



It's A Great Summer at the Garden! *Imaginary Worlds* Volunteer Opportunities Continue

Photographer Station

Come hang out with the Garden's friendly Ogre! Volunteers are stationed with the Ogre every day in shifts 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. and 1 p.m. - 4 p.m. to take pictures and answer common questions about the Garden and the *Imaginary Worlds* exhibition.

A guide is available in the Visitor Center and Volunteer Office that will answer visitors' questions.

Family Crafts

Every Saturday in August and September 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. in the Visitor Center, volunteers are needed to assist with family crafts like making a beaded cobra and designing a unicorn horn.



Chocolate Covered Weekend

September 7 and 8, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Take a weekend to celebrate everything Chocolate! Visitors will get their hands chocolaty with crafts and games, learn about chocolate with a variety of discovery stations, and even get some chocolate treats to taste. Volunteers are needed for three hour shifts to run activities and stations during this family festival.

Don't Forget!

The 2012-2013 volunteer year ends September 30. Please remember to record your volunteer hours after each shift. Volunteer hours are submitted for grant and donation requests and the more hours ABG can showcase, the better our applications look! Hours are also important if you are trying to reach the Centennial Category of 100 hours during the volunteer year for Garden-sponsored parking the following year.

Congratulations
to these
Volunteers Of the Month

April
Rick Fritz

May
Bonnie Shepherd

June
Galina Ovchinnikova

Read their profiles on page 2.

Scarecrows in the Garden returns for its 11th annual season of spooky, kooky family fun! Every October the Garden is stuffed with more than 100 scarecrows handcrafted by businesses, individuals, schools and organizations. Harvest your imagination and consider creating a scarecrow inspired by the *Imaginary Worlds* exhibition of living plant sculptures. The deadline for registration is September 13. Visit atlantabotanicalgarden.org for details.

Meet the Volunteers of the Month

April: Rick Fritz

It was a fateful series of events that led Rick Fritz to a new life as a volunteer at the Botanical Garden when he retired in 2009. ABG members since 1989, Rick and his wife had often visited, but when he retired, he began to see the Garden in a whole new light. About that time, Rick signed up for Carol Sutherland's drawing classes held here every Tuesday. He continues those to this day. Next, his wife became a docent at the High Museum, inspiring him to think about doing the same at his favorite haunt, the ABG. Then came the last push: after seeing the faces of his three-year-old granddaughters as they explored the Garden with him during that October's Scarecrows exhibit, he signed up to become a children's docent, and he hasn't stopped yet! Since then he's also trained to give adult tours "mainly because my friends kept asking me when I would give them a tour," he laughed. Discovery Station trainings came next, and Rick also enjoys any post at the many special events. All the while, he has developed a new appreciation of the staff that makes the Garden such a special place. They are, Rick quickly says, what make a volunteer want to come back again and again.



The ABG is so thankful that fate made such a loyal volunteer as Rick Fritz and salutes him as April Volunteer of the Month.

May: Bonnie Shepherd

Her smile says it all. And the twinkle in her eye. Bonnie Shepherd is a happy person when she is at the Botanical Garden, especially when she is volunteering in the Outdoor Kitchen. "Becoming an OKRA (Outdoor Kitchen Resource Assistant) honestly has changed my life! I have really embraced all I've learned here about growing and using fresh ingredients and have made it part of lifestyle...and my family and friends really appreciate it," she says with more than a little enthusiasm.

Bonnie has lived in Atlanta for 25-plus years and has been a Garden member for most of that time. The Garden has long been a respite for her: she recalls many lunch hours spent strolling the paths as a way to decompress from the stresses of a hectic workplace nearby. When she retired in 2011, she knew volunteering at the Garden was for her and just happened to read about "Gourmet in May" events that were starting. Something clicked in her inner self, and she has been happily volunteering ever since. One of her first OKRA shifts was with a canning class "and it gave me the courage to try it on my own, just like my mother and grandmother did. It's been very exciting to add this dimension to my own life." Bonnie has donned a volunteer's hat for other Garden events and activities but considers herself an OKRA, first and foremost. The Garden is certainly glad of that and names this enthusiastic OKRA as May Volunteer of the Month.



