



The Voter

The League of Women Voters
of the Space Coast
www.lwv-spacecoast.org



Volume 36: No. 2

October 2014

Mission: The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Timely Topics Brunch

League of Women Voters of the Space Coast
American Association of University Women
NAACP – Central Brevard Branch
present



“No Labels”
Guest Speaker Rich Bartholomew

What: Buffet Breakfast at Suntree Country Club

When: Saturday, October 25th

Time: 10:00 a.m.

Address: One Country Club Drive, Melbourne, FL 32940

Cost: \$19.00

Reservations to Doreen Archer at 321-622-4071 by Tuesday, Oct. 21st.

Public is Invited.

No Labels is a national movement of Democrats, Republican and Independents dedicated to a new politics of problem solving that will replace the current culture of conflict and division in our government. **No Labels** believes that common ground does exist if our leaders are empowered to find it. . **No Labels** has the only forum for regular cross-party meeting and problem solving on Capitol Hill. More than 90 members of Congress make up the **No Labels Problem Solvers Coalition**. A National Strategic Agenda is being created with input from people across America. Senator Joe Manchin, a Democrat from West Virginia and Former Utah Gov. John Huntsman, a Republican, are the Honorary Co-Chairs of **No Labels**.

Rich Bartholomew is a semi-retired New Yorker who has been based in Jupiter since 2001. His 45 year career involved jobs at all levels of government. In the beginning of the 1980's he served as the Senior Human Resources Analyst for the U. S. Senate Budget Committee. He provided staff support to former Senator Pete Domenici and (then) Congressman Leon Panetta as they hammered out bipartisan budget deals in the first years of President Reagan's term. For 13 years he represented the New York Legislature in DC and at national gatherings of state officials. The U.S. Treasury borrowed him from Cornell University in 1995 to provide budget guidance to developing countries, especially those involved in the transition away from Communism. In 2014, he has been working part time for the U.S. Government and the United Nations in Jordan and Moldova.

He is committed to **No Labels** agenda for "stopping the fighting and starting the fixing" in our nation's affairs.


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Thank you to our Underwriter of the Month

Underwriter of the Month



Florida Power and Light Company



President's Corner

Marilynn Collins & Priscilla Griffith

Dear Leaguers,

Election time: the time to consider a common occurrence at the polls, low turnout, especially low turnout for the primaries. *Florida Today* featured an article after the August 26th Primary Elections by guest columnist, Daniel Tilson. It deals with low turnout. Brevard's turnout was 21.91 percent while the State's was 17.55, the lowest since 1998.

Tilson's title asked "Does anyone care about voter apathy?" Furthermore, he claims that political insiders make no effort to turn non-voters into voters. His "tongue in cheek" suggestion was that Florida might want to take "a cue from Lost Angeles" and have "election ballots double as lottery tickets." (note: Los Angeles did not use this desperate option but one can only imagine what effect such a gimmick would have on election outcomes.)

To illustrate his thesis, he offered some comments on the behavior of one party's insiders in three South Florida counties which are a stronghold for one party. In the primaries the insiders did not try to connect with "young, racially and ethnically diverse and working class voters which should be its powerful base."

Rather, the outcomes were determined by party leaders, club activists, interconnected private, corporate and special interests and party machinery" in other words, the usual insiders game.

Insiders money is spent on contacting proven voters. Having gotten the maximum campaign funds, they "leave the impoverished outsider candidates to tackle the costly challenge of turning non-voters into voters."

Tilson asserts that even a very good outsider would be hard pressed to garner these votes without adequate resources and they have to choose insider votes due to inadequate resources. He does recommend some possible remedies: civics lessons with entertainment value for adults and school children "with multicultural, multilanguage versions and free TV and radio exposure. However he does not give them much of a chance of being developed in the present.

Also suggested was "an escalating sales tax break based on income and scores on a short test confirming grasp of government and legislative process"

As he began speculating on this concept, he even wondered if lower-income voters with high scores would get a gold card giving them a 50 percent tax break on every purchase, a silver card good for 30 percent and a copper card for 10 percent tax break.

In conclusion Tilson admits that this system may have a few wrinkles to be worked out. But it would be a "great way to let common folks join corporations in getting tax breaks, while promoting civic education and engagement."

