

PostScript

SDSU Retired Faculty/Staff News

Summer/Fall 2020

Volume XXXIV No. 3



“WHAT DID YOU DO WHILE STUCK AT HOME?”

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Cover: Covid-19 policy on SDSU's Interstate 8 freeway sign. An electronic billboard began flashing campus messages in 1998; this redesigned version dates from 2016.



Nancy Farnan

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: FINDING LIKENESS AMONG DIFFERENCES

*Nancy Farnan, College of
Education*

To say we're living in fraught times is an understatement: intense political tensions, violence in the streets with worldwide protests, and a global pandemic because of a virus we know as Covid-19 that has altered almost every aspect of our lives.

In this context, Barbara Duriau, who lives in Amsterdam, launched the Facebook group "View from my window" on March 22, 2020, with a group of dedicated volunteers. Her goal was simple, to connect people around the world in these times of quarantining, a time that for many has included feeling isolated. This group quickly experienced explosive growth, now with nearly 2.3 million members. The moderators created a few rules for posting: Participants take a picture of their view from a window and tell who they are, where they are, and when they took the picture. In addition, the moderators are clear about protocol: "Be kind and courteous. No political comments or harassment. No hate speech or bullying. No promotions or spam."

People started joining the group and posting their pictures. Some of those posting mentioned that isolation had enriched their lives with a slower pace, more time with immediate family, and a return of birds and wildlife. They also shared personal experiences with cancer treatment, loss of loved ones to Covid-19 and other maladies, and anxiety related to being unable to see family and friends. Many expressed appreciation for the shelter of home and the nurturing power of what they viewed every day outside their windows: lakes, rivers, and oceans; mountains, both snow-covered and rocky; forests; blue skies and storm clouds; sunrises and sunsets; cozy patios and sprawling fields; animals from domestic sheep and cattle to wildlife, including deer, elephants, and giraffes; cityscapes and neighborhoods; front yards and backyards.

TO THE MEMBERSHIP: FYI

Change has come to the campus parking permit procedure!

The green laminated card for your dashboard, along with a visit to the parking office, are things of the past. The next time you need to renew your SDSU parking, start by emailing Parking Services at parking@sdsu.edu. You will be asked to provide information about your vehicle—license plate number and vehicle make, model, and color. This information will be stored in a database and when parking personnel patrol the lots, they will scan your plates looking to find a match in their system.

One benefit of the new procedure is that you are allowed to register two license plate numbers per person. That's good news for those of us who sometimes drive the other family car to campus.

For more information regarding qualifying for a retiree parking pass or obtaining a permit, please contact Parking Services at (619) 594-0113 or parking@sdsu.edu. ♦

In response to each post, people replied with hundreds and sometimes thousands of comments. They expressed appreciation, in this time of isolation, for the pictures and descriptions that made them feel connected to others from around the world. They commented that the group's pictures were a travelogue taking them to places they had never seen. They sent good wishes and words of sympathy to those who shared personal struggles, often briefly sharing their own personal challenges. They expressed appreciation for the beauty in the picture posted, whether it was an image of a small patio or balcony, open prairie, a Paris street with iconic apartment buildings, or expansive ocean scenery.

The locations posted are from places well known to regions perhaps not so familiar. The following is not an exhaustive list of postings, but it shows the breadth of locations: Albania, Austria, Australia, Bahrain, Bali, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Canada, Channel Islands, China, Colombia, Croatia, England, France, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kyrgyzstan, Libya, Lithuania, Macedonia, Mauritius, Mexico, Montenegro, Morocco, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Scotland, South Africa, Seychelles, Singapore, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, The Netherlands, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United States of America, Vanuatu, Wales, and Zimbabwe.

In "View from my window," people spontaneously communicated from more than 25% of the world's countries. If a theme emerges from this global connectivity, it is that although we live in different places, under different governments, and in different cultures, there is a fundamental sameness among us. Our humanness makes us all so much alike.

I'll share a brief excerpt from a statement accompanying a picture from Pittsburgh, PA.

I share my gratitude for this little patch of green where I find solace in the darkest of times. The majesty of nature remains unchanged, in fact its beauty seems more vivid these days.... We are the guardians of each other's spirits. Let us not lose sight of our humanity for the gift that it is, and take heart in the knowledge that every moment of every day is sacred.

Once the pandemic is controlled and life out of isolation begins again, albeit perhaps in a different form than before, the "View from my window" moderators plan to create a traveling exhibit that includes many of the pictures that represent this amazing example of global communication, keeping it alive as a reminder of the connectivity, compassion, empathy, and love that grew out of a small idea—to share with others who we are, where we are, and what we see during a very challenging time of isolation and uncertainty.

As we experience 2020 in different ways, there are many similarities. It might be interesting to explore virtually some of the places where the posts originated, maybe explore some place you haven't heard of before. Create your own travelogue. Travel safely!♦

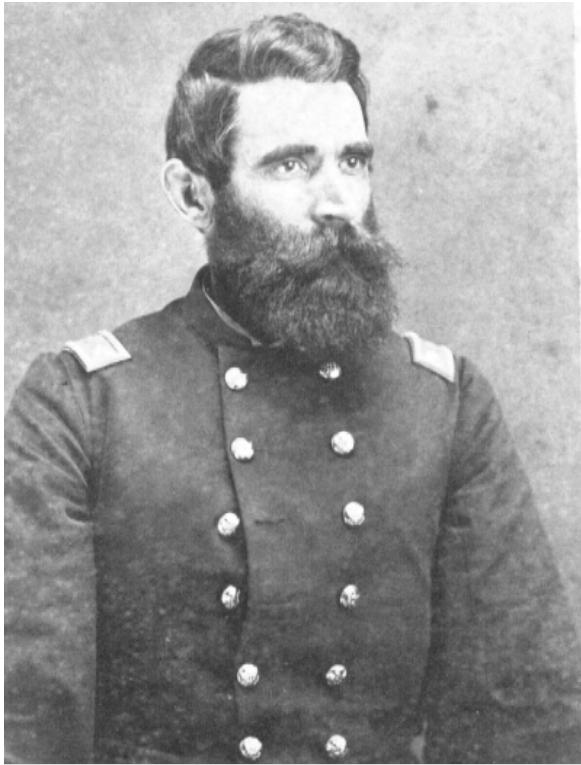
GIFT FROM NORMA SUMMERSGILL

SDSURA has many things to thank Norma Summersgill for, both during her career at SDSU and after she retired. As Benefits Officer, Norma's advice was invaluable, delivered with warmth and kindness. When she retired, she became a founding member of the Retirement Association, and was SDSURA president for three terms. Norma passed away in October 2019 but her generous giving continues; she has left the SDSURA Scholarship fund a gift of \$25,000. For some details of Norma's life that you may not know, here is a short biography courtesy of University Relations and Development.

