

Ancient Order of Hibernians



St. Brendan Division #1 Berks County, PA

Serving the Irish-American Community for over a century

INCORPORATED NOVEMBER 7, 1860 -----RE-ORGANIZED FEBRUARY 16, 1979

Visit our Website www.berkscoaoh.com



Volume XXXI/Tóirt a Tríocha a hoon - Issue #1/Eagrán a haon - Iúil/Lunasa/Méan Fómhair-July/August/September 2020

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

My Fellow Hibernians,

I hope this newsletter finds you and your family healthy and COVID-19 free. Also, with the Pennsylvania State COVID-19 mandates and restrictions loosening up, you are socially and financially recovering from the past month's inactivity, restrictions, and church and business closures. Hopefully, the dire affects of this virus are truly coming to an end, and our lives pre-COVID will return to normal.

Our division activities have been somewhat curtailed since April, and future activities pending on the aftermath of COVID-19 or a possible resurgence of the virus. We had one zoom meeting and one cancelled meeting in June. It will be assumed until the Slovak Catholic Sokol Home Association club re-opens, we will have future meetings via Zoom communications. All will be notified via e-mail of future meeting locations, dates and times.

So, you'll need to enjoy your Guinness's at home for a little while longer! Otherwise, our officers are monitoring our business activities. The membership will be kept abreast of future meetings and activities as the COVID restrictions are waived.

If anyone knows of a brother in need or sick, please contact us. Otherwise, stay safe and healthy by following the commonsense CDC guidelines to prevent COVID-19 infection. Do not let your guard down, and continue to wear a Mask and practice social distancing when outside in a social gathering!

During our restricted activity we are sorry to report that tow of our members passed away, Brother Joseph P. Riley on April 8th and Brother Craig H. Wolf on May 20th. Due to the Covid-19 restrictions the families were unable to have public wakes which limited our ability to honor our departed members with the customary performance of our AOH ritual for waking a member and posting of our Honor Guard.

NEWSLETTER

Once again we remind our members and friends that now more than ever, we ask our members to keep us informed of changes in address, phone number and e-mail addresses due to the necessity to keep our records up to date. As you recall, all members receive the National Hibernian Digest on a bi-monthly basis as part of your membership fees. We are constantly asked to make sure our mailing list provided the National Office is up to date and accurate because they constantly received returned mail when members move or change e-mail addresses. This information is now done by me locally through the national website and if there are problems it comes back to me for corrections.

You will also notice the newsletter has been reduced in size to reduce costs associated with producing the document, printing and mailing. With businesses closed due to the Coronavirus Pandemic it is getting harder to print and mail our newsletter.

MEMBERSHIP

Here we are half-way through 2020 and we have had one application for membership; actually a request for reinstatement from a member who left in 2011. We are in a vicious cycle in that in order to continue and prosper, we need infusion of new blood and fresh ideas if we are to continue into the coming years. For this reason, we urge all members to speak to family members, neighbors and friends about the AOH and what we stand for. If help is needed, please refer them to our website www.berkscoaoh.com where many questions can be answered and an application for membership is easily downloaded.

NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Have you ever given serious thought about running for office in the AOH? If so, we encourage you to come to a meeting and see what goes on and get involved. As mentioned previously, we need to get young members involved and prepare us for the coming years. We need new leaders to step forward and guide us as we prepare for the future.

We realize it is only July, but Nomination of Officers for 2021 will occur during our October meeting with election to follow in November. Our meetings are held the second Wednesday of each month at the Catholic Sokol's at 411 Crestmont St. Reading (18th ward) and begin promptly at 7:30pm and end no later than 9pm. Many meetings are over within an hour and we then spend quality time socializing where most of the good ideas are created. So, if interested please come to a meeting and see what we are about.

COMING EVENTS

07/04/20 - Independence Day
07/08/20 - General Membership Meeting - 7:30pm
08/12/20 - General Membership Meeting - 7:30pm
08/21/20 - Feast of "Our Lady of Knock"
09/07/20 - Labor Day
09/09/20 - General Membership Meeting -
9/13/20 - Feast of "St. Brendan's the Navigator"
10/14/20 - General Membership Meeting - 7:30pm

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

The names of members who are celebrating birthdays during the next two months are listed below. We have acquired the information from our membership applications, so if there are any corrections or errors please advise.

