

eMa-Hi Times *ala '59*

Spring 2008

Fulltime Living on Wheels

My partner, Glenda and I are feeding our Gypsy Souls by traveling North America full time in our 24 foot motor home. The prerequisite to this lifestyle of freedom is in simplifying life to a point of not needing to tend things back home and by arranging personal affairs to be on autopilot for banking and mail. The demise of pony express and telegraph has launched us into a digital communication age and with the advent of e-mail, cell phones, and web phones we keep in touch when we feel the need and folks can reach us as much as we want to be reached. Cash and ATM/Visa transact all our living expenses, which are comfortably slim, once I realized the full distinction of needs and wants.



We do have a box at a private mail service and they forward about once a month to General Delivery, Anywhere, USA. We do not have mail sent to Mexico or Canada, based on our own real world experiences. We seldom stay in RV Parks, but instead find a spot in a marina, small town airport, beach, wildlife sanctuary, public parks or some of our country's wide open spaces designated BLM or Forests. My goal of wearing shorts year-around keeps us in very comfortable climates. I have my full wardrobe on 3 hangers and Glenda manages with her 5 hangers quite well in our 14" wide closet. Shoes, boots and sandals do seem to multiply like rabbits on board SOLTERRA however.

Our motorhome SOLTERRA is a Winnebago View built on the Mercedes Sprinter Chassis with a 5 cylinder turbo-diesel that gets 20 mpg and we run on bio-diesel where available. A Solar PV system with DC to AC inverter provides all our electrical needs for lighting and appliances; a water filtration unit enables us to drink the water even in Southern California.



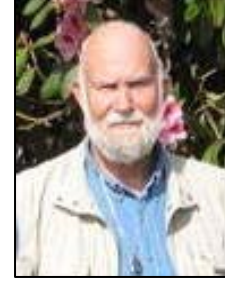
I had lived on a sailboat and Glenda had lived in a 400 SF cabin at Mt. Hood during her career with the US Forest Service and then we built an 800 SF cabin (resembling a fire lookout tower) in Central Oregon that was our solar powered home for 8 years. I had previously converted a 40' Grayline tour bus to be a fully self-contained RV with solar for the electrical system and water heating and a composting toilet. I have been in the solar energy business in Oregon and Arizona for the past 15 years... You guess which place for which season. We decided two years ago to travel so we sold cars, house and business to end the need to return, other than to visit friends. Since then we have been coast to coast in the USA, Western Canada and Mexico's interior and West Coast beach camping. We have had no moments of anxiety traveling in Mexico other than our

challenges in reading road signs and slowing for the unmarked “Topes” (speed bumps) and learning the languages (Mexican and Canadian).



We travel with bird books and binoculars at hand, digital camera and our reading/writing tools on board. Our routes are the back roads of the places we visit to meet the people, see things of nature and stay in awe of the simple pleasures that present themselves each day in life.

Dick Kent



SAUDI ARABIA THE LAND OF CONTRAST

Dave Miller



I took a position as a Vocational Training Administrator in Saudi Arabia in 1980, with a large company known as Arabian American Oil Company (ARAMCO). The main reasons that I accepted the position were: I could take my family; the job looked to be very challenging, and it was a good fit with my education and experience levels; the Arabia work location could afford us the opportunity to travel and visit many parts of the world; the pay and benefit packages were more than triple what I was currently making as Department Chairman / Instructor at Linn Benton Community College; it would allow my family and me the opportunity to really become immersed into a totally different environment and the culture of Saudi Arabia.

Life, as seen during our 19 years of living in Saudi Arabia, initially comprised a series of many, dramatic contrasting changes, compared to our living in sleepy Albany, OR. Nearly everything in my everyday life changed, as I stepped onto the Arabian tarmac in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, at the end of a 5,000 mile flight.

Even though we had gone through an extensive orientation process before departing, it was still overwhelming. I also recall that I was suffering from severe sleep deprivation and jet lag at that time. The most notable life style changes that I observed while living in Saudi Arabia were:

- 1. Time difference** – There is a 10 or 11 hour time difference from Oregon to the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia, depending on daylight saving time.
- 2. Climate** – The temperature in summertime would go to 120F with humidity often at +80%. Every building built within the last 25 years is air conditioned. Older dwellings and shops often would not have AC. Winter-time highs were about 58F average and, surprisingly, you felt chilly and wanted a light jacket. Skies were blue about 96% of the time. Rainfall was about 1-3 inches per year and often would come as torrential downpours. The shamal (wind) was common in the fall and spring and turned the sky brown from all the blowing sand. Some of the most spectacular lightning storms I have ever seen were over the Arabian Gulf, where we lived.

