

OTIS OBSERVER

Your Town, Your Neighborhood and You

August 2023 Vol IX Issue 4

Bank on Otis

Special to the Otis Observer

On June 29th Berkshire Bank account holders received a letter informing them that the bank's corporate offices had decided their Otis branch (along with others) would be closing as of September 29th.

There has been very limited in-person service at the branch since the time of COVID. Closing the branch would also wipe out ATM service. The ATM machine is a cash lifeline and check depository for not just Otis residents but for residents in northern Connecticut and the Berkshire Hill Towns.

The Bank's rather frothy communication indicated that ATM and in-person teller service would be available at their Lee branch, some 13 miles distant from Otis. This could prove a hardship for those transportation-challenged and time consuming for all others in the greater Otis area.

Two *Otis Observer* volunteers saw that the ATM machine in Otis posted the mailed communication along with another notice stating that those affected could send their comments and/or grievances to the Massachusetts State Banking Commissioner. This notice was not included in the USPS mailing.

A news report of impending closure was printed in the July 4th edition of the *Berkshire Eagle*. The news article did not mention account holders' right to protest the proposed closure. The two volunteers (from the *Otis Observer*) contacted the news reporter about this omission and email blasted their friends and acquaintances, attaching a copy of the notice, and urged them to communicate, on a

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Some of the six hundred or so participants in this year's race

Photo: Suzy Avery

A LIFE WELL LIVED

By Stephanie Skinner

"I'm not here for a long time; I'm here for a good time."

Jack O'Brien (2001-2021)

If you were in Otis on July 8, 2023 you probably noticed a few things were going on. At the Town Hall green the library fair was in full swing, and at the Knox Trail Inn 1,000 or so people were milling about, cars were filling the lot across the road and the local police were standing by ready to assist.

The 2nd Annual Smile Like Jack 5k/10k was gearing up for a 9 a.m. start and it was hopping!

This year there was 600 or so runners and walkers, some with dogs, up from 400 or so last year, and to say that this extraordinary foundation is doing things right would be a monumental understatement.

Born out of the tragic untimely death of their son, Jack O'Brien (he of the smile that lit up the town), Star and Mike O'Brien started the Smile Like Jack Foundation (501)(c)(3) to protect what they and their son loved about the quality of life in Otis. An article about the beginning of this foundation

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The Library Fair

Library staff, friends, Trustees and volunteers send a sincere acknowledgment and “thank you” to all participants, volunteers, businesses and individuals who made donations.



Clockwise from upper right: Milltown Beadworks; wreath vendor; getting a glitter tattoo, pirate entertainment at the fair, grandma with granddaughter, raffle prizes.

All photos by Donna Rich



*We Are Deeply Grateful to
All Our Supporters for
Donating to
Our Ninth Annual Appeal*

Anonymous (11)
Beth & Mark Abrahams
Paul W. Adams
Sharon Adams
Rebecca Bach
John & Sandy Balayan
Jerilyn Beauregard
Marsha & Marshall Beckman
Sue Brofman
Fiona Bruder
Peter & Cathy Cameron
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Ann Wendell

Thank you



*Introducing the
Otis Library
Book Club...*

Please join us!

Book:

A Rule Against Murder
by Louise Penny

Date:

Monday, August 7, from 4:00 -5:30

Location:

Roosevelt Room, Otis Library
Books and CD available at the Otis
Library, on Libby and CWMARS.



This adorable dog named Otis is named after the town. He lives on White Lily Pond.

Photo: Stefanie Borg



Ted Rosenthal

Photo: File photo

Renowned Jazz Pianist/ Composer

Otis resident **Ted Rosenthal** is one of the leading jazz pianist/composers of his generation. He has performed worldwide as soloist, with his trio, and with many jazz greats including Gerry Mulligan, Art Farmer, Phil Woods, and James Moody. Winner of the Thelonious Monk International Competition, Rosenthal has released 15 critically acclaimed CDs as a leader. His latest, *Rhapsody in Gershwin*, reached #1 on iTunes and Amazon.

Rosenthal has been a featured soloist with major orchestras including the Detroit Symphony and Phoenix Symphony. An active composer, Rosenthal's jazz opera, *Dear Erich*, was commissioned and premiered by the New York City Opera in 2019. The recipient of three NEA grants, Rosenthal has also been commissioned by Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, the Park Avenue Chamber Symphony, and Dallas Black Dance Theatre. Rosenthal is an author and active in jazz education. He is on the faculties of The Juilliard School and Manhattan School of Music. Website: www.tedrosenthal.com

Upcoming local performances:

Boston University Tanglewood Institute (BUTI) on **Friday, August 11th, 7:30 p.m.**, West Street Theater, Lenox.

Ted's trio at the Gateways Inn for the Lenox Jazz Stroll, Lenox, on **Friday, Sept. 15th at 6 p.m.** ©



Essence of the Sublime

Photo: Gail Gelburd

Gail Gelburd's Personification of Nature Featured at the Becket Arts Center

Gail Gelburd, an Otis artist, will be featured at the upcoming exhibition "IMPRESS" at the Becket Arts Center, Becket MA. Her work will be on display **Thursday, August 24th - Monday, September 11th**. Open 12-4 p.m.

Mark your calendar: Artist Reception: **Saturday, August 26th, 2-4 p.m.**

Free and open to the public.

Gelburd will be displaying more than 20 major works of art that are a part of her series entitled *The Personification of Nature*. She has stated that "[t]he majesty of our environment may sometimes be missed while the destruction of nature may also seem insignificant. But we are all connected, like the roots of trees, the stream of water, we grow together; we do need each other to exist ... My art layers the trees and waterfalls, streams and sunlight with the human spirit and form, so that we might appreciate this interconnectedness."

Gelburd's process is as layered as her concepts. Using archival digital photographs, encaustic paints, sometimes wood and fiberglass, Gelburd's art works can be two- or three-dimensional. She always starts with photographs of nature, be it of the Berkshires, India, Africa or Greece. Most of the works in this exhibition feature waterfalls and rivers from the Berkshires. The two-dimensional works are photo collages with encaustic paint while the three-dimensional works are photographs printed on fabric and then molded into humanoid forms. Many of the works include drawings of figures and faces hidden into the art. "This personification of nature," said Gelburd, "seeks to visualize and remind us that we are our environment."

