

# THE TIMES

of

## SCOTCH PLAINS — FANWOOD



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David B. Corbin for The Times

**WORK MUST GO ON...**Phil Loria, left, Nick Losavio, center, and Vinnie Losavio of John's Meat Market in Scotch Plains continued working but draped the American flag and played "The Stars Spangled Banner" all day on Thursday, September 13.

## Fanwood's Emergency Services, Volunteers Respond to Tragedy

By SUZETTE F. STALKER  
Specially Written for The Times

From a moment of silence at the beginning of their regular meeting to personal reflections near the end, the terrorist attacks on America two weeks ago, the victims and the survivors remained high on the minds of Fanwood's Mayor and council last Thursday.

Like elected officials in other towns, the governing body had postponed its meeting from the previous Thursday in the wake of devastating assaults September 11 on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, as well as the hijacking of another airplane which crashed in rural Pennsylvania.

A special resolution entitled "A Grave American Tragedy" was passed by the council, in which officials commended the many rescue units working at the World Trade Center site; fellow Americans for their prayers and comfort on behalf of the injured and all others who are suffering, and the United States' allies for their support.

With the resolution, the governing body also authorized the Fanwood Police Department to "provide available police officers on a voluntary basis to assist at locations designated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation or any other agency recognized as having authority during the crisis."

During her report as head of the council's Public Safety Committee, Councilwoman Karen M. Schurtz described how Fanwood's emergency response units — as well as ordinary citizens — came together on the day of the catastrophe to aid those who were most affected by it.

According to Mrs. Schurtz,

Fanwood Fire Department and rescue squad volunteers supplied manpower and equipment to a decontamination center in Summit to assist people returning from the city who were showered with dust and debris during the attack.

In addition, borough police, fire and rescue squad personnel joined other volunteers, including Mayor Louis C. Jung, Councilwoman Katherine Mitchell and members of Fanwood's Emergency Management Council and Lions Club in meeting commuters as they disembarked at the Fanwood train station from New York that day. There, they provided transportation, counseling and other assistance to anyone who needed it.

It was also noted that Fanwood emergency service personnel were among those who took part in the "bucket brigade," helping to remove debris in the search and rescue effort at the World Trade Center. They also filled in for units in Jersey City and elsewhere that had been called to the scene of the disaster, while Fanwood police were on standby.

"They are the best," remarked Councilwoman Schurtz of all from Fanwood who lent a hand in the aftermath of the tragedy, as she publicly thanked them on behalf of the borough for their "unbelievable dedication."

Also receiving kudos was Fanwood's TV-35, which suspended its regular programming following the attacks in order to broadcast informational bulletins. Producer George Weiss additionally made a video on the proper way to hang the American flag.

Later, Mayor Jung and members of the council each shared their personal thoughts about the impact of

the tragedy and the need for Americans to stand united against the forces of terrorism.

"We've come together, we have to stay together," said the Mayor, adding that "our thoughts and prayers go out to the victims and their families."

During her turn to speak, Councilwoman Schurtz read a poem called "Think It Over," which calls on people to rethink their priorities and to cherish each occasion.

In another poignant moment, Councilman Thomas P. Ryan, Jr. said he likely would have been at the World Trade Center that morning, but did not go into the city at his usual time in order to attend a morning meeting in Fanwood. An attorney who works a block from where the towers stood, he normally took the PATH train to the center.

"My wife was never so happy that I'm a councilman," said the father of two young children.

Under other business, several residents who live near Forest Road Park voiced concern over renovations currently underway at the park, which are designed to improve playing fields and drainage, but which neighbors fear could exacerbate flooding and compromise privacy.

In February, the council awarded a contract to T&M Associates, a Middletown firm specializing in construction, landscape architecture and design services, to develop and oversee upgrades to the park's building and grounds.

The main focus of the project is field and drainage improvements, including removal of several metal drainage grates that are considered a safety hazard, along with altering the contours of

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

## Accessory Units for Domestic Help Repealed by Scotch Plains Council

By FRED ROSSI  
Specially Written for The Times

After hearing opposing views from several residents, the Scotch Plains Township Council Tuesday night passed an ordinance that repeals an existing local law that permits accessory dwellings in residential zones for domestic or household or farm employees.

