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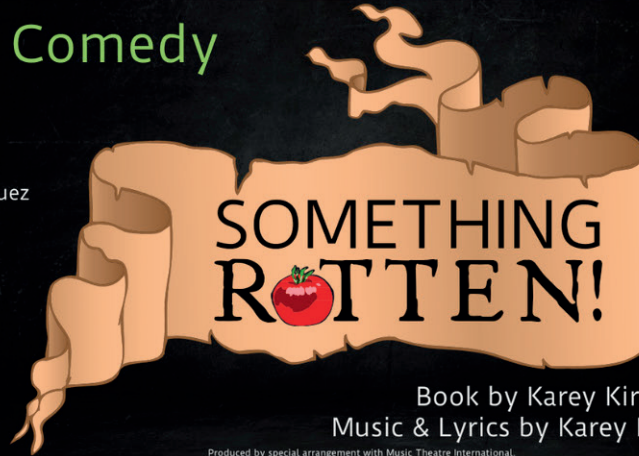
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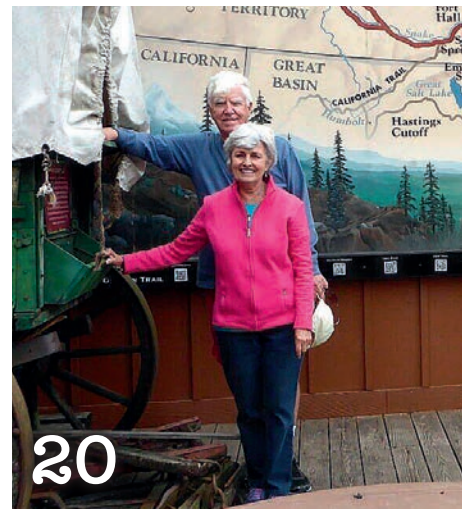
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### On the Cover

*Gainesville photographer*  
*Tony Avila shot our*  
*cover portrait of Carolyn*  
*Hendricks and Keanna*  
*Franklin in front of City*  
*Hall. Avila's work is on*  
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# JENNIFER JOHNSON-SPENCE

*Library Director, Cooke County Library*



***Q: Tell us a bit about yourself and how you wound up running the Cooke County Library?***

A: I'm a native Texan – born in Marshall, but grew up mostly in the Midwest. I come from a blended family of four girls. I have a Bachelor of Science degree in Broadcasting and two Masters – one in Television Production and one in Library Science.

Being a Librarian is actually my second career. I worked 15 years in television production in NYC, which is where I was living before I took this job. I was working as a librarian at a non-profit organization there when I came to visit my family in Lindsay for the Christmas holiday and interviewed for this job. I was offered the job on the spot and as one would say the rest is history.

On March 16th, I started my 18th year as the Library Director at Cooke County Library.

***Q: There is a common perception that the internet has eliminated the need for libraries. Is that true or false, and why?***

A: I disagree that the Internet has eliminated the need for libraries. Libraries are about experiences. If anything libraries are even more important now because of the Internet. So much of what we do on a daily basis requires access to the In-

ternet. The library offers computers, laptops and Wi-Fi access at the facility for anyone to use. We even have Wi-Fi mobile hotspots for library card patrons to borrow for a week.

Another way that proves the Internet hasn't and won't eliminate libraries is by the number of children who attend the classes and programs offered by our library. For example, the weekly children's classes on Tuesday, averages 25 kids and 20 adults. There were so many people that last fall we started offering one in the afternoon.

Digital collections are popular, but people still want books especially when teaching their children to learn to read. Having that physical book in your hands provides a personal connection that digital books just can't give.

***Q: There was some rain damage to the library roof last fall. What happened and has it been fixed?***

A: Unfortunately, there was water damage to the children's and young adult sections of the building. The collection took a big hit as there were over 900 books that had water damage.

The funds have been received and in the next couple of weeks the process will begin to replace everything that was damaged. It will be a big and time-consuming job, but worth it when it's done.

Since the water leak, the library has a new roof and this shouldn't be a problem for here on out.

**Q: County officials considered downsizing the library in a new spot recently, and they were met with strong public opposition to the move. How gratifying was it to know just how much public support is out there for the library?**

A: Even when you think you're doing a good job and making an impact on the community, you just never know if you are or not.

The support that the community showed during this time was greatly appreciated by all of us who work at the Cooke County Library. Each of the staff takes their job seriously and wants to better our community and the lives of the residents.

This outpouring of support showed that the library is considered a vital aspect of the community and the future.

**Q: What's new on the horizon for the library?**

A: We're always searching and researching new services that we think might be popular or wanted in our community.

Right now, we're in the middle of planning all the activities that will be available during the 2023 summer. We're going to have lots of classes for different age groups. We're also working on getting the furniture and items replaced that were damaged in the fall. That will be a huge job.

There are several grants that have projects that are still coming up. I'm looking forward to these and seeing the impact they have on the community. Plus we're looking forward to getting more of the renovations completed on the building.

**Q: Do you need volunteers or other help? How can people get more involved?**

A: Currently, the Library doesn't accept volunteers. If people are interested in getting involved

they could join the Friends of the Cooke County Library. They can find the membership form on the library's website. I know that they are always looking for new members to help them with fundraisers and activities. They're open to new ideas.

**Q: What are your hobbies? Don't say reading; that's too predictable.**

A: I love to travel and explore different places. I've been to all 50 states and all seven continents including Antarctica. When I'm not traveling, I enjoy spending time with friends and family, especially my four nephews and of course my dog, Barkley. I enjoy live theater and music. And, of course, I do love to read.





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# Cousins vs Cousins

## Rivalry unites Muenster and Lindsay



Submitted photo

The Muenster defense tackles a Lindsay ballcarrier during the 2010 Kraut Bowl.