Norma was born in Manning, Arkansas to Jesse D. and Mellie E Adams. She moved to El Cajon, CA in 1955 with her husband who had taken a job as an engineer at General Dynamics. In 1960, she began her career working at San Diego State University. The first seven years she worked in the office at the Physical Plant and then transferred to the Personnel Office where she became the Benefits Officer for the University. Norma became well known for her service to the faculty and staff until her retirement in 1985. In 1986, she received the Mortar Board award for Outstanding Staff Member. Norma was a charter member of the SDSU Faculty and Staff Retirement Association, along with Dr. Aubrey Wendling and Sue Earnest, and served three terms as President of the Association. She also served as Treasurer of the National Organization of the Association of Retirement Organizations in Higher Education (ARÖHE) formed in 2002. Norma was also a longtime member of the First Lutheran Church in El Cajon, serving as an Elder as well as volunteering to help in the office and with bulletins.♦



Norma



Lt. Colonel Joseph Bruff, photo taken in 1865

A BOX FULL OF OLD LETTERS

Barbara Hemmingsen, Biology

A box full of old letters—how many of these have gone to the landfill or into the fireplace? But this particular sturdy green box with hundreds of letters was passed down through the generations of my father's family. The box was preserved by my great uncle, William Bruff, before coming into the possession of cousin Dorothy Bruff who passed it to me with the understanding that the letters would be given eventually to an archive.

A scientist by education and profession, I was probably not her best choice, but she knew of my liberal education at the University of California, Berkeley, and she may have known of my early interest in history, superseded in my teens by my fascination with bacteria and other microbes.

Then close to retirement from science, I took a look at the letters. I wondered if the author, my great, great grandfather, had fought in the most talked about battles—Gettys-

burg, Chancellorsville, Antietam—but no, they seemed to be written in Tennessee, Georgia, and Texas. There followed the painstaking transcription of the 253 letters, followed by research to place the events described into their historical context. Joseph Bruff wrote 231 surviving letters to his wife while he was an officer in the 125th Ohio Volunteer Infantry, Army of the Cumberland. This army fought in the western theater where, as I was to learn, the Union forces made the most progress towards victory, if a civil war can ever claim such a term at the cessation of hostilities. Very few of Anna M. Bruff's letters survive so the five in the collection are truly priceless.

The above two paragraphs are from the preface to my book concerning the life of Joseph and Anna Bruff during the Civil War.

I began transcribing the letters shortly after my retirement. Once the transcriptions were complete, I spent many years researching the military, political, and social history of the period, while writing chapters and drawing figures. My husband and I enjoyed the research trips to the battlefields in Tennessee (Nashville, Franklin, Chattanooga) and Georgia (Chickamauga, Rocky Face Ridge, Resaca, Kennesaw Mountain, Peachtree Creek near Atlanta), as well as other scenic places seen by Joseph: Sequatchie Valley, Tennessee; Roswell, Georgia; New Orleans. Our trip on the river boat, *American Queen*, from New Orleans to Memphis allowed us to experience travel on the Mississippi River. On July 3, 1865 near Memphis, Jo-

seph wrote to his wife about his experience on this mighty river: "I set out on the front of the boat until about midnight enjoying the fine moonlight and thinking of home and friends, had I had thee with me I would have felt perfectly happy[sic] and content, but as it was I enjoyed a kind of day dream of home and almost felt I was with thee."

Progress was slow. Life intervened in many ways. Health issues emerged. Down-sizing our house in San Diego and moving north to Seattle to be near our daughter took away big chunks of time not to mention the inevitable disorganization of books, papers, files, and thoughts. But then came the pandemic. Recall that Kirkland, just east of Seattle, was the first hot spot of the virus in the United States. We stayed home as instructed. I accelerated the book project to nearly full time in early March. It is not finished but good progress, thanks to the pandemic, has been made and maybe soon I can say *fini*. ♦



Anna Marie (Ogden) Bruff, 1830-1887

OUR MISSION

To serve the mutual benefits and interests of retired and near-retired faculty and staff. To facilitate continuing contributions by members to the furtherance of the scholarly and other professional objectives of San Diego State University.

YOU WANT ICE WITH THAT?

Joyce Wright, Teacher Education

With the advent of Covid-19 and the mandate to quarantine, it took a little time for it to sink in: no lunches with friends, no Osher classes, no roaming through Balboa Park. We really were going to be stuck at home. As the days wore on, so much free time became a bit stifling. I was weary of cleaning closets, pulling weeds, and sorting through old Christmas letters. Activity highlights included watching the neighborhood dogs parade by on their daily walks and driving to the drop-off mailbox at the post office. I needed action--something different--something exciting to liven up my daily routine. But you know the adage, "be careful what you wish for." That very evening as I was going through my nightly rounds of locking doors and turning off lights, I heard an unfamiliar noise in the kitchen.

A peculiar sound was coming from the refrigerator and I spotted a small puddle forming at its base. "No problem. This will be easy to remedy," I thought as I ran to get rags to cover the floor. The sound grew from a murmur into a gushing noise. Soon every towel in the house was drenched as water began pouring out of the back and sides of the fridge



Joyce, dealing with the flood

as well. With all the might my 5-foot frame could muster, I managed to wiggle the refrigerator away from the wall and the downpour of water became more intense. I scurried outside to turn the main water line off but had no luck. I returned to the kitchen as the torrent continued. I squeezed behind the fridge and grabbed onto a thin plastic tube that was gushing water in every direction. I danced and

wove this way and that, holding onto the plastic tubing, attempting to divert the water away from my kitchen toward the garage. I was not making a dent in taming the storm. What to do? Whom to call? It was 10:00 o'clock at night, and what plumber would come now? Sopping wet, I escaped from the flooding briefly and managed to call my daughter. "We'll be right there" she promised.

