



**The  
Compassionate  
Friends**  
Bluegrass Chapter  
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

# Bluegrass Chapter Newsletter

"We need not walk alone."

[www.tcfbluegrass.org](http://www.tcfbluegrass.org)

P.O. Box 647, Nicholasville, Kentucky 40340

November/December

## Chapter Co-Leaders

Suzie McDonald

[catholic20@windstream.net](mailto:catholic20@windstream.net)

Janie Fields

[butterflymom@windstream.net](mailto:butterflymom@windstream.net)

## Treasurer

David Fields

## Newsletter Editor

Lisa Fields

## Bluegrass Chapter

### The Compassionate Friends

### Regional Coordinators

Suzie McDonald

(859) 576-7680

## Telephone Friends

Sometimes it helps to be able to talk to someone who understands. The following bereaved parents are willing to provide support and comfort.

### Jim Sims

(859) 858-8288

(859) 797-2168

### Mary Camp

(859) 737-0180

### Suzie McDonald

(859) 576-7680

### Janie Fields

(859) 881-1991

## We welcome you with Compassion, Love and Hope

It is always difficult to say, "Welcome" to people coming to our meetings for the first time because we are so very sorry for the reason they came. For some, the first meeting or two can be rather overwhelming, especially if they are newly bereaved. We hope that anyone feeling that way will return to at least a couple more of our meetings. Everyone is welcome to attend our meetings, regardless of the age at which their child died or the length of time that has passed since that day.

### Newcomers

Camille Jackson, mother of Alijah D. Buckley

Greg & Debbie Kerwin, parents of Daniel Joseph Kerwin

Darnell and Laura Weithkamp, parents of Clinton Robert Weitkamp

Brenda Thompson and Whitney Blake Foley, mom & sister of Michael

Joshua Foley

Alan & Donna Poindexter, parents of Dylan Jenkins Poindexter

Tracy and Amy Vice parents of "Beth" Elizabeth Dawn Livingood

Robert and Gretchen Jordan, parents of Jordan Leigh Jordan

## Love Gifts: A Thoughtful Way to Remember

Love Gifts are a beautiful and loving way to remember a loved one. Through Love Gifts, we are able to reach out to others with our brochures and newsletters as well as obtain books and other information for our library. We truly appreciate every Love Gift, donation and sponsorship. Our Chapter work is done by volunteers and these donations help us reach out in many ways, including the preparation and mailing of the newsletter.

## Refreshments

Some of us like to remember our child's birthday or the anniversary of his or her death by bringing a cake or cookies to the meeting that month. We would appreciate having you bring a special treat to any meeting. You may also want to bring and share a picture of your child.

## The Compassionate Friends National Office

P.O. Box 3696

Oak Brook, IL 60522

(877) 969-0010

[www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)



## Candle lighting

Sunday, December 8 at 6:30 p.m.

South Elkhorn Christian Church

4343 Harrodsburg Road

Lexington, KY 40513

Please bring a dessert to share

before and after the candle lighting.

# Our Children Forever Loved and Remembered

## November Birthdates

11/1 **Daryl Clinton Barnes** Son of Vada and Mike Barnes  
11/1 **Kimberly Ann Holder** Daughter of David and Sondra Holder  
11/2 **Ash Coffey** Son of Stacy Coffey  
11/3 **Taiann Nicole** Daughter of Sue Wilson  
11/4 **Brian Staats** Son of Juanita Staats  
11/8 **Ralph Winton Wesley** Son of Gen Wesley  
11/8 **Randy Blake Johnson** Son of Randy and Doris Johnson  
11/11 **Patrick McDonnell** Son of Bob and Ann McDonnell  
11/13 **Joseph Carl Richardson** Son of Jim and Jean Richardson  
11/20 **Ruth Ann Proutey** Daughter of George and Sarah Hudgins  
11/22 **Isaiah Thomas Stewart** Son of Connie Stewart  
11/23 **Debra Cay Stinson** Daughter of Bill and Letha Stinson  
11/23 **Amanda Williams** Daughter of Donna Riley  
11/24 **John Thomas Parks** Son of Rosemary Parks  
11/24 **Marcie Reynold Thomason** Daughter of Barbara and Bill Thomason  
11/27 **Bobby Lee Grimm** Son of Brenda and Peter Grimm

