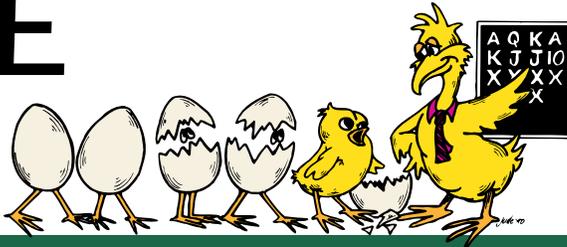


THE BRIDGE TEACHER

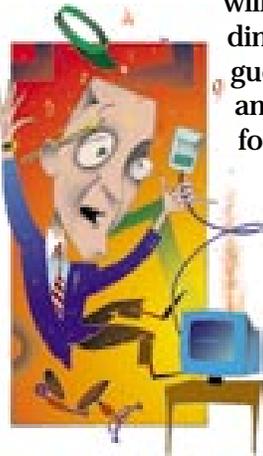


MARCH
2001

VOL. 13 • ISSUE 4

CHANGES

The Newsletter. Here is our first newsletter in glorious technicolor. The link you received by e-mail takes you directly to the teacher section of the ACBL home page of our website. You can also go to www.acbl.org directly, click on Teachers (in the left hand column) and then on "The Bridge Teacher" to read this publication. While you are on the web, take a few minutes to check out all of the great links and information we have gathered here for our teachers.



Teacher Resource

Manual: During the coming month, the Education Department will put the entire Teacher Resource Manual on the website. Be certain to check it out. We have been slowly adding material to the web, so if

you haven't visited lately, you might be surprised to see all of the things that are now available — there are more than 150 pages of information.

At the NABCs: The Kansas City NABC will introduce a new kind of teacher dinner. Many of you have wanted to bring guests to our Sunday evening get-together and now you can. We have changed the format to a Dutch treat dinner that will be totally social. Check with us at the ACBL Information Desk and look in the Daily Bulletin for the 5pm dinner on Sunday, March 18. We hope you and your friends will join the Ed Department Staff for some fun.

On Monday, March 19 at 10am (Hyatt Hotel), we will offer a "What's New" seminar for teachers. Come and

hear about the new texts and teacher manuals, Mini-Bridge, and the Play Courses for Advancing Players. Bring your questions and a special teaching tip. This figures to be a productive and enjoyable new feature.

OUTSTANDING TEACHER OPPORTUNITIES IN TORONTO

ACBL is pleased to announce two exceptional opportunities for bridge teachers which will take place this summer at the Toronto NABC.

MiniBridge: Sandra Landry, world champion bridge player from England, will present a six-hour accreditation course on Mini Bridge. The English version of Mini-Bridge is currently being used quite successfully in the schools in Great Britain. The English have developed an outstanding teacher manual and school presentation kit which you will want to have. Plan to take advantage of this excellent continuing education opportunity. The program will be held on Friday afternoon and evening, July 20, immediately following the

ABTA Convention. To pre-register, call Dana (901-332-5586, ext.264). Course fee of \$30 U.S. to cover materials.

Commonly Used Conventions: Author Audrey Grant will conduct a two-hour seminar on this new course for advancing students on Monday morning at 10am. Come hear Audrey tell you how to present the *Commonly Used Conventions* course in various ways to different levels of students. You'll want to hear all of the tips Audrey has collected from field teaching this material.

The TeacherUpdate Program will start this spring in Kansas City as a regular Monday morning feature at NABCs. We hope to bring you varying programs on "What's New in Teaching" at each meeting.

*The Official
Newsletter
of The
American
Contract
Bridge
League
Accredited
Teachers*

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SPRING
2001

Textbook Prices -

As of May 1, 2001, there will be an across the board increase of \$.50 for all teacher prices on ACBL textbooks.



Commonly Used Conventions

The brand new *Spade Series* text, *Commonly Used Conventions*, is expected to be

ready for delivery in April. Don't miss Audrey Grant's seminar on this new course at the Toronto NABC.

Commonly Used Conventions Teacher Manual

We expect to have the teacher manual ready for delivery in April. The teacher manual is being sold three-hole punched (ready for a three-ring binder) and shrink-wrapped to hold down the cost. Teacher's price will be \$13.50. Order your copy with your next purchase!