Sure enough in about 15 minutes the whole family contingent arrived. My son-in-law managed to turn off the water supply, my granddaughter and grandson put a shop vac to work sucking up water, and my daughter directed the whole rescue team. Finally the water ran its course. My son-in-law's diagnosis was correct: the tube feeding water from under the sink to the icemaker had split. Who knew the simple pleasure of having ice cubes-at-the-ready could lead to such a circus?

In the weeks to come my days were filled with phone calls to insurance agents, visits from flood damage companies, trips to Home Depot, and carpet shopping. I soon longed for the simple days of gazing out my front window at the neighborhood parades of dog walkers and my post office treks. Take to heart my sage advice: **be careful what you wish for.** ♦

SDSU BOARD MEETING, ZOOM STYLE



SDSURA Board Members at October 9 Board Meeting. Row One (top), left to right: Patrick Papin, Barbara Barnes, Dan Gilbreath, Rick Schulte. Row Two: Nancy Carmichael, Nancy Farnan, Lesley Bryant, Dean Popp. Row Three: Cheryl Trtan, Gordon Schackelford, Kimberlee Reilly, Robin Fishbaugh. Row Four (bottom): Ron Young, Amy Walling.

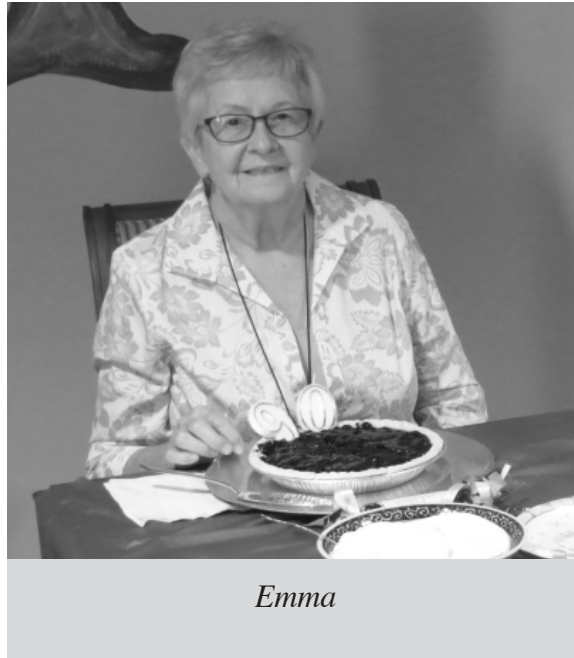
WHAT DID I DO?

Emma Berdan, Library

WHAT did I do? I took my temperature every day starting March 23 and documented it until June 30. My place of residence is a retirement community, Paradise Village, in National City. They take good care of us, making sure we are social distancing, wearing masks, having no visitors, and delivering the food we select to our doors.

We were all ecstatic when they opened up the gym and salon on June 9. Three and a half months without a haircut, but I could not feel bad because all of us had to go through the same situation. Before the gym opening, I was up early to walk around the Village but when the gym opened, I was one of the first to enter at 6 A.M. five days a week until we were closed down again on July 14.

In July, I did a virtual tour of the Chula Vista Heritage Museum. Ruth



Emma

Sax was a Holocaust survivor and her daughter, Sandy Scheller, is working diligently to film and interview other survivors and relatives. The title of her project is "RUTH, Remember Us the Holocaust." Ruth was a resident

here at the Village. She was in a camp and unable to have her Batmitzvah at age 13. I was able to attend her Batmitzva when she was 90 here in San Diego a couple of years ago. In the tour are nine links to watch some of the interviews.

A project I have been working on has boosted my morale. Going through albums and noticing that my husband had written quite a number of poems, I decided to have them published. I was referred to FedEx Business and they are so helpful. There are more than eighty poems, and I am having them bound to pass on to all of his relatives. I have ordered twenty-five copies and I am excited about it.

I celebrated my 90th birthday on July 26 with no friends from SDSU, no church family, not even my personal family. With social distancing, masks, and monitoring with no more than six residents at a time, I had a wonderful celebration. ♦

TREES OF SDSU

Barbara Barnes, Enrollment Services

It was nearing the end of September and I was hoping to visit SDSU to take some photos for *PostScript's* next issue. I hadn't walked on campus since the pandemic-related restrictions of last spring, and I wasn't sure whether I'd be allowed to now. After contacting SDSU's information office, I found that the campus was open to visitors, but that everyone must wear a mask.

So, on a Saturday, with mask on, I set out to explore SDSU once again. I walked from the east side to the west, past the historic arches and tiled roofs of the college's original core, down to the Arts and Letters building, back along the road leading to Scripps Cottage, and uphill towards the old Administration building. I encountered only a handful of people along the way, and was reassured to find that despite the lack of students, the campus was full of life. Roses blooming, emerald lawns, fountains flowing, birdsong. The koi and turtles were alive and well in the Scripps Cottage ponds and even the carillon in Hardy Tower was chiming.

The campus has always been a lovely place for a walk and it still is. As long as permission remains granted, I recommend a visit. However, in lieu of that, there are ways to see the campus virtually. One of them comes from the College of Sciences, an interactive photographic tour of the trees of SDSU: <http://www.sci.sdsu.edu/SDSUTrees/>. What a variety of specimens grow! If you're not ready to step on campus yet, this tour might tide you over until you are. ♦



Queen Palm near Hepner Hall



SDSU
September 26, 2020

**FROM POSTSCRIPT'S PAST . . .
FALL/WINTER 2017**

**BIRDING SAN DIEGO STATE
UNIVERSITY**

Casey H. Richart and Kevin J. Burns,
Department of Biology

More bird species have been recorded from San Diego County than any other county or area of similar size in the United States. This is due in part to the numerous habitats in the county, including open ocean, bays, estuaries, coastal sage scrub, chaparral, oak woodland, coniferous forest, and deserts. According to the citizen science platform eBird, 543 species of birds have been recorded from the county, with well over 200 species recorded from some locations. With 103 species currently reported on eBird from SDSU (<http://ebird.org/ebird/hotspot/L716168>), our campus is a great place to watch birds.

