# TOPSAIL TIMES

TOPSAIL ISLAND, HOLLY RIDGE, HAMPSTEAD AND SNEADS FERRY

1st September, 2023 | American-Owned. Free Press. | Volume III, Issue 15 | FREE!


# LOCAL MUNICIPAL RACES

## WHO IS RUNNING?

### TOWN OF SURF CITY

**For Mayor**

Teresa Batts
Marc Caldwell

**For Council**

William Fowler
Donald Helms
John Koloski
Heather Allen
Cheryl Hunter
Alicia Hawley
Trudy Solomon

### TOWN OF HOLLY RIDGE

**For Council**

Ken Bradshaw
Joshua Patti
Pamela Hall
Chelsea Kurtz
Aaron Ritter
Phil Misciagno
Nicholas Tripp
Dexter Sholar
Rena Bragg

### TOWN OF N. TOPSAIL BEACH

**For Mayor**

Joann McDermon

**For Council**

Phil Fowler
Fred Fontana
Stephen Newbern
Laura Olszewski
Connie Pletl
Tom Leonard

### TOWN OF TOPSAIL BEACH

**For Mayor**

Steven Smith

**For Council**

John Gunter
Joe Bell

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# Topsail Times

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# Fashion Statements: I've Hit THAT Age

**By Becky Borneman**

I've always heard of aging gracefully. And hope that I do. I've read on several friends posts how they've hurt their selves accidently while doing random things. I think to myself...that would never happen to me. Who does things like that? Well let me tell you...I do!

Last week I got in my car and put on my seatbelt. You know how when you do that and you lean forward a little bitty bit and it catches you as if it's saving you from hitting the windshield when in all actuality it's choking you and you feel claustrophobic? That's what happened to me. And then, as I'm stuck like that, I sneezed. And my back went out.

3 days later and I'm still walking bent over. I feel like the only thing that will help me is to go into a traction machine. From a sneeze!! My back is still in major pain with the slightest move. I find myself at the chiropractor almost every day for a week. And it's slightly better. From a flipping sneeze!!

I'm now realizing I'm at that age where I think twice before I do certain things. I used to go sailing off our porch, completely jumping over the 3 steps down to the ground and landing on two feet. Nope...don't do that anymore. I actually attempted a cartwheel not long ago and that did not go well. I landed relatively easy but I almost gave myself two black eyes in the process.

Things just aren't the same as they were! So I wish you, my friends, a whole night sleep without having to pee, a fun night out with some fun drinks and a quick recovery and sneezes that are uneventful!

# Topsail Gun Gal: Demons Among Us

**By Dorothy Royal**

In late spring of 2015, then 25-year-old British nurse Lucy Letby, decided to destroy the lives of 13 families. Through a course of unthinkable actions, Neonatal Nurse Letby poisoned newborns by injecting some with insulin, air or force-feeding milk. After heinously committing these crimes, she would mourn with the parents of the 7 babies she killed, including preparing the babies for burial. Had she not been stopped in June of 2016, 6 more babies would have succumbed to her devious plan.

The English Courts have sentenced her to multiple sentences of life in prison with no chance of release.

But is Lucy Letby the first to do such horrendous things to babies? Unfortunately, not.

During the months of February, March and April of 1991, British Nurse Beverley Allitt, now known as "the angel of death" murdered 4 infants, attempted to kill 3 others and caused serious physical harm to 6 more infants during that short time. This British nurse was also given 13 life sentences but was eligible for parole in 2021 but remains incarcerated. It is noted that Allitt apparently suffers from Munchausen's syndrome which is a desire to kill to get attention. Nurse Allitt was 23 years of age when she committed the murders. Her methods of injecting babies with insulin and air were the same as those used by Lucy Letby.

Herman Andaya, who until recently was the head of Maui Emergency Management Services, failed to sound the alarm to alert residents of raging fires. Had the sirens been used it is possible dozens, if not hundreds of citizens may have survived the disaster. The sirens, which are typically used for hurricanes or tsunamis, are located throughout the area.

