we urge you to:

❖ Make officers' disciplinary history publicly accessible.

❖ Hold police officers who kill or seriously injure community members financially accountable.

❖ Update the community feedback survey to allow input on residents' experiences and perceptions of our police department. This input should be used to inform the department's policies, practices, evaluations, and pay incentives.

(8) Transparency: To increase transparency, we ask that you:

❖ Increase data collection and public reporting to include the race and ethnicity of everyone involved in any interactions with Arlington County Police Department officers.

(9) Justice Transformation Commission: To ensure that these recommendations are fully implemented and Arlington residents are involved in our justice system transformation, we urge that you:

❖ Immediately establish a Justice Transformation Commission with Arlington County public officials and community members together appointed to serve for the next six months to manage the implementation of these recommendations. The commission would:

❖ Meet every two weeks at locations accessible to the public

❖ Include time for public testimony

❖ Host public hearings so that you can hear from Arlington residents on how to effectively implement these recommendations

❖ Write & release a report with recommendations on the timing of implementation of these recommendations

Arlington for Justice Steering Committee Members

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Anika Kwinana Atima Omara,

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## Taking the Results in Stride



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Apparently, I'm back in the lung cancer business. According to the video visit I had June 8 with my endocrinologist, my thyroid cancer has not moved into my lungs where my oncologist thought it might have - given the results of a previous biopsy and some surprising tumor inactivity in my lungs. The 'surprising inactivity' the tumors didn't kill me. Living, as they say is the best reward. And it sure beats the alternative.

Nevertheless, I can't say I'm thrilled with the outcome. All the tumors in my lungs still being non small cell lung cancer squashes my dream that those tumors were curable papillary thyroid cancer (as it had been suggested by my oncologist in a previous phone call) that had moved rather than the originally diagnosed incurable lung cancer which itself had metastasized. In fact, papillary thyroid cancer is called "the friendly cancer," according to one of my oncology nurses at the infusion center. There's nothing friendly about non small cell lung cancer, stage IV.

I was hoping that the diagnosis of thyroid cancer was going to change my life from being cancer-centric to being thyroid-cancer-are-you-kidding? You mean to tell me, after 11 years and four months living as, and being treated for, lung cancer, the actual diagnosis is thyroid cancer? But alas, poor Yorick, 'twas not to be. If what I've been told recently is the absolute-without-a-doubt truth/accurate diagnosis, than I am back on the emotional precipice waiting for the other shoe to drop or at the very least, have one of my socks fall down around my ankles and get all balled up in my sneakers. (Which I hate by the way; when socks get all rearranged like that. I like the heel of the sock to be lined up properly with my heel and the toe of my sock not twisted away from the toes and so forth.)

Once again, I suppose I'll have to pull myself up by my own boot straps, which I don't even own, and step lively, putting one foot ahead of the other and trying not to back up one step for every two I take. I've progressed too far for too long to backslide now. And even though my working thyroid-cancer-instead-of-lung-cancer narrative is now a thing of my medical past, it was sort of fun and uplifting - while it lasted. Now, I have to reconnect with my previous lung cancer reality and try to find some new approaches to living with a "terminal" disease.

It reminds me of what Cpl. Klinger (Jamie Farr) the cross-dresser from the television series M\*A\*S\*H once did when he returned to camp after assisting the doctors off-site at an aid station. He was all business away from the 4077th, but upon his return, a few hundred yards outside "the upholstered toilet seat" as Trapper John (Wayne McIntyre) once called it, Klinger put his female nurses cap back on and reverted to his previous form as a skirt-wearing Section 8 wannabe, and life for him and all the other M\*A\*S\*H personnel returned to their abnormal.

So too must I return to mine: as a stage IV, non small cell lung cancer patient who hasn't died and somehow has managed to keep under the reaper's radar. I mean, how else does one live so far beyond one's original "13 month to two year" prognosis? Granted, I have a good attitude and have made some changes to my diet and lifestyle, but hardly would I characterize my behavior as any kind of poster-boy status. Sure, I've tried to make light of an extraordinarily heavy burden and made lots of jokes in the face of what I was led to believe was certain premature death (what death isn't premature?), but that's more about personality than procedure. I was up for the challenge is all. Not everybody is. As Kenny Beatrice, a long time sports-talk-show host in the Washington DC area used to say: "You can't teach height." Lucky for me, as my late father often said, I was "born with broad shoulders."

Kenny Lourie is an Advertising Representative for The Potomac Almanac & The Connection Newspapers.



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