The Club Series

As you now know, *The Club Series* has a new title — *Bidding* — but we will probably continue to refer to it by its original

name. In the new editions, you find not only a new cover but a new format for the exercises. The answers to the exercises at the end of each chapter have been moved to face the questions as per the format of the new texts on conventions. Sorry for the delay in getting these to you. Publishing for a small company that does its publishing as a special project is a long and difficult process. It always seems to take a lot longer than we expect.



The Bridge Teacher's Bookshelf

by Pat Harrington

A must-add to every bridge teacher's bookshelf is *25 Ways To Compete in the Bidding* by Barbara Seagram and Marc Smith. The authors' previous book, *25 Bridge Conventions You Should Know*, was honored with an award from the American Bridge Teachers Association in 1999. And this is another winner in my book!



Each of the 25 chapters focuses on some aspect of competitive bidding from overcalls and responses to doubles and responses, to bidding over the opponents' 1NT opening bids, and preempts to balancing, forcing passes, and hand evaluation. All is much needed discussion for our advancing students who probably have had plenty of lessons on constructive bidding but very little on competitive auctions.

Each chapter concludes with exercises that can be used in the classroom. Teachers need only supplement the material covered with example hands to use the book as a textbook for an entire season of lessons. Students will appreciate the complete yet clear and simple discussions of each topic. The authors are clearly experienced teachers and do not assume that the reader knows more than most students do. Ordering information is given below, but contact Barbara Seagram at bseagram@interlog.com for a special quantity discount of 40% for 30 or more books.

It seems that the primary focus of our classes is usually bidding. But what use is good bidding if the declarer has trouble playing his contract? An occasional lesson or

course on declarer play — beyond *The Diamond Series* — is a must. Teachers will find some excellent material for such lessons in *Countdown To Winning Bridge* by Tim Bourke and Marc Smith. The entire book focuses on counting out the hand from the perspective of both declarer and defender. And there are dozens of complete hands that you can use in the classroom. The material is not for your beginner level students but will be very helpful to your more serious intermediate and advanced students — and even to you.



Both books come in paperback and can be purchased for the member price of \$14.35 from the ACBL Sales Department (800/264-2743 U.S.; 800/264-8786 Canada) or online at www.acbl.org

Speaking of declarer play, if you are looking to improve your own game, check out the new *Bridge Technique Series* again from Masterpoint Press. The first six of the planned series of twelve by David Bird and Marc Smith are available now: "Entry Management"; "Safety Plays"; "Tricks With Trumps"; "Eliminations and Throw-ins"; "Deceptive Card Play" and "Planning in Suit Contracts". Each paperback is approximately 60 pages and is sure to help you sharpen your technique. You might also find a few ideas for your advanced classes. Each is priced at \$5.95 and can be ordered from Masterpoint Press, 331 Douglas Ave, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5M 1H2; 416-781-0351, or online at www.masterpointpress.com

Surfing The ACBL Online Bridge Site With Caitlin

As teachers in the new millennium, we know that online bridge is growing by leaps and bounds with some 75 plus online playing sites. Indeed just this month, as founder of BRIDGE FORUM (www.bridge-forum.com), I added four new playing sites to our vast resource library.

Being online for accredited teachers should often take you to a wonderful site full of many “goodies” — the ACBL’s own presence on the Internet at www.acbl.org. Since it covers such a vast array of territory, however, let me help you navigate your way through this delicious maze:

As a teacher, what strikes me first when I go to the site are the “hyperlinks” at the side, a list of tabs for you to connect to, including ACBLscore, Easybridge!, Charts, Convention Cards, Join the ACBL, Juniors, Laws of Duplicate, Online Bridge, Sales Catalog, and Teachers. And from that list and the headings on the front page, I look for material of particular interest to the many novices I work with.

What do I find when I put my cursor on “New to Duplicate?” A whole world opens up to our students: how to join the ACBL, the “Exciting World of Bridge” brochure just great for those off to their first duplicate game, information on newcomer events at the Kansas City NABC, and how to order your free sample issue of the *Better Bridge* magazine. Consider spending a lesson with your students going through such sections of the ACBL’s website so they know to hook up to places like www.acbl.org/convcard/convcard.stm to find a wealth of information about the many

systems online and particularly SAYC.