## November Remembrance Dates

11/1 **Brian Alan Frith** Son of Larry & Rowena Frith  
11/2 **Jason Randall Johnson** Son of Sundae and Brad Park  
11/2 **Christy Weldon** Daughter of Connie Weldon  
11/2 **Zane Gregory Brown** Son of Gale and Joe Brown  
11/8 **Colleen Christine Owen** Daughter of Diane and Andrew Owen  
11/12 **Becky Fister** Daughter of David and Meriam Fister  
11/12 **Lonnie Gene Centers** Son of Oneida Centers  
11/14 **Sherilyn Annette Adams** Granddaughter of Ann Milton Adams  
11/16 **Jonathan Walker Mayberry** Son of Jonathan & Stephanie Mayberry  
11/19 **Jennifer Lee Guenther** Daughter of Helen Burch  
11/20 **Ashley Riggs**, Son of Sharon Bellows  
11/21 **Paul Travis Hickey** Son of Al and Sandy Hickey  
11/21 **Allyson Mailfald** Daughter of Bill and Carole Mailfald  
11/21 **Joseph William Minor** Son of Pat and Joseph S. Minor  
11/28/1989 **Taylor Joseph Gallant**, Son of Beth Taylor Gallant

*Know that there is hope. Know that many, many bereaved parents who have been  
in the same painful place that you are now have found life meaningful again.  
Know that you will too.*

# Our Children Forever Loved and Remembered

## December Birth Dates

12/1 **Cody McClure Speer** Son of Lin and Mark Simmons  
12/1 **William Fredrick White** Son of Fred and Rebecca White  
12/2 **Michael "Mikie" Varnell Norton** Son of Mike & Vada Barnes, Varnell Norton  
12/4 **Jennifer Lee Guenther** Daughter of Helen Burch  
12/8 **Chad Hammons** Son of Dottie and Walter Hammons  
12/5 **Shannon D. Robinson** Son of Dale and Teresa Robinson  
12/7 **Evan Charles Thomas** Son of John and Keila Thomas  
12/11 **Michael Rhodes Burton** Son of Harold and Pat Burton  
12/13 **Zack Camp** Son of Mary Camp  
12/19 **David Wayne Meade** Son of Sue & Fred Meade, Brother of Susan Bayes  
12/21 **Christopher Andrew Keefe** Son of Michael & Anna Keefe  
12/21 **David Alexander Keefe** Son of Michael & Anna Keefe  
12/23 **Will Fister** Son of Gayle and J. W. Fister  
12/24 **Hank Butler Scolf** Son of Michael and Doretta Scolf  
12/27 **Frank Thomas Glowatz** Son of Frank and Dawn Glowatz  
12/28 **Bessie Renee Root** Daughter of Patricia Root  
12/30 **Noah Edward Kenawell** Son of Mike and Andrea Kenawell

## December Remembrance Dates

12/1 **Debra Cay Stinson** Daughter of Bill and Letha Stinson  
12/2 **Kevin Wayne Gardner** Son of Doug and Vicky Gardner  
12/2 **John Martin Laswell** Son of Frances Shaver  
12/6 **Jacob Daniel Akin** Son of Becky Akin  
12/8 **Noah Edward Kenawell** Son of Mike and Andrea Kenawell  
12/12 **Timothy Richard Woodworth** Son of Richard and Sharon Woodworth  
12/12 **Robert "Rob" N. Lamb** Son of Carol Lamb  
12/14 **Robert Allen "Robbie" Joseph II** Son of Mary Treadway  
12/21 **Christopher Andrew Keefe** Son of Michael & Anna Keefe  
12/21 **David Alexander Keefe** Son of Michael & Anna Keefe  
12/23 **Keith Allen Gadbois** Son of George H. Gadbois  
12/24 **Louis Tsey Gakpo** Son of Seth & Philomena Gakpo, Brother of Paul Gakpo  
12/28 **Michael R. Lucas** Son of Anne & Ed Lucas  
12/28 **Renee Peterson** Daughter of Roy and Juanita Peterson  
12/29 **Julie Dawn Hall** Daughter of Sharon and Don Hall  
12/29 **Tiffany Creech** Daughter of Jim and Karen Rice

There is sacredness in tears. They are not the mark of weakness, but of power. They speak more eloquently than ten thousand tongues. They are the messengers of overwhelming grief, of deep contrition, and of unspeakable love. ~Washington Irving

## Our First Christmas Without You.....

By: Kelly Goff

I feel so strange, sad and mad letting this Christmas pass,  
Not even knowing what you would have wanted from St. Nicholas.