At the time of this writing, 388 independent eBird checklists have been reported since 1999 from SDSU, though most date from 2010 to the present. These checklists span the calendar year, which allows us to see seasonal trends in species occurrence. Many occur year round, meaning they winter and likely nest on campus. These include Cooper's Hawk, Mourning Dove, Anna's Hummingbird, Nuttall's Woodpecker, Black Phoebe, Cassin's Kingbird, American Crow, Common Raven, Bushtit, Bewick's Wren, Northern Mockingbird, Orange-crowned Warbler, Song Sparrow, California Towhee, House Finch, and Lesser Goldfinch. Spring is an exciting time to watch birds on campus when many species that winter south of us return for summer breeding. These include the spectacular Hooded Oriole as well as the Pacific-slope Flycatcher, Western Kingbird, and Cliff Swallow. Likewise, fall brings the welcome return of many species that breed in the north but spend their winter in the mild climate of San Diego. These species include Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Cedar Waxwing, Townsend's Warbler, White-crowned Sparrow, and the ubiquitous Yellow-rumped (Audubon's) Warbler. Other species just pass through campus for a few weeks during spring and/or fall migration, such as Sharp-shinned Hawk, Rufous Hummingbird, Warbling Vireo, Hermit Thrush, Nashville Warbler, Black-throated Gray Warbler, Western Tanager, and Bullock's Oriole. This seasonality is not specific to SDSU, but for all of San Diego.

There have been many changes to the birds seen on campus over the years. Great Horned Owls used to nest in Hardy Tower,



Black Phoebe, SDSU resident

and Brewers Blackbirds were reported in the hundreds from grassy fields, but both have apparently been extirpated from campus. Likewise, Cliff Swallows were more abundant and American Robins were commonly seen. A large palm just south of Hepner Hall used to house a colony of Rose-ringed Parakeets before Landscape Services removed their nest cavity. In contrast, many species are newcomers to campus. The Allen's Hummingbird can now be regularly seen in the Mediterranean Garden, and the Dark-eyed Junco has established breeding territories in the last few years. Another recent arrival is an introduced species from Asia, the Scaly-breasted Munia.

Where to bird on campus? There are some species that are only found in specific places on campus. For example, Aztec Canyon (north and west of Chapultepec Hall) is the last remaining patch of coastal sage scrub on campus, and the only place to see California Scrub-jay, Wrentit, California Thrasher, and Spotted Towhee, and is the most likely place on campus to find a Red-tailed Hawk nest. This canyon may soon be converted into dormitory housing, so if you're trying to build an SDSU bird list, you may want to see these species soon. On the east side of campus, the riparian woodland along Alvarado Creek is perhaps the best place to bird in terms of overall species diversity. In the winter Belted Kingfishers can be seen hunting up and down the creek, Mallards become common, and as many as five species of herons and egrets are possible. In the spring, the riparian vegetation provides nesting habitat for Red-shouldered Hawk, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Common Yellowthroat, Yellow Warbler, and Wilson's Warbler. White-throated Swifts breed here under the trolley line. This is also a good place to pick-up campus "rarities" such as Ash-throated Flycatcher, Lincoln's Spar-

row, and MacGillivray's Warbler—species easier to see other places in the county, but difficult to encounter on campus. The flat open mesa including Tony Gwynn Stadium to the large grass field south of the Music building (ENS 700) does not have a diverse avifauna, but are good places to find birds that prefer open-spaces such as Killdeer and Say's Phoebe; sometimes Peregrine Falcons perch atop the stadium lights. Speaking of Peregrine Falcons, in some winters, a Peregrine has set up residence atop Hardy Tower, feasting on the local pigeons and doves.

Perhaps the most relaxing place to bird campus is Aztec Terrace, where you can grab a coffee or cold drink from the market, sit in a comfy chair, and enjoy swifts flying by at eye-level, gulls and egrets moving up and down Alvarado Canyon, and perhaps catch migrating raptors and vultures pass overhead. On the main campus, Scripp's Pond and the Mediterranean Garden are often good places to see wintering, breeding, and migrant birds. Birds are perhaps more abundant in this area during drought years, when they are attracted to the irrigated landscape. Around the last week of March when the orchid trees are flowering around the lawn above Scripp's Pond, Rufous Hummingbirds aggregate at dusk in the dozens, aggressively defending nectaries with whistling wings and threatening *tchew-tchew-tchew* calls, creating an energetic sunset of pink flowers and red hummingbirds. The best time to bird campus is Saturday or Sunday morning when all is quiet with the exception of calling birds. During weekday mornings, a birder must contend with the hustle and bustle of students rushing to class and the atrocious sound of the ubiquitous leaf-blower, which for unfathomable reasons some humans perceive as an improvement to rakes and brooms.

There are many birds to enjoy at San Diego State University. Maybe you will come across an old favorite or something new. Birds have wings, and you never know just who might show up. In the words of coach Steve Fisher, "Eyes and ears Aztecs!;" keep them both open, for there are many wonderful birds to see at San Diego State..

Update, 9/30/20: A birder visiting SDSU reported that with no human beings on campus, the area was surprisingly birdy. In about 15 minutes of birding, he sighted four species of warbler (Orange-crowned, Yellow-rumped, Wilson's and Black-throated Gray), at least two Allen's hummingbirds, as well as the more common residents. ♦

JUST WATCH

Tom Donahue, Linguistics and Asian / Middle Eastern Languages

One of the things a retired person can do during Covid-19 is to sit and fidget and patz about with imponderables. For example, it has always been a source of wonder to me that the influence of an important person on others cannot be measured accurately while that person is still alive. When I was an adolescent, the American President was Dwight Eisenhower, and for a young person like me (intense and sheltered) what was shared from adults about that man was that he showed seriousness of purpose, probity, rectitude, and righteousness—and we all knew that he had been the leader of the forces in Europe, a genial manager of thousands, the victorious leader over the Nazis, the President of Columbia University, and now: President during the Cold War. Those of you who were in the work force at the time will recall that the corporate climate during those years was impersonal, coercive, and rather grim; but for youngsters in school the spirit of the times could reinforce ambition and competitiveness. I was one of those caught up in the gusts of all of it, and was class president and National Honor Society President in high school, and student representative to the faculty senate at my college and



Samuel T. Black, first president of SDSU. Photo taken 9/26/20

president of a fraternity that won plaudits from its national organization. It was all rather gray flannel suit and stark staring earnestness, but there you have it.