June: Galina Ovchinnikova

For Galina Ovchinnikova, the Botanical Garden has become a second home, of sorts. Born in Russia, she and her family have been in Atlanta for twenty-plus years, but it was when she came to the Garden as a volunteer that Atlanta really began to feel like home.

Galina would be the first to tell a new Garden volunteer that there are many ways to give their time here and that that volunteers are always welcome. She should know. She began her volunteering at ABG working in the Conservatory and Greenhouse but soon found that her back didn't appreciate the physical demands of the role, so she transitioned to the busy Reception Office where assistance is always needed. Galina will admit that English, which is her third language, is not always easy, and especially over the busy Garden phone lines, she didn't feel she was effectively communicating. But she didn't give up – because she felt so GOOD being part of the Garden's volunteer corps -- and, with Josh's advice, found her way to the Development Office, where Christina and the staff there welcomed her with open arms. It was a perfect match. Galina's winning smile and warm personality plus her quiet manner and attention to detail have made her one of the staff's most trusted and loved volunteers. No doubt the feeling is mutual!

The Garden is very grateful that Galina persisted and found her niche and honors her as June's Volunteer of the Month.



DOCENT DOINGS

By Paula White
2013 Docent Chair



I am excited to announce that we will soon be launching **Garden Reverie, Sights and Insights from Garden Volunteers**, an Atlanta Botanical Garden volunteer blog. This blog will give Garden volunteers a public voice, a place to share personal experiences and stories, pictures, and information about your time working as a volunteer. We invite you to help us launch this new endeavor, whether you wish to post a factual piece about the wetlands, a behind-the-scenes description of being a chef assistant, a photo journal or a reverie of what you have done or events you have attended, or a fun piece about the top ten questions asked about the vanilla orchid. The Docents will help launch the initial posts, but we need all of you to help us make this a success.

If you are reading **Digging In** you are one of the most important people in the world of the Atlanta Botanical Garden. You are a volunteer. We do it all, from docent-led tours to visitor center greeters; from GEMs to office workers; from concert ticket lines when it is hot, to Garden Lights ticket lines when it is cold. We are story tellers and story readers; lab assistants and orchid mavens; we cook and clean in the outdoor kitchen; plant vegetables and pick vegetables. We work in greenhouses and rain forests, feed the frogs, muck the ponds, and tell and retell the story of the vanilla orchid. We respond to calls to the plant hotline and help guests find that perfect gift. And no matter what it is you do, you leave with a unique personal experience and relationship with the Garden and its mission, the staff, the visitors, and your fellow volunteers. Now you will have a new way to share that experience.



Contact Josh Todd for a copy of the Blogging Guidelines and start making notes to capture your sights and insights as an Atlanta Botanical Garden volunteer. We need you to "Dig In" and share your unique perspectives with other volunteers, friends, families and the public. Join us!

Paula

News from the Volunteers at

Smithgall Woodland Garden



By Diane Korzeniewski

What's New at Smithgall?

GROUNDBREAKING!

The long awaited groundbreaking ceremony at Smithgall Woodland Garden was held on April 17th. Volunteers barely recognized each other with clean clothes and fingernails! We had perfect weather, gorgeous setting, great food, and inspiring speakers. Especially inspiring was Lessie Smithgall herself, 102 years young. She spoke eloquently of her late husband Charles's dream to develop and preserve this land for all to use. Although no construction has begun, we "broke ground" to plant some climbing hydrangeas. When nature doesn't water, we drive several water filled trash cans over in the truck. The first part of Phase 1 construction will be the road and power. Once that is in, we will be able to water from the well which is already installed on the site. We will keep you posted. Hopefully the next newsletter will have a bulldozer report!



Digging Deeper: A Closer Look Inside the Garden

You Might Be A Docent If...

By Vicki Womack

...you can lead a group of five-year-olds in "the bee dance";
...you know why a stilt palm has stilts;
...you can explain "drip tips" to a group of students;
...you understand what makes an orchid an orchid;
...you can share exhibitions with visitors from all over the world;
...and, since every tour is different, you can think on your feet!

"Docent" is the Latin word for "teacher." These volunteers lead tours and interpret the Garden to visitors ranging from pre-K students to seniors. There are currently 96 docents, including the most recent class of "newbies" plus veterans who served when the GardenHouse was a construction trailer with Blossom the Cat sprawled on the steps.