JULY

11th Fr. Robert Finlan
11th Robert J. McHale
23rd Robert McIntyre
30th Msgr. Stephen Radocha

AUGUST

3rd Michael B. Riley
9th Andrew Scott
10th Fr Eugene Ritz
11th Sean Flannery
16th John J McHale
18th John McCormack
19th Timothy J. Dillon

SEPTEMBER

8th Richard P Flannery
16th Timothy M. Kelly
17th James D. Caherly
22nd Ray Butterworth
23rd Daniel RFlannery
23rd John J. Dore

IN MEMORIUM

Tá siad ar shlí na tairrínne, Go ndeanáí Dia trocaire ar a anam, agus ar dheis De go riabh se!

(They are gone to their eternal reward may God have mercy on their soul, and may he be at the right hand of God!)

As if coping with the Covid-19 wasn't hard enough we lost two members over the past few months. Brother's Joseph P. Riley and Craig H. Wolf. For many of us, the hardest time was not being able to say goodbye to both longstanding members in a manner befitting a member of the Ancient Order of Hibernians with our ritual and Honor Guard at their viewings (Wakes).

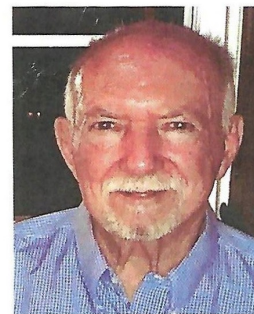


In the case of brother Joseph P. Riley, a stalwart member since the early days of our organization in 1979, he passed away on April 3rd from natural causes, just as the stay at home our Governor announced came into effect.

Although the Riley family could not have a public viewing and the funeral process was reserved to immediate family, many of our officers and members regretted that we

could not offer Joe's family our services.

Joe was proud to be from West Virginia. He served in the USMC during the Korean Conflict and graduated from Notre Dame University in 1956 with a degree in Economics. He played football and track for three years at Notre Dame. He interrupted his college education to enlist in the Marine Corp rising to Sergeant in 1st Marine Division. He was wounded in battle earning the Purple Heart.



In Memory Of

Craig H. "Doc" Wolf

esteem he was held in by his friends and family.

Brother Craig H. Wolf also passed away from natural causes on May 17, 2020. Unlike the Riley family, the Wolf family offered a drive-through opportunity to express our condolences to Craig's wife and family.

Several members were able to join the procession to greet the family and present Mass cards. The huge number of vehicles that lined up to honor Craig was a sign of the high

Craig was retired from the Pennsylvania State Police and spent years serving in the field of security here in Berks County and also

in neighboring counties. He also served as a Eucharistic Minister at St. Catherine of Siena Parish.

IRISH HISTORY -

OUR LADY OF LIMERICK By Mike McCormack



Queen Elizabeth I had outlawed the Catholic Church and it was an act of treason to shelter a priest. Sir John Bourke of Brittas, Co. Limerick was a secret member of the Rosary Confraternity of the hidden Dominicans of the City. He promoted the Rosary in his family and locality risking the enmity of the Crown by his open avowal of the Catholic Faith and protection of hunted clergy. When Elizabeth died and James, son of Catholic Mary,