Gail Gelburd has exhibited nationally and internationally. Her works are in collections in California, New York City, New Jersey, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Florida, Virginia,

Oregon and Colorado as well as in India, Australia, Greece and Barbados. This summer alone, she has exhibited in New York City, Los Angeles, CA, Providence, RI, Middlebury, Vermont and Sandisfield MA. She has received numerous awards and grants for travel to photograph in India, Japan, Nepal, China, Tibet and Greece. Gelburd has been a professor at a University Arts Department, a museum curator, a published critic and authored more than a dozen non-fiction books, primarily about art. More information about her work can be found at her web site www.gailgelburd.com.

The Becket Arts Center will also include works by Roger Duffy (Pen & Ink), Douglas Gilbert (Graphite/Charcoal) and Deb Lohmeyer (Photography) during the same time period.

About the Becket Arts Center

For more than 50 years, the Becket Arts Center (BAC) has been a mainstay of culture and art in the Berkshires. The Becket Arts Center's mission is to ensure that creative expression is a vital and vibrant part of the everyday lives of the regional community. For more information, visit: www.becketartscenter.org, email office@becketartscenter.org, call (413) 623-6635, or visit us at 7 Brooker Hill Road in Becket. ☪

Cultural Council News

Grant Money Available

By Jeanne Randorf

The Otis Cultural Council invites artists, musicians and educators of all genres to apply for funds to provide entertainment, workshops, lectures or classes to Otis residents of all ages for calendar year 2024. These funds are available to our town via a software application provided by the state agency, Massachusetts Cultural Council. The application period begins **September 1st and ends October 15, 2023**. Look for details in the next *Observer* issue and on our website at townofotisma.com/cultural-council.

We encourage you to bring your creative ideas for a variety of programs that will fulfill our mission to “promote cultural access, education, and diversity in the arts, humanities, and interpretive sciences” for residents of all ages. ☪

August, 2023

Bank on Otis Continued from page 1

personal level, their dismay with the impending closure.

Their actions resulted in a follow-up story by Jane Kaufman which featured comments from local residents and a flurry of emails to the State Banking Commissioner.

Two weeks after the initial closure announcement culminated in phone calls from a bank executive to the Eagle reporter and some of those who were quoted in the article. The

upshot was that Berkshire Bank is committed to continuing ATM service at its current location in Otis. The Otis facility is owned by the bank and any sale of the property would carry a proviso for continuing ATM service. The decision was made “in response to community concerns.”

The other takeaway from this episode is that a united community can get a lot more done than flashes of individual anger or indignation. ☪

Laugh with Carolyn

Our resident joke teller, Carolyn Lawry, shares another one of her gems with us this month. Long known for sharing whatever tickles her funny bone with family and friends, Carolyn is a delight to talk to and loves to share her great sense of humor with the readers of the Otis Observer.

Several cannibals were recently hired by a big corporation. “You are all part of our team now. You get all the usual benefits and you can go to the cafeteria for something to eat. We just ask that you don’t eat any of the other employees,” said the human resources rep at their training.

The cannibals promised they wouldn’t and then four weeks later, they were called back to the human resources office. “You are all doing a great job and I’m very satisfied with your performance, however one of

our secretaries has disappeared,” the human resources rep said. “Do any of you know anything about this?”

The cannibals all shook their heads no. After they left the human resources office the leader of the cannibals said, “Which one of you idiots ate a secretary?” A reluctant hand sprung up among the group. The leader yelled “You fool! For four weeks we have been eating managers and no one noticed anything. But, nooooooo, you had to go and eat a secretary!” ☪



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Laurie Flower-The New Principal at FRRSD

By Sandy Balayan

Farmington River Regional School will open this fall with a familiar face at the helm. Laurie Flower is the newly appointed principal and she will begin her twentieth year at the school in this new capacity. Although she will miss being the instructional technology (computer) teacher, she will still be the technology director of the school along with her new duties. Laurie is from Vermont originally, and brings her twenty years of experience at FRRSD and her educational credentials to this new challenge.

“It has been a transition time for our school and I am very excited to take on this role. Interim head Rob Putnam spread his positive energy last year and we are all looking forward to continuing the momentum he built. In addition to an amazing, supportive staff of very talented educators, I am truly looking forward to a great school year for all of our students. I love it here at Farmington River,” said Laurie.

Her enthusiasm and joy is evident. Her heart is really here with our children. In her own words, “I look forward to working closely with the teachers, staff, students and parents to



Laurie Flower
Photo: Sandy Balayan

continue building a welcoming, engaging and rigorous learning environment that inspires students to achieve their full potential, fosters in them a sense of curiosity and encourages them to be exceptional citizens in our communities. Moreover, I am excited to contribute my skills, experience and passion as a technology leader to teach responsible and safe uses of technology. I want to prepare our students for 21st century learning through a balanced approach

and integrating technology into our curriculum to provide opportunities for students to collaborate, communicate, create and think critically. Please know that I am committed to fostering a culture of cooperation, innovation and excellence and ensuring that our school remains where all students feel valued, encouraged and safe.”

Joining her as part-time Superintendent is Timothy Lee. He takes the helm of the district and will work with Laurie to insure that the transition to their leadership will be smooth and benefit the students, staff and families of the Sandisfield and Otis communities. Tim has a rich background as an administrator and brings his expertise, as well as his own education, to this new position. He consults around Berkshire County and his work is guided by three key tenets: students come first; transparency and staff/community participation in decision-making; and predictable operations and frequent communication.