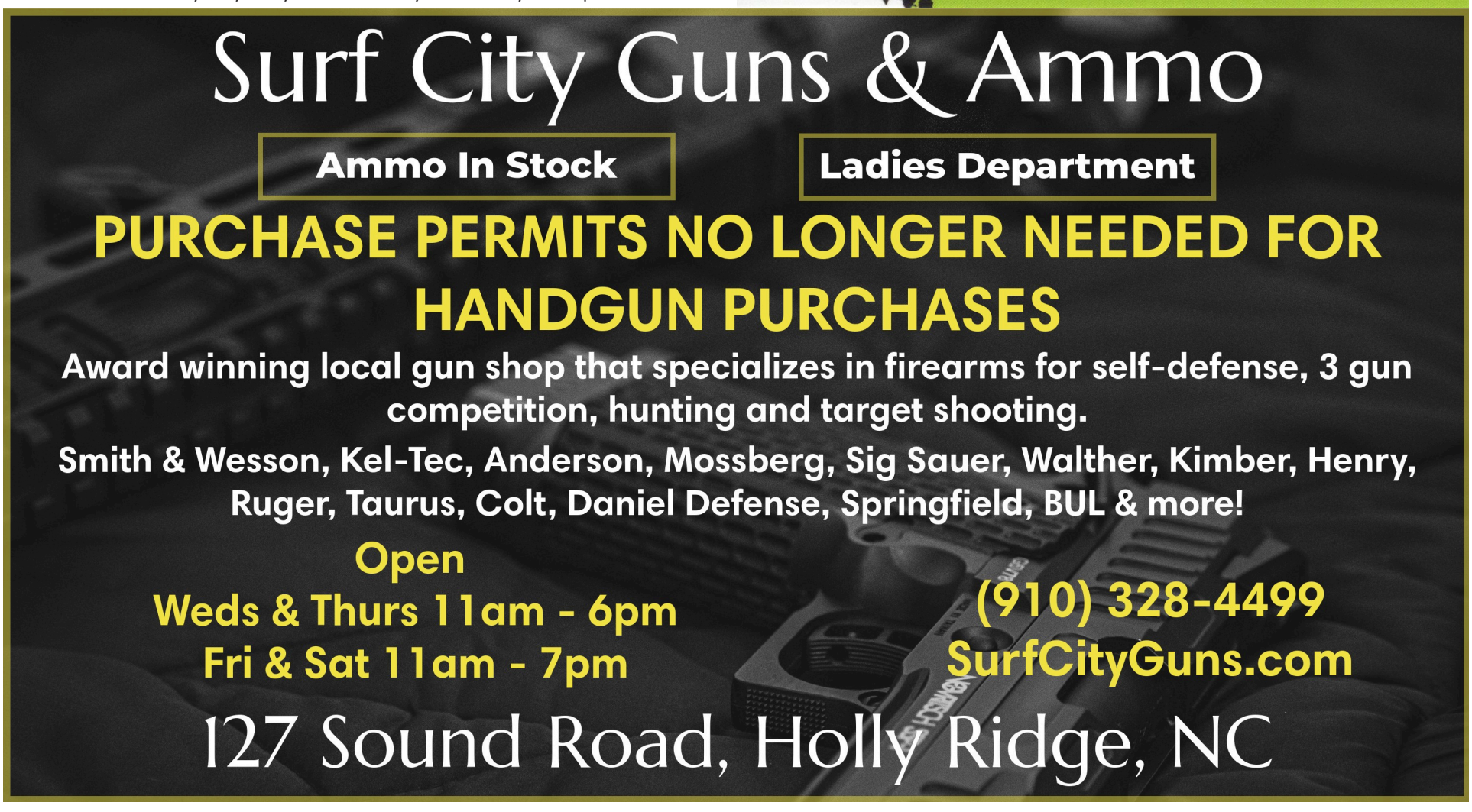
Mr. Andaya defended his actions by stating that emergency text alerts and media (news and radio) should have been enough, what he failed to account for was the loss of power that meant no text or media was available.

Mr. Andaya had previously worked in the Department of Housing and lacked qualifications for his role as head of Emergency Services. He claimed to have received some training. Apparently when he was hired there were over 30 applicants more qualified.

In the six-mile area of devastation over 1,000 people are still unaccounted for, including many children. Currently there are over 100 confirmed dead. DNA samples are being collected from family members of the missing, but there is a fear that bodies may have burned up in the extensive heat of the fires.

With wind gusts between 67 and 80 mph, at its peak it is estimated that the fire moved at over a mile a minute.

Remember knowledge is power, monsters do exist, and human actions may have deadly consequences.



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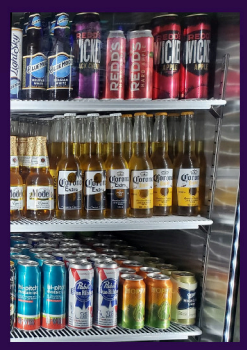

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**IF YOU ARE NOT AT A FLAGGED BEACH ACCESS:** please look at the house directly behind you or read the access number posted where you entered the beach!

**WE STRONGLY SUGGEST THAT YOU DO NOT ENTER THE WATER TO RESCUE ANYONE WITHOUT A PROPER FLOATATION DEVICE!**

# Legal

## Death Notices

Evelyn (Nelson) Jensen, 87, of Jacksonville, died August 8, 2023.

Joan Leister, 86, of Sneads Ferry, died August 10, 2023.

Irvin Ray Barrows, 69, of Jacksonville, died August 16, 2023.

Gregory Fross, 64, recently of Emerald Isle, died August 12, 2023.

Evelyn (Nelson) Jensen, 87, of Jacksonville, died August 8, 2023.

Joan Leister, 86, of Sneads Ferry, died August 10, 2023.

Mary Seay, 81, of Sneads Ferry, died August 21, 2023.

John "Jack" Long, 75, of Jacksonville, died August 20, 2023..

Richard Leister, 89, of Sneads Ferry, died August 20, 2023.


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# The Public Is Invited To Attend The Southern Lights At The Gardens Of Southeastern North Carolina In November And December 2023

**By Wendi Epps**

*The Gardens of Southeastern North Carolina Unveils "The Southern Lights": A Dazzling Inaugural Light Show Experience*

The Gardens of Southeastern North Carolina is thrilled to announce its debut holiday experience, The Southern Lights, promising an enchanting evening of festive wonders and captivating illumination. This inaugural event invites guests to embark on an immersive journey, exploring The Gardens of SENC in a breathtaking symphony of lights.

In collaboration with Patriot Illumination, The Southern Lights offers a sensational holiday light experience, featuring beloved holiday characters, family-friendly movie nights, fun special events, and a mesmerizing array of walk-through lights. Embrace the warmth of the evening as you gather around inviting firepits to indulge in delightful s'mores and conversation. Satisfy your palate with the flavors of wood-fired pizza, expertly crafted in-house and enhance your journey with a visit to our cash bar. Choose from a curated selection of imported wines, beer and soda and immerse yourself in the rhythm of the season as talented artists grace the stage with live performances. Be on the lookout for upcoming announcements about special guest appearances, including Santa Claus himself! Between the wondrous sights, the delicious food and drinks, and a variety of live music, your visit to The Southern Lights will be a truly sensorial experience!

The Southern Lights embodies the spirit of community, celebration, and the magic of the holidays," said David Johnson, Executive Director of The Gardens of Southeastern North Carolina. "We cordially invite everyone to immerse themselves in this spellbinding experience and create cherished memories shared with your loved ones."