On a fall Friday in 1992, one of the quietest students at Muenster High School stood up to give a pep rally speech.

Jerry Metzler, the MHS principal at the time, said he will never forget how the speech ended.

“He gave a nice little talk about how important it was to beat Lindsay and win,” Metzler said. “Then at the end of his speech, he said, ‘And we’re going to go over there Friday night, and we’re going to beat Lindsay. And then, when it’s over, we’re going to dance with their women.’”

Metzler called it one of the greatest lines he has ever heard at a pep rally, and it is among his favorite memories of Cooke County’s premier high school sports rivalry, the Kraut Bowl.

The cities of Muenster and Lindsay were founded around the same time in the late 1800s by German Catholic

immigrants. Located roughly 10 miles apart, their similar origins made for a natural rivalry.

“When sports came along, it kind of gave everybody an excuse several times a year to get together and compete,” Metzler said. “The results of these games are talked about at family reunions, family gatherings, birthday parties, things like that for years to come. So, it’s always been a big rivalry, and the sports part of it probably more in the past 60 years or so.”

### Both sides of the fence

Metzler worked in Muenster in the early 90s, but he spent his playing days on the other side. He is a 1974 Lindsay High School graduate and veteran of the football, basketball and track squads. His mother is from Muenster, so he had a connection, but some people still had to get used to having a Lindsay graduate working for Muenster ISD.



*Submitted photo*  
The Muenster offensive line lines up against the Lindsay defensive line during the 2022 Kraut Bowl.

“There were people, I think, that cast a leery eye on me for a few years,” Metzler said. “But pretty soon, they found out where my loyalties were at that time, and I was proud to be a Hornet. Very proud of my time up at Muenster. We had a very good school, lot of really good kids and people that I got to work with.”

After leaving Muenster, he served as principal and then superintendent at Lindsay ISD from 2000-05. Today, he works part-time at Valley View ISD. He co-hosts Cooke County SportsTalk and broadcasts local high school games for KGAF.

Metzler is far from the only person to go from one side to the other. Muenster football coach and athletic director Brady Carney first experienced the rivalry in 2006 as part of the Lindsay coaching staff. He was the track and field coach when the Knights won a state championship in 2010. He left Lindsay for Muenster that year when presented the opportunity to be a head football coach.

Carney said the families living in Muenster and Lindsay are intertwined,

which makes the rivalry special.

“(It’s) just cousins versus cousins, and it’s probably gone on like that forever,” Carney said. “The proximity in the towns, how they’re so similar as far as the Catholic faith and the success of the school districts in academics and athletics. I think, deep down, it’s probably just the close-knit family ties that make it such an interesting and awesome experience with the rivalry.”

Metzler and Carney have been around this matchup for years, but it doesn’t take long for newcomers to learn how important it is.

Lindsay hired Casey Jones as football coach and athletic director last year. Jones grew up in central Texas, so he didn’t know much about the rivalry at first. He said he knew about the two programs and their proud histories, and he knew they were rivals, but that was it. But within his first two days on the job, people were already talking to him about the Kraut Bowl.

Jones said his first impression is how great the rivalry is for the communities.

“It’s neat to see these communities come together and compete,” Jones said. “So far, all the games that I’ve been a part of have been good games. The kids just seem to amp it up a little bit more whenever it’s Lindsay and Muenster playing.”

A rivalry such as this always means something when the teams play, but it is often elevated by the high stakes sometimes associated with the games. Muenster and Lindsay haven’t always shared a district, but when they do, they’re usually battling one another for district titles.

It helps when both teams are good. In 2021, the football teams didn’t share a district, allowing both to win district championships the same year. This past basketball season, the boys’ and girls’ teams from both schools each reached at least the third round of the playoffs. Both boys’ teams won on their rival’s court, while both girls’ teams won at home.

When the Knights and Hornets go head-to-head, both towns descend upon the schools in droves. The stands at Hornet Stadium and Knight Field are packed

with many more fans standing along the fence, just to get a glimpse of this storied rivalry.

Carney said the schools mean everything to their small towns.

“It’s funny, because you look up at a 5 or 6A game in the city of Dallas or something on a Friday night, you see that there’s 100 people in the stands,” Carney said. “And then, you look at the Muenster-Lindsay game on a Friday night, you can’t find the empty spot in the stands or along the fence to stand.”

In basketball, the gyms are filled to the rafters, even during the junior varsity games before the main event. Fans arrive early to ensure they find a place to park and to sit.

Jones said he wishes every game could feel this big as he described his first Kraut Bowl, which was played in Lindsay this past fall.

“The whole week, the kids just had a little extra pep in their step,” Jones said. “They were excited to get to play. Our season, we kind of had some struggles with injuries and things that hurt us, but that week, you couldn’t tell that we had been struggling. They came out, played really well. The kids just seemed to amp it up a little bit, and the atmosphere was great. People everywhere standing up along the fences. That’s what you want in a high school atmosphere.”

But for all the great atmospheres and great athletes on display, perhaps the best part of the rivalry is the sportsmanship. In the end, these communities are



Submitted photo  
Lindsay quarterback Yancey Otts evades a tackle from Muenster defender Sam Saucer during the 2015 Kraut Bowl.

neighbors. There are countless families with members on each side. Hornets and Knights often become friends, and sometimes, even marry.

Carney said sometimes when he finishes a November football practice, some of his players will go watch Lindsay’s volleyball team in the playoffs. He said whether either side would ever admit it, deep down, the Knights and Hornets support one another.

“If we’re in a playoff baseball game, or softball game, or basketball game, whatever, you’ll look up, and there’ll be Lindsay families there watching,” Carney said. “And it may be that they have blood relatives playing, but then there’s also a group of kids that may come in from Lindsay and sit on the Muenster



Submitted photo  
Lindsay’s Erin Early beats a tag by the Muenster third baseman during a 2016 softball game.

side and cheer ‘em on... But once they play each other, all that cheering for each other is over. They just want to win.”