Officials felt that the existing ordinance constitutes a detriment to the residential character of such zones. The council had introduced the ordinance in the summer, but final action was delayed due to an error in legally notifying neighboring towns about the ordinance and then the postponement, due to the New York City and Washington, D.C. terrorist attacks, of the council's scheduled meeting of September 11.

Councilwoman Paulette F. Coronato had called the existing ordinance "outdated" at the time of the repealing ordinance's introduction in July, noting that it had been enacted at a time when Scotch Plains was more of a farming community that made it necessary for multiple individuals, such as employees, to live on a property.

Prior to voting unanimously to repeal the ordinance, the council heard a plea from an attorney representing a family in the midst of constructing a second dwelling on its property that projects already underway should be grandfathered in and, thus, exempt from the new restrictions.

The council seemed to feel that repeal of the ordinance would be, as Mayor Martin L. Marks said, "for the overall good of the town" since it would prevent a situation of "literally hundreds of properties being qualified to put up an accessory dwelling" without having to secure various township permits and subdivision permission. He said he wanted to avoid situations where a second dwelling is erected on a property too small, perhaps, to house such a building.

"Loopholes for abuse exist," he added, and said it was possible that a new law could be established in the future that would permit such development on certain-sized properties.

Councilwoman Coronato announced that the 13th annual Health Fair will be held on Saturday, Octo-

ber 20, from 8 a.m. to noon at the Municipal Building. She said that free blood pressure, vision, hearing and diabetes testing will be available.

More comprehensive blood testing will also be available for a small cost and by appointment. Bone density tests will be available by appointment. And cholesterol screenings will also be available for a \$12 fee. Free flu vaccines will be given to senior citizens. For further information and to pre-register for certain tests, call (908) 322-6700, extension no. 1309.

At the council's regular meeting on Tuesday night, Mayor Marks also announced that the Village Green adjacent to the Municipal Building on the corner of Park Avenue and Front Street will be renamed the Alan M. Augustine Village Green in honor of the late Assemblyman and former Mayor who died several months ago.

He also said a committee would soon be formed to look into ways to "enhance" the park. The council also passed a resolution declaring September 21 as POW-MIA Remembrance Day.

## SP Council Condemns Attack, Remembers Local Victims

By FRED ROSSI  
Specially Written for The Times

At its meeting on Tuesday night, the Scotch Plains government paid tribute to the victims of the September 11 terrorist attacks by passing a strongly-worded resolution condemning and denouncing those who carried out the hijackings as well as those who sponsored and assisted them.

The Township Council's resolution, jointly introduced and seconded by all five members, also paid tribute to the passengers and crew of the four airliners as well as the volunteers and rescue workers who have tolled for the past two weeks in searching for survivors in the World Trade Center wreckage.

The tragedies, said Mayor Martin L. Marks, "touched us all in some small ways and others in some big ways."

At the start of the meeting, Coun-

cilwoman Geri M. Samuel, in offering a prayer, noted that two current Scotch Plains residents — Mark Rothenberg, 53, a passenger on the United Airlines Flight 93 that crashed in Pennsylvania; and Jim Walsh, 37, along with former resident, Matthew D. Horning, 26, (among the missing in the World Trade Center attack whose family still lives in town) — died in the September 11 attacks.

Later, accepting a proclamation designating September as Rescue Squad Month, Bob Gurske of the Scotch Plains Rescue Squad told the council that a squad ambulance was on its way to New York within 30 minutes of the attacks. The squad, he said, was active in assisting victims in both Manhattan and Jersey City, where "we treated hundreds of patients. It was a total group effort."

Kenneth Lipstein, Scotch Plains

Democratic party chairman, saying that the day's "horrors were matched by the heroism of those who did respond," suggested that the council formally recognize the efforts of those members of the local police, fire and rescue squads who went to New York to aid in the efforts.

Township Attorney Douglas W. Hansen put in a pitch for the Tri-County Chapter of the American Red Cross, which encompasses much of Union County including Scotch Plains, Fanwood, Plainfield, Cranford and Clark. He said that, as a result of its extensive activities since the September 11 attacks, the local chapter is out of money. Mr. Hansen, a past chairman of the local chapter, made a plea for residents to send donations to the Tri-County Chapter at 322 West Front Street, Plainfield, 07060.



