



Unitarian Universalist  
Society of Geneva



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# Pioneer Newsletter

## May - June 2016

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### [UUSG Calendar](#)



### **From the Pulpit** the Rev. Dr. Lindsay Bates

### **Want to Know More?**

[Board Minutes](#)

[Team Reports](#)

[Financial Reports](#)

Without a doubt, the most poignant questions that come to us - whether through the Question Box sermon or newcomers' gatherings or over the Internet or in pastoral conversations - are the ones that ask, May I come in? Do I have a place here? When you say everyone is welcome and "Come as you are" and "Welcome to This House," do you mean me, too? I can't give to the pledge drive, I can't participate in events, I'm gay or lesbian or bisexual or

transgender or gender fluid or unsure, I'm a Republican, a Libertarian, a Tea Party supporter, I'm still Christian, I'm still Jewish, I'm really a Buddhist, I'm one of those "nones," I'm too old, my kids are too young, I never went to college, I have a job instead of a career, I look too different, I sound too different, I feel too different. Would you welcome me?

I tried to answer that on the 15th, when one of its many versions came up to the pulpit with the "Stump the Ministers" questions. I hope I responded adequately. All I really said, though, was Yes.

We mean it when we say "Welcome to this house." Every person who wants to be part of our UUSG community is wanted here. We seek quite intentionally to be a community in which all who seek a place will be able to find one. We want to be the kind of community we believe the world needs to see and to create more of, in other institutions and neighborhoods and towns and cities and nations. The motivational line is "Be the change you want to see." That's what we're about. If we won't do it, we've no moral grounds for urging such an approach upon others. If we can't do it, then where is the hope for the world?

So we do our best, working to create in our small community the world of respect and compassion and acceptance that we long to see on a larger scale. That doesn't mean that you will always feel perfectly comfortable here. You'll hear ideas that challenge your beliefs. You'll meet some people who are not at all like you. People will sometimes say unfortunate things, act in less than compassionate ways, forget the intricacies of the Golden Rule (a challenging imperative if ever there was one). We're a human community, we have yet to achieve perfection, and besides, "not as agreeing in opinion" is part of our Covenant, too.

But I can promise that if you want to be here, you have a place here. Come as you are. You are welcome in this House.

Peace ~ Lindsay



## Scott's REgards

the Rev. Scott Talbot Lewis

As of about 3pm Tuesday, May 18th, Tony and I became residents of St. Charles. After a long and intense search we found a perfect house, just a few minutes from the church. Monday we sold our Oak Park house and moved out. Tuesday we closed on the house in St. Charles and Wednesday at 8 am our furniture was delivered. Whew!

Recently, a church member shared with me his thoughts on moving. Moving is both physically and emotionally exhausting, he said. Each item is a story; each item is a decision about what to discard and what to take with you. Do you keep an ugly vase because of who gave it to you? Do you let go of a book that you loved in college, but haven't touched since? Keeping what's beautiful and useful is easy, but what about the power of associations. What objects mean, rather than what they are...

As I ask myself these questions, our home is rapidly becoming a reflection of who Tony and I are. We love it and how beautiful our possessions look in and around it. "This house is a dream come true." Tony said this morning. Immediate neighbors on each side introduced themselves within minutes of our unlocking the front door for the very first time, how gracious.

We love our Oak Park dentist, general practitioner and barber, so we can't give them up. But we'll be needing recommendations on just about everything else; a fast and inexpensive cleaner; a garden center; handy-persons and mechanics. We welcome advice and suggestions, but we probably won't get to all the good restaurants for a long, long time. We love our new community and are so happy that UUSG and all of its wonderful people are at the heart of it.

With joy, love and gratitude,

Scott

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## **boardblog: Our Commitment to be a Welcoming Congregation**

This is a great time to be involved at UUSG. This is the first full year we have Scott on staff to offer new ideas for children, youth and adult programming. We have new energy showing up in our music programs and the increased use of video in our Sunday services. This year will feature the Follies and our biennial auction fund drive which are always great fun events.

It also has been very inspiring to see the vibrant growth of the Interweave program at UUSG. In addition to special social events during the year, Interweave provides a group gathering once a month for LGBTQ members, friends, and allies. Through publicity and word of mouth the group has broadened to bring into the UUSG community a number of participants looking for a place that is truly welcoming and geared to meet their needs.

Now UUSG is launching a new program by having a drop-in center sponsored by [Youth Outlook](#) meet at our church twice a month. After starting the program this May and meeting through the summer, the new program may be able to expand the meeting times this fall once additional adults are trained to be sponsors at our site. Many people involved with Interweave will complete that training and help ensure that our new drop-in center will have enough adults to keep the program offered here for months and years to come.