The *Otis Observer* takes this opportunity to welcome these two new administrators and to thank them for all the time and energy they have already spent for the opening of the new school year. Good luck to you both and enjoy your first year in your new positions. ☺

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★ **UPCOMING EVENTS** ★

Aug 5th Brass Attack Band 8pm

Aug 11th Adelaide Punkin Trio 6pm

Aug 12th Dice Game Lobster Roll 2pm

Aug 6, 13, 27- Musical Bingo 2pm

★ **Aug 18th COMEDY NIGHT!** ★
★ Dinner Buffet & Show \$75pp
Tickets available @ [Eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com)

Aug 19th Hairballz Band 8pm

Aug 20th The Hilltown Blues Jam 2pm

Aug 25th Misty Blues Band 8pm

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A Life Well Lived
Continued from page 1

appeared in the *Otis Observer*, May 2023, page 8. You can find it at otisobserver.com.

As someone who works very hard to raise money to preserve and protect the history of Otis and its buildings, I know just how impressive Smile Like Jack has become in a very short time. In this 5k/10k alone they raised over \$45k. In just over two years they've raised about \$100,000 dollars that they plow back into what many longtime Otis residents need and value: scholarships for vocational training, a comfort dog for a veteran, gift cards at Big Y and many huge shopping sprees for the Otis Food Pantry. They even stocked the Otis Reservoir with 525 trout, 12 of which are tagged so that when they are caught the lucky fishermen can claim a check. This past month someone landed #1 of those trout and earned himself a \$500 check!

In time they hope to build a concession stand at Monument Mountain High where Jack played football among many other athletic endeavors. "He just did everything to the fullest, athletics, hunting, work, whatever" says Mike.

The foundation has donated to snow mobile clubs for better signage. It may not have made a difference in Jack's accident but it can't hurt say Star and Mike. They want to do everything they can so that, "No other family has to lose a child like we did."

What is so impressive about Smile Like Jack is that its resounding success is accomplished by a phalanx of family and family friends, volunteers one and all. The run logistics (timers, chips, etc.) are managed by Berkshire Running Center that also posts it on their site for anyone to see and participate. Many of the runners were weekend warriors, something Jack would likely have approved of! But the army of helpers signing runners in, herding the crowd, selling merchandise, setting up tents, providing water, marking the route and so much more are simply Jack's close family and friends; pals and buddies, nieces and nephews, cousins, aunts and uncles, even grandparents. The love of everything Otis has to offer, this genuine spirit of community bubbles up from a deep reservoir (see what I did there!) of affection for our landscape and the great outdoors



Jack O'Brien
Photo: Abrianna Chaffee

that Jack lived by is a growing community affair. Keeping and preserving Otis, celebrating its many natural gifts, is something many can get behind and your writer is certainly one of them.

In the years ahead the enthusiasm for a life well lived that Jack embodied at such a tender age will be on all of us to carry forward. As another great athlete once said, "Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on Earth." – Mohammed Ali. ☯



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Opening reception 4-6 pm



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FOR DETAILS VISIT SANDISFIELDARTSCENTER.ORG

Save the Triplex Cinema!

By Jackie Gentile

Great Barrington is a quintessential New England town. Residents and visitors alike enjoy spending their time walking the charming streets lined with unique shops selling eclectic clothing, art, wares, cheese, as well as a throw-back-in-time candy store. A visit can include stopping for lunch at one of the many eateries in town, or later in the day for a drink and dinner at one of the fine restaurants. Yes, over the past couple of decades, Great Barrington has become a popular destination.

While there are many factors that contributed to its popularity, the Triplex Cinema, which opened its doors in 1995, has certainly played an integral part in revitalizing Great Barrington. The Triplex is also the birthplace and has been the home of the Berkshire International Film Festival (BIFF) for 16 years. But now after 28 years of serving the community with both independent and blockbuster films, the Triplex closed its doors on June 5.




When Richard Stanley, owner of the Triplex, announced in the spring that the theater was scheduled to close in June, an all-volunteer group of community members stepped forward to save the Triplex. The goal is to turn this once for-profit enterprise into a nonprofit. Guided by the success of local theaters in Chatham, Millerton, Williamstown and Amherst that have gone that route, the team of volunteers are using their experiences to reopen the theater.

In thinking about the challenges of independent movie theaters, I spoke with John Valente, who managed the Triplex for many years and currently serves on the Save the Triplex advisory committee. He, being in the business, and I, as a movie goer, shared our observations. Small-town independent movies theaters have been struggling nationwide. As with the Triplex, theaters rely on a mix of blockbusters and independent movies. However,

independent films have declined in popularity in the last ten years. (I can attest to that observation as my grandchildren and their parents much prefer Marvel movies.) Streaming was always a factor but a much smaller one until COVID, which broke the pattern of people going to the movies. With theaters closing, streaming took off—offering a wide variety of content availability and quantity (not to mention large screen TVs and the short commute to the TV room). Post-COVID saw a slow evolution of people returning to enclosed public spaces, but it happened more quickly in bigger cities. While the theaters were closed, some took the opportunity to invest in upgrading its facilities to meet the expectation of the filmgoer. And this will be the challenge of the Triplex—to not only renovate (such as lounge seating), but to reinvigorate, that is, to give the customer a reason to come to the theater.

Naturally, overall attendance will be the key to success of the Triplex. But as with many nonprofits, donations and memberships will be essential. The goal is to raise \$1.7 million. This amount is needed for the first year's payment to the seller, Richard Stanley, and to cover operating costs and building updates. As of June 30, the community has raised approximately \$600,000. What's in it for the community besides continuing to enjoy another important art medium in the Berkshires and preserving what BIFF has worked so hard to bring to Great Barrington? The answer is that with the Triplex dollars will continue to flow into South County instead of out.

In closing our conversation, John stated, "We need to rebuild the relationship between the theater and audience. It takes more than a movie schedule. We have to find new and inventive ways to accomplish that. We believe people want the Triplex or else we wouldn't be doing it."

To learn more and see how you can save the Triplex, go to savethetriplex.org. 

NOTICE

If you were a client of **ROBERT J. MCMAHON, ARCHITECT** and wish to have the architectural drawings & files pertaining to your project from his files, please email Jeanne Randorf at mcdorf@gmail.com to arrange to pick them up.

Files remaining will be disposed of in September.