According to Garden Registrar Lawton Delchamps, the ABG has hosted almost 200 tours thus far in 2013, with over 60 more scheduled as of this writing. In addition to scheduled tours for schools, church groups, professional associations and botanical societies, there are "drop in" tours nearly every day for general visitors from all over the U.S. and the world.

Docents have hosted international groups visiting the U.S. for diplomatic or commercial missions, lead tours for corporate hospitality and convention events, and even led private tours for families of local media personalities.

As *Digging In* discovered, extensive plant knowledge and experience is not necessary, though several docents are Master Gardeners and degreed horticulturists. Docents continually learn from each other and from the ABG staff at monthly meetings after an initial seven-class training session. Training is available for both adults and children's tours. Candidates must be members of the Garden, submit to a background check, and commit to two tours monthly during busy seasons. The next Children's Tour training will begin in January 2014. Anyone interested should contact Josh Todd.

But it's not all work--the ABG docents meet once monthly for field trips to other public and private gardens as well as destinations of interest within driving distance. Monthly Update meetings are often docent-provided pot-luck luncheons, dessert-and-beverage affairs and occasionally a treat from the ABG staff.

Docent Chair Paula White sums up the docent experience from her perspective: "Serving as Docent Chair can only be described with superlative adjectives. It is a job that allows you to interact with the incomparable, interesting garden staff, plan meetings with speakers who consistently dazzle and work more closely with the wonderful docent community. It goes without saying that it has been fun, interesting and enjoyable."

Interested in signing up for
Docent Training?
Contact Josh Todd at
jtodd@atlantabotanicalgarden.org
or 404-591-1548
for more information.



(Above) Sally Crowe leading a group
(Below) Kay Darrington and friends;
Alice Pugh during Spring Break Week



MEET THE GARDEN STAFF:

The Conservatory's Paul Blackmore

By Josh Todd, Volunteer Manager

If you've run across Paul Blackmore in the Conservatory, you know he has a story to tell. Blackmore is the Garden's Fuqua Conservatory Manager and will be celebrating his 10-year Garden anniversary in August. During his tenure, the Conservatory has taken on new life and become a centerpiece for visitors exploring the Garden. His horticulture knowledge and expertise have developed over a long and amazing journey across the globe.

Blackmore began his exploration in the natural world as a horticulture student at Brighton City Parks in the UK. He then traveled for voluntary projects throughout Central America and Europe, working on conservation efforts and forest surveys and, his favorite, spending time with native populations to learn about medicinal plants. Moving back to England in 1987, he started at the Kew Royal Botanic Gardens to study Botanical Horticulture, a two hundred year old course with a focus on learning to build and run botanic gardens, including programming and interpretation. Upon completion, Blackmore worked as a landscape manager for Stockley Business Park in London.

Back to school yet again, Blackmore attended the University of Birmingham (UK) for a Masters in Conservation and Utilization of Plant Genetic Resources, which included plant collection trips in Turkey. Finding employment with the Royal Horticultural Society, he worked to disseminate information and interpretive messaging from scientists to the public and the society's membership. After a year, Blackmore moved on to the role of the Botanical Garden Management and Development Advisor for Limbe Botanic Garden in Cameroon. This revitalization and restoration project was funded by the British Government to develop and renovate facilities, collections and programs for the old German Colonial Botanical Garden established in 1892.

Finally, the story moves stateside as Paul started at the Atlanta Botanical Garden in August of 2003 as the Fuqua Conservatory Manager. The job includes overseeing collections in the Rain Forest, Desert House, Orangerie, Greenhouses and Special Exhibits Hall along with the outdoor Conservation Garden behind the Orchid Center. In addition to his work at ABG, Paul also supports the Tooro Botanical Garden in Uganda in collaboration with the North Carolina Zoological Parks program and frequently gives presentations at Emory and UGA as part of a lecture series on economic and medicinal plants in central Africa.

With so much under his direction, Blackmore truly appreciates the volunteer support throughout the Conservatory and Conservation Gardens. Volunteers help by pruning and watering in the Rain Forest and Desert House, repotting and weeding in the Greenhouses and watering and endless weeding in the Conservation Gardens. Volunteers even assist by sweeping pathways clear for visitors and feeding the winged Conservatory inhabitants. Paul states, "Volunteers are essential—we couldn't get everything done without them. I am so grateful to all volunteers across the Garden; they are the blood in the veins of ABG."