“

“He gave a nice little talk about how important it was to beat Lindsay and win. Then at the end of his speech, he said, ‘And we’re going to go over there Friday night, and we’re going to beat Lindsay. And then, when it’s over, we’re going to dance with their women.’”

— Jerry Metzler

”

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# Passing the Torch

**T**he Gainesville City Council met for its regular meeting March 7, in part to confirm the results of the annual election and cancel the May 6 vote, given that all candidates were unopposed.

All but one council member is returning. Carolyn Hendricks is stepping down from the council after decades of service, but she's confident in her replacement.

Stepping up to take her place is her great-niece and goddaughter, Keanna Franklin, someone Hendricks is proud to be passing the torch to.

Both of these women have grown up in Gainesville and are proud leaders in the community.

Hendricks graduated from Gainesville High School in 1978. She has been the council representative of Ward One since 2003.

"I wanted to work and do what I could for the betterment of the community," said Hendricks.

Since then, she has been a listening ear to whoever needed her.



“People feel very comfortable coming to talk to me if they have complaints,” said Hendricks. “When they approached me, there wasn’t any fear, and I think when we talk it is very educational and I provided them with information of what was going on in the city.”

As glad as she is to have been able to serve the city, Hendricks is stepping down to allow for a new generation to step up.

“20 years, that’s a long time period of being on there [the council],” said Hendricks. “I think it’s time for somebody younger and more energetic to step in that place, and she’s going to bring a lot of new ideas.”

That’s not to say Hendricks’ shoes will be easy to fill.

“We’ll miss her,” said City Manager Barry Sullivan. “She’s been volunteering for 20 years.”

Franklin has grown up looking to Hendricks for advice and wisdom.

“I’ve definitely watched her vouch for this ward in particular, and I love it. Like she said, people are truly open to coming to her and voicing their concerns, and that’s always inspired me to hear people out,” said Franklin. “It’s important to hear people out and try to help them fix their problems. You want to pay it forward.”

Franklin graduated from GHS in 2008.

“I grew up in Gainesville and I love this town,” said Franklin. “It’s important to continue on and voice the legacy, and I want to be able to continue to grow the community in a positive direction, and I definitely want to make sure that Ward One doesn’t get left behind.”

## Potential

Hendricks sees good things to come from her successor.

“Keanna is really equipped and ready to step in that position as far as background and her education,” said Hendricks. “She and I both share a political science degree and we both graduated from Texas Women’s University, and Keanna went on to higher education.

She received a master’s degree from Texas Womens University, as well as from UNT, and she graduated from both universities on the same day. She was going to both universities to get her master’s degree. I think she’s ready for this position.”

“

I grew up in Gainesville and I love this town. It’s important to continue on and voice the legacy, and I want to be able to continue to grow the community in a positive direction, and I definitely want to make sure that Ward One doesn’t get left behind.”

— Keanna Franklin

”

Franklin is passionate about the kids in Gainesville and continuing to make the city better for them.

“It’s important to me, especially with my background, that kids in Gainesville have something to do. I’m huge

on recreation; that’s my heart and my background,” said Franklin. “As we grow, I definitely want this community to maintain a small town feel, but still be able to offer development to other companies.”

Hendricks says this is a good time for Franklin to take the mantle.

“She’s going onto the council at a real good time, because there’s a lot of things that’re fixing to happen in Gainesville,” said Hendricks. “She gets to be a part of making decisions on how Gainesville is going to grow, and I think she’ll be very open-minded. She’s going to do whatever is for the betterment of this community.”

## Legacy

Hendricks and Franklin recognize that they represent two groups that have historically not had much of a voice locally: women and people of color.

“[Franklin] watched me and knows, she knew that she could be a councilwoman someday,” said Hendricks. “Some young kids see that I was the first female African-American woman on the council, and then there’s hope that someday they could do that, and that they can represent this community.”

Franklin confirmed this, saying how she has grown up seeing Hendricks as an inspiration.

“Especially as a woman of color, had I not seen her hold this office for so long, I would have ever thought it would be possible for me,” said Franklin. “It is important to see people like her and to see people like me fill these positions because you can’t be what you don’t see. Representation is very important, especially in the black community.”

Hendricks agrees with this sentiment, and is glad to be passing on the torch to Franklin.

“She’s energetic, and I think she will work well in the community. She will work well with the people and with the council also,” said Hendricks. “It’s a good council to work with, and I think she will be a big inspiration in working

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# What's **HOT** at the Cooke County Library this Spring?

**S**pring is here and with it another list of hot off the press library books. If you're ever in doubt about what to read next, your local library staff is always ready to make suggestions when you aren't up for browsing the stacks. Let's look at some current popular titles.

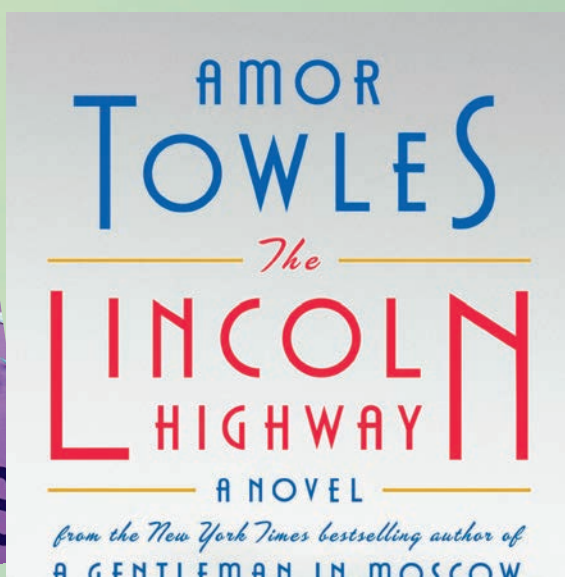
Colleen Hoover first won the Goodreads Choice Award for Best Romance in 2015, then again in 2016 and 2017. Six of her novels


are currently on the New York Times Best Sellers list.

