

Your favorite non-humans

When a neighboring newspaper staff decided to take pictures of a "girl of the week", Corie Fisher decided the Free Press should have something different — the "pet of the week."

It has been an outstanding success, with a regular series of tips on where to go next for a picture of somebody's favorite animal.

The other paper has stopped photographing girls, after it was pointed out there isn't much reason to take pictures of a person who's

only claim to fame is her looks, which come by good fortune rather than her own efforts.

But the pet of the week goes on. There have been dogs and cats, rabbits, ponies, horses, a pig, guinea pig and even a snake. We haven't heard of a fish lover in the five months or so the series has been running. Aren't fish lovable? Maybe not.

We'd like to hear from more people and their favorite non-humans.



SNOW, RAIN, slush, ice and fog followed each other last weekend. Wet snow weighs down the branches of these trees near Ballinafad. Free Press photographer Peter McCusker took the moody midwinter picture.

Free Press Editorial Page

The last of the perogies

Another chapter to the "perogie country" story.

CFTO Night Beat weatherman Dave Devall started his segment of the show last Friday by reading about himself in the Acton Free Press. His quick reference was to a story in the paper about the show, but he added humorously that the paper didn't help him any with the weekend weather report.

It was another amusing part to the Case of the Perogie Mystery—a bit of mid-winter silliness that resulted from Dave Devall's first off-hand mention of Acton as "perogie country".

Guess it's all over now, except for an enlarged cooking vocabulary and eating experience for Actonians.

How about a vote?

A couple of people have suggested a ballot in the Free Press asking people's opinion of regional government. The surprisingly high return of questionnaires to the hydro commission gives the impression there might be a good return on such a question from Acton people.

On the other hand we hear "People are sick and tired of hear-

ing about regional government."

What would be good to have in the Free Press would be some letters to the editor on the subject. They needn't be long, they needn't be smart, they needn't be signed.

It's an important subject, and the more opinions heard the better.

And if you're fed up with it all, please let us know, too!

The shadow walks

People who enjoy being superstitious can be watching on Sunday. That's the day the groundhog is supposed to come out of his hole. And alert weather watchers are supposed to figure out if his shadow is visible or not.

No shadow? Spring will be along soon.

A cold crisp shadow? Get back in the burrow, fella. And join the rest of us in the long, long wait for the robins.

Flakes and splashes

Winter is one time of year when you notice the need for sidewalks in the subdivisions.

ier Bill Davis was the first last weekend.

The winter carnivals held by the high school make a nice break in the season. "Too much work" was the feeling last year.

The article in last week's Free Press on the Niagara Escarpment Commission won't cause any foreboding for Acton and district people probably. Acton is in the control area, but the commission sees many land uses as acceptable—agriculture, quarrying and residential development among them. These are all important to this district.

Will there be a provincial election this year? The Canadian Club of Burlington thinks so, and has invited leaders of the three Ontario provincial parties to speak between now and the middle of May. Prem-

The plan will not freeze development, such as the huge housing complex proposed for the east end of Acton.



Bill Smiley

There are a lot of questions floating around in the murky depths of my mind, and occasionally one floats to the surface: It is usually slapped down by someone (my wife?), or just given a good shot of Raid, and lies over on its side and expires.

But recently, the questions have been boiling up like bubbles in a thundermug. I felt I should share them with my long-suffering readers, and among the six of us, we might be able to come up with some answers. (By the way, if you don't know what a thundermug is, ask your Mum. Your Dad would be too shy to explain.)

They are not exactly burning questions, but they do create a small smoulder, from time to time.

Why do so many men addicted to hairy appendages to their craniums these days? I can understand any chap growing a beard to hide a weak chin. I can understand any young man trying to grow a beard. It's part of growing up.

But why all these Fu Manchu moustaches? They add nothing whatever to a face that has no character, and they detract from one that does.

I'm glad I'm not a girl. It must be revolting to kiss a young man and wind up with a mouthful of hair.

When I got back to England from prison camp, I had a beautiful handlebar job which had taken me nine months of constant upsweeping to achieve. It came off 20 minutes after I'd looked up my first old girl friend. She said it was like kissing a cow's ear. Blunt but honest, she was.

And why do all those older guys, who are skin-bald for the first two-thirds of their skulls, insist on growing those long, greasy, forlorn ringlets at the backs of their heads, falling down over their collars? They fool nobody. It doesn't make them look more virile. It merely makes them look scruffy, and silly.