Just because you're not here physically, I know you had to drop by.  
I'm sorry there were no gifts for you, nor a stocking hung nearby.  
Your stocking was tucked away and kept out of sight,  
No presents wrapped for you my love, what a stupid oversight.  
We thought we were saving everyone some tears by not putting some  
your things out,  
When all that we did was make it worse, you were missing and nowhere  
to be found.

My promise to you from now on my love is, not one Christmas will ever pass,  
without a gift for you under our tree, proving our love for you will  
always last.

All of the ornaments you ever made were hung on the tree with care  
But no one insisted they put the star on top, that was always your job  
and we so badly wished you were there.

Unable to give you a hug or even a kiss  
Bug, your presence here at home with us, we sure do miss.  
In our hearts and our minds sweet memories of you abound,  
Still our house feels so empty without having you around.  
Your deep raspy voice and genuine belly laugh,  
the pitter patter of your little feet up, down and all around.  
A smile so contagious, eyes sparkling, mischievous and bright,  
Yet not a sole could ever deny you, our beautiful blessing and absolute delight.

WHITT GOFF, you are missed more than my words can ever express,  
Holiday cheer wasn't felt this year by a family under such duress.  
It's impossible for us to find happiness wrapped inside a cardboard box,  
when all that we truly long to have is you back home among our flocks.

Our wonderful Whittybug, oh how you tied us all together,  
A lifetime seems much too long to have to wait until forever.  
Please God grant us a little peace inside our hearts,  
A Band-Aid of sorts for us help mend all the broken parts,  
A reprieve from all this grief that is much too profound.  
Our family is still so broken just not having him around.

Merry Christmas to my sweet Whitt. Mistakes were made this holiday but  
they will never be made again.  
With All My Love, Momma





HOLIDAYS AS WELL AS OTHERS SPECIAL DAYS CREATE EVEN MORE STRESS ON US.

BEREAVED PARENTS HAVE FELT EVERY EMOTION KNOWN TO MAN AND MORE SINCE THE LOSS OF THEIR SON OR DAUGHTER. SO HERE WE ARE AT THE HOLIDAYS POSSIBLY FOR THE FIRST TIME OR GETTING THROUGH ***IT ONE MORE TIME.***

LET'S TRY AND FIND SOMETHING THAT MAY LIGHTEN YOUR HEART AND SOOTHE YOUR SOUL DURING THIS HOLIDAY TIME.

FIRST OF ALL WE HAVE RIGHTS AND WE CAN ELECT TO EXPEDITE OUR RIGHTS TO SURVIVE.

### **The Bereaved Holiday Bill of Rights**

- **GIVE YOURSELF PERMISSION** TO FEEL WHATEVER YOU ARE FEELING. YOU ARE NOT RESPONSIBLE TO MAKE OTHERS COMFORTABLE OR HAPPY.
  - **GIVE YOURSELF PERMISSION** TO FEEL GOOD, TO LAUGH AND HAVE FUN. FEELING GOOD AND LAUGHING RELAX YOUR BODY AND ALLOWS YOU TO REGAIN SOME STRENGTH FOR A FEW MOMENTS DURING YOUR GRIEF. YOU ARE NO WAY BEING DISRESPECTFUL TO THE MEMORY OF YOUR CHILD.
  - **GIVE YOURSELF PERMISSION** TO CRY WHEN THE PAIN BECOMES TOO MUCH. CRYING HELPS YOU.
  - **GIVE YOURSELF PERMISSION** TO TAKE A REST FROM THE STRESS OF GRIEF. TAKE A WALK, LISTEN TO SOOTHING MUSIC, GET A MASSAGE.
  - **GIVE YOURSELF PERMISSION** TO HAVE YOUR CHILD REMEMBERED IN A WAY THAT IS MEANINGFUL TO YOU THIS HOLIDAY SEASON.
  - **GIVE YOURSELF PERMISSION** TO CHANGE YOUR HOLIDAY TRADITIONS IF DESIRED. TRADITIONS ARE SUPPOSED TO BRING COMFORT NOT DISTRESS.
  - **GIVE YOURSELF PERMISSION** CHANGE YOUR MIND OVER AND OVER DURING ANY GET TOGETHER, EVENT OR PARTY. YOU MAY NOT KNOW IF YOU CAN OR CANNOT HANDLE UNTIL YOU ARE FACED WITH IT.
- GIVE YOURSELF PERMISSION** NOT TO SHARE YOUR FEELINGS IF SOMEONE ASK. "I AM FINE" IS OKAY TO SAY.