Join us for the Southern Lights Launch Party on November 18th, 2023 and be among the very first to witness the grand illumination! Join us between 5pm - 8pm for an enchanting evening where the Southern Lights come to life for the first time. Revel in the mesmerizing light display, indulge in wood-fired pizza, delight in libations from the bar, and groove to the rhythm of live music. Tickets for this captivating event are priced at $50 per person, which includes one alcoholic beverage and delectable light hors d'oeuvres. Embrace the magic of the season by dressing in your finest winter garden party attire and experience an unforgettable night under the stars.

"The Southern Lights" will illuminate the nights from November 24 to December 23, offering an enchanting holiday experience suitable for all ages. For comprehensive details, dates, ticket reservations, and event information, please visit www.TheSouthernLightsNC.com.

*The Gardens of Southeastern North Carolina is a non-profit company dedicated to improving lives, cultivating inspiration, offering a variety of experiences, creating jobs, and generating income for the community.*

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# Sea Turtle Hospital News

**By Star Sota**

Question: Why did the hatchlings cross the road?

Answer:

a) They heard there was a great band playing at the Trailer Bar.

b) They wanted a hot dog from Friendly Mart.

c) They saw the playground and wanted to try out the slide.

d) They followed the light.

Easy question, especially if you're a fan of sea turtles and our hospital. The answer is: d) They followed the light. When these little guys and gals boiled out of their nest they looked up and headed over the dune to the bright lights of the big city. The light that they should have followed was the reflection of the moon on the water. But sometimes the moon just can't compete with the residential and commercial lighting of beachfront development. Thankfully Surf City police were out on patrol and recognized that this was not your typical gang trying to break in for late night snack. They notified Terry Meyer, our Beach Director, who called area coordinator Todd Crawford who roused his crew of Topsail Turtle Project volunteers from a deep sleep in the middle of the night. Working in the dark they somehow managed to locate and wrangle a whole passel of hatchlings that incredibly made it across the main road on the island.

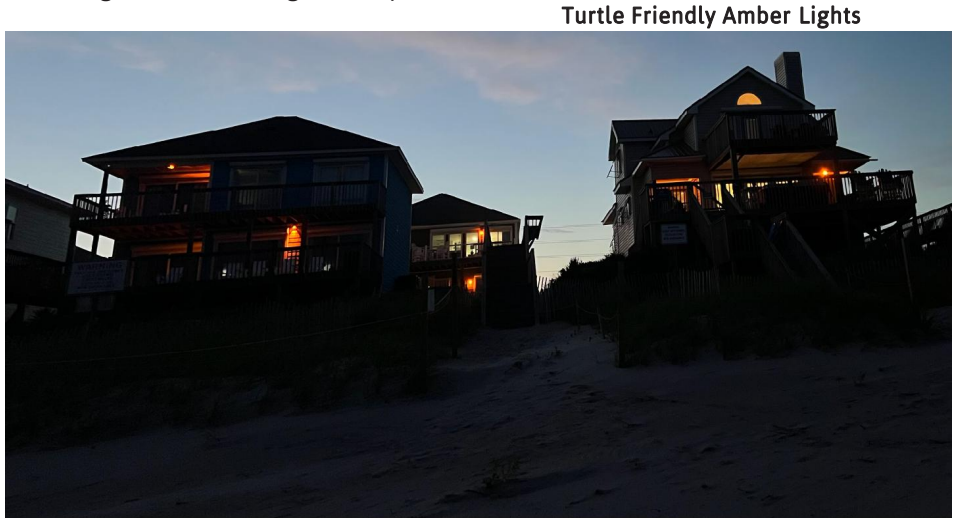
Hatchlings don't have the best odds of surviving their early years in the ocean but even less of a chance if they're in a fight with a car. These critters were very lucky, and they were in the water shortly after their rescue.

So how can beachfront homeowners make sure that hatchlings (and sometimes a nesting mama) do not make the same mistake during the few short months that turtles are on our beaches? It's easier than you might think, and right now it's FREE - all you have to do is ask for our help.

To celebrate the 25th Anniversary of our hospital we're looking for twenty-five beachfront homes for our free give-away of four (4) amber light bulbs to replace your current ocean facing white outdoor lights. These amber lights emit a wavelength that makes them practically invisible to sea turtle eyes. It's simple technology, and in fact you can see it for yourself if you visit during tour hours. And we did say that they're FREE. All you need to do is complete an application online at: seaturtlehospital.org/lightsout. We'll deliver and install them for you, but you must agree to use them exclusively from May 1 – November 1 and submit a photo of your new lights for our use. Maybe time or circumstances won't let you volunteer at our hospital or as a beach walker, but by doing this you too will become a big part of our mission to save sea turtles.

So, what do I do if I find a hatchling that's gone astray anywhere on Topsail? Carefully pick it up and put it in a small container with some sand and a very small amount of water - barely cover the flippers. With this extreme heat it's important that the little critter does not bake in the sun for hours. Then call our Director of Beach Operations, Terry Meyer at: 910-470-2880. Calls to her number after hours will automatically be forwarded to her for action. You may also call the hospital during operating hours: 910-329-0222. We will take the information and one of our area coordinators will meet you to retrieve the hatchling and refer it to us for follow-up. Terry is also the contact for any sick, injured or pier-hooked turtle. The State of NC hotline for strands picks up 24/7 at 252-241-7367. Remember that interfering with or harassing federally protected sea turtles in any way makes you subject to steep fines and possible imprisonment. Our work with sea turtles, at the hospital and on the beach, is authorized by the NC Wildlife Resources Commission, ES Permit 23ST05. We're open Monday through Friday in August with tour hours posted on our website: www.seaturtlehospital.org. Days and hours will change for September and are also currently posted. Please remember that admittance to the hospital is only through pre-paid on-line reservations for the specific date and time on our website. We always have patients hoping to see your smiling faces. Our gift shop is open during tour hours and you are welcome to stop in to browse without taking a tour.