They remind me of the guys who used to comb across a completely naked pate eight strands of long hair from their sideburns. Why not face it, chaps? If you have a big belly, stick it out and pat it. If you're a baldy, you're a baldy, and you wash your hair with a face-cloth.

It doesn't seem to bother the ladies. Yul Brynner has been a sex symbol for years. And that Telly Savalas, or whatever his name is, that mean-looking guy on TV (Hojak? Hojak? Wojak?) seems to be on every second program, bald as an egg, and about the same shape.

I remember an elderly lady whose chief delight was putting a needle into people. She was as bald as a billiard ball on top, but, by a clever contrivance of buns and piling-up, she managed to cover it. Or so she thought.

In her joky way, one day, while I had my head bent over a book, in my usual scholarly fashion, she scratched my crown and chortled, "My, you're getting a little thin on top."

It didn't bother me. I was. If it had, I could have said something cruel. Like, "O.K. Rapunzel, let down your hair and we'll climb up and have a look at what you've been hiding all these years."

I couldn't. But I didn't like the old bat, and it was time someone blunted her needle. So, I stood up, walked around her twice, my eyes glued to her bum, which looked like the east end of a cow going west, smiled, and said gently, "Yes, my dear, but perhaps it's better to get a little thin on top than gargantuanly thick on the bottom."

She scuttled to the coffee urn, eyes a-witter to see if anyone had heard, and shut her mouth for three whole days. I think it was the word "gargantuanly" that flung her.

This started out as a question period, and is turning out to be a piece about hair. Sorry, I've nothing against hair, as such.

I'm not one of those back-to-the-brush-cut people. Lurdy, if someone made all my students (male) cut their hair, I'd have to learn their names all over again, and it's already taken me three months to identify the shaggy dogs.

In fact, I rather enjoy the modern novels, which state that, "She ran her hands through his long, silken hair," just as much as I enjoyed the old novels which stated that, "He ran his hands through her long silken hair." Men's Lib. If you can find some silken hair, which is a lot scarcer than you think, grab onto it and run your hands through it.

One group I do feel sorry for during this fad is the old-fashioned barber. There's no such thing as a young barber. The young ones are all hair stylists. For the oldtimers, business is pretty sketchy. Some of them are cutting so little hair these days — the odd gray lock here, another there — that they don't even need a broom to sweep the floor. They just use a garden rake.

I'm sorry. This started out as a column of questions about the energy mess, politicians who need a 33 per cent raise in pay and other such, and it wound up as nothing but another of my hairy columns.

No wonder my life is such a mess. I can't keep to the trail. I'm like a finely trained deerhound who goes haring off after a hare when he should be pursuing a buck.

Old-time barn raising was long, painstaking work

By Mrs. R. Shortill Sr.

There is a very interesting story lurking behind the huge barns which dot the country side reaching high among the trees, still proclaiming that this was primarily a farming district, even though progress is rapidly changing the picture. Let us go back to the efforts which went into the building of these huge structures—the framing, the raising and the completion.

About this time of year say, in the year 1900, the farmer contracted with a barn framer presenting him with the size and specifics necessary. Then, said framer went to the bush and cut out the necessary timbers.

Hauling them up to the farmyard he "set to" with broad axe, adz, squares, planes, saws and other necessary equipment, to frame the structure.

On the ground This was all done on the ground—every piece cut to fit—where it belonged. Pins had to be cut to fit holes made by the boring machine for these old barn frames were not put together with nails but with wooden pins.

While all this was being done the stone mason had been building the wall—not with ready-made products—but with good old field stone and mortar.

Good thick walls they were—a foot and more thick, made sturdily to support the barn which would rest on it and rise high up from it, with spaces left for the required doors and windows.

Erection begins By this time the warmer weather had come—possibly about June, and erection of the huge structure began. The carpenter or framer as he was designated had a number of right hand men, who were able to take directions and who could stand heights.

Then came the barn framing "bee" when all the neighbors around came to help raise the frame. This was a breath-taking task to

all who watched and sometimes there were accidents if a hammer fell or a man slipped. A derrick was used with a huge ladder and a faithful horse hitched to ropes and pulleys pulled up the huge beams and plates, all of hand-hewn and sawed timbers. There were no electric saws, planes or electrical equipment of any kind, as there was no hydro in those days!

Framer's fee A barn framer, of who my late father-in-law, Harry Shortill was one, received about \$100 to \$150 for raising a barn and sheeting, shingling, siding etc. Out of this he must pay his regular men.