#### Care Tips

Remember friends, always have a Plan "B". If you plan to attend a function of some sort, holiday or not!

Make sure you drive or have someone that will take you home the moment you are ready to leave.



## Accept the Likelihood of Your Pain

- When you are facing the holiday without the one who has been so close to you, a good starting point is with this awareness: chances are it will be a painful time. You may wonder how you will ever make it through
- This may or may not comfort you, but it is true: your pain is a sign you have been blessed to draw very close to another. You have loved and you have been loved. The hurt you feel is an indication of your wonderful humanness, your sensitivity, your openness. It is a proof that another has touched you deeply, even as you have touched them. While you may wish you did not hurt as much as you do, you dare not forget that your pain is none other than the result of your joy.
- Even so, you may feel you would like to bypass the entire holiday period and not participate in it at all. That's a common response. During the final two months of the year, however, holiday reminders are visible almost everywhere you look and audible in almost everything you hear. It is impossible to avoid the impact of the season. The energy you would spend evading what is going on all around you will be more creatively spent adapting to the reality of what this particular season holds for you.
- Similarly, it is probably unwise to pretend everything is perfectly normal, and that this year's festivities will be no different than any other year's. The death of this important person in your life has created a conspicuous void. You may feel that, of course, any time of the year. But this is especially the case during the holidays. You expect to include those you love in your holiday celebrations – with the meals you share, with the cards you write, the gifts you give, the rituals you re-enact. The one who has died, however, cannot be included, at least in the way you wish. And you are reminded of this time after time in the way families are portrayed on TV, in the way loved ones are referred to in holiday songs, in the idealistic images everyone carries inside about these special times.
- **Remember this:** few holidays are as picture-perfect as we'd like to believe. It may help to admit that from the start.
- It is equally important not to decide in advance that the approaching holidays will necessarily be horrendous. While it may have its difficult moments, the approaching holiday time does not have to be an absolute catastrophe. More often than not, people report that the experience itself did not turn out to be as trying as they feared. Chances are good that can be your experience, too.
- Yes, you will probably feel pain. Yes, you may wish this year's calendar would skip over November and December. But, no, it does not have to be awful. There are things you can do to help.
- Feeling whatever it is you feel
- Express your emotions
- Plan ahead
- Take charge where you can
- Turn to others for support
- Be gentle with yourself
- Remember to remember
- Count your blessings
- Do something for others
- Harbor hope



### Empty Stocking

Each Christmas we had stocking stuffers. Our son, Tyler, died at age 17 after a riding accident. I broke down that first Christmas when I put his up and realized I didn't need to put stocking stuffers in it. I started writing a letter to him, about a page long, and sticking it in there. I just tell him in the letter how much I love him.

Vicki Blount, Enid Oklahoma



### Thanksgiving Angel

It was on a Wednesday, the day before Thanksgiving. "I need to keep reminding myself that this is my mother's funeral and not an extension of Brad's," I remember saying to the funeral director, the same man who helped us bury our son exactly eight weeks before. Unlike her grandson, who died suddenly, Mom had been in declining physical health for some time. Her mind, however, was alert and clear. When it was obvious she would only last a few more days we put out the call and all nine of her surviving grandchildren came in from around the country to say their goodbyes. The emotions ran deep, but Mom was at peace. She was eighty-five years old, tired of fighting the health issues and was ready to join our Dad, who had passed on a few years earlier.

Thanksgiving was the next day. Although it was usually 'our' holiday my brother and sister-in-law agreed to host it this year

as we were in no shape to do so. Our mother's death would make this an extraordinary Thanksgiving. Along with my brother's family and mine, my three sisters and their families were all in town. It had been many years since we were all together. Eerily, I began to understand we could never be all together again. Not in this life, at least.