So what is modeled forth at present and what will the influence be on university students of the near future? Let's start by asking where is the purpose, the probity, the rectitude, and the righteousness? Keep in mind that the current President is 74 years old,

and has spoken millions of sentences in his lifetime. To give him credit, perhaps 250 of those sentences have had truthful content. This fact alone will have outstanding cultural influence. Specific results are challenging to predict, because when prevarication is a preferred mode of communication, it is difficult for a listener to know what the speaker really believes. But it is certain that among university students in the coming decade or two, we onlookers are likely to see strong cultural change. I personally foresee that new student societies will take shape. There will be a Pre-Copernican Society that will press for the abolition of the Astronomy and Geology Departments. There will be a Hammurabi Society for Pre-Law students. Membership will swell in the Truth is Whatever You Can Get People to Believe Club. We will see the requirement that those entering student government will have to register high on the new Learning Disability Test. Beyond that, Speech Communications and Political Science departments will be pressed to give courses in Applied Demagoguery. Interest in Pre-Med courses and in Nursing will decline sharply. There will be little pressure for social change, although one will see activists in the student parking lots driving cars with Weinstein for President bumper stickers. You'll see.♦

NOTES FROM THE GRAND CANYON

Ed Deaton, Mathematics

In May, 1992 five mathematics professors from SDSU decided to walk from the South Rim of the Grand Canyon down and up to the North Rim, then return. They were Lee Van de Wetering, John Elwin, Richard Hager, David Mackey and myself. We needed ten people in order to make reservations at Phantom Ranch at the bottom of the canyon, so we advertised for five people to join us. They were interviewed by John. We met at the South Rim. There were two young women, maybe in their low 30s. For some reason I thought I should make sure the women knew what they were in for. I approached them and before I said anything I heard one say to the other "The last time I ran from rim to rim it took me eight hours." The other replied "I have climbed forty of the sixty fourteen thousand-foot high peaks in Colorado, and I expect to do the remaining twenty this summer." I sneaked away very quietly.

At Phantom Ranch there were four dormitory buildings, each holding ten people segregated by gender. There were also several small buildings for tourists who rode mules to the bottom. We were in our dorm resting before dinner when a young woman came to the door and said, "I wish to speak to Hugo." A man in his mid 50s came to the door and said, "I am Hugo."

The woman said, "I wish to speak to Hugo from Germany."

The man said, "I am Hugo from Germany."

The woman said, "I wish to speak to Hugo from Hanover, Germany."

The man said, "I am Hugo from Hanover, Germany."

We were all listening by this time. A young man then came to the door and said, "Hi Sally."

Both the men were indeed Hugos from Hanover, Germany. In fact they had attended the same secondary school, albeit 30 years apart. The man was a physics professor visiting the states.♦



Birdhouses painted during Ed's four-month visit to Vancouver

NOT STUCK AT HOME

Ed Deaton, Mathematical Sciences

I was not stuck at home. I was fortunately at my daughter Evelyn's home in Vancouver, WA when the virus struck!

In January 2020, Evelyn and I went to India and Nepal for 19 days. We started in Mumbai where we met Dawa Yangji Sherpa. Dawa is a woman from Lukla, Nepal I have known since 1992 when she was one year old. This was Dawa's first trip outside of Nepal. Very exciting for her and us. Evelyn and I arrived back in the States on Feb 5, 2020.

I had made arrangements for a home exchange with a couple in Istanbul for

two months, beginning March 5. He arrived in San Diego on March 5. His wife was to follow. I was to spend three days at my daughter Janice's home in Pacific Beach, then fly to Istanbul on March ninth. At the urging of my daughters and a friend, on the afternoon of March eighth I cancelled my ticket. I stayed at Janice's until March 13 when I flew to Vancouver, WA to spend four days with Evelyn, then return home to San Diego. About March 14 the virus struck. So I was still there until July 12, 2020.

The man from Turkey stayed at my condo until May 20 when he went to Houston to visit a friend. His wife never got here. He went home in July.

A four-day visit turned into a four-month visit. We started a 1000 piece jigsaw puzzle. Long time to finish. Ron, her husband, did not help. We painted arrows for a travel pole. Ron made bird houses and we painted them. I spent hours every day playing Township. Melanie Branca, Mathematics, and I go from silver to golden and back most weeks. If you wish to join us, we can stay in golden. I play Ken-Ken a lot.

Most days I stayed in the house. I took neighborhood walks. I stained a lot of wood for a new fence. A few times I went on a ride when they were running errands. I stayed in the car.

In early July, Mary Dee Dickerson, Family Studies, came from San Jose to visit for a week. This was different. A

new person in the house. We even went to Astoria (Oregon coast) for lunch at an outdoor restaurant!

Three times I bought a ticket home to San Diego. Twice I cancelled. I have money in "wallets" in Delta, American, and Alaska Airlines. My latest ticket to SD was for July 12, 2020. I flew home. Daughter Janice picked me up and quarantined me for 14 days; then and only then I came home to my condo downtown. I now spend a few days at each place every week. On August 18 I celebrated my 90th birthday. There were 12 of us outdoors scattered about. I think I will do it again next week. ♦



Balloons for Ed's 90th birthday



COLLECTIONS

Marilyn Harder, Aztec Shops

Although I don't think of them as part of a collection or that how I acquire them as "collecting", books are something I view as friends, always available to relate to me, always ready to comfort me; a constant source of thoughts, ideas, spiritual guidance; and they offer me experiences that often allow my emotions to soar or tears to fall. I have an individual relationship with each one. If I am looking for Life experiences to identify with, or feelings of Love, or Enlightenment, Peace, Power, Beauty, or Joy, there is always a book to match my feelings, support my values, or lead me to explore new ideas.