This set-up would be "just the thing for insiders to work on" is his final challenge.

What say you all?

In League, Priscilla

President's Report from Marilyn Collins

Chuck O'Neal (LWVF Natural Resources State Chair) and I met with Rep. Crisafulli on August 21st in his Merritt Island District office. Deirdre Macnab had directed me to set up this meeting. The goal of the meeting was to introduce ourselves, to discuss the League's support for Amendment 1, to share that Health Care Expansion in our state is a top priority for LWVF, to see if he may be open to a compromise solution for expansion and to offer the League's support to that end.

Rep. Crisafulli does not support Amendment 1 because it ties the hands of the legislature when making decisions. They will not be able to respond quickly to changing circumstances. He also feels that the wording of the amendment may work against us as the monies generated by amendment 1 could replace monies for conservation expended by other government agencies instead of adding to the coffers. On the plus side, the issue of water will be a top priority for the 2015 Legislative Session. They are going to approach it from the big picture with a state-wide view rather than individual solutions to a particular area. Chuck O'Neal was pleased to hear this. Rep. Crisafulli is against accepting the money for Medicaid expansion. They want to use the State's money to solve the problem. He is amenable to compromise legislation. I shared with him that due to the Affordable Care Act, 3,000 Brevard children, who were without insurance now have health care. However, unfortunately, 10,000 are still uninsured because we will not expand Medicaid in our state.

The issue of fracking legislation in Florida was brought up by Chuck O'Neal. Rep. Crisafulli stated that he did not know enough about the issue to discuss it at this time and was appreciative of Mr. O'Neal's offer to share the work that Barry University Law students and the Center for Earth Jurisprudence (CEJ) are doing in conjunction with the League of Women Voters of Florida. The mission of CEJ is to advance legal principles, laws, policies and governance that reflect a transformative Earth-centered framework that supports the health and well-being of all of Earth's inhabitants.

I attended Marine Resources Council Brown Bag Lunch on August 5th along with Doreen Archer and Brigitte Sinton in support of Sharon Reynolds-Mixon who did an excellent job giving Amendment 1 Power Point Presentation. On August 12th, Tony Dutton and I accompanied Sharon Reynolds-Mixon to the Space Coast Association of Realtors meeting where she did another excellent presentation on Amendment 1.

Tony has been keeping a breakneck schedule of meetings and commitments with Voter Service, including the successful Bob Graham event and all the upcoming forums and Amendment presentations he has booked. Thank you, Tony, for all you do for the League. Hopefully, members are taking the new Voter Registration training so they are eligible to register voters.



Children's Committee

Maria Mogollon-Seemer – Chair

Understanding Common Core

Common Core, or the **Common Core State Standards (CCSS) Initiative**, is a United States (US) education initiative that outlines quantifiable benchmarks (basically the same academic standards regardless of the state in which you live) in English-language arts and mathematics at each grade level from kindergarten through high school.

These benchmarks were developed by a working group assembled by the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers from 2008 through 2009. Many think that the CCSS are a federal mandate, but that is incorrect. Although highly supported and encouraged by the US Department of Education, they are not a federal mandate.

There is also some confusion as to how to implement these standards. In fact, the curriculum on how to implement CCSS can vary by state, county, even city. What is "standard" is the premise behind the CCSS, which is to encourage depth, rather than breadth, in mastering topics. It also emphasizes a student's ability to analyze and explain their answers rather than simply knowing how to come up with the correct ones. Getting the answer right is not good enough anymore. So for parents who learned fractions for example, or division and other math essentials a certain way, helping their children with unfamiliar charts can be very frustrating and many, frankly, don't see the value. For a complete look at all the standards by grade, you can visit: http://www.flstandards.org/about/a_look_inside_the_new_florida_standards.aspx

Some history behind the implementation of these in Florida: In 2010, Florida's State Board of Education voluntarily adopted the CCSS, with little public input. It started phasing them in the 2011-12 school year. In the first year, Common Core was only fully implemented in kindergarten and partially implemented in other grades. Though the state's Florida Department of Education (FDOE) said districts could have started teaching the standards as early as 2010, the state has no data to show that any did.