After dinner someone suggested that all the cousins stand together for a photo. I'm sure no harm was meant, but it was heart wrenching to see our other children and their cousins reunited minus Brad. The picture, emotions aside, turned out quite good. My wife could not look at it without falling apart so she had a recent photo of Brad superimposed in the background and slightly above the rest as if he is a guardian angel looking down on his cousins and siblings. That's how I think of him now: Our guardian angel, helping his grandparents there, and keeping an eye on us here.

Every year now, we put the picture on the Thanksgiving table to remind us of our missing children who are in another 'state.'

### Meeting Information

#### Lexington

First Tuesday of Every Month  
6:30 p.m.—8:30 p.m.  
Hospice of the Bluegrass  
2321 Alexandria Drive  
Lexington, Kentucky

#### Meeting Format

Doors open one-half hour before meeting times to provide the opportunity to visit with old friends and acknowledge new ones. Please plan to arrive early so the meeting can begin on time.

#### Winchester

Third Tuesday of Every Month  
7:00 p.m.—9:00 p.m.  
Hospice East  
417 Shoppers Drive  
Winchester, Kentucky

### Practical Advice

*This column is dedicated to providing ideas to help you find your way through the grief.*

**From: Tabitha Jayne,**  
**Transformational Loss Coach**



Dance is a great way of tapping into deep emotions and connecting with yourself after loss. When I talk about dance I don't mean the kind of dancing you do on a Saturday night but rather solo dancing to allow self expression. It's very hard to let yourself get caught up in music and dance with abandon when there are others around.

This type of dancing is a throwback to using dance as part of rituals and ceremonies. The key is the intent behind the dance. Find some music you are attracted to. Create an intention for your dance. I know that after my brother died a lot of my intentions were all about expressing my anger safely. Maybe you want to express your love, let go of pain or just tap into something you can't express.

Moving to the music in an authentic way allows you to tap into deep emotions and express them. It's not important that you don't know what they are only that you have expressed them. Dancing also boosts your immune system which is lowered after loss. This means that you are working on a physical and emotional level creating powerful internal change.

It can be intimidating, at first, to do this in a group. Pick a song you like. Make sure you are alone and put it on loudly. Stand up and close your eyes. Listen to the music and feel it with your body. Then slowly let your body move in its own rhythm. As you're alone you don't have to worry about looking silly. Experience how this feels. You have nothing to lose.

**From: Susan Zimmermann**

Begin by jotting down memories, little or big ones. You might want to pull out an old photo album or scrapbook or an object to jog your thoughts. Now read over your list. Choose one item from your list that you want to write about. Give this memory a context, a beginning, middle and an end. Make it rich in detail. Muster up the courage to digress, for it is in the digression that you will discover what you really want to remember. From time to time pick another and another item from your list. Write about each with detail and digression. After a while you will have a wonderful collection of vignettes or short stories that will be yours for keeping or sharing.



**From: COPE**

Plant a tree, bush or garden in honor of your child. A perennial that grows year after year will continue to remind you of the light your child brought into your life. If your child had a favorite flower, consider adding that to your garden.

Wear something special. A picture of your child in a locket, a pin she made for you. A color that was his favorite. These things will help you feel connected to your child.

Create a reminder of your child around the house. A collage or other art project, a memory box, an afghan or pillow with your child's picture on it. Something made especially in honor of your child will help to honor and work through your grief.



### **Holiday Aches**

Printed from "Where Are All The Butterflies" with permission.

After the first few holiday seasons after my daughter's death, I thought I had licked the holiday doldrums. After all, two, three, four years had passed. I was unprepared for the dull ache I battled throughout the holidays in 1993; however, it didn't dawn on me until the middle of January why.

December 1993 was the first time since 1989 that both my surviving sons and their families, my step-daughter and her family had been all together during the holidays. I had been looking forward to having them all home at the same time once again. The cousins (all my grandchildren) would be able to renew acquaintances, and I could watch their interaction with interest and glee.

Yet all during the season, I was plagued with a longing, an all too familiar ache. I missed my daughter's presence. Her widowed husband had remarried in May that year, and he and his new wife were also included in our family gathering. I liked his new wife very much. But I suppose subconsciously, I was reminded even more of my daughter's absence. As I wrote my Christmas letter to my daughter Teri and put it into her

Christmas stocking, unbidden tears chased themselves down my cheeks. I pushed my thoughts away from sadness; I reminded myself how lucky we were to have known and loved her, and to know and love her still.