While she has been popular across the country for a while, it wasn't until recently that her books gained popularity for Cooke County Library patrons. If you look at titles that have circulated over the past six months, Colleen Hoover's holds the spot for one out of every four popular adult novels in our library. The most popular titles

include *Confess* and *All Your Perfects*.

What's the hype? Hoover is an adult contemporary romance author. Her background in social work inspired many of the settings and the plot twists always come as a surprise. For readers who love Colleen Hoover, we also suggest romance authors Lucy Score, Christina Lauren and Emily Henry.





PRINCE HARRY

SPARE



Another author gaining popularity fast is Sarah J. Maas. Her newest Crescent City series are her first two science fiction novels written for adults, but it is her two young adult series, *A Court of Thorns and Roses* and *Throne of Glass*, which are also gaining the interest of adult readers. These fantasy-romance novels take the reader into a magical land full of mythical creatures, faeries, witches and wolves. The strong female heroines aren't afraid of violence or romance.

While romance books are some of the top requests, our readers know there are other genres too! Amor Towles' newest novel, *The Lincoln Highway*, is still a top checkout two years after its publication. This historical fiction novel follows two brothers on a road trip. Set in 1954, their trip follows the Lincoln Highway where they meet unique characters and make unexpected detours. Other historical fiction authors to try include Kristin Hannah and Kate Quinn.

Of course we must include which suspense books are keeping patrons up at night. *Desert Star* by Michael Connelly, *Racing the Light* by Robert Crais, *Night Shift* by Robin Cook, and *The Favor* by Nicci French all make the top of this list. Any of these authors are sure to keep you on your toes until the end. Colleen Hoover even snuck a psychological thriller into her collection with her novel, *Verity*, which pops into one of our most popular checkouts.

Every few years there seems to be that one book patrons start asking for long before the release date. Prince Harry released his memoir, *Spare*, in January. Harry retells the hardships he faced after his mother's tragic death and the challenges and victories he faced from childhood to adulthood. The audio version, which is available on the Libby app is narrated by the prince himself. This title is also available as an eBook on Libby and in book format at the Cooke County Library.

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out the Cooke County Library for your next read, whether it be audio, digital eBook, or the physical book you devour.

*Kimberly Reiter is the Associate Director and Children's Class Coordinator at Cooke County Library. Reiter holds a Bachelor of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies with a focus in Elementary Education from Texas Woman's University and a Master of Library Science from the University of North Texas.*



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The pioneer journey to a new life in the West is one of America's great narra-

tives. During the mid-1800s upwards of 350,000 men, women and children traveled the Oregon Trail following a series of paths initially forged by Native Americans and, later, by fur trappers.

Pioneers required approximately six months to complete the 2,100-mile journey across prairies, deserts and mountains. Both the length and time required decreased as shortcuts were discovered and ferries and bridges constructed. Even with improvements the journey remained difficult and dangerous with many pioneers losing their lives to disease and accidents.

During the trail's early years emigrants converged in Independence, Missouri to set out in wagon trains across the northeast corner of Kansas toward the Platte

River that spans present-day Nebraska. The trail split from a Platte River tributary near present-day Casper, Wyoming, to cross the high desert and meet the Sweetwater River.

The Continental Divide was crossed at famed South Pass in southwestern Wyoming on the way to Fort Bridger before pioneers headed to Oregon by turning north into present-day Idaho. Reaching the largely inaccessible Snake River, they followed the south rim of the river's deep canyons onto northwest Oregon's Columbia Plateau to meet the mighty Columbia River that flowed to the Pacific Ocean.

It was quite a trip and with wagons bursting of supplies and personal possessions, most emigrants walked the entire distance.

With the Oregon Trail being one of 20 national historic trails administered by the National Park Service and so many road trip options available to travelers why do we consider the Oregon Trail to be America's best? For one thing, it delivers an interesting history lesson as well as stunning scenery. From the long-grass prairie of Kansas to the Columbia Plateau of Oregon, the journey is filled with impressive landmarks and excellent interpretive centers that offer a graduate course in America's early history.

Another plus is a route that traverses mostly rural America with sections, especially through Wyoming, little changed from pioneer days. Other than Kansas City at the beginning and Oregon City (a Portland suburb) at the terminus, communities along the trail are of modest size. Topeka, North Platte, Casper, Pocatello, Twin Falls, Boise, Pendleton and The Dalles are pleasant communities easily navigated, even for seniors like us. Roads following the trail typically have light traffic and at most trail landmarks we encountered few other travelers.

Exploring the many natural landmarks that created wonder among pioneers nearly 200 years ago makes this an extraordinary adventure. Standing where tens of thousands of pioneers once forded a river or ascended a hill is an experience long remembered.

Follow the trail in western Nebraska and walk along a lengthy depression created as oxen struggled to pull wagons up a steep incline at California Hill. Stand atop Wyoming's Independence Rock and view the zig-zag path of the Sweetwater River pioneers followed and were required to ford several times on their way to the Continental Divide. Stroll the 9th fairway beside a lengthy trail depression at an Idaho golf course. Stand in five-foot deep ruts cut in sandstone by wagons and livestock lumbering through southeast Wyoming.

At several locations, today's travelers can view names and dates etched in stone by pioneers. During our 2021 visit to South Pass we stood in awe as elk raced nearby before effortlessly leaping a fence. Minutes later antelope sped in the opposite direction along the same fence row.