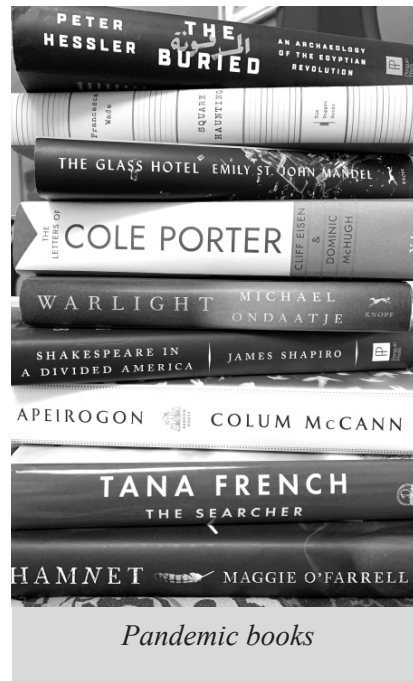
Left: "Friends, always available," book shelf in Marilyn's guest room.

PANDEMIC READING

Maggi McKerrow, Theatre

Two novels I read in the last month or so describe life during pandemics. I loved them. They are both set in the past. *Hamnet* by Maggie O'Farrell is about young William Shakespeare, his involvement with and marriage to Anne Hathaway and the lives of their three children, Susanna, and the twins Hamnet and Judith. Very little is known about Shakespeare's life in Stratford, but O'Farrell takes what is known and presents her version of the story. She is so inventive. Her description of the romance between teen-age Will and the slightly older Anne is completely believable. I want it to be true—and probably will never be able to think of their relationship in any other way—even when I watch that wickedly clever PBS show about Shakespeare called *Upstart Crow*. O'Farrell makes us understand why smart young Will hates working in his father's smelly glove making business. He manages to escape by heading off to London to drum up glove customers—finding them in theatre companies that need fancy gloves to perk up costumes. What a great idea. I love fiction! The part of the novel that relates to the pandemic is sad. History tells us that Shakespeare's son Hamnet died at the age of eleven. We do not know why. O'Farrell, who has turned Anne into a herbalist and a healer, suggests that both Judith and Hamnet get the plague which was common at that time. She treats both but only Judith lives through it. There were frequent plague scares in the late 1600's. Theatres often had to close for months. Some people believe the forced closings gave Shakespeare time to write his best plays. Judith survives but Hamnet dies. If you want to know more you will have to read the book. I give it five stars.

The other novel I read about a pandemic is also written by a woman with Irish roots. Her name is Emma O'Donahue. You may know her work. She wrote the book that inspired the excellent movie *Room*. Her current novel is called *Pull of the Stars*. I could



not put it down. It is set in Dublin and describes three difficult days in a maternity quarantine ward during the pandemic of 1918. The main character is a nurse/midwife. She is assisted by a young volunteer from an orphanage and a medical doctor named Kathleen Lynn. The character of Dr. Lynn is based on a real person, but the characters of the nurse/midwife and the volunteer are so vividly described that they seem real too. The book is totally engaging and heart-breaking too. Babies are born. Some die. Some are orphaned because some mothers live and some die. A reminder of the seeming randomness of life in our pandemic. The publisher intended to publish *Pull of the Stars* next year but it came out in July because because the topic was so current. It is a book I will never forget.

Two other novels about pandemics are on my recommend list. *Station Eleven* by Emily St. John Mandel is a recent dystopian novel that explores the near future. It is set in the USA (Michigan) after a pandemic flu wiped most people out and follows the fortunes of a theatre company traveling on horseback from town to town trying to scratch out a life by giving performances of Shakespeare.

The second book is called *Year of Wonders: A Novel of the Plague* by Geraldine Brooks and is set in 1666. I read it years ago and enjoyed it. Brooks is another clever novelist. She's American.

I can't resist telling you that recently I got a jolt of literary surprise. As usual I am reading several books at the same time—listening to one book while I walk and actually reading at least one or more. In two books I suddenly came upon passages vividly describing places that I knew well. Woke me right up. That has happened to me in the past, but not twice in one day. If this has happened to you perhaps you too have found the experience unsettling. I had to slow down and re-read parts of one book and search internet images for the other. The first book is a novel (which I actually don't recommend) featuring teen-age sisters who went to the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor in 1963, I was there too that exact same year having some of the same experiences described in the novel, taking classes, walking the diag, eating in the student union, going to football games, noticing signs for the Students for a Democratic Society meetings and watching performances by the student Union group called Musket. The second—a fascinating travel book I highly recommend was written by a Brit named Roger Deakin, another wonderful writer. It describes his adventures during a year he spent swimming in rivers, moats, canals, swimming holes and other legal and illegal spots all around Britain. It is called *Waterlog*. Late in the book he writes about swimming places in London and describes his swim in the spectacular pool in the basement of the richly appointed Royal Automobile Club building in London. I stayed at the RAC in March 2019 and also admired the pool. To this day I have regretted the swim I missed. I immediately looked the pool up online. Its remembered beauty confirmed by the images. At the time I remember thinking it reminded me of the beautiful outdoor pool at Hearst Castle. Check it out—and happy pandemic reading whether or not you choose to read about pandemics. ♦

On quarantining at home--Bob Metzger, Chemistry/Biochemistry

I hardly notice quarantine; I am busy writing. I will thank heaven for KPBS-TV. I am amused at crowd noises sounding on telecasts of sporting events in empty stadiums and arenas being carried live on television. I will note that now, in mid-August, one does not see many masks at the beach or in Pacific Beach. Don't worry, when we are out, we do wear ours. ♦

BEARING UP

*Leif Fearn, Teacher Education, and
Nancy Farnan, College of Education*

A lifetime of rising early has conditioned us to be early risers. Neither of us remembers a time when we weren't out of bed, dressed, and ready for school or work by 8:00, seven days a week, as children, adolescents, and adults. I can work any time of day. Nancy's best in first half of the day. We're up, dressed, breakfasted, bed made, and ready for the day by 9:00.

Leif's next several hours are in various physical things: walk and/or ride bicycle in and around Balboa Park and the daily habit of exercises with dumb bells. Nancy reads the paper, walks in the park, exercises to one or more yoga videos, and does pretty stuff around the condo, which includes maintaining the flowers on the patio. Often we walk to the plaza in the park together and sit over iced tea and watch the world go by. After noon we read and write. Nancy does her work for the Retirement Association. We talk with our adult children on the telephone and keep up with emails.