Cheri Rogowsky for The Times

**PRESSING THEIR LUCK...**Casino Night activities, sponsored by the Scotch Plains Business and Professional Association (SPBPA), encouraged revelers to try their luck at the craps table. Held Saturday evening at Scotch Hills Country Club, all proceeds from the event will benefit SPBPA's Scholarship Fund.

## DISTRICT RECEIVES \$500,000 GRANT FOR ATHLETIC FACILITIES

### Superintendent Proud of Response From SP-F Community to Tragedy

By SUSAN M. DYCKMAN  
Specially Written for The Times

A moment of silence marked the start of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education's September 13 meeting to remember the victims of the September 11 attack on the World Trade Center and Pentagon.

Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Carol B. Choye, began her report on the opening of school by saying, "I feel like school opened a long, long time ago."

In reviewing how school administrators, teachers, the Parent Teacher Association, local police chiefs, aftercare programs at the YMCA and Jewish Community Center, Resolve Community Counseling Center, and the ministerial pulled together last week, Dr. Choye added, "The incredible violence in New York and Washington brought out a side of Scotch Plains and Fanwood that I'm proud to be part of."

Fanwood resident Monica Zimmerman expressed concern that students may not have enough time to "process" the tragedy, and suggested teachers consider a reduction in homework. While acknowledging the value of the letter which was sent home to parents from Dr. Choye last week, Mrs. Zimmerman said the schools may need to be more proactive with middle school and high school students.

"The more we can involve them in the relief effort, the better off they'll be for it," she said.

As the business portion of the meeting proceeded, the superinten-

dent announced the district would receive a special \$500,000 grant from New Jersey's Department of Community Affairs for athletic facilities improvements.

Acting Governor Donald T. DiFrancesco had hinted at Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School's graduation ceremony last June that such funding would be forthcoming. A letter from the state confirming the grant was received about two weeks ago.

The funds will supplement facilities improvements outlined in the district's 2001-2002 budget and December 2000 bond referendum. In deciding how funding would be used, Dr. Choye explained the decision was "governed by health and safety and equity issues." Improvements are already underway or completed for the high school's football and soccer fields.

Based on committee discussions, and from recommendations from Athletic Director Erik Rosenmeier, the superintendent indicated the grant money would be used for baseball, softball and track facilities.

Board member Edward J. Saridaki, Jr. asked the administration to meet with the Board's Facilities Committee to review the plans.

The superintendent reported there were 151 more students in the schools than there were last year: 33 more elementary students; 44 more middle school students; 73 more high school students; and 14 additional students placed out of district. Thirty-seven new teachers were hired.

Noting that new principals at Brunner, Evergreen and Coles Elementary Schools are making positive adjustments at each of their buildings, Dr. Choye said, "The fit is wonderful."

She noted how attractive and welcoming the schools were on opening day, and commented specifically on the quality workmanship at School One. She commended Scotch Plains Township's construction official Robert LaCosta for "going the extra mile to get inspections done (at School One) over the Labor Day weekend."

Business Administrator Anthony DeSordi said, "The nail biting up to eight o'clock Tuesday morning (September 4) truly resulted in a worthwhile endeavor at School One."

He added his thanks to the workmen at School One, Clerk of the Public Works Department Anthony Romano, and to School One's custodial maintenance staff and teachers who worked so diligently to ready the school to open on time. Mr. DeSordi expects work on the media center to be completed by October 1.

He said work at Park Middle School is "moving ahead in a positive way," noting that the first floor continues to be under construction. The contractor for the job is purchasing all materials for the entire renovation project upfront so work may proceed without delays caused by waiting on deliveries.

He anticipates the contractor's being "back on target" in terms of scheduling by March 2002. The next meeting of the Board is scheduled for Tuesday, September 25, at 8 p.m.

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## Memorial to Westfield's WTC Victims Planned Near Train Station

By PAUL J. PEYTON  
Specially Written for The Times

WESTFIELD -- The Westfield Town Council took action last week to create a memorial to town residents killed in the terrorist destruction of the World Trade Center's Twin Towers on September 11.