There is much to see and explore along the historic trail and the experience shouldn't be rushed. We devoted approximately a month to each of our three trips. It can be completed more quickly, but plan on a minimum of two weeks. It is best to travel from east to west as did the pioneers. Reading a few books on Oregon Trail history prior to your own trip will result in a much richer journey. A suggested bibliography is available in our book. Happy trails.

Kay and David Scott are authors of "Exploring the Oregon Trail: America's Historic Road Trip" (Globe Pequot). Learn more about the Oregon Trail at [blog.valdosta.edu/dlscott/oregon-trail/](http://blog.valdosta.edu/dlscott/oregon-trail/)



*Photo by David and Kay Scott*  
The grave of John Hollman who died during an 1852 journey to California includes the original gravestone.



*Photo by David and Kay Scott*  
This section of the Oregon Trail in southwestern Wyoming leads to the Continental Divide at famed South Pass.



*Photo by David and Kay Scott*  
The site of Robidoux's first trading post along the Oregon Trail in Western Nebraska is marked with a monument.



# Popular trends in home exteriors

**C**ertain homes have an undeniable wow factor. That instant appeal tends to be noticeable the moment visitors pull up to the curb, and it might be a byproduct of homeowners' willingness to embrace the latest exterior design trends.

Trends come and go, but recognition of the current fashions can help homeowners create that highly sought-after wow factor. The following are some recent trends in home exteriors that have helped homeowners set their properties apart.

## Wood

Natural wood has undeniable appeal, and it hasn't only found newfound devotion among home interior decorators. Natural wood garage doors create a sense of warmth and can set a home apart from others with steel doors, which tend to be the most popular garage door material. In addition to the garage door, natural wood entry doors and wood decks are popular ways to impart this

classical, warm look to a home's exterior.

## Painted brick

Like natural wood, brick is a traditional material that's both sturdy and classical. But homeowners can add character to brick with a coat of paint, which has become a popular trend in recent years. Light tones tend to be most popular when painting bricks. The experts at Better Homes & Gardens note that this could prove a long-term commitment if homeowners so desire, as a properly painted brick exterior could last as long as 20 years.

## Hardscaping

Hardscaping isn't a new trend, but it has been trending in recent years. Hardscaping is an umbrella term that includes everything from outdoor living rooms to incorporating natural stone into a landscape. Outdoor living rooms are one hardscaping trend that has become increasingly popular of late. These spaces serve as an extension of indoor living

spaces. The home improvement experts at HGTV note that recently homeowners have looked to create covered outdoor rooms that can be enjoyed more frequently than patios or decks that are not protected from the elements.

## Outdoor lighting

It makes sense that individuals looking to spend more time enjoying their properties outdoors would want more lighting outside. Ambient outdoor lighting can be utilized throughout a property. Such lighting can light up walkways and driveways and be used to light up landscaping features like trees and gardens.

Home design trends tend to be fickle. But recognition of the current trends in exterior home design can set homes apart and turn properties into awe-inspiring places to enjoy the great outdoors.

## Other options

There are many other, more budget-

friendly ways homeowners can tend to the exterior of their properties.

- **Power washing:** Power washing won't break the bank but it can revive the look of a home. Power washing removes dirt and grime from the siding of a home and a power washing can be used to clean porches, walkways and patios as well. Hardware chains like Home Depot and Lowes typically rent power washers, but homeowners who don't want to do it themselves can hire a professional for a few hundred dollars, if not less. Power washing after winter can be a good idea, as the elements can take a toll on a home's exterior. A good power washing before spring and summer entertaining season can thus give a home a fresh, clean look without breaking the bank.

- **Furnished front porch:** A furnished front porch can serve as a welcome sign to neighbors and provide a great place to relax with a morning cup of coffee and a good book. Homeowners with a small porch won't need to bust their budgets to upgrade their front porch furnishings. Some small chairs with bright cushions, a small table and a rug underfoot can revamp an entryway at low cost.

- **Window box installation:** Installing window box planters is another cost-effective way to brighten up a home's exterior. Homeowners can hang window boxes outside windows on the front of their homes and then fill them with brightly colored flowers to add an inviting pop of color to their home exteriors. The experts at Better Homes & Gardens urge homeowners to take weight into consideration before buying window planters. Keep in mind that soil and developed plants can be heavy, so look for a sturdy box as well as one that has drainage holes.

- **Replace hardware:** Another simple way to freshen up a stale exterior is to replace hardware. Door knobs, knockers, house numbers, and even the mailbox can appear dated after a while. Replacing these items is inexpensive and quick but can have a profound impact on how the exterior of a home appears to residents and visitors.

Exterior renovations need not break the bank. Various simple and inexpensive tweaks can quickly revitalize the exterior of a home.

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## HONEY GARLIC GLAZED SALMON

Author: Sam Hu | Ahead of Thyme

Total Time: 25 minutes

Yield: 2-3 servings

Diet: Gluten Free

Sticky and sweet, easy honey garlic glazed salmon is one of the best salmon recipes to add to your weeknight dinner rotation. Ready in under 25 minutes.

### INGREDIENTS:

- 1 ½ lb. skin-on salmon fillets, about 1.5-inch thick
- ½ teaspoon salt (or to taste)
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper (or to taste)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoon soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons honey
- ¼ cup water
- 1 teaspoon cornstarch
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice, freshly squeezed
- 1 tablespoon garlic, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon green onions, finely chopped