SAYC (Standard American Yellow Card) is the most popular default card found online. It’s a system developed in the mid-80’s to attract more players to duplicate bridge by providing simple bidding and a selected set of basic conventions. Now through



the ACBL’s home site, you can go back to the original SAYC (Standard American Yellow Card) booklet at www.imsa.edu/~freaksho/sayc.html or update with Ann Marsh’s wonderful SAYC SIMPLIFIED: <http://www.annam.co.uk/sayc.htm>. (The fourth and fifth books in The ACBL Bridge Series — *Commonly Used Conventions* and *More Commonly Used Conventions* — focus on the basics of SAYC.)

Now where to play SAYC? How about e-bridge, which hosts the ACBL’s online playing site? I’ve talked with Richard Laufer, e-bridge’s Marketing Director out of

their New York office about their commitment to help you “Play Bridge; Learn Better Bridge; and, Watch Great Bridge.” What does this all mean? With the high tech programs available so you can play comfortably, e-bridge currently provides education through Eric Kokish’s columns, newsletters, and bidding contests with a full teaching program to be launched. You watch great bridge with their VuGraph of all NABCs, World Championships (Bermuda Bowl/Venice Cup, Bridge Olympiad, et al) and some major international competitions, including the Macallan, Cap Gemini and others. They also plan to present challenge matches featuring Zia, Michael Rosenberg, Barnet Shenkin, Sam Lev, and Marcelo Branco, to name just a few. The vision of what is to come is quite awesome as they aim for online directors, support teacher activities, and even more money games while all players are “on camera.” e-bridge also applauds the fact that it is the official sponsor of the WBF Junior Program for the year 2001.

You have just begun your trip through the ACBL site and now you are sitting playing a great game of bridge (on a premiere site, www.e-bridgemaster.com) as you work with your student on e-bridge, all on the web, the place to be for practicing your bridge before going to your local club, tournaments, and certainly nationals!

See you next issue as we find out more about e-bridge and how you — as a teacher — can license Fred Gitelman’s program to make your own online “lesson movies” for your students. Visit him at www.bridgebase.com and download a demo. I hope to meet you there!

Until then..happy e-bridging!

Ideas For Working With School Children

by Betty Starzec



When you are teaching school children, your plate is really full. Keeping your classes flowing with the proper balance of structure and creativity can challenge the most experienced bridge teacher.

While reading about MiniBridge as adopted by The English Bridge Union, I was pleased to find a number of ideas and exercises that can aid those of us teaching bridge to school children. Here they are:

- Use only some of the cards. Younger children in particular often have difficulty managing cards and have to get used to dealing and handling them. You can start with just one suit, removing the 2 so that play consists of three tricks to which everyone will follow suit. Encourage the students to observe the cards played. After two tricks have been completed, the person holding the highest outstanding card should be able to predict that they will win the third trick. Then add a second suit, so that students learn about discarding. Remove the 2 again so that you have 24 cards in play.
- Get your class to practice sorting the cards into ordered suits. Here is a step-by-step guide to sorting a hand.

1. Pick up the dealt hand and group all the cards together, with the backs of the cards facing out.
2. With one hand tightly on the bottom, using the thumb and first fingers of the other hand, spread out the top corners of the cards so that you can see the number or picture letter (J, Q, K or A) to form a fanned shape.
3. Now, take the lowest diamond from the hand and place it behind all the other cards, so that you cannot see it any longer.
4. Take the next lowest diamond and place it behind all the other cards so that you cannot see it any longer.
5. Continue with step (4) above with all the diamonds.
6. Repeat steps (3) to (5) with the club suit.
7. Repeat steps (3) to (5) with the heart suit.
8. Repeat steps (3) to (5) with the spade suit.
9. You will now be looking at the lowest diamond, the first card you moved. Spread out the cards as in step (2) above and your hand will be sorted.

- Calculating the number of expected tricks — Point out that declarer can calculate the number of tricks expected to be made in a suit which is headed by the top honor cards as follows:

Add together the number of cards in the suit held by the partnership. Take this from 13 and divide the answer by 2 to give the most even break between defenders. Example, AQxxx opposite Kxx — an eight-card fit. Five cards are missing which hopefully will break 3-2. You have enough high cards to win the first three tricks with this break, so the suit should produce five tricks.