The land is in a small park to the left of an area known as The Plaza, near the First Union Bank where commuters exit from the trains at North Avenue and East Broad Street. The area has been electrified in order to light an American flag that has been hung from an existing pole.

"It was something we could do in town to recognize these victims of what occurred on Tuesday, September 11," said Mayor McDermott.

A memorial will eventually be added as a tribute to the eight Westfield residents killed following the crash of two, hijacked commercial jetliners into the 110-story towers. A dedication ceremony will be held once the memorial is completed.

"The Town Council of the Town of Westfield deems it appropriate to honor the memories of those victims by declaring that certain public property owned by the Town of Westfield shall be dedicated as a memorial to the victims of this attack," according to the resolution approved by the council at its September 19 meeting.

Among the 6,500 names of persons missing in the Trade Center tragedy are Westfield residents Andrew Alamo, 37, Michael A. Davidson, 27, Stephen M. Fogel, 40, Leo Russell Keene, 33, Richard B. Madden, 35, John S. Salerno, 31, and See-Wong Shum, 44, and Anthony M. Starita, 35.

Fourth Ward Councilwoman Janis F. Weinstein, who came up with the location for the memorial, said a large stone similar to the one used in the Bicentennial Square off of Mountain Avenue, will be used at the memorial. Mrs. Weinstein also donated an American flag to be flown from the pole.

"It just seemed like a very fitting place to put this," Mrs. Weinstein told *The Times of Scotch Plains-Fanwood*. She noted the high visibility of the site combined with the fact the park area runs along the commuter passageway.

The memorial will be known as "The Town of Westfield Memorial to the Victims who Perished in The Destruction of the World Trade Center."

Acting Town Administrator James Gildea explained that the town envisions adding a stone with a bronze plaque attached to it. The names of the Westfield victims will be included pending approval of the families. The stone will be placed within a memorial

garden.

The council's action also commended "in the strongest possible terms the terrorist act of September 11, 2001." The resolution extended the council's "heartfelt condolences" to the friends and family of the victims.

## Westfielder Tests Positive For West Nile Virus

By PAUL J. PEYTON  
Specially Written for The Times

WESTFIELD -- A Westfield woman is among three new confirmed cases of the West Nile virus, according to the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services.

A department spokesman said the newly diagnosed cases include the 78-year-old Westfield woman, a 72-year-old man from Camden and a 66-year-old Edison Township man.

The new cases brings to four number of cases detected in the state this season.

All three of the newest patients were hospitalized with symptoms consistent with the West Nile infection, including fever and altered mental status. They were released after their conditions improved.

The Westfield resident is currently receiving rehabilitative therapy. She had been admitted to Overlook Hospital in Summit on September 5.

Dennis McGowan, a Department of Health & Senior Services spokesman, said it was not known where the woman might have been infected. He did say the woman was recovering from the illness.

"My understanding is that she is doing well," he told *The Times of Scotch Plains-Fanwood*.

"The best way to fight West Nile virus is through comprehensive, year-round mosquito control and surveillance," said State Environmental Commissioner Robert C. Shinn.

The state dispersed \$2.4 million in funds this year to assist counties in cleaning up scrap tires which officials have said can serve as breeding grounds for mosquitoes if left untreated.

In addition, New Jersey Agriculture Secretary Art Brown, Jr. says New Jersey landowners need "to continue to be diligent in cleaning up sources of standing water that could serve as breeding grounds for mosquitoes."

The Department of Health and Human Services has also indicated that the West Nile virus has been detected

## Vigil Brings Doves of Residents To Downtown for Local Victims

By STEVEN KRAKAUER  
Specially Written for The Times

WESTFIELD -- With garbage still drifting about the streets of Westfield, remnants from the FestiFall street fair earlier that day, citizens crowded the corner of Elm and East Broad Streets for a candlelight vigil last Sunday evening to honor those residents who died in the September 11 terrorist attack on the World Trade Towers.

Religious, government, and civic leaders came out to speak and support the crowd that gathered, many with candles and flashlights. Westfield Police Chief Bernard F. Tracy estimated the crowd to include 3,000 people.