Queen of Scots, came to the throne in 1603, there was a pause in the persecution as James I had promised that he would not persecute "any that will be quiet and give but an outward obedience to the law." Bourke now openly attended St. Mary's Cathedral which had been restored to the Catholics and was received with his family into the Dominican Confraternity of the Holy Rosary. However, English Catholics, disillusioned with their new king, led a failed assassination attempt against him in 1605 that triggered a new wave of anti-Catholicism and harsher legislation. On the renewal of persecution, Sir John was summoned to answer a charge of refusing to attend Church of England services and thereby committing a statutory offense. He was imprisoned, but his friend, Sir George Thornton, obtained his release; yet he continued to harbor hunted priests and protect Catholics. Each year he invited priests to secretly celebrate Mass in Brittas Castle. During one secret celebration on the feast of the Holy Rosary – the first Sunday of October – in 1606 or 1607, he was betrayed by his kinsmen, Theobald Bourke of Castleconnell and Sir Edmond Walsh of Abington. A detachment of soldiers arrived to arrest the priests and Sir John stalled until Mass was over and Fathers Clancy and Haligan escaped through a secret passage. On his refusal to co-operate, Brittas Castle was besieged. Sir John "with his helmet on his head, his shield on his left arm and his sword in his right hand, burst out and made good his escape." He made it to Waterford on his way to Spain, but was there betrayed, arrested and sent back to Limerick for trial. He refused to renounce the Catholic Faith or conform to the new state religion, stating "he could acknowledge no king or queen against the King of Heaven and Queen of Heaven. . . whoever would act otherwise was not a servant of God but a slave of the devil." He was tried by Judge Sir Dominic Sarsfield, and sentenced to be hanged, beheaded, and quartered. He was executed on Gallows Green three months later on 20 December and his body, returned to relatives, was buried in St. John's Churchyard, where no trace of it remains.

In 1625, Charles II took the throne on the death of James I and limited Catholic tolerance returned. Sir Dominic Sarsfield had renounced the Faith for political gain, but his brother kept it and passed it to his son Patrick. In 1640, Patrick Sarsfield (not the Earl of Lucan) the nephew of Sir Dominic, wanted to atone for the terrible deed of his uncle and he and his wife, Eleanor, had a

statue of the Blessed Virgin carved from oak in Belgium. It was almost life-size at four and a half feet tall. It has Mary wearing a white robe and a blue cloak decorated with stars, and her brown hair is coiled over her right shoulder. She holds the infant Jesus in her left arm and through her right hand she threads a silver rosary coming from the hand of Jesus. At her feet are the carved faces of winged cherubs and on her head a jeweled golden crown. He also commissioned a silver chalice, which was placed in a hollowed out section of the statue's back. Patrick and Eleanor donated the Statue and the Sarsfield Chalice, dated 1640, to the Dominicans of St Mary's parish in Limerick and he inscribed it with his wife's and his name in reparation for the sin of his Uncle. They were presented to Fr. Terence Albert O'Brien who would later become Bishop of Emly.

However, the religious policies of Charles II and his marriage to a Roman Catholic, generated the mistrust of English Puritans who thought his views were too Catholic. In 1642 an English Civil War resulted in his overthrow and his execution in 1649 after which the anti-Catholic Puritan army of Oliver Cromwell turned its attention to Ireland. In September 1651, a messenger arrived at Limerick with the news that Cromwell's army was on its way. Panicked residents began to prepare for an assault. Sacred books and vessels were taken from churches and hidden. The statue of Our Lady of Limerick, as it was now known, presented a problem because of its size, but it had to be protected from the infidel at all cost. It was decided to bury it in a coffin and that they did. On the last day of June, the Puritan army surrounded the city, terms of surrender were rejected and a siege began. Through a long hot summer with food supplies gone people were reduced to eating anything they could catch, even rats. Inevitably, plague broke out and hundreds died. Limerick finally capitulated and articles of surrender were signed. On 30 October 1651, all the city leaders were executed including Bishop Terence Albert O'Brien who had received the gift of the statue, but never revealed its secret location.

A century passed and no one had seen the statue for a hundred years, though they knew of its existence and its legendary beauty. People prayed to Our Lady of Limerick as a means of keeping the memory of the statue alive. Finally, the Papists Act of 1778 became the first Act of Parliament for limited Roman Catholic relief. It was now safe to exhume the statue and its location was revealed. In 1780, the Dominicans built a small chapel in Fish Lane to replace an earlier church destroyed by anti-Catholic forces. The statue was recovered from its earthly grave where it was found lying face down, in perfect condition; no erosion, no insect damage and no rot had affected her. Inside the statue, the magnificent Sarsfield Chalice was found, as perfect as the day Patrick and Eleanor Sarsfield had donated it a century before. The statue was given a place of honor in the new Dominican chapel on Fish Lane where it remained until 1818 or 1820 when it was carried in procession and enthroned on its own altar surrounded by images of saints in the Church of St. Savior in Glentworth Street. In 1954 the Virgin was crowned with a tiara of gold, pearls and diamonds all donated by the women of Limerick with the result that rich and poor alike had some share in the graces that flow from Our Lady of Limerick. On the Virgin's arm rests the Infant Jesus while the long silver rosary, with an ancient tubular cross, still stretches from her right hand. Our Lady of Limerick, a gift in reparation for the sins of man, watches over her beloved city and its people to this very day - a remarkable relic created to atone for deeds

against the Irish, protected by the Irish and, after surviving the centuries, returned to a position of veneration by the Irish.