Turtle Friendly Amber Lights



Not Turtle Friendly Lights

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# Great White Shark Returns To Hampstead

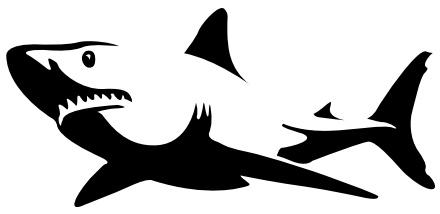
**By Steve Unger**

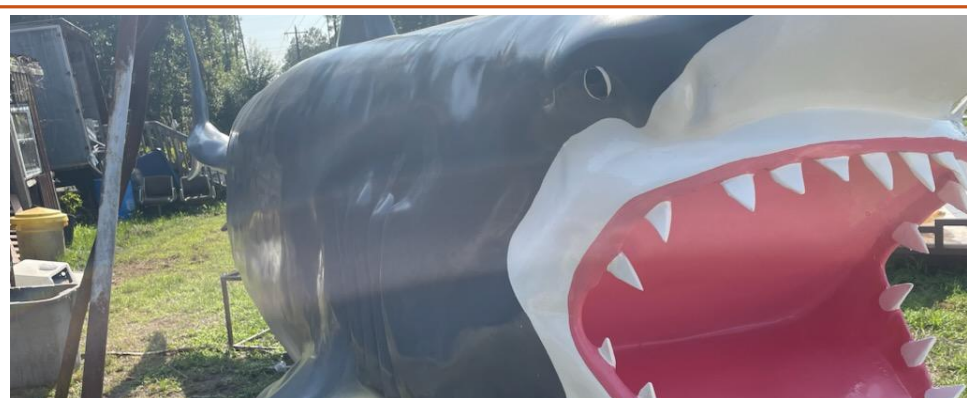
HAMPSTEAD -- Shark Week may be over on the Discovery Channel, but a Great White is headed to Hampstead! After a complete refurbishment, the 26 x 10 feet grey monster is headed back to DDT Outlet at 21740 Highway 17, where it previously greeted shoppers with its giant jaws open for 20 years until late 2021. After the shark got pretty beat up by the elements, owner Tom Miller turned to Hubert Graham of Bolton, NC who operates the highly visible Grahamland Attractions on US Highway 74.

Graham, who was featured in the June 2023 issue of Our State Magazine says he gave the big fish a new set of blood- red gums, pearly white teeth, and brand-new dorsal fins to make it anatomically correct. "It was just a mess when I got it," says Graham – who meticulously restored the fiberglass creature.

"It looks better than new, " exclaimed Miller who previously got plenty of attention for "the Shark" (no other name) as it greeted shoppers for two decades. Which And that's not all. Miller has ordered two more giant sharks from Graham which are to be delivered this fall – ensuring that a whole school of fish will soon great shoppers along with Bigfoot, who is already in place out front at DDT.

The restored behemoth is being towed into Wilmington tomorrow (8/25) along with an accompanying pink flamingo -- and expected to cross the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge about noon on its journey back to Pender County. Detours can be arranged for print or video stories (for instance directly to TV stations) and both Graham and Miller will be available for interviews along with the shark.





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# Own Your Own Announces 24 Finalists In Million Dollar Nationwide Restaurant Challenge

Burgaw, NC - The Own Your Own (OYO) Million Dollar Nationwide Restaurant Challenge is excited to announce the 24 Finalists who will be coming to Burgaw, NC this October to compete for the opportunity to own their own restaurant at 106-108 W. Courthouse Avenue.

These finalists, selected from a group of over 500 applicants, represent 10 states and a wide range of concepts. On Saturday, October 21, 2023, the final 24 will face off against each other in a Town Square Cook-off along W. Courthouse Avenue in conjunction with Burgaw's inaugural Autumn Fest.

Each applicant will have a pop-up kitchen from which to serve a sample size dish that represents their concept. The cook-off will be judged by 200 Burgaw residents and a panel of award-winning judges, including Christi Ferretti of Pine Valley Market, Myra McDuffie of Mema's Chick'n & Ribs, Keith Rhodes of Catch and Dean Neff of Seabird. Both residents and judges will cast their votes for the entrepreneurs and concepts they believe will be the best fit for Burgaw.

It's no secret that the American Dream of owning your own business is out of reach for many due to economic barriers. Social entrepreneur and OYO founder, Richard Johnson, is hoping to change that. Own Your Own is designed to give hopeful entrepreneurs the opportunity to connect with investors, open small businesses and help revitalize historic downtowns.

The Town Square cook-off will result in 12 of the finalists being eliminated. The remaining 12 will present business plans, from which 8 will be selected to work shifts in the judge's restaurants. On Sunday, October 29th two finalists will be given a list of seasonal, local ingredients from which to prepare a three-course meal to the judges, the OYO team, and 50 VIP guests at the Historic Burgaw Train Depot. A winner will be crowned at the end of the evening and handed the keys to their new restaurant space along with a million dollar budget to design and outfit the 2,250-square-foot space.

The restaurant challenge in Burgaw is just the beginning. OYO's mission is to create a movement that helps revitalize small towns across the country and bring back the belief in the American Dream.

To learn more about the OYO process, the restaurant space, and most importantly, our final 24 applicants, please visit our website where you can find profiles of each of them. See names below.