His favorite part of the job is interacting with the public. You'll often catch him talking to visitors about plants, where they come from and how they are useful to people. Paul also enjoys giving lectures and presentations to school groups and garden clubs.

On Wednesday, October 2, Paul is presenting the Calhoun Lecture at ABG. This lecture series includes a morning session for school groups and an evening session for adults. Presenting on *How Botanic Gardens Help with Conservation in Africa*, the evening session begins at 7 p.m. in Day Hall and is free to the public with no reservations required. If you want to hear more about Paul's journey, he'd love to see you there!



**BEHIND THE GARDEN GATE:
STAFF INSIGHTS**

PLANT RECORDS VOLUNTEERS: DETAILS, DETAILS, DETAILS

By Michael Wenzel
ABG Plant Recorder

In recent years, with much help from a group of dedicated volunteers, the Garden's plant records system has begun a major overhaul that creates more opportunities for access, stability, and ease of use. There is a database that houses information regarding our permanent plant collections that is now using a web browser for ease of access. This information ranges from the basic - like where a plant came from - to details that help with interpretation and conservation, like if a plant is considered endangered in its natural habitat. There is a soon-to-be-launched website that will showcase our mapping of the collection plants throughout the Garden. There are a variety of ways that information about the plants can be viewed through this web page. Searching by plant names, accession numbers and more will show where these plants are located at the Garden.



Volunteer John Pardue at work

All of this takes a lot of work, and I would like to mention specifically the volunteers who have helped move this project along. **John Pardue** has been working for eight years on inventories of our dynamic collections in the backup greenhouses. His attention to detail and flexibility have been unfailing. One week he might be trying to track down all of the begonias and the next he's combing through rows and rows of the critically endangered *Torreya taxifolia*, all the while keeping meticulous (AND legible) notes. Even before our new database was functional several volunteers were helping to research, verify, and update much of the data in the system. **Anita Hinkel** has been working for six years to fill in and check information ranging from the spell checking the scientific names to updating the status of threatened and endangered plants in our living collection. Recently she has begun assisting in collecting the exact locations of the thousands of trees and shrubs visitors enjoy every day. Whether in the heat of the office or the steamy Atlanta summer outdoors she has persevered and helped bring substance to the information we keep. **Tom Shillock** and the late **Tom Clark** both started by checking names of plants and verifying the scientists who first described the species. Then they turned their attention to detailed coding of where these species are known to grow in their natural habitat, from the easily coded *Retrophyllum minus*, known only from New Caledonia, to the exotic tropical ferns that span the globe. Tom Shillock has continued to update these often complex distributions by leveraging his knowledge of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) using graphical maps to collect the information in a more efficient way. **Cindy Jeness** has for many years devoted countless hours and expertise in converting our previous system into the more robust and accessible system that she has built and helped design with input from staff and Plant Hotline volunteers. How the information needs to be used and accessed easily has always been at the forefront of her mind.

All of this work has helped make the plant records system available for even more volunteer involvement. Volunteers can be more easily trained to input and update information directly into the system. The primary ways this has happened is making it truly a multi-user environment, incorporating as many selectable fields rather than free-form entry, and adding logins that allow for work at any machine on our network and provide a level of accountability for the user.

Over the next months and years we plan to refine and enhance this system that these plant records pioneers have helped establish. They have made it through this tricky transition period and are still smiling. The Garden is grateful for the dedication of these behind-the-scenes volunteers. If you have an interest in joining the plant database volunteer group, please contact Josh Todd at 404-591-1548 for more information.

A Garden Chat With

Mary Pat

Questions and Answers with
The Garden's Executive Director



I love volunteering for the summer concert series each year. It's always fun to see how the series changes each year with new artists while bringing back some of the favorites. How do you go about working with artists or their agents to book the shows? What has been your favorite concert or moment from the series over the past ten years?

The concert series has really hit its stride in the last five years or so; we have more sellouts than ever and the diversity and quality of artists have grown with the series. We have eight shows this summer so I expect it to be a banner year. Over the last eight years, we have worked with Stephen Moore, RCS Productions, to book and produce our shows. Stephen really understands the Garden's brand and the type of artists best suited to our venue. Late in the year, we get together to discuss ideas for the following season's concert series. Stephen brings us a list of artists and we put together a priority or "wish" list. With that in hand, Stephen begins the process of booking our concert series; it takes patience and time as many artists and their agents make touring decisions later in the spring.