Meanwhile, the implementation of the CCSS drew so much backlash that Governor Scott asked the FDOE in 2013 to get public comment. So the FDOE opened three channels for the public to provide input to policy makers. First, three public meetings were held throughout the state at which attendees had the opportunity to communicate support for the standards as well as concerns about the standards. Second, a website was posted that presented information about the new standards, links to the proposed standards,

transcripts of the public meetings, and other resources. A form was provided on the website for public input. Third, an email address was created for individuals to send their comments directly to the FDOE.

Based on the results of the public comment, in January of 2014, the Department recommended 98 changes to the standards adopted in July 2010 and rebranded them as the "FLORIDA STANDARDS". They are to be fully implemented across all grades in the 2014-15 school year with "some test yet undefined" to replace the FCAT (commonly known as FCAT 2.0) in March 2015.

This subject continues to polarize many school districts, as evidenced with the recent decision by the Lee County School Board to opt out of standardized testing. Although the School Board rescinded its vote a few days later, this maverick move has opened up a Pandora box.

As of the writing of this article it appears that Palm Beach County may follow suit, and that there are some strong advocacy efforts for the same in Alachua, Collier and Hillsborough Counties.

At the Florida School Board Association (FSBA) meeting held in Vero Beach on September 5th, Lee County School Board Member Jeanne Dozier presented a motion to "Compel the state to adopt a comprehensive 'opt-out' policy that would allow parents to have their students to be excused without penalty, from participating in statewide standardized or state-required assessments". Although this was tabled until December, it is opening a whole new possibility, as there is nothing in the current statute that addresses this option. A second motion to stop all testing was also tabled until December.

Currently, the Brevard County School Board will be discussing this subject at their September 9th meeting. It will be interesting to see to which side of the debate the board aligns.

There are actually many supporters of the implementation of the Common Core including many teachers, school district leaders and business people who like the concept of the standard represented by the Common Core and say it does a good job of raising the bar, preparing our students to compete nationally and globally (some sources quote as much as 75% or more of our High School graduates are not prepared for college), and helps our children to build much needed critical thinking skills.

Support for Florida Standards has been championed by the Foundation for Florida's Children led by former Governor Jeb Bush. On the group's web page Governor Bush says, "Florida has made great strides to improve the quality of education. A decade ago, the Sunshine State ranked at the bottom nationally.

(continued on Page 6)



Health Committee

Jo Shim & Connie Dobrin Co-Chairs

MENTAL HEALTH – IT TOUCHES US ALL

By Dr. C. Shannon Roberts, Member, Space Coast League of Women Voters Health Care Committee

The recent passing of Robin Williams and James Brady; the wounding of U.S. Representative Gabby Giffords; the shootings at Sandy Hook, Aurora, VPI, Columbine, and Santa Barbara; and, the daily national and local news of endless violence and substance abuse are all constant reminders of the significance of mental health in the United States, the State of Florida, and in our local community. More than likely, each of us has been impacted directly or indirectly by a loved one or acquaintance who has experienced or dealt with mental illness. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, one in four adults - approximately 61.5 million Americans - experiences mental illness or is living among those with a serious mental illness, such as schizophrenia, major depression or bipolar disorder. Approximately 26 percent of homeless adults staying in shelters live with serious mental illness, and for those without shelter, an estimated 46 percent live with severe mental illness or a substance abuse disorder.

Approximately, 20 percent of state prisoners and 21 percent of local jail prisoners have a "recent history" of a mental health condition. Seventy (70) percent of youth in juvenile justice systems have at least one mental health condition, and at least 20 percent live with a severe mental illness. Over half a million of our returning veterans experience posttraumatic stress disorder. Suicide is the tenth leading cause of death in the U.S. (more common than homicide), with veterans representing 20 percent of suicides nationally. In 2012, about 9 million adults reported serious thoughts of suicide. Of those, about half receive mental health treatment each year. Economically, serious mental illness costs over \$200 billion in lost earnings annually.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, only 17% of U.S. adults are considered to be in a state of optimal mental health. Depression is the most common type of mental illness, affecting more than 26 percent of the U.S. adult population. **It has been estimated by the year 2020, depression will be the second leading cause of disability throughout the world, trailing only ischemic heart disease.**