ASTROLOGY ✨

The Serpent's Subtle Whisper

By Hilary Harley

The Full Moon's fever pervades on Day 1 of August. This is one highly creative Full Moon. Ask: what is trying to be born, in yourself, in your life? Both Sun and Moon challenge Generous Jupiter in practical Taurus to ground our ideas in reality. The planetary friction may spark resistance in yourself to change, or find others digging their heels in. Watch for "my way or the highway" attitudes. Remember, *there is no one right way to do something.*

Better to turn any push-back into good old perseverance and grit. When we apply this planetary strength to see our tasks through, we can do the heavy lift right now. Valuable Venus retrograde all month offers time for reflection on whom and what we value. Summer is convenient for Venus' retrograde cycle while many are on vacation, lending itself to the RE words: relaxing, rest and refreshment.

Watch your spending during August. Ask if you really need the pricey jewelry or gadget. Venus retrograde comes with that notorious tag line *Buyer Beware*. Before you wallow in buyer's remorse, take a pause. When replacing essentials such as a refrigerator, phone or washing

machine, *make sure you buy the extra warranty* as you very well may end up using it.

August 10th and 16th, is a particularly tempting time to splurge. Ask: what could you otherwise do with that money? *Temptation* now applies to old relationships resurfacing. In short, watch your heart and your wallet this month. Be cautious with both.



This is vitally important heading into the New Moon in Leo on Wednesday, August 16th which joins the Venus-Sun duo. Carefully hand write three to five goals you want to manifest over the coming month or season. Lean into the abundant practical earth energies that are built into the New Moon energy which tame our urges to throw caution out the window. Stay the course, and refuse to get sidetracked by the shiny Leo Sun-Venus objects.

Remember your hard work that will get you across the finish line. Make the

most of Venus' retrograde and take a day off from life to reset, especially at the end of August when any progress will be reworked. Divine Timing has other ideas when Wednesday, August 23rd, Messenger Mercury turns retrograde. The galaxy is doubling down as Mercury joins Venus to cycle in reverse. If ever there were a time to hold off on major initiatives, or large purchases, this would be it. From August 22nd through September 15th, better to buy the warranty and *know your escape clause* as you may very well need them.


By Monday, August 28th, Motivating Mars moves into Libra where he's looking for a fight. Instead practice giving the benefit of the doubt, *even when you are certain you are correct*. Two days later Awakener Uranus turns retrograde on Tuesday, August 29th. This is a notoriously unpredictable shift. If you can, lay low the 28th – 30th. Best to do so, as Uranus provokes and kicks up dust. Make sure to have a Plan B just in case.

By month's end, six out of ten planets are cycling in retrograde motion. Trying to get anything done may feel like spinning your wheels in cosmic mud. The energetically thick stew stays in place through mid-September, so use this time to ask questions, do your homework, research and reflect on your next courses of action.

Timing is everything. Soon, the right time to proceed will appear. Until then, make love not war. ☯



FARMINGTON
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Love



Otis resident Hilary Harley is a counseling astrologer and hosts *Mystical Messages* podcast. She is an art aficionado, a community volunteer, the mother of two daughters and owner of an elderly Tibetan Terrier.





OTIS LIBRARY NEWS

By Brad Havill

It has been a pleasure to see the library in summer mode! Patron numbers are increasing as residents look for an engrossing summer read or the latest film to help pass a stormy evening. Exciting recent events have brought familiar and unfamiliar faces into the library community as well.

At the end of June we hosted an event with Lara Tupper, local writer, performer and educator. During this well-attended event, Lara guided attendees through a series of thought-provoking, free writing exercises in which she provided a prompt. The goal was to write for a set amount of time without taking the pen off the paper. This was a hit! Our patrons in attendance all want Lara to come back and to do another event.

Our next big event was the Annual Craft Fair held on July 8th near Town Hall. The turnout was unbelievable for this fundraiser, and we are so extremely fortunate to have a community that shows up for events like this to support their local library. The book sale, bake sale and craft vendors

were kept busy, while children were treated to a range of activities and a visit from Operation Copsicle. I cannot thank enough the town hall, trustees, Friends of the Library, volunteers, and vendors. The amount of work that goes into planning and putting on an event like this is significant, and I have a deeper appreciation for how these groups work together to make it look effortless. My heartfelt thanks to all who made the event a success!


The library most recently hosted Ed the Wizard and his *My Alchemy Laboratory*. Wonder and science with a magical twist kept the 27 people who attended engaged, and Ed made sure to enlist many helping hands from the audience. Fun for all ages, Ed donated his book to the library so that everyone can learn how to perform these tricks. If you check out his book, then it's up to you to decide whether you will share with others the secrets behind the magic. Ed returns to the library for some *Reading is Magic* on August 9th. This show, while geared towards children, is open to everyone from tots to grandparents.

Events such as these highlight how so many contribute to a library's success, particularly in a time when many small libraries face enormous challenges. The library thanks the Otis Cultural Council for funding these events. Without their generous support, it would make it more difficult to bring these to the community. When you check out materials, or come to an event, we record your presence for the

purposes of receiving state aid and to better understand how patrons use the facility for our own continuing work to serve Otis. When you return materials inside the library building, for instance, we are able to include you in our daily user numbers. Events held in the library are occasions showing our tight quarters and the need for expansion to enable the library to continue to serve its many functions.

I, therefore, invite you to complete the surveys, one for adult users and another for those under twelve, to help further our efforts. We want to learn more about your use of and perspective on the Otis Library and its future. Completing these surveys provides information to assist in constructing the library's strategic plan and aids in informing the library and trustees about the needs of the library, both current and future. Survey links are located here, the library's Facebook page and the library's website.

Otis Library Adult Survey 2 (For adults age 19 and older) <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Z9WBFYF>.

Otis Library Children's Survey 2 (For children aged from birth through age 12, Parents can help) <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/YF2JRLV>. 




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OTIS COMMUNITY GARDEN

Veggies Galore!

The Bountiful Otis Community Garden

By Joan Katter

Despite (or because of?) the super rains, the Otis Community Garden is flourishing! This also helps the potato slugs, squash beetles and other insects thrive, but volunteers are doing their best to keep them at bay with non-chemical control methods such as sticky tape and cayenne pepper spray.