As is the case with many accounts that took place in the penal times, secrecy was paramount and historical documentation is difficult to find. In this story, we found records that define Sir John Bourke's arrest and execution as 1606 and 1607, yet the accounts are identical. There is also a question of whether the clergy were Dominican or Franciscan although the statue is now in the care of the Dominican sisters. In the absence of those minor details of historical data, we rely on the facts in hand and tradition and in this case the tradition has proven to be 99% accurate.

Thousands of miles away, in Glens Ferry, Idaho, stands Our Lady of Limerick Catholic Church, a historic church built in 1915 obviously by parishioners with a connection to Limerick. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places on 11/17/82.

REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS

Prayers are requested for following persons who have requested to be listed in our prayer list. Included in the list are members, family of members and members of the LAOH. They are: Henry Mullen Sr. James Caherly, Deacon John Murphy, Henry and Eleanor Trexler, Rita Mullen, Michael Riley, John Mackey, Charles Fritz, Mary DeMarco,

Special prayers are asked for the following deceased members and their families: Joseph P. Riley, Craig H. Wolfe, Tricia Dore, Edward Collins, James Doyle, Lee Garrigan, Joseph M. McGee, Clare Flannery and all the deceased members of the AOH-LAOH of Berks County.



*Marian Shrine to "Our Lady of Knock, Queen of Ireland"
County Mayo, Ireland*

"OUR LADY OF KNOCK - IRELAND'S ONLY QUEEN"

THE STORY OF THE APPARITION

"On a wet Thursday evening of the 21st August, 1879, at about the hour of 8 o'clock, Our Lady, St. Joseph, and St. John the Evangelist appeared in a blaze of Heavenly light at the south gable of the Church of St. John the Baptist. Behind them and a little to the left of St. John was a plain altar. On the altar was a cross and a lamb with adoring angels. The Apparition was seen by fifteen people whose ages ranged from six years to seventy-five and included men, women, teenagers and children.

The poor humble witnesses distinctly beheld the Blessed Virgin Mary clothed in white robes with a brilliant crown on her head. Over the forehead where the crown fitted the brow, she wore a beautiful full-bloom golden rose. She was in an attitude of prayer with her eyes and hands raised towards Heaven. St. Joseph stood on Our Lady's right. He was turned towards her in an attitude of respect. His robes were also white. St. John was on Our Lady's left. He was dressed in white vestments and resembled a bishop, with a small Miter. He appeared to be preaching and he held an open book in his left hand.

The witnesses watched the Apparition in pouring rain for two hours, reciting the Rosary. Although the witnesses standing before

the gable were drenched, no rain fell in the direction of the gable. They felt the ground carefully with their hands and it was perfectly dry as was the gable itself."

OUR LADY OF KNOCK, Queen of Ireland

Brighter than worlds of sunburst beaming-
Fairer than myriad fair stars gleaming-
Whiter than floods of moon waves gleaming-
Lovelier far than the loveliest seeming-
Vision of love, of a pure heart's dreaming-
The blight of the night of lost life redeeming-
Our Lady of Knock!
Thy beauty the heavens and earth transcending-
Purer than crystalline dew descending-
On the lips of the virgin rose low bending-
Softer than rays of the rainbow blending-
Tint into tint, in the heavens depending-
Sweeter than incense clouds ascending-
When the organ its silvery peal is lending-
To the aid of the suppliant voice attending-
Our Lady of Knock!