Below is a list of the THE FINAL 24:

Pilar Beasley, Charlotte, NC

Nathaniel Blanford, Cincinnati, OH

Shawn Buskirk, Holly Ridge, NC

Christopher Carlo, Waterford, MI

Mandy Chow, Wilmington, NC

Matthew Cole, Winterville, NC

Charmaine Lizette Eclarin Devine, Wilmington, NC

Zachary Fabian, Jersey City, NJ

Joe Friday, Toronto, ON Canada

Christopher Gates, Wilmington, NC

Penny Hayes, Myrtle Beach, SC

Brandon Hunsaker, Escondido, CA

Khristen Hunter, Wilmington, NC

Zinyusile Khumbula, New York, NY

John Knox, Maple Hill, NC

Vincent Mangual, Brooklyn, NY

B. Lucas McLawhorn, Wilmington, NC

Katharine Myhand, Rocky Point, NC

Karoline Schwartz, Tabernash, CO

Allan Tijerino, Morristown, TN

Peggy Walker, Fayetteville, NC

Julia Warren, Whiteville, NC

Bart Weber, Hickory, NC

Oscar Zeno, Wilmington, NC

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# Greater Topsail Area Chamber Of Commerce Hires New Interim Executive Director

*The chamber experienced tremendous growth under Dr. Steven Hill's leadership*

TOPSAIL – The Greater Topsail Area Chamber of Commerce board of directors voted unanimously to appoint Tammy Proctor as the incoming interim executive director. The action comes after receiving the resignation of the current director, Dr. Steven Hill.

"I have enjoyed working with the businesses in the Greater Topsail Area," said Dr. Steven Hill, "In my service to the chamber, we made great strides in the area of economic development, and I will continue to be involved with regional economic development."

Proctor, who will retire from her role as director of Pender County Tourism, will step in as interim director of the chamber. From 2013-2015, Proctor served as director of the chamber.

"I am looking forward to returning to the Greater Topsail Area Chamber of Commerce," said Proctor. "Dr. Hill moved the chamber forward and it is my goal to continue that momentum."

Under Hill's leadership, the chamber has expanded its economic development mission, created a new membership website, and built lasting relationships with the town officials in the chamber's geographic coverage area. The chamber's ambassador program and WomenConnect, a women's networking group, have been instated under Hill's leadership.

The Greater Topsail Area Chamber of Commerce is a membership organization that serves businesses and nonprofits from Scotts Hill to Sneads Ferry. It is 332 members strong and growing daily.

For more information about the Greater Topsail Area Chamber of Commerce, call 910-329-4446 or visit online at topsailchamber.org.

# Author Dinner

Thursday, October 12, 2023, 6 p.m.

*USA Today* bestselling author

## Donna Everhart

**Donna Everhart** is the *USA Today* bestselling author of authentic, vivid Southern fiction, including the Southeastern Library Association Award-winning *The Road to Bittersweet,* Indie Next Pick and Amazon Book of the Month, *The Education of Dixie Dupree, The Forgiving Kind, The Moonshiner's Daughter,* and *The Saints of Swallow Hill.*

Her sixth novel, *When the Jessamine Grows*, releases January 23, 2024.

Born and raised in Raleigh, North Carolina, she now lives with her husband in a small town in the Sandhills region where she is currently working on her next novel. She's a member of the North Carolina Writers' Network, Women's Fiction Writers Association, and is the host for the MaryJanesFarm Book Club.

### Hampstead Women's Club Building

14435 US Hwy 17, Hampstead, NC

Dinner by Middle of the Island Catering Co. Includes entree, three sides, dessert, tea. BYOB.

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Topsail Township Friends of the Library

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**All proceeds benefit library programs, materials, and the proposed new Hampstead library building.**

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# Coastal Common Sense

**By Kim McGahey**

*Originally featured in our June 16th issue. Reprint due to upcoming relevance.*

There's an undeveloped parcel of land at the very southern tip of Topsail Island. We affectionately refer to it as the Hundred Acre Wood, but the surveyor tells us it's actually more like a 150 acres of undisturbed, pristine coastline dunes, and one wiley coyote, that has been used and admired for years by locals and visitors as the last of Pender County's, and maybe North Carolina's, natural sea coast habitat.

The Hundred Acre Wood is now slated for development which has all the locals and visitors up in arms and mounting a grassroots effort to halt any building on this last vestige of the pure Carolina coastline.

Protest yard signs claiming "Conserve The Point" along Anderson Blvd. and numerous citizen comments at Topsail Beach town council meetings call for no construction on the Hundred Acre Wood. A town hall meeting was held by the owners to inform and reassure the public and several hundred people showed up to voice their disapproval. It's a topic of concern at all local town planning meetings and all local happy hours. But the aversion to the current development plan on this private land is misplaced.

The protesters would have a stronger case if the Hundred Acre Wood was publicly owned. They could then petition the government to stop any development on the land. Even a motion for Imminent Domain could then be more easily thwarted if the land were owned by an entity seeking development for the public good or the general welfare.

For example, public municipalities can develop land under the Imminent Domain law for purposes of creating parks, recreation sites, transportation access arteries, various infrastructure projects, wildlife refuges, etc.

The Town of Topsail Beach, Pender County or the State of North Carolina could "take" the land to build a bridge to Hampstead, a sewer plant for the town or a commercial pier - all of which would likely be allowed under that Imminent Domain law; however difficult those projects would be to accomplish.

As it stands now, the land is privately owned by individuals who desire, and have made formal application to the Town of Topsail Beach, to develop the parcel with 8 homes and docks into Topsail Sound. This low impact, minimal development is infinitely preferable to other high density, multi-family construction that an owner of the land could request. Eight homes is alot less intrusive than 10 multi-story buildings with 150 condo units, for example.

Besides, anybody else wanting to control development there should have bought the land. These owners paid millions of dollars for the land and deserve to have their day in court.

Preventing the Town Council from approving a sewer treatment plant for the Town is a much better target for local and second homeowner protesters wishing to curtail future high density development in Topsail Beach. Tall condo buildings like in Surf City and North Topsail Beach can only be built if a sewer treatment plant system is approved by our Town Council. No such high density, multi-family buildings can be built as long as we remain on septic systems. So let's protest the proposed sewer plant system and not the Hundred Acre Wood.