- Keeping the dummy involved can be a challenge. But you can keep dummy alert and involved by posing questions or tasks to be answered at the end of play, such as:
 - How were the trumps divided among the four players?
 - What was the shape of declarer's hand?
 - Who held the ace of spades? Or the three of clubs?
 - What was the opening lead? How many tricks did the defenders win later in the suit led?
 - How were the points held by the defender with the lower total made up? (i.e., which high cards were actually held to make up the total?)

We are always looking for new ways and ideas to use to teach bridge concepts. Hopefully, you will enjoy these ideas from MiniBridge.

DON'T MISS THE MINI-BRIDGE SEMINAR THIS SUMMER AT THE TORONTO NABC - FRIDAY, JULY 21. OFFERED BY WORLD CHAMPION SANDRA LANDRY OF THE ENGLISH BRIDGE UNION

The Grapevine

ACBL's Junior newsletter, The Grapevine, is now posted on the ACBL web site. Take a look at it. You might have some students who would like to get their children and grandchildren involved in bridge. Remember to tell them about the free LTBP (Learn to Play Bridge) software they can download.



THE PSYCHOLOGY OF BRIDGE

At the start of all beginner classes and some intermediate classes, I ask the students to introduce themselves and tell the class what brought them there. I get some vague and guarded responses, of course, because many have just not thought a lot about it. But I still get an idea of who will need to be motivated or given extra attention, and who might need to be toned down a bit.

I often comment on what they tell me, for example, explaining why their well-meaning friends didn't have much success with them. I get a chance to tell them that the emotional behavior that they may have witnessed or heard about is more a reflection on the guilty individuals themselves than on the game itself. I tell them that it is almost never a problem in my classes because people willing to sign up for a class rather than learn their bridge "on the street" are usually pretty willing to accept responsibility for themselves. And

that I don't allow it anyway.

I like to remind them that all of them are good at something, probably several things at which I am hopeless. We are, therefore, all really equals and they must remember that when they've made an obvious error. I tell them that the only reason I'm good enough to be teaching is because I took bridge much more seriously than what I would recommend for others to do. I tell them, correctly, that whatever they do, I can remember doing the same thing only worse.

I also tell my students that "you represent the 90% of all bridge players who have, and are likely to retain, mainstream attitudes and values when it comes to playing bridge, the 'normal' ones. I wouldn't be able to work effectively with you if I had not gone to unusual lengths to be one of the other 10%, nor would I be here if I hadn't seen pleasing contrasts between practically all of the people I have worked with and some of

by Prent Glazier

those I fight the wars with." To an outsider this could sound patronizing, but many of these people are worried about the prospect of an arrogant and belittling teacher (there are these, unfortunately) and are not yet sufficiently aware that their mistakes are no different than those of everyone else, including mine, at one time.

You really have to get it across to them early that you are not a threat to their self-respect, especially if you are, like me, a younger male with more of a tendency to maintain a 'serious' bearing than to appear "sugary" (either style, in the right hands, works if people sense its authenticity).

And that's just when you do the introduction! You'll get chances to tell them a lot more later. Next issue!

P.S. If you have questions for Prent, <psychbridge@yahoo.ca> is his email address



Plan Ahead

There are so many exciting activities planned for teachers at the Toronto NABC, we urge you to make a special effort to attend. Check out the ABTA schedule for their convention on page 7 - it runs from Tuesday through Friday morning of the week prior to the tournament - and you will have an opportunity to become an official MiniBridge teacher by attending a course taught by English World Champion Sandra Landy on the first Friday afternoon and evening of the tournament, following the ABTA Convention.

Kansas City Social

Attend the first Teachers Dutch Treat Social between sessions on Sunday of the Kansas City NABC. We'll pick a spot when we arrive in Kansas City so check with Julie or Charlotte at the ACBL Information Desk or the Daily Bulletin for more information.



Visit the
Teacher section
at ACBL's website:

www.acbl.org

There are lots of interesting
things to see!



KISS

If the second “S” in this familiar bridge saying stands for “stupid,” I don’t want to use it! But let’s say “sweetie” and take a great lesson from its “Keep It Simple” message. If we get too elaborate in design, plans, or lessons, our message will not be as effective and lasting as we’d wish.