### INSTRUCTIONS:

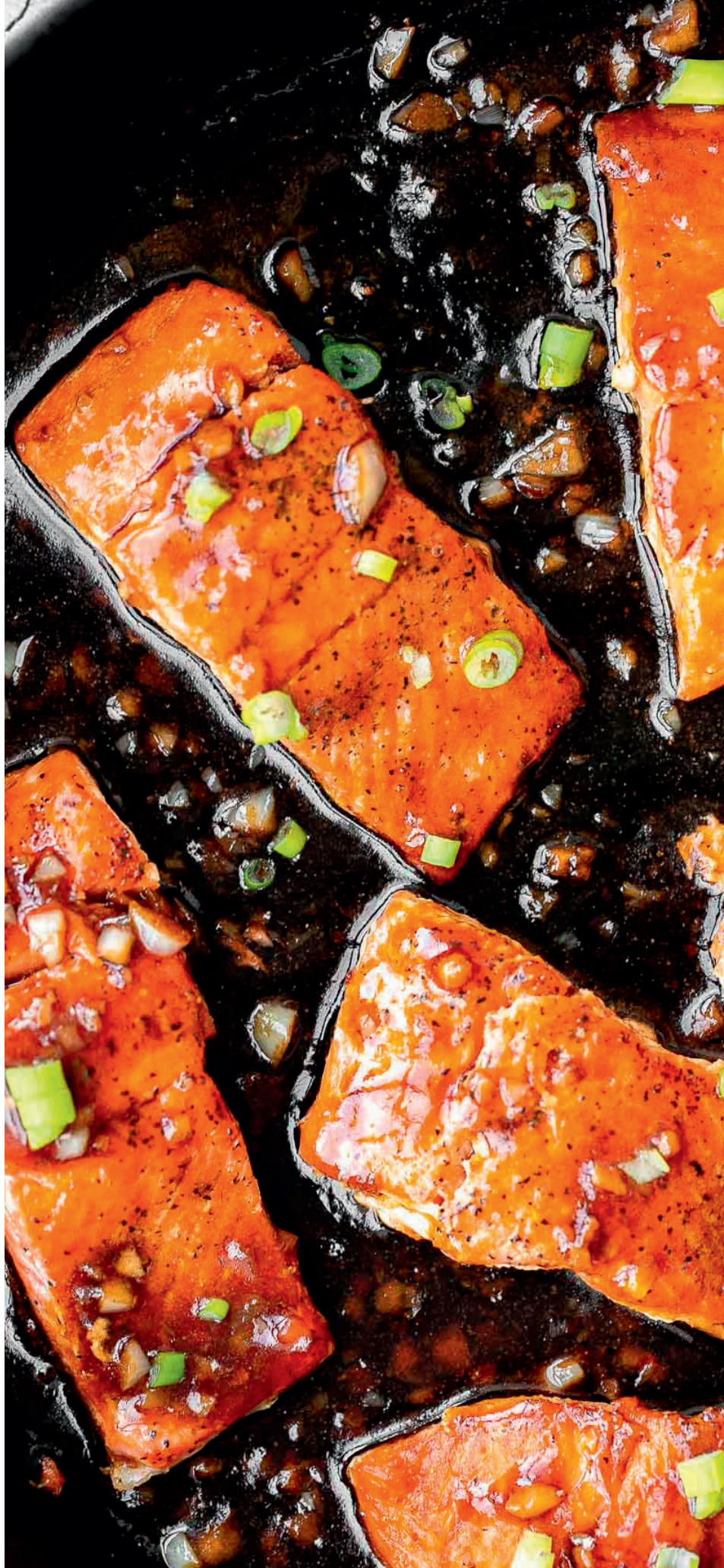
Pat dry salmon fillets and season with salt and pepper. Set aside at room temperature for 10 to 15 minutes.

In a large skillet, heat oil for 2 minutes over medium-high heat until the hot oil sizzles. Sear the salmon fillets for 5-6 minutes on each side (skin side facing up first), until golden brown and fully cooked. When salmon is cooked, the flesh will turn opaque, and it will flake easily when inserting a fork. Transfer the cooked salmon onto a plate.

In a small bowl, whisk together soy sauce, honey, water, cornstarch and lemon juice. Whisk well to combine until the cornstarch dissolves. Set aside.

In the same skillet, add garlic and sauté until fragrant over medium heat, about 1 minute. Stir in sauce mixture and cook for 3-4 minutes. Keep stirring until thickened to a desired consistency.

Return the cooked salmon to the skillet and toss well to coat evenly. Garnish with green onions and serve warm with a bowl of steamed rice.



## BAKED CHICKEN QUESADILLAS

Author: Sam | Ahead of Thyme

Total Time: 30 minutes Yield: 4 servings

### INGREDIENTS

- 12 ounces boneless skinless chicken breast (about 2 breasts), cut into ½ inch cubes
- 3 tablespoons fajita seasoning\*
- 1 tablespoon avocado oil (or vegetable oil)
- ½ medium onion, diced
- 1 red bell pepper, diced
- 1 green bell pepper, diced
- cooking oil spray (or vegetable oil)
- 4 flour tortillas, 8-inches in diameter
- 1 cup cheddar cheese, shredded and divided
- ½ cup Monterey Jack cheese, shredded

### INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat oven to 425F. Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper. Grease the parchment paper with cooking oil spray or brush with vegetable oil.

In a large mixing bowl, add the cubed chicken and fajita seasoning. Toss to coat chicken completely in seasoning. Set aside while oven preheats.

In a large skillet, heat oil over medium heat. Add cubed chicken and cook until browned, about 5 minutes. Transfer the cooked chicken to a plate and set aside.

In the same skillet, add onion, red pepper, and green pepper. Sauté until soft, about 3-4 minutes. Return the cooked chicken to the skillet and stir to combine with the veggies. Remove from heat and set aside.

Take one tortilla at a time and spread one-quarter of the filling into one side of the tortilla. Sprinkle with a ¼ cup of cheddar cheese and 2 tablespoons Monterey Jack cheese. Fold the tortilla wrap in half and place on the lined baking sheet. Use the back of a flat spatula to gently press the tortilla down so that the top sticks to the mixture.

Repeat with the 3 remaining tortillas.

Spray the top of the folded tortillas with more cooking spray oil or brush oil on top to help crisp up the tortillas.