Crops are maturing, and in many cases have been harvested and reseeded already. There are beautiful rows of colorful lettuce, and wonderful entangled pea vines filled with lovely sugar snap peas and pea pods ready for a crunchy salad or stir fry. Some of the spinach got a little overeager and “bolted” since the last harvest, perhaps because of the several very hot days.

Irene and Eve usually do most of the Saturday morning harvesting themselves, but last week they were joined by Irene’s guests, and would-be farmer friends, who made the work



Happy to Harvest—Nan, Tammy, Irene, Amy, Jen, and Lyy

Photo credit: Eve Kummel



Lovely lettuce – library raffle prize

Photo: Joan Katter

more fun. They eagerly picked and cleaned the mature crops, filling bags with lettuce, spinach, pea pods, sugar snap peas, radishes, turnips, carrots and herbs. What a bounty! Wednesday and Saturday harvests are quickly delivered by volunteers to the food banks we supply: the Otis Food Pantry and the Lee Food Pantry.

The garden also donated a planter of lettuce to the Otis Library Fair raffle. One lucky winner is now enjoying home-grown salads. We were glad to contribute to help our important and well-loved community library. ☺



VOLUNTEER GARDENERS NEEDED TO PLANT AND TEND FLOWER BARRELS IN OTIS!

We have a few barrels that need some tender loving care!

- **Job requirements:** Desire to help make Otis beautiful & a slightly greenish thumb
- **Job description:** Plant and maintain 1 or 2 town barrels
- **Rewards:** Satisfaction of beautifying our town
- **No experience necessary/Help & advice available**

Come join our group of dedicated gardeners – sponsored by the Otis Cultural Council

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OUR WEEKEND
SPECIALS IN
AUGUST!



OTIS FOOD PANTRY UPDATE

By Terry Gould

As the summer in Otis flies by, and we are beginning to think about sweatshirt weather, the Otis Food Pantry has begun to benefit from a lot of seasonal produce. Our Community Garden visits each week with bounty grown right here in Otis and we are so grateful that they share with the pantry. Our local feathered ladies are still sharing with us as well. Eggs are a protein that is easy to prepare as a meal or in baking, and are truly a necessity for families.

Thank you to all who think of us each week. We are so grateful that we have become part of your weekly shopping lists. Elves and OWLS make sure that the pantry gets the extras they need as well. We could not continue to exist without any of you. A quick shout out to Walter and Mary Jo for doing double duty for us during a holiday week.

Our shelves have been in constant rotation in and out and we marvel at the generosity of neighbors who make certain that the pantry has what is needed.

As I write, we are experiencing the humidity and heat of late July and heavy rains are in the forecast.

We try to move fresh vegetables and fruit along with baked goods outside during the summer and chase the shade a bit. Non-perishables and refrigerated items are still inside so this allows a little more space for everyone.

As seasons change people often sort and empty their cupboards. Any non-expired, non-perishables are always welcome. We are unable to distribute expired food items, so please be sure to check the dates on your pantry items.

Donations may be placed in our newly spruced up safe box at the back door of the Otis Town Hall.

If you have any questions, please feel free to email us at otisfoodpantry@gmail.com. You may also text or leave a message at (413) 207-4028. We are also on Facebook at Otis Food Pantry.

Enjoy the remainder of your summer. ☺



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Students must have a 90 average with no grade below an 85.

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Isaac Hartshorn (Otis)

Davice Murray (Sandisfield)

Ryan Michael Murray (Sandisfield)

In our July issue one student was inadvertently left out of the

graduates published from

Monument Mountain

Regional High School.

Willa Dunaj (Otis)

LEE HIGH SCHOOL

Graduates

Makenzie Marie Chaffee (Otis)

Madison Nicole DellaGiustina (Sandisfield)

Matthew Thomas O'Brien (Otis)

Taylor Olivia Roberson (Otis)

The Monument Mountain High School Honor Roll was unavailable at press time.

It will appear in the September issue.



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NAME THAT OTISITE

Winner!



Photo: F. Tolopko

Dede Loring is the winner of the Name that Otisite Contest from our July issue. She correctly named Charlie Humason. ☺

Contest



Can you solve this month's contest mystery? If you are the first to identify the family name of the woman in this photo, you will be the winner of the contest and win a prize!

Try your luck with this picture. Remember, if there is more than one winner, first in gets the prize. Good luck!

Please send your name, phone and email address to **lynnegeane@gmail.com**. Open to Otis residents only. Members of the *Otis Observer* staff are not eligible to enter.

If you have a picture you'd like featured in a future contest, please email the above address. ☺

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with the *Boston Post*'s time-honored tradition, the Otis Board of Selectmen now presents a 'Boston Post Cane' certificate to the resident holding the position of the eldest citizen of Otis."

The inscription on the right is part of a display case in Otis Town Hall where the cane is proudly displayed with the certificates of the cane honorees since 2015. Although Otis took part in this tradition earlier than 2015, the cane was lost when the honoree of the time passed away and the family did not return it. This is believed to be in the late '70s or early '80s but it is a mystery as to who it was. Although the *Boston Post* no longer exists, a company in Peterborough, New Hampshire proudly produces the canes for this long-standing town-by-town tradition. Otis purchased one but the COA,



The Boston Post Cane on display at Town Hall
Photo: Sandy Balayan

who administrates the cane presentation, decided to present the recipient with a certificate and pin and keep the cane in the town hall display with the names of those who held this honor proudly displayed. Chester Snow, Josephine Wright, Dorothy M. Carrington and Albert M. Boucher have all been honored with this tradition. Stop in at Town Hall to see this great tradition for yourself! ☺

"In August 1909, Mr. Edwin A. Grozier, Publisher of the *Boston Post* newspaper, gave the Selectmen of 431 towns in New England a gold-headed ebony cane with the request that it be presented, with the compliments of the *Boston Post*, to the oldest male citizen of the town, to be used by him as long as he lives (or until he moves from town) and then handed down to the next oldest citizen of the town. In 1930 eligibility for the cane was opened up to women as well. Over the years the canes were lost, never returned to the town, or retired by the town. The Otis cane is one such cane. In keeping

"Otis Memories" is an ongoing way to share your Otis memories with the community. If you have an idea for an article or think one of these memories would be a good feature, let us know. We also welcome old photographs. Send memories and ideas to otismemories@gmail.com. Looking forward to hearing from you!