Nancy and Leif

As necessary, we keep the larder stocked with groceries, visit a wine store or two so there's always wine for dinner, and top off our gasoline tanks. Nancy's grandson requires some attention right

now, what with introduction to higher education. We get together with friends for socially-distant conversation over wine and light dinners outside on patios

Then it's around 4:30, and we pour glasses of wine, which we sup for an hour over the afternoon news on TV. Dinner at 5:30 – 6:00, after which we watch TV series and films we didn't in the past. We have found *Medici*, *Longmire*, *Money Heist*, and *Foyle's War* compelling. We found *Breaking Bad* sufficiently compelling to watch to the end, but terribly depressing. We're both fans of *Fraiser* and *Doc Martin*, so we watch those, and the three Sunday shows we've recorded so we don't have to deal with commercials.

Then it's in the neighborhood of 10:00 and time for bed. There, we read until sleep takes over. The days roll along comfortably. Both of us remember days that didn't, when every day was run-run from one responsibility to another. Those are over, and each of us appreciates it in our own ways. ♦

TREASURER'S REPORT

Robin Fishbaugh Treasurer

SDSU Retirement Association Accounts as of October 7, 2020

Scholarship Endowment Fund	\$255,394.05
Scholarship Fund	\$38,912.20
Operating Account	\$21,365.18
Activities Account	\$13,920.92

Sub-total	\$329,592.35
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Bohnsack Scholarship Endowment Fund	\$53,922.19
Bohnsack Scholarship Fund	\$2,526.49

Sub-total	\$56,448.68
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Total Assets	\$386,042.03
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**FROM POSTSCRIPT'S PAST . . .
SPRING 2010**

**ENCOUNTERING HOME
TRUTHS ABROAD**

*Dan McLeod, English and
Comparative Literature*

After finishing graduate school in the early Sixties I made a half-baked application/inquiry for a Fulbright grant to Ireland. My request was rejected, but they encouraged me to apply for one of the many grants they were developing at this early stage of a program that was to transform many lives, mine included. Somehow Japanese participation in WWII qualified that country for grants. They wanted an applied linguist with an interest in second language acquisition, and with a literature student's appreciation for irony, I applied for one of these despite my lack of an appropriate background.

As fate and the mysterious ways of the State Department—in charge of the program at that time—would have it, my application was accepted. The grant involved helping Japanese universities add a speaking dimension to their English studies. The American government had some years before donated language laboratories to many national universities, but few of them had ever been used because Japanese academics saw no point in teaching anything more than translation. Indeed, one of my Japanese bosses informed me that only businessmen and whores needed spoken English. When I accepted the grant I confessed my lack of appropriate background to do this job. The Fulbright people generously offered to pick up this dropped stitch by sending me to the University of Michigan's English Language Institute for a crash course in TESL and applied linguistics. After being certified I was off for a year in



Dan McLeod

Japan. Two disturbing memories along with a couple of things I learned about my own culture by getting away from it remain with me from that year. The first event occurred on the Maebashi-Kiryu train where a stranger informed me of President Kennedy's assassination; the second was my introduction to Japan's university admission examinations. Both events haunt me to this day. I never gave my country's heedless gun violence a thought before Kennedy was shot, but who could ignore it when soon after two other mindless, heartrending killings trailed in its wake. School admissions tests may not be as ugly as shooting at people, but they too have a blighting cultural impact, and my take on both phenomena was established in that first year I spent in Japan.

Before a Japanese colleague of mine showed me a copy of the English language section of Tokyo University's entrance exam I knew nothing about such things. My colleague wanted to know what I thought of the test. I picked up a pencil and had a go at it. With a fresh doctorate in English, a multiple choice test designed to measure a Japanese high school student's command of my native language shouldn't have been

much of a challenge. The problem was that a good many of the items offered possible answers that looked equally correct to me. Still, my friend assured me, there was only one correct answer for each of the items I was puzzling over. And I wonder how most of us would deal with something like this:

1. Choose the one word that does not belong:

A. Calmly, B. Friendly, C. Patiently,
D. Quickly, E. Sweetly.

Answer: B. Reason: A, C, D, and E, all derive from adjectives; "friendly" does not.

In the end I had to guess at a lot of them, and after checking my answers with the answer key my friend's assessment was that my performance might not have been up to the university's standards. By the way, many visitors to Japan are surprised that after six years of required secondary school English, most Japanese college students cannot manage even the simplest of conversations in English. But their mastery of the minutia of English grammar and usage is truly astonishing—for all it's worth.

When I returned to the U.S., I discovered entrance exams had become a feature of university admissions here too, and their largely negative impact on school curricula was intense, and has increased with our efforts to leave no child behind. Hypocrite that I am, my distaste for such tests did not prevent me from moonlighting for Educational Testing Service for over thirty years.

As I reflect upon what I've just written it occurs to me that it might have been better to have written about drinking sake and singing songs under a blooming cherry tree. But, today is one of San Diego's rare gloomy and wet ones, and as a native too soft to feel at home in places with real seasonal weather, this always puts me in a testy mood. ♦

IN MEMORIAM

Len Williams

Spouse of Maureen Williams
Academic Affairs
June, 2020

Sharon Feierabend

Spouse of Ivo Feierabend
Political Science
July, 2020

Rachel Thompson

Custodial Services
September, 2020

Roy Kaderli

Aztec Shops
September, 2020

PENSIONS: HERITAGE VALUES OR FUGITIVE VALUES?

Tom Donahue, Benefits/CSU ERFSA Representative

Many of us closing in on a big number birth year spend time looking at what old friends have done with their academic careers. A hometown friend of mine, John “Jack” Resch, whom I knew from Youngstown, Denison, and Ohio State, went on to become a Professor of History at the University of New Hampshire, Manchester. In the sixties while I was studying historical phonology he was working up a specialty in colonial American history. In his book *Suffering Soldiers* (University of Massachusetts, 1999), he describes the circumstances under which American citizens were mobilized after the War of 1812 to grant service pensions to the veterans of the Revolutionary War. At the outset there were two causes producing this leadership initiative: the first was the active support of President James Monroe, and the second was the possible influence of Adam Smith’s 1759 work *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. The effort to give credit to the soldiers was one of Monroe’s efforts to exert leadership during his presidential campaign. And, drawing upon the dissertation research of Sarah Purcell (Sealed with Blood: National Identity and Public Memory of the Revolutionary War 1775-1825, PhD dissertation, Brown University, 1997) Resch discusses Adam Smith’s belief that as a person matures emotionally and physically in the world, over time prudence and material success naturally produce benevolence and sympathy toward other people.