3. Language – Arabic is the national language. English is a second language for many of the younger Saudis, as it is “the language of the oil industry,” and they knew they would have better opportunities for good employment, if they spoke conversational English. Nearly all the young Saudis wanted to learn English, so, there was very little incentive for “westerners” to learn to speak Arabic. The elderly Saudi men spoke very little English. Many “westerners” did learn Arabic, but I only learned a little bit. During the total time that I spent in Saudi Arabia, I can recall only speaking to three Saudi women. It was unlawful for men, other than family, to speak to a Saudi woman or to see her face; hence, it was always covered with a veil. Most Saudi women were not employed, or well educated, but more positive strides have recently been made for their schooling and employment. I think a lot of Saudi women learned their English from American TV and soap operas.

4. People and Culture – For the most part, I found the Arabs to be a very cheerful, friendly, hospitable and intelligent people. Their pride in being Arabs of Bedouin origin is profound. Their looks are quite striking, with their bronze colored skin, black hair and brown eyes. They walk with straight backs and tremendous grace. Most have an innate ability to memorize enormous quantities of information that they can totally recall in minute detail. The Kingdom conducts a national contest to determine who can recite from memory the complete Muslim Religious Book (The Quran). A contest winner would receive a lavish gift such as gold or a car. Their nomadic, ancestral lifestyle afforded them with very few mechanical experiences. They grew up without bicycles, modern toys, cars, etc., and therefore they didn’t learn how to fix things, like most of us “westerners” did. This fact led to some very basic skill training requirements to eventually bring them to a competent job skill level within the oil industry. The traditional dress for Saudi men was a white gown (thobe) and a white or red and white checked head scarf (ghutra) and single toe loop sandals. The women were always seen in black floor length gowns (abayah) that came up to their chins, with their arms and hands also covered. They wore scarves on their heads and veils, with only their eyes showing. Pork and alcohol are forbidden.

5. Currency – The money is riyals (like our dollars) and halalahs (like our pennies). The riyal to dollar exchange rate currently is 3.75 to 1.

6. Landscape – We lived in the Eastern Province, which is where the oil was first discovered. Our town was Ras Tanura (RT), which was on a 6 kilometer peninsula jutting out into the Arabian Sea. The world’s *largest oil refinery*,



storage tanks, an 8 berth, offshore ship loading facility for oil tankers, and a liquid petroleum gas loading facility were also there. You can believe Saddam Hussein had his sights set on this facility during the Gulf War, while our family was there. The Arabian Sea water is the most brilliant aqua green color, with summer temperatures of

85F, and a salt content about 5 times greater than the Pacific Ocean. The terrain is mostly flat for as far as you can see with fine sand and sage brush and a few acacia trees. In the Central part of the Kingdom, there are low hills and some

outcroppings of rocks. In the Western Province there are mountains comparable to our Coast Range. In the Southern part of the Kingdom is “the empty quarter” (the Rub Al Khali), which is a huge sand dune desert, larger than France, covering a quarter of the total Kingdom.

We were able to see a lot of the country by traveling in our 4x4 Blazer and tent *camping* with friends in our traveling group, in addition to flying. There are no permanent rivers or lakes in the Kingdom. When traveling, we took refuge in oases as did the early Saudis, with their cool well water, groves of date palms, and shade.



7. Animals – Camels are as common as cows and horses in Oregon. They ran wild, but “all belong to some Saudi.” We also saw donkeys, monkeys, lizards, snakes, scorpions, and hundreds of flies. The seas have beautiful corral reefs and are a diver’s paradise for coral and tropical fish.

8. Villages and Cities – The older villages are adobe (mud brick) style houses with wooden shutters and large ornate wooden doors. The houses are either connected or have an 8’ high privacy wall surrounding them. As villages grew into cities, there was generally an old shopping section with open stalls for shops, about the size of a single car garage, with stuff just piled on top of stuff. The newer sections of the cities contain very modern US style buildings. Today, because of oil and big money, the architecture of some of the buildings and shopping malls in Riyadh, Jeddah and Al Khobar rival the best of any in the world.

9. Work Week – Weekends are Thursday and Friday. The work week is Saturday through Wednesday.

10. Calendar – The Arabic Hijrah calendar is 12 months, but it is 11 days longer than our Gregorian calendar.

11. Religion – The religion of Saudi Arabia is Muslim. Muslim religion requires that a person pray 5 times per day. Everything stops when the call to prayer is put out over very loud speakers. Shops close and you can’t conduct business or work for 15 to 30 minutes. Medina and Mecca are the Muslim’s holy cities and non Muslims are not allowed to visit them. Other nationalities practice their religion in strict privacy, and it is unlawful to try to convert Saudis to another religion.