In addition to these programs, [PFLAG](#) (parents and friends of lesbians and gays, which also has programs for bisexual and transgender persons) is interested in moving the Aurora/Fox Valley chapter meetings to the Tri-City area. If room is available, that chapter may be moving to UUSG later this year as well. So in total that would result in three groups, each with a different focus, meeting at UUSG with the purpose of meeting the needs of LGBTQ persons and their families, friends and allies, both within our walls and in our greater community. We set out to be a Welcoming

Congregation in 1999 and then took that commitment to a higher level with the UUA designation five years ago. Now we are demonstrating that our type of welcoming is more than just acting nice and kind. We are showing that UUSG is committed to living our values in sharing our time, talent, and support for this unmet need in our community.

What a great time to be at UUSG!

Questions or comments? Contact the [Board of Directors](#).

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### **Music is a One-of-a-Kind Creation!**

May brought us a gorgeous bouquet of music, beginning with the very cool UUSG Jazz Combo, featuring Geoff Pynn, Tracy Rosenkrans, Michael Townley, Meredith Vandre and Ian Vetter; the exquisite playing of Lillian Lau in lush harp pieces; wonderful selections by the UUSG Choir, led by Cynthia Spiegel, with Liam Johnson on percussion; the spirit-lifting songs of the FUUsion vocalists, with Lynn Fisher McCanne leading Trish Beckjord, Pam Birch, Sara Hoerdeman, Susan O'Neill, Dawn Pokorny, Rhonda Robinson and Shawna Tiffin; and our regular keyboard stars Sandra Anderson-Cordogan, Patricia Arzaga, Dean Malambri, and Geoff Pynn.

Coming up, we'll be treated to the return of EnsAmble Ad-Hoc, featuring flutist Ruth Cavanaugh, vocalist Francy Acosta and Jose' Luis Posada on strings and percussion; pianist Lynn Fisher McCanne; Grace Christiani, Audrey Jonke; and pianist Sandra Anderson-Cordogan performing with son Stephan Cordogan.

Every weekend is a one-of-a-kind creation. Each of our musicians and groups carefully prepares music to fit the particular service, presenting a worship experience that we believe is unique to the area. To share your own special gift, offer suggestions, or express your appreciation of our work, please reach out to Music Director Tracy Rosenkrans at [music@uusg.org](mailto:music@uusg.org).



## RE Music Highlights

Congratulations to all RE Music students for their meaningful and expressive sharing of the song, "I Have a Dream," last March! Special thanks goes out to all parents for supporting this! Also in March, Liam Doyle played his cello and Corey Klein played his keyboard for classmates. Thank you Liam and Corey, for your gifts to the class! RE Music resumes on Homecoming Sunday in September.

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## Senior Minister on Study Leave

Our Senior Minister, the Rev. Dr. Lindsay Bates, will be on study leave, June 20-26.

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## Pledge Drive Thank-You!

The Stewardship Team would like to thank everyone who responded to this year's Pledge Drive. We owe a special debt of gratitude for the generous contributors who created the Match Fund. Thank you to the following people for your inspirational gift: **Mark Adams & Eleanor Hamilton, Kevin Beyer & Lisa Gades, Deb & Don Brod, Bev & Peter Coe, David de Coriolis & Rhonda Robinson, Jim King, Debbie Leoni, Brad & Doris Lipman, Tracey & Kathy McFadden, Dave & Karen Moore, Gary & Kathie Noll, Kevin & Linda O'Neill, Bill & Dawn Pokorny, Bob & Manya Prah, Hal & Christine Schulman, Jeannie & Bill Scown, Pat Ward, Molly MacKay Zacker & David Zacker and two households who wish to remain anonymous.**

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### Rev. Scott on Study Leave & Vacation

Our Assistant Minister, the Rev. Scott Talbot Lewis, will be on Study Leave and vacation, June 20 - 30.

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### **Green Corner: A Letter of Green Thanks!**

That means Green Sanctuary earnestly thanks ALL who came to be informed, inspired, and to buy native plants from our sale on Sunday! Our thanks as well to everyone who diligently helped make the sale a success with their time and ingenuity: Trish Beckjord, Llona Steele, Kurt Heinz, Bill Koehl, Sandy Bottoms, Linda Valentine, Ann Drover, and Trish's source and contact, Midwest Groundcovers.