Florida's ranks 49th in per capita mental health spending when comparing spending levels to other states. According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, of Florida's approximately 18.3 million residents, close to 660,000 adults and 181,000 children live with serious mental illness or mental health conditions. Florida's public mental health system provides services to only 26 percent of adults in need. Of Florida's state

mental health agency spending, 56 percent is on community mental health services, relative to 42 percent on state hospital care, compared to the national average of 70 percent on community mental health services and 28 percent state hospital care. Over 150,000 involuntary exams are administered in Florida annually under Baker Act provisions (legal procedures for mental health examination and treatment), which is a 50 percent increase in the number of cases during the past 10 years. Receiving facilities include crisis stabilization units (CSU's), short-term residential treatment facilities (SRT's), and hospitals.

Locally in Brevard, crisis stabilization services are provided by Circles of Care and Wuesthoff Behavior Health Services; Parrish Medical Center also provides services to Baker Act (mental health) and Marchman Act (substance abuse) clients. Forensic adult mental health services are provided by the Brevard County Jail Complex and state hospitals for Brevard residents throughout the State of Florida. 2-1-1 Brevard serves as the County's crisis hotline and connects people on Florida's Space Coast to services by providing crisis intervention and information about and referral to community services.

With respect to the Affordable Care Act and its impact on mental health services, "it will provide one of the largest expansions of mental health and substance use disorder coverage in a generation, by requiring that health care plans on the Health Insurance Marketplaces cover mental health and substance abuse use disorder services. Health plans must now cover preventive services like depression screening for adults and behavioral assessments for children. Beginning in 2014, most plans will not be able to deny coverage or charge more due to pre-existing health care conditions, including mental illnesses." (mental health.gov).

The challenges with respect to mental health are substantial, ranging from: (1) building public awareness and understanding of the significance and magnitude of mental illness; (2) looking at the concern from a large systems solution perspective given its interrelationship with substance abuse, criminal behavior, domestic violence, homelessness, wartime service, etc.; (3) determining what programs, services, professionals, and facilities are most effective; and, (4) providing sufficient resources to make these available to those in need.

This is a broad overview of mental health - an important component of Health Care in the United States and our community. Please contact the LWVSC Health Care Committee if you are interested in working on: available mental health services, advocacy, best practices, legislation and what is needed to deal effectively with mental health in the United States, Florida, and on the Space Coast.



Natural Resources

Susan Little – Chair

Report from Maureen Rupe

Natural Resources Consultant.

Port Canaveral and National Security

(Follow-up from August Voter)

One of the major milestones for improving and expanding the Port St John inland port was the Port Authority signing a 35 year agreement with Gulftainer to manage cargo operations at the port and Gulftainer making an \$100 million infrastructure investment at the Port. From a June 1, 2012 news article in the Florida Times-Union, Jacksonville was Gulftainer's number 1 choice and was offered a \$250 million investment deal. Jacksonville turned it down stating Gulftainer wanted too much of their property. I've heard Gulftainer has approached other Ports.

Orlando Sentinel was one of the many news agencies that reported U.S. Representative Duncan Hunter on the Congressional Transportation Committee asked the Treasury Secretary to make further security reviews on the Port Deal with GT USA (Gulftainer). Representative Duncan's letter states "It is my understanding that the agreement marks the first time a Middle Eastern company will fully operate a U.S. cargo terminal." Concerning the review, Representative Hunter's letter stated the review "is not for the purpose of immediately terminating the agreement but rather making the appropriate determinations in the interest of U.S. national security. This should be the case for all investments in which foreign investors acquire or gain operational control of critical U.S. infrastructure used in international trade."

The Orlando Sentinel story reported that there was major security concerns brought up back in 2006, when it was found that Dubai Ports World had purchased several U.S. port operations. The Congressional Committee voted 62-2 to not allow Middle East operating port operations. The Port Authority seems to think this is entirely different as port operations and security will be ran by the Port Authority, but security experts have stated for years their concerns for having terrorists using shipping containers and conducting terrorist operations at the port or inland areas through truck or rail. The Port Authority claims it plans to be the largest port in the world. Problem is there is no guarantee all the containers from the Middle East will be checked.