In the least of thy charms more wonders combining-
Than the mightiest mind in its art designing-
Fairer than milk white lilies entwining-
Their petals of gold round their heart's snow lining-
Cherubim, Seraphim, all outshining-
Far above mortals, or angels divining-
Our Lady of Knock
"Queen of all queens", bespeaks thy brow-
Virgin of Virgins, we fervently vow-
To thy service each day that our lives allow-
Life of our life! To thee we bow-
Hope of our joy! We hail thee now;
Love of our heart's deep love art thou-
Our Lady of Knock

Consoler of Erin! Art thou not so?
Come in the night and the might of our woe-
In the storms that blast, and the winds that blow,
O'er our poor motherland drooping low,
Forsaken of friend, derided by foe-
Thy mercy show, and relief bestow-
On the hearts that break, and the eyes that flow,
With tears - still the fears that their sad souls know-
Our Lady of Knock!

IRISH SIGNERS OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

On 4 July 1776, the Philadelphia State House was packed, despite a sweltering heat, as Secretary Charles Thomson of Derry read a Declaration that Adams, Jefferson, Franklin and Livingston had composed and that he, Thomson, had drafted. It was a declaration explaining why their revolutionary action was justified. After a full day of debate, modifying copy and amendments, Secretary Thomson recorded the changes and America's Declaration of Independence was complete! The formal copy would not be ready for signature until August, but the public first heard that document read on 8 July 1776 by Col. John Nixon, son of a Wexford immigrant. Philadelphia printer Charles Dunlap of Tyrone rolled out copies that were snatched up before the ink was dry. Among the courageous men who signed that Declaration of Independence were eight Irish Americans, three of whom were

Irish born. To sign this momentous document was an act of high treason against the British Crown. All the signers could be executed and their estates confiscated, thereby impoverishing their families. But, they hated monarchy and their spirit of independence is at the heart of the Republic they would crucially help to form. Their brand of defiance saw through British imperialism and used Enlightenment ideas to create a nation of free people. Those Irish signers were:

Thomas McKean was born in Pennsylvania on 19 March 1734 to William McKean from County Antrim and Letitia Finney McKean whose family also emigrated from Ireland. He became an American lawyer and politician, serving as President of Delaware, Chief Justice and then Governor of Pennsylvania. During the American Revolution, he was a delegate to the Continental Congress where he signed the Declaration of Independence and served as a President of Congress. Thomas McKean led the movement in Delaware for American independence and served as commander of a patriot militia group known as the Pennsylvania Associators. He died on 24 June 1817.

Charles Carroll of Carrollton in Maryland was born on 19 September 1737 and was the only Catholic and the longest-living signatory of the Declaration of Independence, dying at age 95 on 14 November 1832. He was held up by Catholic Americans as proof of their patriotism in an America largely run by a WASP establishment until JFK's election. He is descended from the Tipperary clan Ó Cearbhail who trace their origin to The Cianachta, a tribe recorded to the third century AD. At the time, Maryland was the only colony tolerant of Catholic immigration, thanks to Lord Baltimore.

James Smith was born in Ireland about 1719 and his family was forced to emigrate to the American colonies due to abuse by landlords. Smith emerged as a leading lawyer of his day and wrote legal opinions denying the constitutional power of Great Britain over the American colonies. He also urged an end to the import of British goods. He raised a militia group in York, PA and joined the American Continental Congress in July 1775, a year before the Declaration was ratified. Smith would become a member of the Continental Congress in 1776 and serve in the War of Independence as a Colonel of Pennsylvania Militia. He died 11 July 1806.

George Taylor was born in Antrim in 1716 and emigrated to the American colonies in 1736. Taylor operated a furnace and was an iron manufacturer in Pennsylvania. He was a member of the Committee of Correspondence from 1774 to 1776 and of the Continental Congress in 1776 and 1777. Taylor is a name common in Ireland since the fourteenth century.

Matthew Thornton was born in Limerick on St. Patrick's Day, 1713 and came out to America as a four-year-old child in the passage of five ships carrying 120 Irish families from the Bann Valley. He would practice medicine and become active in pre-revolutionary agitation before being elected to become a member of the Continental Congress in 1776. He was a Colonel of New Hampshire Militia from 1775 to 1783. He died on 24 June 1803.

Edward Rutledge was born in Charleston, South Carolina on 23 November 1749 and was the youngest signer of the Declaration of Independence. His father Dr. John Rutledge left Tyrone in 1735 and his sons, John and Edward were elected to the Continental Congress in July 1774. John was later Governor of South Carolina. Edward died on 23 January 1800.