The memorial vigil started with a performance of "Taps," a group of Bagpipe players, led by Chief Tracy down Elm Street, and such songs as "You'll Never Walk Alone" and "God Bless America."

Former Westfield Mayor and current State Assemblyman Richard H. Bagger attended and addressed the crowd first, followed by current Mayor Gregory S. McDermott.

Mayor McDermott said, "There's no better way than this to show how we are resilient. We have learned a most painful lesson."

He also noted that the United Fund of Westfield has created a specific fund, the September 11 Fund, which will go directly Westfield families impacted by the tragedy.

After a speech and rendition of "This Land is Your Land" by Cantor Martha T. Novack of Temple Emanuel, four local clergy members took the microphone for short speeches.

Reverend Dee Dee Turlington of the First Baptist Church of Westfield reminded residents, "You are not alone." She also spoke of the role of God during the September 11 tragedy. "God was in every victim that suffered," she said.

Next to take the podium was Dr. Christopher Atwood of the First Congregational Church. Dr. Atwood

warned against an excessive retaliation by the United States against the terrorists.

"If there is to be any victory of good over evil, we must not become terrorists ourselves," he said.

He also mentioned the role of God in what action must be taken from here. "We serve our country best, when we serve our God first," he said.

Father Dimitrios Antokas of Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church was the final clergy member to speak. He spoke of the unity the nation must now have.

"All of us are God's children, which makes us all brothers and sisters," he said.

Congressman Michael A. Ferguson (R-7th) was the last to speak to the crowd, calling the vigil "perhaps the best type of response we could have."

Following Congressman Ferguson's speech, a moment of si-

lence was observed, and a bell was rung eight times, one time for each of the Westfield residents still missing from the World Trade Center.

Linda Maggio, Executive Director of the United Fund of Westfield, said, "To see us come together in such a community shows that the terrorists broke our buildings but couldn't break our spirit."

Westfield Third Ward Councilman Neil F. Sullivan, as well as every other council member, were in attendance.

"I think this is a really special community. The feeling of community and unity is important, and we need to work to keep it growing," Mr. Sullivan said.

Chief Tracy noted the harmony of the residents in attendance.

"One thing that we all have in common is that we're all Americans," he said.

## Stalled Contract Talks Cause BOE to Postpone Back to School Nights

By SUSAN M. DYCKMAN  
Specially Written for The Times

SCOTCH PLAINS — In a September 21 letter to Superintendent of Schools Dr. Carol B. Choye, the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Education Association (SPFEA) announced it will be postponing its participating in Back to School Nights until its contract with the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education is settled.

In response, Dr. Choye restructured the Back to School program calendar as follows: Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School, Monday, October 15; Coles School, Wednesday, October 17; Park Middle School, Tuesday, October 23; Terrill Middle School and School One, Wednesday, October 24; Evergreen School, Monday, October 29; and McGinn and Brunner Schools, Tuesday, October 30.

If the sides settle the contract, these programs will be held in the evening as usual. In the event contract settlement is not reached between October 2 (when the two sides meet again) and October 17, these programs will take place during school hours to ensure that parents and core subject teachers have the opportunity to meet face-to-face.

It was standing room only at the September 25 board meeting as members of the SPFEA packed the board room for the first half of the meeting. This was the first large-scale appearance of the union before the board since their contract expired June 30.

As the designated spokesman for the group, high school English teacher John M. Patterson, Jr., accused board members, whom he called "a grudge board," of "refusing to negotiate in good faith." He asked, "Why are you hurting our school system?"

He went on to cite ways in which teachers have contributed to the district's distinction as a "lighthouse district," despite there being no contract. He remarked on the absence of job actions thereby contributing to a smooth start of school. He accused the board of making derogatory comments about teachers. Mr. Patterson stated starting salaries were lower in SPFF than in comparable districts, and com-

plained about the frozen salary guides at the top of the union pay scale.

Following the meeting, *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times*, confirmed that the State of New Jersey dictates that salaries be frozen at the level they are at the time the three-year contract expired.

Union members applauded Mr. Patterson at the conclusion of his remarks after which SPFEA President Ed Leonard signaled they should rise as one and leave the room.