Often it took most of the summer. Of course the volunteer help of the neighbors was free, as it was quite an occasion. Women helped the housewife as the huge dinner had to be prepared. Lots of cured ham, potatoes, vegetables and pies, pickles—all hand prepared.

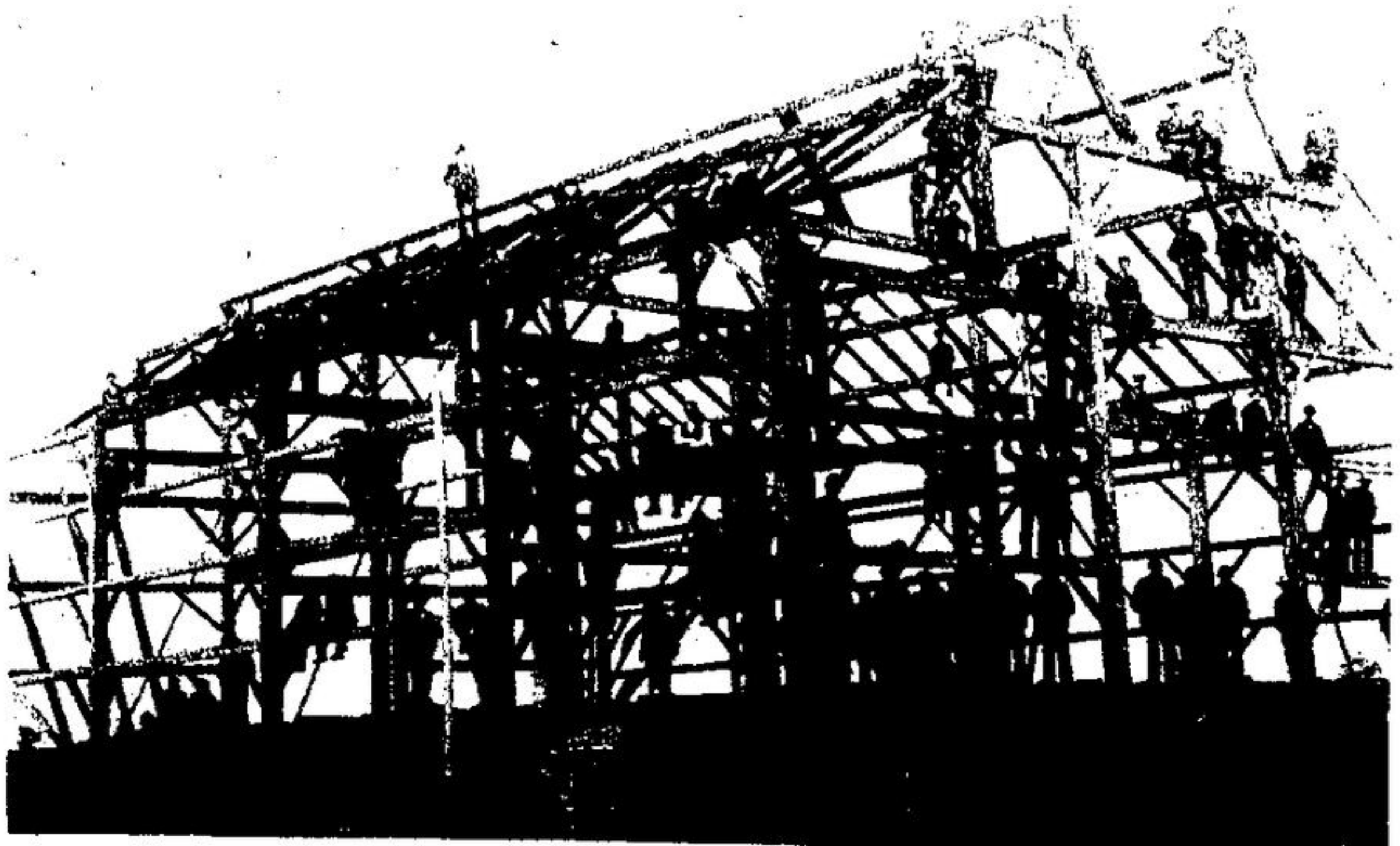
Mustn't it all have been fun! I listened with interest as my late father-in-law used to tell about it, and my late husband Richard as a boy often went along to help some ground job.

The barn on my farm was one of these although the Shortills did not own it at that time.

High cost It is regrettable to see many of the barns in bad state of repair but what can a farmer do? It's even hard to get men to roof these high barns, and repair costs are almost prohibitive.