As confirmed by the Town of Topsail Beach planning and council officials, the development process for the Hundred Acre Wood will be arduous at best. There will be numerous planning and zoning approvals required at many levels of government from the town, the county, the state and the federal. There will be wildlife habitat issues, environmental concerns, ocean objections, water and land access problems, infrastructure obstacles and many more hurdles that we don't yet know about.

So let the development process run its course, but do protest peacefully and patriotically loud and often to your Town Council and Planning Boards to make the planning and zoning process as difficult as possible within the law. Maybe then the land owners will give up and sell the Hundred Acre Wood back to Winnie the Pooh and friends.

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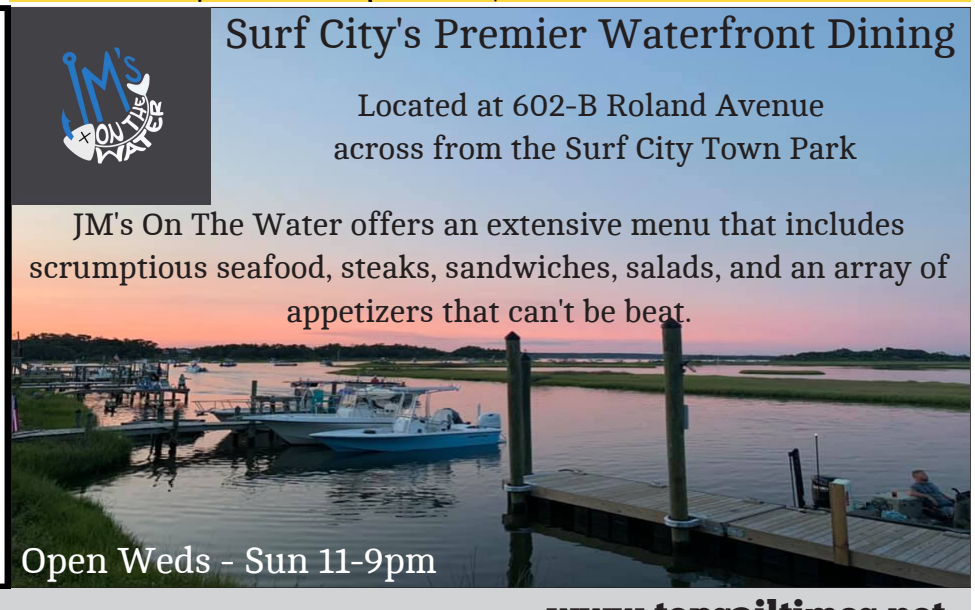



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# Embracing Transformation: Mourning the Loss of Our Old Identity and Welcoming Growth

**By By Jennifer Baker**
**LPC RPT ACS**

Life is a continuous journey of change and growth, and with every new chapter, we bid farewell to the old. Just as the seasons change, so does our sense of self, life circumstances, and our internal working models about the world.

An internal working model is our framework of mental representations for understanding the world, self, and others, which was learned in early childhood through our experiences. This means is that how we feel about ourselves has been learned by how others were acting around us, not necessarily caused by us, but by how they were able to 'show up' for us. If you were ever wondering why your relationships are on a 'lather, rinse, repeat' cycle, there's an idea that 'we go with what we know' until we do the personal therapy to understand and transform what we learned as children.

The mourning process of embracing transformation seems to come as a surprise to most people while doing their own personal work to process trauma. In some areas of their lives, people welcome the ability to feel sense of well-being and happiness, but in other areas, they may notice more discontent, such as how they are being treated by others. They feel like the shoe just doesn't fit them anymore. Disconcerted by this shift, I always assure them this is a normal step in becoming their own true and best selves. Most likely, the patterns of interaction they were doing before were done to avoid any dreaded association with their Family of Origin, relational, shock, or other traumas. Trauma may be defined as any time there is a perceived or actual sense of overwhelm that cannot be fixed, avoided, or rescued from.

As the lens with which we see the world transforms, we then start to move through the world differently. We start to expect different things from our relationships, our purpose in life, make new friends, and bid goodbye to old circumstances that don't seem to fit our lives anymore. Mourning this shift is a profound and complex process but can also be a gateway to new opportunities, personal growth, hope, and resilience. I have listed some helpful ideas and simple skills to foster internal resources to help with inner fortitude below:

1. The Cycle of Change: Embracing change is an inevitable part of life's cycle. From childhood to adulthood, through various life stages, we evolve as individuals. Acknowledging that change is natural and allows us to embrace transformation with greater ease.

*Start each day by saying five Gratitudes; this can help change your mood, embrace who you are and where you are at in your life, and the trajectory of the day.*

2. Saying Goodbye to the Familiar: Mourning the loss of our old identity, life, or internal working models means letting go of what was familiar. This can be accompanied by a sense of loss and uncertainty as we step into uncharted territories.

*Practice radical acceptance. Just say, 'ok, I wonder what will happen next?' and give yourself time to process and think about it for 24 hours instead of doing your normal knee-jerk reactions.*

3. Honoring the Past: As we embark on a journey of transformation, we must honor our past experiences, the lessons learned, and the growth achieved. Each moment, positive or challenging, has contributed to shaping who we are today.

*Create new practices or rituals that give meaning to your journey. Wrap a colored piece of string on your wrist, journal and rip it up, or release flowers to the ocean to remember someone or something that you mean to let go with love.*

4. Navigating the Emotions: Grieving the loss of an old identity or life can evoke a range of emotions. Allow yourself to feel them fully - sadness, nostalgia, fear, or excitement. Embrace vulnerability, as it is a sign of authenticity and courage.