Board member Thomas Russo did not let Mr. Patterson's comment about the board's not negotiating in good faith go unanswered. "For the record," said Mr. Russo, "the board has never failed to negotiate in good faith with the SPFEA." He added that, while he respects Mr. Patterson as a teacher and a professional, "Eloquence and accuracy sometimes diverge. I think that was true in the statement we heard tonight."

In his report on the status of negotiations, board member Lance Porter voiced surprise at Mr. Patterson's reference to the board's making derogatory comments about teachers. "One thing we have learned to do is respect each other's opinions and hear each other out," he said. The stalemate, said Mr. Porter, "does boil down to salaries and benefits."

Mr. Porter is hoping for a settlement on October 2 when the two parties meet again. In the event settlement is not reached at that date, the mediation process is set to begin October 17.

In other business, the board awarded construction bids for work at Terrill Middle School and Coles Elementary School in the amount of \$4.9 million and \$2.3 million, respectively. The Terrill bid came in \$900,000 under budget. Once contracts are signed, Board Administrator Anthony DeSordi expects work to begin at both sites by the end of October.

Mr. DeSordi also reported the library/media center should be completed at School One by tomorrow, September 28, and that outside surfaces at both School One and Park Middle School are being prepared for construction.

## National Achievement Scholarship Program Names Semifinalists

SCOTCH PLAINS — Megan R. Rose from Union Catholic Regional High School and Alana V. Davis and Joseph R. Nelson of Union County Magnet High School, both in Scotch Plains, have been named semifinalists in the 38th annual National Achievement Scholarship Program.

An academic competition for Black American high school students, the pupils now have the opportunity to continue in the competition for over 700 Achievement Scholarship awards, worth approximately \$2.5 million. These grants will be offered next spring for college undergraduate studies.

To qualify for the awards, Megan,

Alana and Joseph must advance to the finalist level of the competition by fulfilling a number of requirements. They must hold a record of high academic performance throughout high school, be endorsed and recommended by their school principal, and earn SAT scores to confirm their earlier PSAT/NMSQT performance.

Megan, Alana and Joseph, as well as a high school official, must complete a scholarship application in which they provide information about the student's participation in school and community activities, demonstrated leadership abilities, and educational goals.

## Fanwood's Emergency Services, Volunteers Respond to Tragedy

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

the property.

A French drain system is expected to maintain or improve drainage at the park, according to Councilman Ryan, who serves as Liaison to the Fanwood Recreation Commission.

Herbert Ribner, a Forest Road resident and retired Senior Director of Process Engineering with Merck & Co., Inc., said plans to raise ground levels at the park by as much as three feet in some sections -- using 6,000 cubic yards of soil will increase water levels in an area which has already experienced periodic flooding.

In a written statement, copies of which were distributed to elected officials, Mr. Ribner stated that for decades, "the park has acted as a natural floodplain, or detention basin, serving to reduce the potential level of rising waters and, in some cases, preventing flooding from entering homes."

Similar sentiments were expressed by former Fanwood Police Chief Anthony J. Parenti, who also lives in the vicinity. He said the park originated as a detention basin and gradually evolved into a park with recreational facilities.

"We're frightened. We're frightened silly," remarked Mr. Parenti, who said area residents have lived through numerous floods and that

some have had their homes "completely destroyed by flooding."

Mr. Ribner additionally lamented the removal of wooded areas along the park perimeter, which provided privacy for neighboring residents. He called the project "ill-conceived" and questioned why it was approved.

While saying the neighbors' concerns involved "valid issues," Mr. Ryan noted plans for the park had twice been reviewed and approved by Borough Engineer Richard Marsden, who did his second review after residents presented their arguments. Mr. Marsden recommended one alteration to the plan following his second review.

Councilman Ryan said it was the opinion of both Mr. Marsden and the T&M engineer who designed the plan that it would not increase flooding for abutting properties. He added that Mr. Marsden has been visiting the site regularly to supervise the work.

"We're working toward seeing that all the improvements we do don't have any impact on the periphery," Mr. Ryan remarked, referring to adjoining properties.

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## Victories October 6, 2001

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