Fox River Ecosystems Partners (FREP) will be the beneficiary of your purchase funds along with a portion towards UUSG. There are still some plants left, so those who need more of what they bought or want to have a different choice in their garden, and those who weren't able to come on the 22nd, do plan to check out the remaining native plants during Social Hour on May 29th. We will be available to help you select what you need or would like to try for a change in your garden!

Look for us at the south side of the church and you'll find a table of hardy, environmentally sustainable Native Plants with Green Sanctuary helpers nearby.

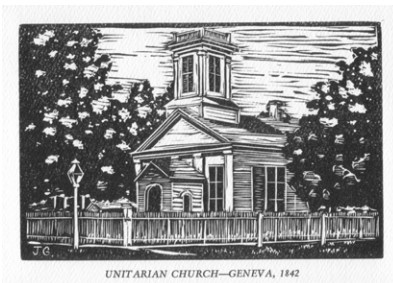
Again, our Greenest Thanks to everyone and to UUSG!



### **Friday Flick: "Making a Killing: Guns, Greed, and the NRA"**

Due to Swedish Days, there will be no 4th Friday Flick in June. "Making a Killing," which will be shown in July, is an unabashedly unbalanced look at the costs of gun ownership to our society. The NRA spent more than \$27 million on congressional races in 2014, according to [opensecrets.org](http://opensecrets.org), which monitors political lobbying. In recent years the guns and ammunition industry had estimated revenues of more than \$11 billion annually. The documentary notes that one person in the U.S. is killed with a gun every 16 minutes and that 92% of Americans favor background checks on all gun buyers.

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## UUSG Turns 175!

Seems like only yesterday it was 1842 and we were a religiously diverse group of Geneva settlers, no more than a couple dozen folk, signing our assent to the original Covenant of the First Christian Congregation of Geneva. Now we're looking at our 175th Anniversary in June 2017.

Clearly, there must be a party!

Planning is beginning for special activities in the spring and early summer of 2017, and we need some more idea-folks and organizers and volunteers to help make things happen.

We've already got the Augustus Conant Pageant that Diane Handler created a few years ago lined up for the first weekend in June 2017. We're thinking it will happen on that Sunday morning, followed by our 175th Birthday Party.

Other ideas that have come up include a tea room during Swedish Days, docents in period costumes talking to visitors about our church's story during Swedish Days, a float in the Swedish Days Parade (since we're an important part of Geneva's story, maybe we could even arrange for Augustus Conant to be the Grand Marshall!).

Would you enjoy being part of the planning? Let Rev. Lindsay know that you'd like to be part of the team that makes it all happen. (And if there is no team, there will be no party. No one is going to be cornered into doing it all by him or herself!)

Sign up with an email to [Rev. Lindsay](mailto:Rev.Lindsay).



### **Circles of Life**

Congratulations to Dave and Karen Moore on the birth of their first grandchild, Samantha Josephine Borne, on May 16th! David and Karen's daughter Susan and her husband Daniel Borne were married at UUSG last July. All are healthy and doing well. Welcome to the world, Samantha!



### **\$1,000 . . . and counting!**

New2U has just raised its first \$1,000, after only four months in existence. The New2U Crew would like to thank all congregants who have listed their items and to those who have purchased. Please help us raise even more in the next four months! [Check out the marketplace.](#)



## **Volunteer Appreciation**

We give our heartfelt thanks to the following people:

The Social Justice team offers sincere appreciation to the following people who helped with our Lazarus House ministry in May: Sherri Casterline, who prepared lunches and Neill and Janet Shanahan, who fixed dinner.

Thanks to the help of some hardy souls, our combined Day of Service and Spring Spruce-Up was a resounding success! Our UUSG grounds look spiffed up and ready for summer thanks to the hard work of:

Rosemary Maziarz, Roger Gallentine, Diane Gallentine, Mededith Vandre, Llona Steel, Nancy Goodfellow, Patrick McGleam, Bill Scown, Andrea Gruszecki, Becky Hruby, Carol Myers, Stephen Kemp, Karen Laukaitis, Karin Kemp, and Karen Moore.

In addition, many thanks to the Hospitality Team who provided beverages and a delicious lunch for all of our hard workers. It was much appreciated.

Greeter: Louise Haslett

Social Hour Hosts: the Ministry on Ministries Team, the Hospitality & Fellowship Team, Cindy Vacek, Jamie Carroll, Sherri Casterline, Vohny Moehling, David Tomell, the LRE Team

Counters: Kevin Beyer, Ellie Radvanovsky, Brad Lipman, Jamie Carroll, Patricia Ward, Jim Carroll, the Finance Team

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## **Adult Religious Enrichment: Understanding Sexuality and Gender Identity**

It requires an atmosphere of respect and trust to speak frankly about human sexuality and identity. This workshop will offer such an opportunity to discuss the emerging spectrum of gender. Words like "cisgender," "transman," and "genderqueer" may be new to you and the experiences of the people they describe are things you want to better understand. If so, this is your opportunity to learn more! The workshop will be Sunday June 5, 11:30am-1pm.