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# OTIS HISTORY

## The Story of the Founding of Our Constitution

### Part One

By Peter Cameron

On July 4, 1776 we declared our independence from England, a truly unprecedented event in history at that time. The Revolutionary War followed for five long years. Once the war was won, what then? No one had a clear idea how to form a government for the new country. These next few columns will trace what did happen, why it happened, how it happened and how it shapes our nation even today.

Even before England capitulates in 1783, it is incumbent that a system of governance be established for our new nation. There was an overwhelming disdain for a powerful centralized government. After all that was England's system. The result in 1781 was the "Articles of Confederation," or as the 13 states looked at it, a league of friendship, vesting most of power to govern in each State Capital. It established a weak central government Congress that could make treaties and appoint ambassadors to other countries but could not raise its own funds through taxes nor settle quarrels between the states. In essence we had 13 independent countries.

Within a few years the country was in turmoil. There was runaway inflation. Arguments over trade broke out between states. The national Congress was almost out of money. The states, in order to raise funds and satisfy their wealthy citizens, many who were owed money from war debts, instituted high property taxes. To collect these taxes, states instituted debt laws akin to and, in some cases, stricter than the English law that had just been fought to overthrow. This affected farmers the hardest because they owned more taxable land.

Numerous farms were confiscated due to outstanding tax debts. Farmers, often former Revolutionary War soldiers, were thrown into debtors' prisons.



In 1786 Massachusetts farmers fought back. Led by a former captain in the Revolutionary War named Shays, this growing group of men started preventing courts from meeting in western Massachusetts. They showed up as armed mobs at the Northampton, Pittsfield and Great Barrington courts. They blockaded the doors, turning away the magistrates, shutting down the courts. The number of Shays' followers grew, and the governor called out the militia, but they refused to put down the revolt. Many even joined Shays' force. The press wholeheartedly supported the uprising, alarming the wealthy and middle class in eastern Massachusetts. Then Shays threatened to take the arsenal in Springfield. This caused the Governor to react. He raised a private mercenary force, financed by the wealthy of eastern Massachusetts. They met Shays' forces in Springfield and put down the rebellion down.

The rebellion did not go unnoticed elsewhere. James Madison, George Washington and Thomas Jefferson took notice and mentioned it in correspondence, characterizing it as a threat to the nation. They agreed that oppressive state power was the cause. A better governing system was needed.

Madison and John Tyler convinced the Virginia Assembly that a conference was needed to discuss this issue. As a result, in September 1786, a voluntary conference was convened in Annapolis, Maryland. Madison and Alexander Hamilton issued a report

on the discussions of that meeting to Congress, urging that a mandatory convention be convened to revisit the Articles of Confederation. Congress issued a formal call to the states to attend a convention in Philadelphia in May 1787. To Madison, Hamilton and Washington this represented an opportunity to reverse the course of the economy and government of their hard-won fledgling nation.

The stage was set for one of the great debates, mostly forgotten, in American history. This debate and its result will drive the course of history to this day. We will pick up the debate next month. ☺



Peter Cameron is an Otis, MA resident and a retired policeman. He is a graduate of Central Connecticut State University with a B.S. in History with a concentration in U.S. Colonial History.



We are back! Can't believe it's been four years. We hope to see everyone come roll the dice and win some lobster.

# DICE GAME

**Come join the fun!**

**Sat., August 12<sup>th</sup>**  
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# Oh Deer!

By Sandy Balayan

The post office is the unlikely site of some of my best inspirations as I look for article ideas for the Otis Observer. Recently a man pulled in next to me and started telling me about the huge dent in his car. Although a stranger to me, Dick Massucco is a well-known pillar of the community. It seems that while going through Becket to get to his job as a greeter at the Pittsfield Walmart, a doe came out of the woods and ran right out in front of him. He could not avoid hitting her and she bounced fifteen feet off his car and lie ahead of him in the road. Dick got out of his car and although he didn't see any blood or visible injury, the stunned deer hobbled off into the woods. Dick doesn't know her final fate. He did call and report it to the police who said he should contact his insurance company. The car had \$6000 damage but was totally drivable. Even the lights work on that side!



*The Massucco car* Photo: Dick Massucco

it, but my car did not. There were hoof marks and fur all over the dents and that side of the car barely survived. But we did, and besides picking glass out of my kid's ears and hair, we were untouched. Scared but safe.

Judy Franz shared a similar tale of a deer hitting her car many years ago. She was driving with her daughter Alisa in the passenger seat. Husband Burvee was icing his newly pulled hamstring (a water skiing injury) in the back. Route 8 was very dark and all of a sudden a huge deer appeared which she hit. It landed on the windshield, cracking it of course, and hit the front bumper, knocked off a mirror which hit Alisa's elbow (she couldn't swim for a week). But, other than being quite shook up, everyone else did fine. (Burvee still had the hamstring pull of course!)

On her way to Otis from New Jersey, Donna Mettrock was enjoying her brand new car, less than 24 hours old, when a deer came flying out of the woods and landed on the hood, almost totaling her car. From the picture you can see below the rescue lights reflected in the crumpled wreck. Luckily, Donna survived without a scratch. A little emotional trauma and a long time dealing with the insurance company and several months later Donna was back in her new car. The tow truck driver said it was his sixth deer related tow of the day!