The original story on the port states the contract is with GT USA, and part of a privately owned company Gulftainer. They don't say Gulftainer is a middle-eastern owned company, which is the primary reason the current security review is taking place.

A Port Authority story states Gulftainer already operates on 5 continents. The Jacksonville story details that statement by stating Gulftainer operates container operations at three ports in the United Arab Emirates, as well as in Iraq, Pakistan, Russia, Brazil and Turkey. United Arab Emirates does support some terrorist groups, Hamas for one. This will be the first Port in the United States that allows a Middle Eastern County to operate its container operations.

There will be a Sierra Club/Partnership joint meeting on October 23rd, 6:30 pm, at the Unitarian Church on U.S. 1 (just north of Suntree Blvd.) to discuss this threat to the lagoon. Make no mistake, this project could kill the lagoon and officials are carrying on.

Reference:

<http://www.portcanaveral.com/general/news/releases/06232014.php>

<http://members.jacksonville.com/business/2012-06-01/story/jaxport-turns-down-250-million-deal>
<http://www.orlandosentinel.com/business/brinkmann-on-business/os-congressman-review-canaveral-gulftainer-cargo-20140729,0,3469843.post>

<http://www.portcanaveral.com/general/news/releases/08152014.php>

~Welcome to our New Members~

Elizabeth LaPointe

Jonnie Swann

Please add new members to your membership book. Addresses, phone numbers and e-mail addresses of new members will be sent to you by e-mail. If you have friends who belong to League of Women Voters of the Space Coast who do not receive e-mail, it would be helpful if you could contact them and give them addresses and phone numbers of new members to add to their membership books. We discontinued printing this information in our *Voters* because of privacy concerns. Our *Voters* are distributed to libraries and other community locations. They are found on line at our web site, www.lwv-spacecoast.org

The League of Women Voters of the Space Coast will promote in all aspects of the League's activities, a philosophy of inclusion that reflects the diverse composition and issues of the community.



International Relations

Joyce Calese

"In the era of globalization, knowledge of the world is increasingly imperative. A capacity to see the whole world and to appreciate the values and aspirations of all of its inhabitants, no longer is a luxury but an urgent necessity." Quote from Noel Lateef, CEO Foreign Policy Association. The International Relations Group of the League of Women Voters of the Space Coast consists of many LWV members who wish to attend and study international issues. By a vote taken in 2010 it was decided to open the meetings to the public. The group meets at the Satellite Beach Library. Meeting times and topics are listed each month in THE VOTER newsletter, in the newspaper and at the library.

In October the group will meet from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. at the Satellite Beach Library to discuss the National League of Women Voters' position and policy on International Relations. Lucia Watson will lead the discussion. Members are encouraged to come prepared to talk on current issues facing the world today.

This is our time to reconnect after the summer recess and to welcome new members. See you soon.
Mary Nicolay



Understanding Common Core continued from Page 3

Nearly one-third of third graders couldn't read on grade level and close to half of fourth graders were functionally illiterate. Too many students were dropping out of school, while those who stayed weren't gaining the knowledge to succeed after graduation.

Today, Florida's elementary and middle school students are reading above the national average. Math proficiency is on the rise. More students are taking and passing rigorous courses that prepare them for college. The graduation rate has jumped by double digits and fewer students are dropping out. All thanks to the foundation of core principles. Starting with the A+ Plan in 1999 and continuing today, our reforms combine high expectations, standardized measurement, a clear and achievable system of accountability, rewards and consequences for performance, effective teaching in the classroom and more choices to customize education to each student."

However, many are still opposed to implementation of the standards. The one group that has been very vocal on their opposition of standardized testing is the Florida Stop Common Core Coalition, a statewide organization led by Dr. Karen R. Effrem that has united parents, teachers, small business owners, and many others against the implementation of CCSS. They oppose CCSS, tests, and data collection because they claim that "the system will harm the quality of

education in Florida, violate our children's, families', and teachers' privacy rights, deny state sovereignty and local control, and be unsustainably expensive."

In a recent analysis conducted by Dr. Effrem the group claims that there are major state and federal statutory and constitutional flaws with Florida's current mandated state standardized testing program. The Florida Common Core Coalition has published their findings indicating that Florida's current mandated testing violates the Florida Constitution, State statute, the Tenth amendment and three different federal laws.