♠ DESIGN. You should have a logo and a distinctive style for everything that you publish: business cards, stationery, lesson hand-outs, flyers, posters. Anyone who sees them should know they’re yours. And the simpler and bolder the design, the better. Edith McMullin has been a genius at this with her cartoon figures and the style used in all of her many publications. Similarly, the work of computer expert Fred Gitelman is distinctive. Buy the first and then the second of Eddie Kantar’s excellent books on defense, and you’ll see that the design and layout is distinctive and special. Caroline Sydnor’s books all have the same “look;” and we see the same approach used as we take students from one to another of the ACBL/Audrey Grant texts. Take a cue from these experts and have your own bold and recognizable design. Carry through with a legible and distinctive type face, and then vary with size and color as necessary.

♥ PLANS. Over-elaborate plans are harder to execute. Whether you are planning a party,

The Business of Bridge

by Lynn Berg

a series of classes, or a cruise course, keep objectives and goals simple. Make them easy to identify and understandable for your clientele, and you will get a better response. What is the purpose of the event? Who is being invited or solicited? If people are unsure what is going on, they tend to be negative. Make it easy, and they are more likely to respond positively. “Come to a party Saturday night” doesn’t give enough information. Do you mean for supper? Is it dressy? Is there a guest of honor or a special occasion? What time? Simple does not mean uninformative! “Come over Saturday night at 7:30 for dessert and bridge. Let’s be casual.” Now everyone knows what to expect. Apply this same principle to your announcements of classes and events. People want to know about cost, starting and finishing time, and what is expected of them — as well as what to expect.

If you are designing a series of classes, make sure that you are not going to cover too many topics. If you do plan just an overview of many topics, make sure prospective clients know that the intention is broad rather than in-depth. Think of the difference in appeal of “A Survey of Modern Conventions” as opposed to “A Detailed Look at Current Notrump Bidding.” Your prospective clients might be quite different in each of these offerings.

I am planning a whole six-session course on current notrump bidding. I will be spending at least 12 and maybe 15 class hours on this one topic, and I certainly will not have exhausted it. While we feel we must introduce absolute beginners to a lot of topics just to give them the

rudiments of bridge, this shot-gun approach is not necessary in many intermediate and advanced classes. Try a narrow definition and deep analysis of a few topics instead to better serve these improving players. They need to be reminded, too, that knowing the basics thoroughly is more important than adding a lot of new conventions to their arsenal. “KISS” really is a great motto for most bridge players.

♦ LESSONS. It should be clear to you by now that I will recommend that each of your lessons focus on a clearly defined and limited topic. Take a look at Easybridge’s workshop materials and you will see a good example of limiting the topic. Or analyze what is going on in *The Diamond Series (Play of the Hand)*. In each lesson, the trick-taking technique used will be the one studied in the first hour, and the topic of the bidding review in the first hour will determine the hand types that will be played in the second hour of class. Furthermore, in both “packages,” the same format is used in each lesson. Once students have experienced one lesson, they will know the format of every lesson. They won’t have to worry about what comes next, but will be able to concentrate on content. The format is consistent and easy to remember.

Whether you are setting up the room for a lesson or planning handouts, KISS will help. Take a hint from these well-designed and successful materials. Plan clear and simple objectives. Repeat style and format so students find it familiar and comfortable. Don’t overload them or yourself with too many goals.

CHURCHES - A Source of Students

by Karen Velle

As a bridge teacher and director, my dream has been to bring my students not only the love of bridge but also the confidence to play duplicate. Aid in obtaining that goal came from Father Timmings, a local catholic priest. He was looking to start a bridge class for his parishioners. Father had come across my ad for beginning lessons a few days after reading an article on the medical benefits of bridge. Imagine my surprise as a non-bridge player spoke of the medical, intellectual, and social benefits of our favorite game.

After each mass for a couple of weeks, Father Timings invited parishioners to come to a two-hour bridge lesson. A pleasant surprise awaited me when I arrived at the rectory for our first session. The tables were set up covered in new gingham tablecloths. The snacks and drinks provided would rival the best duplicate clubs. We work from *The Club Series* but keep the lessons short — about fifteen minutes. The rest of the session is followed by super-

vised duplicate play. The students take home 'bid by priority' worksheets, which have substantially improved their basic bidding skills and increased their confidence.