*The Mettrock car* Photo: Donna Mettrock

I like to say "the deer hit me," not vice versa. On Route 84, on a dark, desolate stretch, I was driving with my daughters. In front, my older daughter and I were singing and my younger daughter was sleeping slumped over her seatbelt in back. The deer came out of the woods, started to cross the three lane highway, and checking my mirrors, I could not go anywhere because of other cars. It all happened so fast and I hoped and prayed he would be past my lane as I approached him. But, would that be better? He could hit the car on my left or right and force that car to lose control and the car could hit us. He hit the side of my car, cracking the windshield, breaking into tiny shards the two windows on the passenger side and he went airborne. I can't tell you whether he survived

An anonymous participant relayed a different type of deer story. Her ex-husband dreamt of getting his first deer while hunting. Unfortunately, this goal eluded him. He found a recently hit deer on the road, put it in their car, brought it home and claimed he had hunted it. The deception was never revealed but, she is no longer married to this man. She said it was truly a hairy ride home with the deer's head almost between the seats.

The bottom line is to drive defensively, especially in the winter time. We live in a place where seeing wildlife is a daily occurrence and we must all be ready for this eventuality. Stay at the posted speed limits, scan your eyes right and left as you drive, and if you see one deer, stop, as there is, more than likely, a few together. Be patient. Let them pass. This is true for many of the species we see. Brake for the deer and the rest of our Berkshire wildlife friends that cross our roads. ☺

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Prior to entering real estate sales, my profession was building, a profession I continued for many years in conjunction with being a real-estate agent. Many clients have found that background very helpful, whether preparing a house for sale, or discussing the possibilities of a potential purchase or repairs that might be needed.

It is my philosophy that the path to success is through helping clients to the best of my ability. In doing so, I have made many wonderful friends over the years. If you have questions about buying or selling real-estate, please feel free to call anytime to discuss them.



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We invite submissions, news tips, photos, comments and suggestions including letters to the editor. For consideration they must be received by the **15<sup>th</sup> of the month prior to publication.**

## CONTACT US:

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**Prepared by Sue Brofman**

*For inclusion in the Calendar,  
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**Note: Check events calendar  
[townofotisma.com](http://townofotisma.com) for up-to-date  
notifications/cancellations.**

## AUGUST

**1. Otis Town Hall is open from  
8 am – 3 pm, Monday - Thursday.**

**2. Otis Library Summer Hours**

- **Monday – 10 am – 4 pm**
- **Tuesday – 12 noon – 6 pm**
- **Wednesday – 10 am – 5 pm**
- **Thursday – 1 pm – 7 pm**
- **Friday – 10 am – 5 pm**
- **Saturday – 9 am – 1 pm**
- **Closed Sunday**

**3. Otis Food Pantry opened every  
Wednesday 9 – 11 am**

**4. Rec Center - Temporarily Closed**

**5. StoryWalk, children and adults  
will enjoy a reading of “Henry’s  
Big Kaboom” by Mary Ames  
Mitchell, while taking a walk  
along the Farmington River  
Trail, this StoryWalk will remain  
up through Aug. 9. A reading of  
“Different, A Great Thing to Be”  
by Heather Avis, will remain up  
through August 6.**

**6. Farmington River School,  
August 30<sup>th</sup>, First day of School  
(1/2 Day)**

Tues., Aug. 1, 11 am – 12 noon,  
**Historical Commission**, Otis Town  
Hall

Tues., Aug. 1, 8, 15, 22 and 29, 10 am,  
**Otis Play**, parent/child playgroup  
best for children birth – 5 years of age,  
this is a free program, no registration  
required, Otis Town Hall

Wed., Aug. 2, 9, 16, 23 and 30,  
9 am – 2 pm, **Council on Aging Open**,  
Otis Town Hall, for information call  
Eila at **(413) 269-0103** or email at  
**[eilabell2@aol.com](mailto:eilabell2@aol.com)**

Wed., Aug. 2, 9 am – 2 pm, **Council  
on Aging, Foot Nurse** will be at the  
center, Otis Town Hall, for information  
call Eila at **(413) 269-0103** or email at  
**[eilabell2@aol.com](mailto:eilabell2@aol.com)**

Thurs Aug. 3, 10, 17, 24 and 31,  
10 - 11 am, **Chair Yoga, Connie  
Wilson**, Ages 12+, Otis Town Hall,  
call or email Otis Rec Center for  
more information **(413) 269-4541**,  
**[otisrec@verizon.net](mailto:otisrec@verizon.net)**

Thurs., Aug. 3, 12:00 noon, **Council  
on Aging, Out to Lunch** at the Locker  
Room in Lee, for information call Eila  
at **(413) 269-0103** or email Eila at  
**[eilabell2@aol.com](mailto:eilabell2@aol.com)**

Sat., Aug. 5, 12, 19 and 26,  
9:30 – 10:45 am, **Mat Yoga, Connie  
Wilson**, Ages 16+, Kripalu Yoga, all  
levels, Otis Town Hall, call or email  
Otis Rec Center for more information  
**(413) 269-4541**, **[otisrec@verizon.net](mailto:otisrec@verizon.net)**

Sat., Aug. 5, 9 – 11 am, **Kids Obstacle  
Challenge**, Free for all ages! Dress  
appropriately and prepare to get wet.  
Parent/Guardian must be present  
for the event. Email any questions to  
**[townofotisrec@gmail.com](mailto:townofotisrec@gmail.com)**, Otis  
Town Hall

Mon., Aug. 7, 14, 21 and 28,  
10 am – 2 pm, **Council on Aging  
Open**, Otis Town Hall, for information  
call Eila at **(413) 269-0103** or email at  
**[eilabell2@aol.com](mailto:eilabell2@aol.com)**

Mon., Aug. 7, 14, 21 and 28,  
12:30 – 1:30 pm, **Council on Aging  
Fitness Class** with Michelle from  
Soules Fitness, Otis Town Hall, for  
information call Eila at **(413) 269-  
0103** or email Eila at **[eilabell2@aol.com](mailto:eilabell2@aol.com)**

Mon., Aug. 7, 4-5:30 pm, **Otis Library Book Club**, come join the book club for a discussion about "A Rule Against Murder by Louis Penny". Books and CD available at the Otis Library, on Libby and CWMARS, Otis Library

Mon., Aug. 7, 6 - 7 pm, **Recreation Meeting**, Otis Town Hall

Mon., Aug. 7, 7 - 8 pm, **School Committee Meeting**, Farmington River Regional Elementary School

Tues., Aug. 8, 6:30 - 8 pm, Town of Otis **Select Board Meeting**, Otis Town Hall

Wed., Aug. 9, 5 pm, "**Reading Magic with Ed the Wizard**" designed to entertain folks of all ages from tots to grandparents, this program shows how reading provides knowledge, inspiration, imagination, and expansion of the mind. Otis Library, Free. Register at [www.otislibraryma.org](http://www.otislibraryma.org).