What is not clear at this point is what happens now? If a school board or parents opt out of testing, will graduates get a high school diploma? How will teachers and administrators demonstrate classroom performance, which is tied to salary adjustments? How will school districts that receive state funding which is tied to a letter grade be funded? What about Title I funding, which is tied to statewide assessment?

Since the FSBA won't be discussing this until December and the FDOE will not be responding until next year, it appears that at least for the school year of 2014-2015 the implementation of the Florida Standards and some sort of standardized testing is a given. We will keep on monitoring this very interesting subject.



Board Bytes

- 123 members
- Barbara Dutton is one of 11 members on State Membership Task Force.
- Hospitality chair or chairs are needed. Please call a board member for more information.
- Voter Guide for November election can be found on our website www.lwv-spacecoast.org
- Health Committee is planning a Media Event in October. Time, date, and location will be announced.
- Members are encouraged to take and pass a new LWVF quiz and requalify to register voters.
- Additional presentations planned in October for the 3 amendments on November ballot.

Thank you

We thank the following dentists and doctor for their contributions of dental supplies to homeless students in Brevard County.

Dr. Richard Conforti - Merritt Island

Dr. Merrill Grant - Satellite Beach

Dr. Lisa Goff - Melbourne

Dr. Adam Wiener - Melbourne

Dr. Jesse Yates/Dr. Jonathan T. Calderon -
Satellite Beach

LWVSC School Recycling Awards Program

The LWVSC Recycling Awards Program is a partnership between League of Women Voters of the Space Coast and Brevard Public School. The aim of this program is to help instill in our students an appreciation for the environment and the need to conserve our precious natural resources. The winners for the 2013-2014 school year were:

West Melbourne School for Science for Elementary School Competition and **Space Coast Jr./Sr. High School** for High School Competition. Honorable Mention certificates were awarded to **Croton Elementary, Jupiter Elementary, Fairglen Elementary and Challenger 7 Elementary.**

A special thanks to LWVSC member and our League's School Recycling Awards Program Coordinator Marcia Booth, President and Founder of Recycle Brevard, Inc. and to Laura Kandiko from Brevard Public Schools for her support.

**Marcia Booth and Marilyn Collins presenting
Awards to the Winning Schools**



**Jo Shim, Deirdre Macnab &
Barbara Dutton at Natl. Convention**



Membership Leadership Development Program (MLB) training weekend in Lakeland, Florida

Susan Little and Lucia Watson attended the two day MLB training weekend in Lakeland, Florida on Aug. 23rd & 24th. We found it very worthwhile and educational. We were able to network with other Florida League members from Palm Beach to Pensacola. Florida now has 31 LWV leagues. The purpose of this conference was to "learn valuable planning skills to grow the League." We want to engage potential leaders and increase membership. We will be giving you a lot more information on this in coming months. There was emphasis on partnering with other groups, and using media options. There were two national coaches there. One was from Colorado and one from Alabama. We met the Florida coaches who have a lot of league experience. One state coach will be assigned to work with our local League. Working with this coach will normally be by monthly over-the-phone conversations. Susan and Lucia will be sending more information to the board on this program and the board will make the decision as to how to go forward with this program.

~October Calendar - Members welcome at all meetings~

Tuesday, October 7 - Board Meeting at Suntree Library at 5:30 p.m. (large meeting room)

Tuesday, October 14 - International Relations Committee meeting at Satellite Beach Library - 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

National League of Women Voter's position and policy on International Relations and discussion on current issues facing the world today. Lucia Watson leading the discussion.

Monday, October 20 - Health Committee Meeting at Suntree Library at 6 p.m.

Saturday, October 25 - Buffet Breakfast at Suntree Country Club at 10 a.m. Guest Speaker is Rich Bartholomew and Topic is "No Labels".

October Meeting Date and Time to be announced later. - Local Government Committee. Call Priscilla Griffith at 321- 723-7101 if you would like to attend a Local Government Meeting.

October Meeting Date and Time to be announced later. - Children's Committee.

October Meeting Date and Time to be announced later. - Natural Resources Committee.

Voter: Monthly publication (except June, July, August)

Issue Date: October 2014

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