I know some of you want to know our magic formula for selecting artists to perform but, in reality, it's a process that involves instinct, knowledge of our audience and music, and some fact checking. Sabina Carr, our VP of Marketing, participates on the concert selection team. She has good instincts about our audience and potential audience and continues to remind us to book at least one act to attract a younger demographic. This year's "young" act was the Carolina Chocolate Drops. They are very popular with the NPR crowd and were this year's surprise for our volunteers and guests.

Regarding my favorite concert, that's a very tough question as we've had so many memorable evenings in the Garden during the concert series. I will tell you three shows that stand out as very memorable, all for different reasons.

The first was when we had The Blind Boys of Alabama, a wonderful group of gospel singers whose harmony will bring tears to your eyes. They performed on a beautiful night with a clear sky and rosy sunset. During their encore performance, the largest, most golden full moon I have seen in Atlanta emerged just over the Chinese Elm trees on the back left-hand corner of the lawn. I couldn't believe how beautiful that moon was and how fortunate we all were to see it while being serenaded by the Blind Boys of Alabama. I wondered if the three blind singers could feel the moonshine on their faces as they sang to us; at least I hoped that they had a sense for the beauty of that moment.

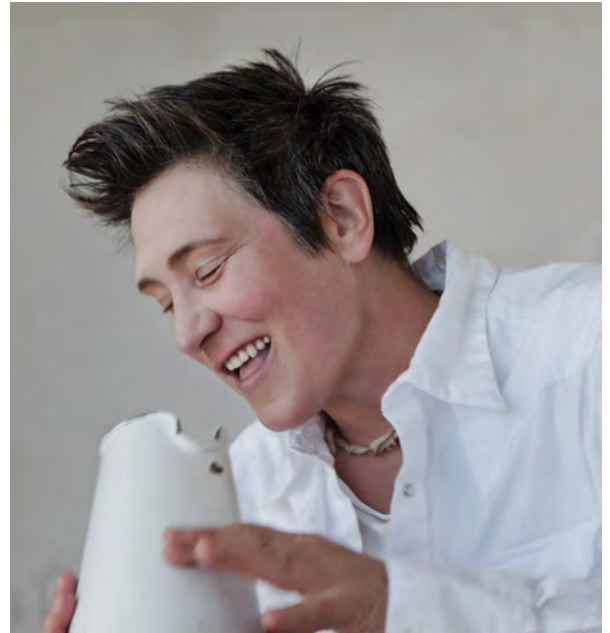
My second great memory is of Buddy Guy jumping off the stage and performing on his electric guitar as he walked through the audience. He even did a shimmy shimmy with an eighty-year old woman who was amazed to find herself dancing with the great Buddy Guy in front of 2000 people!

(Continued on the next page)

And finally, my favorite concert of the last 11 years was last year's opening show with k.d. lang. What a voice, what a performer, what a night! Her range and lyrics are so beautiful, and she performs like a female Elvis without shoes!

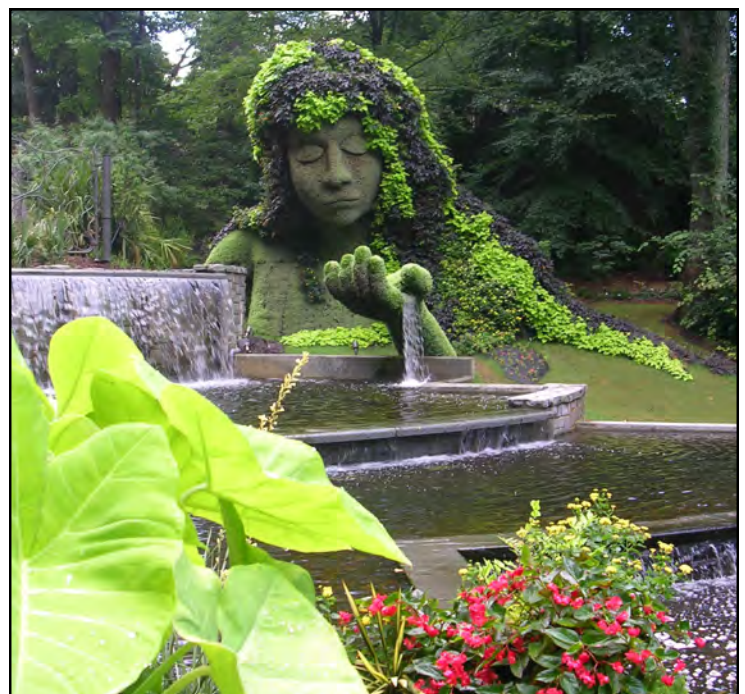
I've been volunteering at the Ogre every week to take pictures and talk to visitors about the exhibition, and it's been busy! I've heard wonderful comments; my favorite was "This is even better than Chihuly!" What are the Garden employees hearing about the show and how is attendance so far during the exhibition?