Sign up with an email to [the Rev. Scott Talbot Lewis](mailto:the Rev. Scott Talbot Lewis).

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## **Peace March protesting Long-term Solitary Confinement at Thomson Prison**

On Tuesday, May 31, twenty peace marchers will stay overnight at UUSG. They are bringing attention to the construction of 1,900 cells designed for indefinite solitary confinement at the maximum security prison in Thomson. We are planning on serving them a potluck dinner at 5:30pm, and at 7pm they will present a program in our sanctuary addressing *The Case For De-Incarceration*. If you would like to bring a dish for the potluck, please [sign up online](#).

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## Pottawatomie Habitat for Humanity

Our local Habitat chapter will once again be building a house “from scratch,” as opposed to rehabbing. The first one will be on the east side of St. Charles. UUSG will be assigned a Saturday this summer, and we will be asked to provide 25 people who will help with the project. Please contact [socialjusticeleader@uusg.org](mailto:socialjusticeleader@uusg.org) to make sure you are notified about the exact date and location.

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## Ongoing Teacher Recruitment

We are forming teacher teams for next year's LRE classes. Thank you to all who have signed up already!

We plan to offer 8 classes, most of which operate best with 4-teacher teams. The 4-teacher teams allow teachers to rotate weekends, exchange lead and assistant roles, and frees up schedules so teachers can rejuvenate by attending services or having an occasional Sunday off.

We provide curriculum, supplies, guidance, teacher meetings, a yearly recognition ceremony, and even an annual party!

You get to learn about who UUs are, what we believe in, and provide valuable lessons to our future UUs.

Interested? Need more information? Let us know by contacting [Rev. Scott](#) or [Cathi Plass](#).

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## "Taste of New UUs"

The Membership Committee welcomes you to join our one-session "Taste of New UUs" Orientation Program. This program will take place on Sunday, July 17, 11:30am-2pm.

[Learn more and Register Here...](#)

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## Membership Preparation Class

Have you been here for at least 3 months? Have you attended at least some of our "New UUs" Orientation Program? Are thinking about becoming a member? If so, please attend this class on Sunday, July 31 from 11:30am-2pm to learn about important features of membership at UUSG.

This class is a requirement for church membership, and you'll have the opportunity to sign our membership book at the end of the class. [Learn more and Register here...](#)

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## Get Involved With Interweave

Interweave is a local group of LGBTQ members, friends, and allies who meet once a month to have time together for discussions and special events.

Interweave will not meet in May but will have their annual Pride Month Picnic on June 12, after the church service.

For more information, please contact [Lynn Steele](#).

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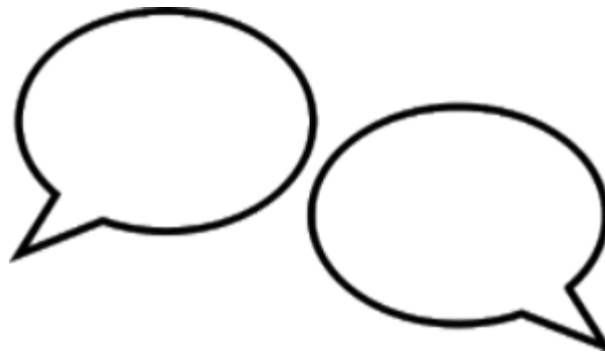


## Interested in Taoism?

How do you feel about “going with the flow”? Is there a cosmic principle of balance at play in the universe? Do you believe in a life of compassion, moderation, and humility? UUSG is considering a discussion group for the philosophy, ethics, and practice of Taoism. Contact [the Rev. Dr. Lindsay Bates](#) for more information.

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## **Drinks and Dialogue – What Needs to be Fixed in the Fox River Region?**

Before June 14, members of the Social Justice team and the Fox River Valley Group would like to sit down with you to learn what you want to see changed in the region. For instance, several years ago people expressed concern about the effect of development plans on the environment. Others were interest in the lack of affordable childcare for single parents or about the increase in heroin use. If you are still concerned about one of these problems or anything else, now is the time to advocate for that issue. As you know, currently the group is addressing the imprisonment of mentally ill people and affordable housing. We are starting to look ahead to the future. What do you see as the most pressing issues that could be addressed if the government, business, and civic sectors worked together? Please contact [socialjusticeleader@uusg.org](mailto:socialjusticeleader@uusg.org) to tell us when you would like to get together to share your ideas over a cup of coffee – or whatever.