*Allow yourself the time and space to grieve. Go for a walk to be with your emotions and at the same time invite the healing power of moving your body and being with nature to help temper your internal experiences. Pendulation is a powerful tool that encourages your nervous system to move through powerful emotions. Pendulate by focusing on an external positive resource, breathe, then shift to become curious about the uncomfortable emotions internally. They may shift and move through you.*

5. Supportive Connections: Seek support from friends, family, or a therapist during this transitional period. Engaging with others who understand your journey can provide comfort, connection, corrective emotional experiences, and a sense of belonging. Do some advanced techniques such as EMDR and Somatic Experiencing (click on links to read more) which may support our transformation goals by releasing the past from the present.

6. Embracing Change as an Opportunity: Embrace change as an opportunity for growth and self-discovery.
Embracing the unknown opens doors to new perspectives, passions, and possibilities. Let your curiosity lead the way, looking at new experiences as invitations to connect on a new level.

*Anxiety and excitement can often be mixed up in our bodies, especially if we have a trauma history. Use the breathing technique of breathing in normally, then breathing out longer to gain a sense of calm.*

7. Cultivate Self-Compassion: Be compassionate toward yourself during this transformative phase. It is okay to feel uncertain or uncomfortable; change takes time and patience. Treat yourself with the same kindness you would offer a friend.

*Would you speak to someone else like you usually talk to yourself? Probably not. Try to change your self-talk to be more encouraging. Instead of, "I'm so stupid to have done that", perhaps say, "Well, that didn't work! I will have to try something different next time."*

8. Reframing Perspectives: Take time to reflect on your new identity, life, or internal working models. How have they evolved? What new insights or strengths have emerged? Reframe the change as a chance to create a more fulfilling and authentic life.

*Seek out others who now reflect your sense of self and bring you joy mentally, spiritually, and physically.*

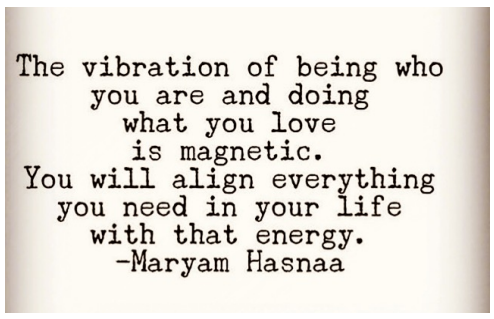
9. Establishing New Goals: Set new intentions and goals that align with your evolving self. As you redefine your identity or working models, prioritize what matters most in your current chapter. Make your self-care and restorative practices like yoga, walking, and meditation a daily ritual.

*Make yourself and your happiness a priority, and you will see you have much more to give others. A good way to think about it is like the gas in your car: if you have a full tank, you can go far.*

10. Celebrate Progress: Celebrate the milestones and progress in embracing your new goals and sense of self. *Each step forward is a testament to your resilience and adaptability.*

Remember that transformation is a continuous process, and we are ever-evolving beings. Mourning the loss of the old is a necessary step to welcome the new with open arms. As we let go of what was, we create space for growth, healing, and a deeper understanding of ourselves and the world around us. Embrace change as an opportunity to blossom into the person you are destined to become.

Smile, Breathe, Go slowly.



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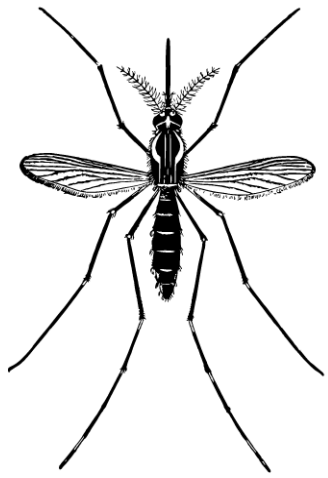

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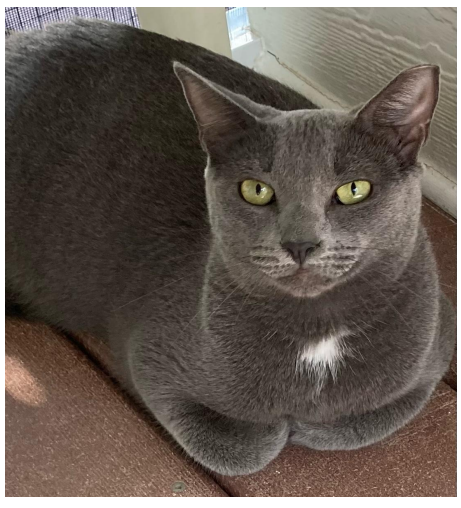

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# New Immersive Haunted House Attraction Debuts This Fall

**By Port City Fear Factory**

Wilmington NC, August 23, 2023 - Two influential artistic entities from the film and theatrical industries have joined forces to create the area's premier haunted house attraction, launching "Chapel of Horrors" next month. The recently formed company, Port City Fear Factory, is the newest purveyor of haunts and frights in Southeastern N.C. Combining the talents and skills from The Opera House Theater Company and Bearded Skulls Make-Up FX Group, Port City Fear Factory has created an immersive experience unlike the traditional haunted houses with which fans and patrons are familiar.

Port City Fear Factory intends to create the feeling of being actively placed inside the plot of a horror movie, offering the customer far more than the expected jump scares.

Both Opera House Theater Company, with artistic director and entrepreneur Justin Smith at the helm, and Bearded Skulls MUFX Group, comprising veteran Make-Up / SPFX Make-Up Artists Rick Pour, Jason Willis, Tony Rosen, Jeff Goodwin, and Matt Barrett, have dreamed of operating a haunted attraction for years.