Imaginary Worlds has been a spectacular success over its first two months. As you are aware, our visitors just love the exhibition. You can stand by the Ogre and listen to the squeals of delight from children and adults or stand at the "wow" spot on the canopy walk and watch people discover the Earth Goddess as they get to the first overlook. Members are also delighted with the exhibition and many are asking if we plan to keep one of the pieces. I love the response we get when a visitor or member is told that the Goddess will remain – that's become the most popular piece and is already destined to be an icon of the Garden.



k.d. lang
Her concert last year ranks as
Mary's Pat's favorite.

Visitation in May and June was robust, more than doubling that of last year. That's a result that few museums ever see and it's impactful as the word of mouth continues to build in Atlanta and beyond. I had hoped that we would see such high numbers knowing that *Imaginary Worlds* and the work of Mosaiculture International had never been seen in the United States. It's so rewarding to see our dreams and hopes come true; we are thrilled with the response and the entire staff is working hard to assure that every visitor and member has a special experience. Of course, that experience includes many interactions with our volunteers as visitors are able to ask you all about the sculptures, have their photos taken with the Ogre and Unicorn, and learn more about the plants in our beautiful garden. Feedback from visitor surveys demonstrates just how important that interaction is to our visitors. They always mention our wonderful, smart and thoughtful volunteers. Thank you for making sure that the Garden offers the best customer service in Atlanta!



Concerts in the Garden Continue Into August

July 26
Lyle Lovett

August 9
Mary Chapin Carpenter &
Shawn Colvin

August 10
Bruce Hornsby
with special guest
Railroad Earth

August 18
Roger Hodgson:
The Legendary Voice of
Supertramp



For available volunteer shifts
for the remaining concerts,
contact Josh Todd or
see the sign-up book in the
Volunteer Office.

Growing the Garden: Inside the Garden Associates



Connoisseurs Tour Breaks Record

By Tisa Moore

The 29th Annual Gardens for Connoisseurs Tour grossed a record-breaking \$88,000 for the Atlanta Botanical Garden. This year's Tour featured 11 private gardens in metro Atlanta, plus a bonus garden featured at the Atlanta Symphony Associates' Decorators Show House. The sites showcased a range of locations from tranquil woodland settings to intimate urban oases to grand estates to "gardener's gardens." The Tour delighted both gardening enthusiasts and also the "garden curious" who were able to explore enchanting ideas by talented landscape designers and home gardeners as well.



"We made \$88,000. This was the most ever made thanks to the wonderful garden owners who allowed us to roam and love their gardens and of course, Mother Nature, for the lovely weather," said Pat King, Gardens for Connoisseurs Tour 2013 Chair. "We chose gardens that were interesting and well thought out spaces. Also, we selected historical gardens like Boxwood House and Jean Astrop's garden that uses collected rain water to keep it lovely all summer long. We even looked at gardens that are a peaceful retreat, which have been lovingly planned and have evolved like Harris Trail."



Building on the success of this event, the Associates' have scheduled a busy fall. Watch for a Fall Luncheon in September or October (date, TBD), a Wine Tasting and Auction in October (date, TBD) and the annual Holiday Party in December (date, TBD). Let Sandra Erickson know if you would like to volunteer for one of these events by contacting her at saeatlanta@att.net or 404-227-1725.

"Digging In" is published for the volunteers and staff of the Atlanta Botanical Garden.

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