Place the baking sheet in the middle rack of the oven and bake for 15 minutes until golden brown and crispy and the cheese is melted. If during baking you notice that the tortilla tops are flipping up, carefully press them back down using the back of a spatula or spoon.

Cut each tortilla into 4 slices and serve with guacamole, salsa, and sour cream



## HONEY MUSTARD DRESSING

Author: Sam Hu | Ahead of Thyme

Total Time: 5 minutes

Yield: 1 cup

Diet: Gluten Free

### INGREDIENTS:

- ¼ cup honey
- ¼ cup Dijon mustard
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice, freshly squeezed
- ½ teaspoon salt (or more to taste)
- ¼ teaspoon ground black pepper

### INSTRUCTIONS

In a medium mixing bowl, combine all the ingredients. Use a whisk to mix together and stir well to combine.

Store in airtight jar (like a mason jar) in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks.



## BAKED MEDITERRANEAN PASTA

Author: Sam Hu | Ahead of Thyme

Total Time: 40 minutes

Yield: 8 servings

Diet: Vegetarian

Baked Mediterranean pasta is simple, flavorful, and vibrant, loaded with fresh tomatoes, artichoke hearts, and olives, and topped with mozzarella cheese.

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb. rotini pasta
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 1 tablespoon garlic, minced
- 3 cups cherry tomatoes, halved
- ½ teaspoon Italian seasoning
- ½ teaspoon salt (or to taste)
- ¼ teaspoon ground black pepper (or to taste)
- 1 (12 oz.) can artichoke hearts, drained and cut into bite-sized pieces
- 1 cup pitted kalamata olives, halved
- 200 grams bocconcini (mozzarella balls), halved (or more for extra cheesy topping)
- 1 tablespoon fresh parsley, finely chopped (optional, for serving)
- Parmesan cheese, grated (optional, for serving)

### INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat oven to 375F.

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil over medium high heat. Add pasta and cook until al dente (fully cooked but still firm) according to package directions, about 6-8 minutes. Drain well and set aside in the pot.

While the pasta is cooking, heat oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat until the hot oil sizzles, about 2 minutes. Add onion and garlic and cook until tender, about 3-4 minutes

Add tomatoes and season with Italian seasoning, salt, and pepper. Stir well and cook for 1-2 minutes until the tomatoes have slightly softened.



## SAUTÉED ASPARAGUS

Author: Sam | Ahead of Thyme

Total Time: 15 minutes

Yield: 4 servings

Diet: Vegan

Quick and easy Sautéed Asparagus is a simple, savory side dish that goes well with almost any main dish. Seasoned simply with freshly ground pepper and seasoning salt, this spring vegetable is transformed into a tender and crisp dish that's perfect for quick dinners, cookouts, and dinner parties. Healthy, flavorful, and delicious.

### INGREDIENTS:

- ½ tablespoon olive oil
- 1 bunch asparagus, woody ends trimmed
- ½ teaspoon seasoning salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper

### INSTRUCTIONS

Heat olive oil in a skillet over medium heat.

Add the asparagus and generously sprinkle with seasoning salt and pepper.

Sauté for 5-12 minutes, tossing occasionally. If you prefer crisp and crunchy asparagus, cook for only 5 minutes. For softer and more tender asparagus, cook for about 10-12 minutes.





## PASTA BAKE WITH SAUSAGE (BAKED ZITI)

Author: Sam Hu | Ahead of Thyme

Total Time: 50 minutes

Yield: 8 servings

Pasta bake with sausage (baked ziti) is a lazy day lasagna with layers of pasta tossed in a rich meat sauce, layered with mozzarella, and baked.

### INGREDIENTS:

- 1 lb. (454 grams) penne pasta
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 lb. Italian sausage
- 1 cup onion, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon garlic, minced
- 4 cups tomato sauce
- 1 tablespoon Italian seasoning
- 1 cup Parmesan cheese, freshly grated, divided
- ¼ cup fresh parsley, finely chopped
- ¼ cup fresh basil, chopped
- 1 teaspoon salt (or to taste)
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper (or to taste)
- 3 cups fresh mozzarella cheese, shredded

### INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat oven to 375F.

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil over medium-high heat. Add pasta and cook until al dente (fully cooked but still firm), about 8-10 minutes, or according to package directions. Drain well and set aside.

Meanwhile, heat olive oil in a large pot (or 4 qt. Dutch oven) for 2 minutes over medium-high heat until the hot oil sizzles. Add sausage and stir to cook until browned, about 5-7 minutes. Use a spatula to break the sausages into small pieces.

Add onions and garlic and sauté until soft and tender, about 2-3 minutes. Stir to combine.

Pour in tomato sauce, turn the heat down to medium, and bring the meat sauce to a simmer, stirring occasionally. Stir in Italian seasoning, ½ cup Parmesan cheese, parsley and basil. Season with salt and pepper.

Turn the heat down to low and simmer for 5-7 minutes, stirring occasionally. Simmering helps develop richer flavour in the sauce.

Transfer the cooked and drained pasta into the sauce and toss well to mix evenly.

Spread half of the pasta into a 9x13 casserole pan and top with half of mozzarella cheese (1.5 cups). Add the remaining pasta and sprinkle the remaining mozzarella and Parmesan cheese evenly on top.

Bake the pasta for 25 minutes until the melted cheese is golden brown. Let cool for 15 minutes, then serve.



## HONEY GARLIC SHRIMP SKEWERS

Author: Sam Hu | Ahead of Thyme

Total Time: 25 minutes

Yield: 6-8 skewers

Diet: Gluten Free

Grilled honey garlic shrimp skewers marinated in a flavorful Asian marinade are sweet and savory, loaded with flavor, and ready in 25 minutes.