"It's been an idea we've suggested on numerous occasions amongst ourselves," stated Pour from Bearded Skulls MUFX, "and we can hardly wait to show people what surprises we have in store for them." The opportunity to collaborate came about while members of Bearded Skulls and Smith were working together on an independent film set earlier this year. The groups jointly realized they could pool resources to bring their shared vision to life. Rounding out the team with theatrical set builders Terry Collins and Michelle Ponton, administration head Riley Oates, and creative design & digital marketing head Reagan Simon, the new group quickly got to work. With the film industry currently at a standstill pending strike negotiations, the opportunity to pursue the venture became evident.

"Now's the time, especially when we recognized a need in the community for such attractions," Smith said. Actors from the Opera House Theater Company and other regional talent will be bringing the characters to life, while the Bearded Skulls MUFX Group ("Scream," "The Black Phone," "The Conjuring," "Mr. Mercedes," "Blue Velvet") are writing the story and creating the horrors within.

Port City Fear Factory plans to host up to three unique horror-themed events annually. The first presentation, "Chapel of Horrors," debuts this fall on its opening weekend of September 29. The attraction will operate weekends through its final night on Halloween and will include extended hours during a family-friendly festival weekend in October.

Stemming from a storyline that can be followed online via Instagram and Facebook, the weekly posts, which began July 14 are small, incremental sneak-peeks into the larger experience. This is where future customers of the haunt can read the tale of the Chapel, its eerie history and surrounding folklore, and later watch the story come to life inside the venue.

Visit portcityfearfactory.com, Facebook, or follow on Instagram: @PortCityFearFactory to begin experiencing the story of The Chapel of Horrors.

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– D. R. Royal

# Pender County WIC Receives The Highest Award Of Excellence

BURGAW – Pender County's WIC department received the Premiere Award of Excellence from the US Department of Agriculture. The honor is called the WIC Breastfeeding Award of Excellence Program.

"This is the second time Pender County's WIC agency has been honored," said Carolyn Moser, Pender County Health and Human Services Director. "The recognition goes to agencies that have demonstrated model practices in Breastfeeding Peer Counseling as well as those who are at varying stages of implementing exemplary breastfeeding promotion and support practices."

Only eight North Carolina local WIC agencies achieved the WIC Breastfeeding Award of Excellence. Six of those were Gold Award Winners. Pender County was one of only two agencies that was honored with the Premiere Award. The other county was Buncombe.

According to the US Department of Agriculture, this year North Carolina has the highest number of awardees in the southeast region, including the most Gold awardees and the only SERO State agency with Premiere awardees.

Pender and Buncombe counties have created an elite group, they are the only local WIC agencies in the southeast region to achieve the Premiere Award twice, according to the USDA.

"We are proud of our hardworking staff," said Moser. "This is an important program that promotes good health for mother and child."

To qualify for the Premiere Award, local WIC agencies must have a minimum of 15 percent of infants issued the fully breastfeeding food package in the previous year with improvement in the current year or a minimum of 25 percent of infants have been issued the fully breastfeeding food package in the current year.

WIC stands for Women, Infants, and Children.

PENDER COUNTY NC

# Word Search *(Katy Perry)*

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# Pender County Tourism Announces Another Record Year In Visitor Economic Impact

Pender County spending increases by 14.7 percent to $189.66 million

PENDER COUNTY – Domestic and international visitors to and within Pender County spent $189.66 million in 2022, an increase of 14.7 percent from 2021. The data comes from an annual study commissioned by Visit North Carolina, a unit of the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina.

"The tourism industry in Pender County continues to grow and once again, visitor spending hit an all-time high in our county," said Tammy Proctor, Pender County Tourism Director. "Tourism is driven by natural resources and outdoor recreation, history, agriculture and aquaculture, and film. Pender County offers visitors all these attractions."

The travel and tourism industry in Pender County directly employs more than 1,004. The total payroll generated by the tourism industry in Pender County was $39.6 million.

The state tax revenue generated in Pender County totaled $6.2 million through state sales and excise taxes, and taxes on personal and corporate income. About $8.9 million in local taxes were generated from sales and property tax revenue from travel-generated and travel-supported businesses. The taxes generated by visitors save each Pender County resident $231.98.

The statistics come from the "Economic Impact of Travel on North Carolina Counties 2022." The study was prepared for Visit North Carolina by Tourism Economics in collaboration with the US Travel Association.

Statewide, visitor spending in 2022 rose 15.2 percent to reach a record $33.3 billion. Urban areas, which experienced a decline during the pandemic have rebounded.

"North Carolina's tourism industry draws its success from the authentic culture and experiences that flourish across a spectrum of settings," said Wit Tuttell, Visit NC's executive director. "The new report from Tourism Economics shows growth beyond our celebrated mountains and beaches to our urban centers and surrounding suburban and rural counties. Tourism's strength across the state underscores the industry's role as an anchor of economic development. The money visitors spend benefits everyone by sustaining jobs and reducing the tax burden for every resident."

"The tourism industry is vital to the economic development of our county," said Proctor. "For the last five years, Pender County has set new visitor spending records and increased the number of jobs. That's excellent economic development."

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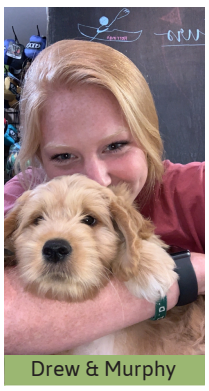
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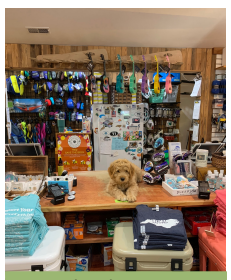
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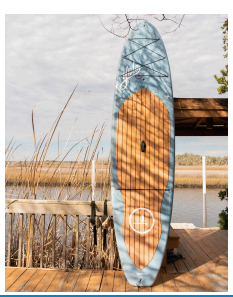

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