Thurs., Aug. 10, 6 pm, **Otis Library Meeting (In person and Zoom)**, inquire at [info@otislibraryma.org](mailto:info@otislibraryma.org) for more information, Otis Library

Thurs., Aug. 10, 47 pm, **PTA Meeting (Zoom)**, Farmington River Regional Elementary School

Mon., Aug. 14, 2 - 4 pm, **Board of Assessors Meeting**, Otis Town Hall

Mon., Aug. 14, 7 - 9 pm, **Planning Board Meeting**, Otis Town Hall

Tues., Aug. 15, 6 - 9 pm, **Conservation Commission Meeting**, Otis Town Hall

Tues., Aug. 15, 12:30 - 1:30 pm, **Council on Aging, A Self-Drive Trip to The Three Sisters Sanctuary** in Goshen, MA and The Natural Bridge of Flowers in Shelburne Falls, MA, for information contact Diane Dyer at **(413) 269-0100 ext. 5**, or email Diane at [ddyer555@hotmail.com](mailto:ddyer555@hotmail.com)

Wed., Aug. 16, 12 noon, **Council on Aging Potluck** with music performed by Larry Southard, Otis Town Hall, please call Eila at **(413) 269-0103** or email Eila at [eilabell2@aol.com](mailto:eilabell2@aol.com)

Wed., Aug. 16, 6 - 7:30 pm, **Cultural Council Meeting**, Otis Town Hall

Fri., Aug. 18, 10 am - 12 noon, **Council on Aging Brown Bag Program** and CHP Wellness Van, Otis Town Hall, for information call Eila at **(413) 269-0103** or email at [eilabell2@aol.com](mailto:eilabell2@aol.com)

Tues., Aug. 22, 6:30 - 8 pm, Town of Otis **Select Board Meeting**, Otis Town Hall

Mon., Aug. 28, 9:30 am - 2 pm, **Council on Aging Haircuts**, Otis Town Hall, call for an appointment, Eila at **(413) 269-0103** or email Eila at [eilabell2@aol.com](mailto:eilabell2@aol.com)



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# The Rural ETHICIST

## The Color of Theory

By Katharine Adams

Color theory is a subject I once thought defined a box of crayons with interesting names, or the wash of a blueberry-scented El Marko magic marker.

“The more you dig into color theory,” mused a fervent art school teacher, “the deeper it gets. It could fill a book the size of a dictionary.”

We sat there wide-eyed and blinking, intimidated by his description. This was the era B.G. (before Google), when we all relied on flipping through heavy, bound tomes.

In the visual arts, color theory is the body of practical guidance for how to mix color, and how specific combinations produce visual effects. Dating to antiquity, Aristotle (d. 322 BCE) and Claudius Ptolemy (d. 168 CE) noted how some colors could be produced by mixing others.

The first known scholar to propose that there are three primary colors for painters was Scarmiglioni (1601). Eventually, the early color wheel took shape in 1704 by Sir Isaac Newton, credited with discovering the color spectrum as defined by differing wavelengths of light. With its geometry, the color wheel separates colors into primary, secondary and tertiary colors, and still supplies riveting discovery for children in grade school.

One day, in Color Theory class, our teacher had us bring in little tubes of gouache paint. We were instructed to find a freckle on our skin, and “match it.” It was a surprisingly difficult task! The instructor strolled the room, stopping by desks, checking progress. Only a lucky few were declared successful, having made a match.

There would be no creating light tan

paint by adding a touch of brown pigment to white! Nope, that only looks flat.

Instead, to build nuance, she directed us to mix opposing or “complementary” colors on the color wheel, so they would cancel each other out (lose hue) and produce a neutral.

What that meant is blending yellow with purple to create warm beige; green and magenta created a resonant gray; and orange and cyan, a sophisticated taupe. At first, all three mixes looked like mud, barely different from one another—until we were directed to mix a smidgeon of each into white. Alchemy! Suddenly, that crazy purple-yellow mix mellowed into glowing, rich beige.



Colorful umbrella  
Photo: Erean, Morguefile

Is white a color, or an absence of color? How about black or gray? White light comprises all hues on the visible light spectrum, so some categorize it as a color. Since many pigments combine to create black, it’s frequently considered a color. But none of these express true colors, in a purely technical sense—they are shades.

Colors can trigger a range of emotions. Color psychology studies how certain hues impact human behavior.

Red and orange are eye-catching, useful on warning signs and safety equipment. Red is found to be the most persuasive color. It stimulates the appetite and impulse purchases, and is associated with action.

Color sways our perception in subtle ways, unlike the more direct influences of music or food. Colors convey different meanings across cultures.

Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung was a prominent leader in the field of color theory, and went on to develop art therapies. He stated, “Colours are the mother tongue of the subconscious.”

I have a first edition of *The End of Print* by iconoclast David Carson, arguably the most innovative graphic designer of the '90s. It was published during a pivotal time when professors suggested visiting the school’s burgeoning tech lab to “get an email address” on their intranet system. It was kind of intriguing, but a few of us felt making the effort would amount to unnecessary busy work. What would we be using this school email thing for, anyway?

Don’t get me started what a cajoling I would soon require to accept the invasive companionship of a cellular flip phone. I mean, I required prodding. And now? I don’t know who that alarmist, privacy-sacred-space adherent could have been.

Meanwhile, with a wink of ironic humor, an expressive, word-painting surfer named Carson titled his book to advocate that print—while no longer a primary place for information—will indeed maintain its reach in the digital world.

“The medium is changing. Rather than debate whether that’s good or bad, let’s accept it and address it,” he simply said.

Thankfully, print marches on, in full color. ☺



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**STAFF:**

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