Here is how that is supposed to work according to Adam Smith. As an individual matures in adulthood, he (or presumably she) constructs an imagined “impartial spectator” in life, and the individual comes to understand the needs and emotions of others through that spectator. One cannot entirely comprehend the stresses of others, but the observer sees through the imagined intermediary how he or she would be affected if those stresses impacted him or her personally. And

if in one’s own life the first person observer achieves comfort and success, that person comes to understand that gratitude, empathy, and benevolence toward others, develops naturally. Resch argues that Smith’s influence on our founding fathers in part naturally led the American public toward the gratitude and benevolence that yielded old age pensions for soldiers in the Revolutionary War (pp. 6-8).

A reading of a modern edition (Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Introduction by Herbert Schneider, Digireads. com, 2018) shows that Professor Resch does not put a strain on Adam Smith’s views. Key to understanding Smith’s discussion are the concepts of “self-love” and the impartial spectator. Smith argues that the individual is influenced by a drive toward “self love,” or self-respect in modern terms. The impartial spectator, which functions like a conscience in our modern sense, speaks to the individual who has matured emotionally, and who has accumulated an understanding of the behavior of virtuous people observed in real life. For a specific case, let us suppose there is an issue of generosity or support to the aged poor. The individual prepares the impartial spectator with an analysis and evaluation of human motives: there is first a sympathy with the observed motives, and a sympathetic understanding of the benefits passed on to a real person. Next, the motives must be widely generalizable, and the observer must understand how the general motives affect either an individual or society overall. (Part VII, Section IV) In the specific instance, out of personal maturity and self-respect, an individual concludes that the provision of pensions for the needy is an appropriate societal response. But we notice generally that over a lifetime’s experience the impartial spectator directs an individual to a significant array of personal virtues: beneficence, gratitude, humanity, magnanimity, justice, duty, self-command, moderation, prudence, kindness, modesty, fortitude, intrepidity, vigilance, circumspection, temperance, love of countrymen, constancy, and firmness (VII, III, and discussed throughout.)

Adam Smith’s discussion here is not only a character portrait of the eighteenth-century English gentleman, but a preview of the *homo economicus* described by John Stuart Mill at the beginning of the nineteenth century. In any instance this is a fascinating set of heritage values from an influential moral philosopher. The influence is profound: with Smith we have the cornerstone philosopher in our economic life, who champions self interest, rational planning, a permissive laissez-faire attitude in our system of economic rules, an absence of outside coercion, and a respect for a simple economic system and the way that rules play out automatically. But we are brought up short when we see there is a clash over moral sentiments at present: our current leadership is motivated not by beneficence or the other classic virtues, but instead resentment, disrespect, contempt, and spite. How can this happen?

Adam Smith had an answer. As people mature socially and emotionally, there comes a time when an individual can choose between the influences of benevolence and resentment in their lives. Everything in one’s developing character up until that point directs a person to benevolence; yet, as Smith treats in (II, I) a rare individual may choose to be dominated by feelings of resentment. This can come about either because one has only partially learned those social lessons affecting everybody else, or because one chooses resentment as the basic emotion in his life. If the latter is the case, the individual has made a conscious choice because he may gain something from resentment as a mode. If that is true, the person is defective, certainly an outlier; Smith believed that such an individual is an “artful knave” (III, V, and VI, I) who has an “erroneous conscience” (II, I.)

If we hold Smith’s analysis to be true, then our current political difficulties derive from hidden values, however classic and traditional, having been put to flight and then replaced with false values given to us by artful knaves. It seems that an important clarification has reached us from the eighteenth century. ♦

COMING IN THE NEXT POSTSCRIPT: SHOPPING

Maggi McKerrow, Theatre

Spending too much on Amazon? Been standing in line at Trader Joe's? Having an embarrassing amount of stuff delivered? Are your kitchen cupboards stuffed with stuff you don't seem to get around to cooking up? How things have changed. I am befuddled by shopping. Can I bring my bags to this store? Is this mask clean enough? How far is six feet? Which direction should I walk down this aisle?

This morning I noticed that I was running out of coffee beans. A year ago I would have driven over to World Market, picked up a bag or even two, then wandered around the store checking out the shelves and picking up one or two items to try. No big deal. Fun actually. Not now. I went to the World Market web site to order coffee and arrange to pick it up at the Grossmont Center store. Oops. Not working this time. You could only order six bags, and anyway they were out of my favorite. Early in the pandemic I ordered six bags of coffee and had them mailed to my house, but they took up too much valuable storage space. Whenever I opened the cabinet one or more of them tumbled to the floor



Pumpkins at Trader Joe's

along with a few other items I had overbought. New rule. Only buy stuff that will fit in. Crazy days. Somewhere I saw a hilarious cartoon (dated 2045) of a man using up the last of the rolls of toilet paper that his father had bought in 2020. Coffee. Coffee. Coffee. A necessity. What to do? Taking a chance I grabbed my mask and headed for the store which was pretty empty at noon on a Sunday. To my delight they had my favorite flavor. Guess the web site got it wrong. I picked up two bags and, for safety sake, two bottles of wine and headed for the check-out-counter. Great sense of accomplishment. I'll never know what intriguing items I missed, but at least I can have coffee for a couple of weeks while I consider how to buy another essential item.

The theme for the next issue of *PostScript* is SHOPPING. Write and tell us about your shopping adventures during the pandemic (or earlier) and we will print them in the next edition of *PostScript*. We can't wait to read your stories.♦

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Coming in the Next
PostScript:

"Shopping"

Left: Statue of Samuel T. Black, SDSU's first president from 1897 to 1910, in front of the old Administration Building. He's been outfitted for the pandemic.

DEADLINE: February 10, 2021

Please e-mail your double-spaced article of approximately 400-500 words to whitesagecafe@aol.com. If you have no access to a computer, mail your typed or clearly printed article to 4829 Beaumont Drive, La Mesa, CA 91941. Scanned photos may be sent as an attachment or mail photos to Barbara Barnes at the above address. Photos are appreciated and will be returned.

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