Thomas Lynch Jr. Was the grandson of Jonas Lynch of Galway who was exiled after the defeats at Aughrim and the Boyne. Thomas Jr. was born on 5 August 1749 and named by South Carolina to the Continental Congress as its sixth delegate on 23

March 1776. Although ill, he traveled to Philadelphia to sign the Declaration of Independence. Thomas Lynch Sr. and Thomas Lynch Jr. were the only father and son to serve in the Continental Congress. After signing the Declaration, an ill Thomas Lynch Jr. set out for home with his ailing father. On the way, his father died in Annapolis, MD. Thomas Lynch Jr. retired in early 1777 and after two more years of illness, he sailed for respite to the West Indies in late 1779. The ship disappeared and he was presumed to have died at sea. At the age of 30, he was the youngest signer of the Declaration to die.

George Read was born in Maryland in 1733. He was the son of John Read and Mary Howell Read. John Read was a wealthy resident of Dublin who emigrated to Maryland. When George Read was an infant the family moved to Delaware. As he grew up, Read joined Thomas McKean at an Academy in Pennsylvania and then studied law. In 1763 John Penn, the Proprietary Governor, appointed Read as Crown Attorney General for the three Delaware counties and he served in that position until leaving for the Continental Congress in 1774. All the 56 signers were brave and daring men and put their lives on the line to give their sons and future Americans the country we have today. Remember them and keep America the way they envisioned it could be.

LABOR DAY 2020

Labor Day, the first Monday in September, is a creation of the labor movement and is dedicated to the social and economic achievements of American workers. It constitutes a yearly national tribute to the contributions workers have made to the strength, prosperity, and well-being of our country.

As the Industrial Revolution took hold of the nation, the average American in the late 1800s worked 12-hour days, seven days a week in order to make a basic living. Children were also working, as they provided cheap labor to employers and laws against child labor were not strongly enforced.

With the long hours and terrible working conditions, American unions became more prominent and voiced their demands for a better way of life. On Tuesday September 5, 1882, 10,000 workers marched from city hall to Union Square in New York City, holding the first-ever Labor Day parade. Participants took an unpaid day-off to honor the workers of America, as well as vocalize issues they had with employers. As years passed, more states began to hold these parades, but Congress would not legalize the holiday until 12 years later.

The founder of Labor Day remains unclear, but some credit either Peter McGuire, co-founder of the [American Federation of Labor](#), or Matthew Maguire, a secretary of the Central Labor Union, for proposing the holiday.

The first Labor Day holiday was celebrated on Tuesday, September 5, 1882, in New York City, in accordance with the plans of the Central Labor Union. The Central Labor Union held its second Labor Day holiday just a year later, on September 5, 1883.

In 1884 the first Monday in September was selected as the holiday, as originally proposed, and the Central Labor Union urged similar organizations in other cities to follow the example of New York and celebrate a "workingmen's holiday" on that date. The idea spread with the growth of labor organizations, and in 1885 Labor Day was celebrated in many industrial centers of the country.

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04/21

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CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

DUE TO THE GOVERNOR'S ORDER AND THE THREAT IMPOSED BY THE COVID 19 VIRUS NOW THREATENING THE BERKS COUNTY & THE ENTIRE STATE OF PENNSYLVANIA, THE OFFICERS OF ST. BRENDAN'S DIVISION #1, A.O.H. MADE A DECISION TO CURTAIL ALL ACTIVITIES & MEETINGS UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE AND THE COUNTY RETURNS TO NORMAL ACTIVITIES AND THE SHELTER AT HOME DIRECTIVE IS LIFTED.

YOUR OFFICERS WILL ATTEMPT TO KEEP YOU INFORMED OF ALL NEWS & ACTIONS OF ST. BRENDAN'S THROUGH E-MAIL AND OUR NEWSLETTER. IF WE DON'T HAVE YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS PLEASE LET US KNOW A.S.A.P.

Labor Day Monday September 20, 2019



ST BRENDAN'S DIVISION #1

ANCIENT ORDER OF HIBERNIANS
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