Later I realized what should have been obvious to me during the holidays. Although our family was altogether, it wasn't the same as it used to be. Teri was missing from the scene. It's one thing to hold her spirit in our hearts and minds, and quite another to have her sitting in her usual place at the table or leading us in Christmas carols.

We all missed her, even after nearly eight years; and we talked about her often. We had a wonderful holiday together that I wouldn't have missed it for the world. I hope we will have many more such reunions. Next time, though, I'll be wiser. I'll know why the ache is there, why the joy is tempered slightly and why as long as I live my life and our family's life together, will be forever altered. The difference will always be noticeable, I imagine. But then, the difference Teri has made in each of our lives is and always will be obvious too.

### **Special Memories**

Holidays provide opportunities for memorializing our children in special ways. Here are a few of the things we can do:

- Take a wreath, decorated tree, Menorah, dreidel, etc. to the cemetery.
- Light a candle representing the baby and let it burn all day.
- Donate a few hours of service to a favorite charity.
- Hang an ornament or decoration for the baby.
- Put thoughts and feelings about your child on notes and wrap them up or tie them to the Christmas tree or put them in the baby's special stocking. This is an excellent opportunity for younger children to express their feelings.
- Send flowers to a hospital or nursing home in your child's memory.
- Make a contribution to charity in your child's memory.
- Donate a new toy or article of clothing to a children's shelter.
- Plant a tree or shrub and watch it grow as the years pass.

## Cultural and Religious Holidays

Holidays in general, and the winter holiday season in particular, are always difficult times for bereaved parents. They bring back vivid personal memories of happier years and inspire painful day-dreams about what might have been. Even worse, by giving the world permission to go out and have a good time, they seem to make a mockery of the bitter facts of our lives. We try to protect ourselves, we try to mind our own business, but even for those who are in no mood to celebrate there's no escape. The symbols of celebration are on every street corner and everywhere we go we are insistently exhorted to be merry, to be happy.

Getting through the holidays is hard, there is simply no getting around it. We can make things a little bit easier for ourselves, however, if we are realistic both with ourselves and with relatives outside our immediate family about what we will and will not be able to do. The first step is to set priorities - to decide what is important to us about this holiday and what is not. Do we really need to send out greeting cards this year? Can we dispense with some of the baking and decorating? Would it be okay if someone else hosted the family dinner? Ideally, all members of the immediate family, including children, should be involved in the making these decisions.

A change in the normal holiday tradition can help to minimize painful memories in a way that is surprisingly effective. We may want to consider spending the holidays away from home, for example. On the other hand, we may find that scheduling the festivities for a different day or attending religious services at a different place of worship is enough of a change. Perhaps we will discover that our experience of the holiday has deeper meaning when we reach out to others in need by making a donation in memory of our child, volunteering our time for a worthy cause, or inviting a foreign student or senior citizen to share our abundance. Who knows, perhaps we will decide to incorporate some of the alternatives we have explored into a brand new holiday tradition.

### The Compassionate Friends Credo

We need not walk alone. We are The Compassionate Friends. We reach out to each other with love, with understanding, and with hope. The children we mourn have died at all ages and from many different causes, but our love for them unites us. Your pain becomes my pain, just as your hope becomes my hope. We come together from all walks of life, from many different circumstances. We are a unique family because we represent many races, creeds, and relationships. We are young, and we are old. Some of us are far along in our grief, but others still feel a grief so fresh and so intensely painful that they feel helpless and see no hope. Some of us have found our faith to be a source of strength, while some of us are struggling to find answers. Some of us are angry, filled with guilt or in deep depression, while others radiate an inner peace. But whatever pain we bring to this gathering of The Compassionate Friends, it is pain we will share, just as we share with each other our love for the children who have died. We are all seeking and struggling to build a future for ourselves, but we are committed to building a future together. We reach out to each other in love to share the pain as well as the joy, share the anger as well as the peace, share the faith as well as the doubts, and help each other to grieve as well as to grow. We Need Not Walk Alone. We are The Compassionate Friends.

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