### INGREDIENTS:

- 1 ½ pounds shrimp (about 32 pieces), peeled and deveined
- ½ teaspoon paprika
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon ground black pepper

### FOR THE MARINADE:

- ¼ cup soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons honey
- ½ tablespoon sesame oil or vegetable oil
- 1 tablespoon vinegar or lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons garlic, minced
- ½ teaspoon fresh ginger, grated

### INSTRUCTIONS

In a large mixing bowl, combine shrimp with paprika, salt, and pepper, and mix until evenly coated.

In a separate mixing bowl, whisk together soy sauce, honey, sesame oil, vinegar, garlic and ginger until well combined. Reserve 2 tablespoons of the sauce mixture and add the remaining to the shrimp. Toss well to coat evenly and marinate for 10 minutes.

Thread 4-5 shrimp onto each skewer.

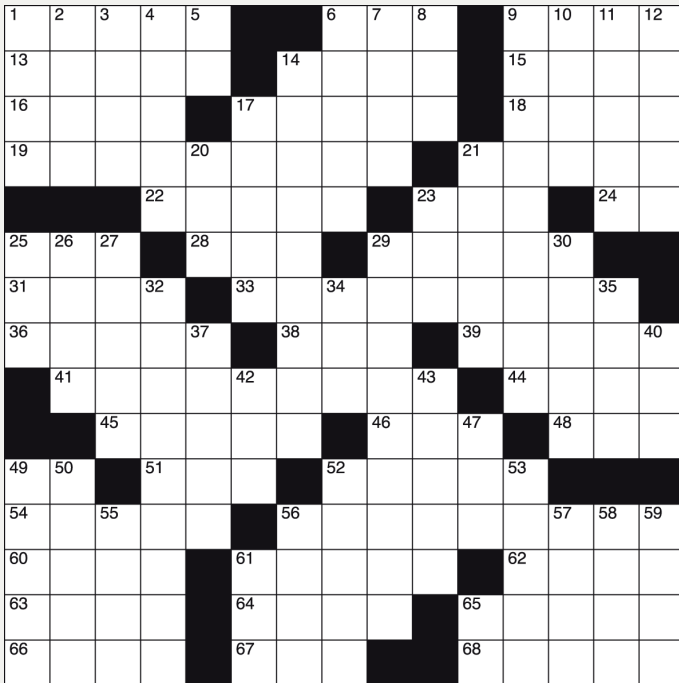
Lightly brush some oil over the grill or grill pan and preheat the grill over medium-high heat for 1-2 minutes until the oil starts sizzling and shimmering. Place the skewers spaced evenly apart on the grill and grill for 3-4 minutes on each side or until nicely charred.

You can also bake these shrimp skewers or air fry them (unthreaded or shortened skewers) at 375F for 12-15 minutes.

Baste with reserved sauce mixture and cook for another 1-2 minutes on each side to enhance the flavor.

Serve immediately.

# Crossword Puzzle



## ACROSS

1. Dull and flat
6. Baking measurement (abbr.)
9. Education-based groups
13. Not behind
14. Runners run them
15. Japanese ankle sock

## DOWN

1. Actor Damon
2. A call used to greet someone
3. Part-time employee
4. Emaciation
5. "Westworld" actor Harris
6. Gains possession of
7. Relaxing spaces
8. 23rd star in a constellation
9. Northern grouse
10. Monetary unit of Bangladesh
11. Manila hemp
12. Unites muscle to bone
14. Makes deep cuts in
17. 18-year period between eclipses
20. Member of a people inhabiting southern Benin
21. Synthetic rubbers
23. Unwelcome rodent
25. Expression of creative skill

26. Some is red
27. Seems less in impressive
29. Harry Kane's team
30. Gland secretion
32. Action of feeling sorrow
34. Disallow
35. Deceptive movement
37. More dried-up
40. Crimson
42. Actress Ryan
43. Adherents of a main branch of Islam
47. Accomplished American president
49. Side of a landform facing an advancing glacier
50. Sheep breed
52. Appetizer
53. Broadway actress Daisy
55. Influential film critic
56. NY Giants ownership family
57. Type of script

16. Grave
17. Japanese industrial city
18. People of southern Ghana
19. Particular designs
21. Device fitted to something
22. Infections
23. Pirates' preferred alcohol
24. Expression of sympathy
25. Rock guitarist's tool
28. Neither
29. Ancient city of Egypt
31. You \_\_\_ what you sow
33. Ruined
36. Narrations
38. Body art (slang)
39. Fencing sword
41. Apartment buildings
44. Type of missile
45. Fathers
46. Extremely high frequency
48. Type of school
49. Incorrect letters
51. Two-year-old sheep
52. Nasty manner
54. One who accepts a bet
56. Indian prince
60. Asian country
61. Rhythmic patterns in Indian music
62. "Uncle Buck" actress Hoffmann
63. Detailed criteria
64. Son of Shem
65. Talked wildly
66. Discount
67. Not good
68. Growing out





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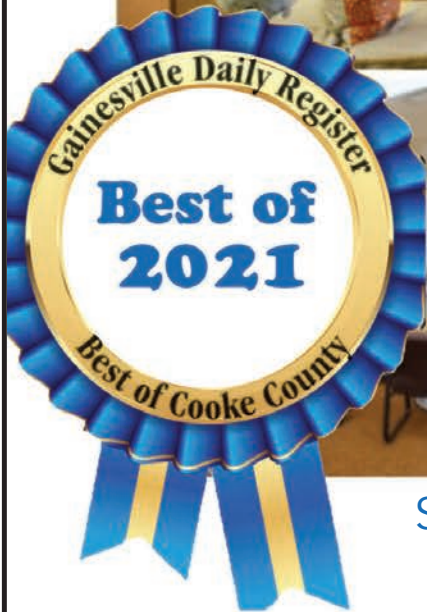
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