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### **Save the Date!**

The 4th Annual UUSG Women's Retreat will be held February 3-5, 2017.

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## Stay Connected!

The Social Media Team asks everyone to “like” [UUSG on Facebook](#) to stay connected with us throughout the week! Questions, comments, photos to share or content ideas? Please [email us](#), we would love to hear from you!

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## Promoting Practical Goodness Awards

Thanks to Christine Schulman for the use of the beautiful cream tablecloths for Katie's farewell party. Christine donated the tablecloths in her mom's memory, Caroline June Anderson, 3 years ago, and the tablecloths are always available for special UUSG events.

The Social Media Team for all their hard work getting our Facebook page updated and responding to comments, messages, and questions!

Lazarus House thanks Vohny Moehling for providing lunch, supper, and overnight on May 5, 2016.

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## Buddhist Meditation & Study Group's New Book Selection

UUSG's Buddhist Meditation and Study Group will be starting a new book on June 1 entitled, *After Buddhism: Rethinking the Dharma for a Secular Age* by Stephen Batchelor. It's a great time for new friends to check out the group! We meet at 7pm on Wednesday evenings in the Common Room. For more information, please contact [uubuddhism@uusg.org](mailto:uubuddhism@uusg.org).

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### Book Exchange

Take a peek at the UUSG Book Exchange across from the James St. entrance. Borrow or keep any of the books in the barrister shelves. No sign in/out – just enjoy! Latest additions include: *Juggling*, *How Good Do We Have to Be?*, and *Meditations on Design*.

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### Fair Trade Products: Think BOB!

Sale with benefits: Equal Exchange will offer a complimentary BOB ("bag of [coffee] beans") with every Equal Exchange fair trade purchase. Complimentary BOBs are possible due to the generosity of Equal Exchange. Look for the brown bags marked "BOB." Take one home with you when you purchase 1 or more items from the fair trade armoire in the Common Room.

We'd like to find homes for current inventory before the start of the coming

fiscal year. Remember that Fathers' Day is coming up, along with graduations, showers, weddings, etc. Fair trade gifts are always welcome and appreciated!

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### **Attention All Weeders**

Spring has sprung at UUSG and so have the weeds! Our Groundskeeping Group is looking for teams of people to tend a section of church property Spring through Fall 2016 in our new "Adopt-A-Plot" program.

If you're interested in helping, click [here](#) and select the section you'd like to adopt. Your "Plot Captain" will contact you with further details.

If you have any questions, contact [Karen Laukaitis](#).

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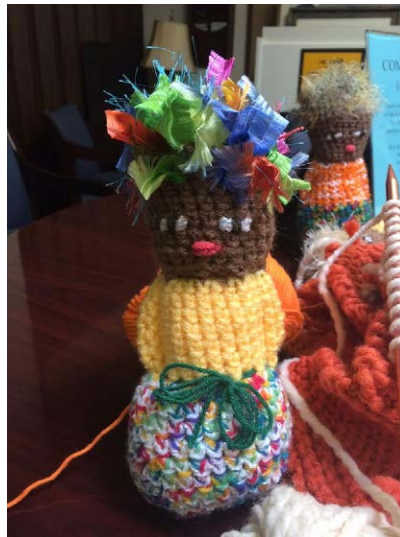
### **Keep It Together, People!**

It takes teamwork to keep our buildings in good repair, and the team that does it has openings for new members. Your Facilities Team manages contractors and volunteers who maintain and repair every aspect of the UUSG buildings, and their historic nature makes it a creative, educational endeavor.

If you're interested in home repair, project management, or any aspect of construction, make your interest more meaningful by joining the UUSG

Facilities Team. Contact us for more information.

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### **Commit to Knit**

For UUSG needle artists, May is send-off month! We'll send our knitters, crocheters, and quilters off to work on their own over the summer.

And at the end of May, we'll collect all the completed projects we can for sending off to the organization [Women4Women Knitting4Peace](#), whose incredible folks will hand-deliver the much-needed, comforting items to women and children in global areas of conflict (including locations in the U.S.).

Please join us in making scarves, shawls, baby blankets and bibs, toys, sleeping mats, and other items. Yarn, patterns, needles, and assistance are available on request.

Questions, suggestions, donations? Contact [Katherine Lyons](#).

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## Friendly Faces

Individuals, couples, and families are all invited to act as greeters on Sunday mornings. Sign up [here](#).

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