One of our local directors hosted a mentoring game. Some of our regular players teamed up with the students for a successful first experience. The students had a great time. I believe that if we can get them to the games, they will come again and that playing up is the best way to improve.

It's been six months since Father Timmings first called. Newcomers from the rectory regularly attend our local duplicate clubs and a few of the students are looking forward to their first sectional in April. Churches have been for me an excellent source of new duplicate players.

NOTE: If you are interested in Karen's "Bid by Priority" sheets, you can contact her by e-mail at karenvelie@hotmail.com>



ACBL Membership

Did you know that ACBL membership is on the rise for the first time in a long time? Thank you for your efforts in bringing new people into the game and into our organization!

THE AMERICAN BRIDGE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION SEMINAR AND CONVENTION

Seminar:

Tuesday afternoon — get new ideas from your colleagues

Wednesday 9-noon — Audrey Grant presents A Step By Step Approach to a Lesson Program - This program will provide sound advice to use from your decision to teach right through your post-lesson follow up. Cost \$35.

Convention 1:30 pm Wednesday through noon Friday — Advice from the experts (Joan Butts, Matthew Granovetter, Michael Huston, Harry Lampert, Alan LeBendig, and Mike Passell are just a few of the speakers who will be sharing their ideas with you.) Cost \$100.

You need not be an ABTA member to attend. Your registration fee includes continental breakfast at each morning session as well as our gala banquet and celebrity panel on Thursday evening. In addition, Audrey Grant's *Better Bridge* is hosting a barbecue on Wednesday evening. The only charge is a nominal fee to cover ABTA's cost for transportation.

For more information or to register, contact:

ABTA c/o Pat Harrington
14840 Crystal Cove Court #503
Fort Myers, FL 33919
abta@juno.com

"Are you a Star Teacher?"



JoAnn Mauger, Effort PA — JoAnn got her BS in mathematics in 1963. Currently she is an adjunct algebra instructor at Carbon-Lehigh Community College. JoAnn became an ACBL Accredited Teacher in 1994. She says she is inspired by the Chinese proverb "To teach is to learn twice." JoAnn received a Mini McKenny award from her unit in 1994 and 1995 and then became a director and organized the West End Duplicate Bridge Club. She became a Life Master in 1999. JoAnn is also the Education Liaison for Unit 120.

TIP: A sense of humor is critical. Arrange the suits in your hand in the same order as the faced dummy to better see the best plan.



Robert Hirschhaut, Boynton Beach FL — Bob started playing about 40 years ago in Buffalo, NY at the insistence of his wife, Janet, whom he describes as the perennial average player. They moved to Chicago in 1975, where he became a Silver Life Master, ACBL Accredited Teacher, Director, and served a term on the CCBA Board. Bob and Janet retired to Boynton Beach in 1994. Bob is currently teaching many small groups, directing 3 games a week, and playing a little professionally - usually with students.

TIP: Always make yourself available for your students, past or present, to call about a bidding problem, a convention, etc.

Add your name to our elist. Send your e-mail address to Dana.Norton@acbl.org

100+ Tips for Becoming a Successful Bridge Teacher

The Teacher Resource Manual has been replaced by a small booklet called "100+ Tips for Becoming a Successful Bridge Teacher." This is a compilation of ideas and tips we have collected from you during the past 15 years.

The Teacher Resource Manual material is going in the Teacher section of the ACBL website this month.

The new "100+ Tips" booklet will be given to all participants in the TAPs.

If you attend the Teacher Update programs at the NABCs (Monday mornings at 10am), we will have extra copies on hand for you.

Thank you for this wonderful material. We are happy to be able to make it available for all teachers to use.

Do You Teach Bridge On The Internet?

If you are currently teaching bridge online, we need your help!

ACBL wants to set goals for ACBL Online education - who do we want to teach and what do we want taught; decide on a set of criteria for selecting teachers; determine how students will pay for instruction and how teachers will be paid - maybe some programs should be free; work with teachers and programmers to develop the software tools to meet our goals.

Please e-mail Julie Greenberg (julie.greenberg@acbl.org) if you are interested in working with us on this project.

THE BRIDGE TEACHER

AMERICAN CONTRACT BRIDGE LEAGUE

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