The picture is of one of the barns in Esquesing—I'm not sure—maybe some farmer will recognize it.

Harry Shortill is in it and Joseph Allen and I think a Mr. Kentner. I might add here that the Swindlehurst brothers were stone masons who built many of the barn foundations and many of the stone houses around as well as Ballinafad Store, as all the carpenters worked, painstakingly with hands and very little pay.



ALL THE MEN of the neighbourhood would come for a barn-raising bee. The barn framer would receive from \$100 to \$150 for his summer's work, and out of this paid his assistants. But the many volunteers weren't paid. Huge dinners

The Free Press Back Issues

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press January 27, 1955

A local man suffered painful injuries and his 1954 model car was badly damaged Sunday morning when the vehicle he was driving went out of control and crashed south of Silvercreek on No. Seven Highway east of here.

Hugh Jordan, McDonald Blvd., was driving north about 7 a.m. Sunday morning when he lost control of the car. It swerved into a telephone pole, broke it in three places, cracked against two mail-box standards, then hurled a gully and crashed against a tree.

Three days after his car was stolen from in front of his Agnes Street home, Gordon Harding was notified by police that the vehicle was found abandoned in Toronto. The car was stolen January 5 and recovered the following weekend. Local police reported this week the car was undamaged. A rifle belonging to Mr. Harding was missing from the car, however.

William J. Coon, Acton, was the unanimous choice for chairman of North Halton high school district board at the inaugural meeting of the board in Acton Monday night. Dr. J. E. Milne of Georgetown was chosen as vice-chairman for the year. The new member for Esquesing, Mr. Giles, was introduced and welcomed to the board.

The C.G.T. of Knox Presbyterian church met in the Sunday school room of the church Monday, opening with games and a sing song led by Miss Walkins. The president, Margaret Armstrong, led the business. They planned to have a special meeting next week visiting other groups. Ruth Spielvogel, Ella Jany, Rhoda Mr. Eschen and Betty Leman conducted the worship service. The meeting closed with taps.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press January 29, 1925

Monday evening at Knox Church, Gault was one of much interest and information. Mrs. Minnie R. Moore gave a splendid address on Folk Songs and their origin in the various countries. Each of these was represented by musical numbers. The history of the folk songs of the following countries were given as follows: England—Mixed Quartette, composed of Mrs. Minnie R. Moore, Mrs. A. C. Stewart, Messrs. Alex Mann and V. B. Rumley. Song, "Drink to me only with thine eyes." Scotland—Tenor Solo, by Mr. A. Jack. Ireland—Song by Miss Jean Orr. "Believe me if all your endearing your charms." United States, the song, "Old folks at home."

A concert under the auspices of St. Alban's church was held in the Parish Hall on Monday evening, and was attended by a good-sized audience. The platform was decorated to represent a country home. Duets were sung by Misses Nellie Fairbanks and Nellie Heesor, Miss Gullharth and Mr. Rogers, Messrs. Alex Mann and V. B. Rumley and by Mr. and Mrs. H. Rogers, Mrs. Mew and Mrs. Hough and Mr. Messrs. F. E. McCleary, H. W. Hinton and H. Rogers gave several selections. Miss Viola Waller presented a very novel monologue, "The Christmas Star." There was ample evidence that the various numbers on the programme were appreciated, as every one of them was favoured with an encore.

75 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press January 25, 1900

A letter, just arrived from Mrs. James McLennan, Winnipeg says the family is all well and they like their new home. They still remember with pleasure their home and friends in Acton and desire to be remembered to them all.

Mr. Alex Hunsbrow gave his left hand an ugly squeeze in the rolling machine he operates at Beardmore's tannery last Friday.

Owing to re-arrangement of several of the street circuits to allow of the addition of ten new electric lights at various outside points in town, a number of regular lights have been cut off for a few nights. Electrician Kitchen is working hard overtime to have them all in shape again at the earliest possible moment.

The pulpit of Knox Church was occupied last Sabbath by Rev. Dr. McKay, of Toronto. The Dr.'s sermons were able and eloquent and were much enjoyed by the congregation.

The municipal authorities are determined to put an end to the snowballing nuisance on the streets. A number of black eyes were carried by citizens last week as a result of snowballing. Offenders are likely to be arrested in future.

At a meeting of the ladies of the various churches in the Methodist Church Tuesday afternoon it was decided to organize a Woman's Christian Temperance Union in Acton.

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