12. Work ethics – Saudi’s didn’t grow up with a clock or a strict sense of time. When I worked there they were often late to class, meetings and work. Many lacked a work incentive as well, for all Saudis receive money from the government.

13. Government Type – The government is a Monarchy style with a king as the supreme ruler. Religion is not separated from the government, and religion constitutes a large part of the laws.

14. Restrictions on Women – All women are forbidden to drive an automobile, must be accompanied by a male member of the family, must be dressed conservatively, i.e., covering the ankles, elbows, and up to the neck. Saudi women were required to cover with the abayah, head scarf and veil. The dress restrictions were less enforced in the Eastern Provinces, due to the influence of “westerners” living and working there. My wife wore the abayah only once, when she visited me, while I was working in Jeddah in the Western Province. Women from the Western culture of the world were expected not to call attention to themselves, either by dress or actions, while in public.

My family arrived three months after I did in the summer of 1980, when temperatures were scorching hot. When I asked my son what he thought of Saudi Arabia, he said that “it looked like miles and miles of kitty litter.” Our first housing was a 10’x50’ mobile home, but we soon moved to a new 3 bedroom house just off the beach.

We enrolled our kids into the RT ARAMCO School. The schools are American style, with US curriculum, teachers, and administrators. Our children did well in their school and had little difficulty transitioning back into US school for the 10th grade. Living in RT main camp, we were able to meet and make lasting friends with a lot of families from all over the US, Canada and England. We also got well acquainted with people in our church group. The compound had lots of activities, i.e., sports, recreation, library, swimming pools, commissary, golf course, movie theater, service station, and even shops for you to work on wood projects and vehicles.

As two of our three kids were swimmers, they joined the swim team, and over time my daughter Amy went to the Jr. Olympics in St Louis, MO, and placed high in the back stroke. I served several years as the RT swim coach, meet judge and referee for the regional and national events. Even though our children could have gone anywhere in the world for their 10th grade and above, they all chose to go to the Oregon Episcopal School in Portland, OR.

Travel for us, both inside Saudi Arabia and in the world, was a highlight for all of our family. Our children and other non Saudi children were required to go out of Kingdom for their education beyond the 9th grade, because of Saudi government policy. They could come to us in Kingdom during their summer breaks and join us for special holidays like Christmas. With 4 weeks paid vacation (repatriation), we generally went back to the States, but also stopped along the way to visit several countries. Several of our trips took us around the world. At last count I had 31 different countries stamped into my passport. Our children all agree that they received great additional educational experiences with all of their travels and exposure to the many different cultures because we lived in Saudi Arabia. None of our children regret going to Saudi Arabia.



My favorite world travel would be Europe, especially Switzerland and Italy, Netherlands. Iceland, Hawaii, and Fiji were also favorites. We also did quite a lot of traveling in Saudi Arabia with our 4 wheel drive Blazer. Recreational travel outside of the Eastern Province in Arabia was restricted, and you had to apply for travel, explaining where you wanted to go and why.

We would camp along the way and generally travel in groups of 2 to 6 vehicles for safety from heat, *breakdowns*, getting stuck in the sand, etc. It took a while for us Oregonians to feel like we could enjoy the brown desert, but we did enjoy it very much. We always took along lots of water, fuel, a compass, and eventually a GPS.



Some of our fondest trips in Saudi Arabia were:

1. The Hijaz railway - Early rail line to bring Muslim pilgrims to Mecca (depicted in the “Lawrence of Arabia” journals and film).
2. *Madayen Saleh* - Early 2000 year old dwellings carved into sand rock formation.



3. Escarpment, “End of the Earth” – These were high cliffs with a dramatic view of the country near Riyadh.
4. Rub Al Kali - Vast sand dunes with buried ancient arrowheads that were used for hunting before the time of Christ. Luckily, we found a few of these prehistoric arrow heads.

5. *Camel Market* - Selling and trading camels. Camel rides could also be taken.

6. Camel Races - Annual race sponsored by the king held in Riyadh.

7. Riyadh city – The capital.

8. Jeddah - City along the Red Sea with very modern, new commercial and residential areas and an interesting, well preserved old town.

9. The many Oases – Water and date palms offered a refreshing escape from the heat and barren land.
10. Abandoned villages - *Ancient structures* at various locations in Kingdom.



A couple of my worst memories of Saudi Arabia are going through the Gulf War and jail time in Jeddah. During the Gulf War we were living in Ras Tanura, near the refinery and oil depot “targets,” and didn’t know for sure what was going on. Satellite CNN TV provided the best source of information and emergency alerts for us. Scud missiles did land within ¼ kilometer from our house. My jail time in Jeddah was for erroneously being accused of running a red traffic light. You are guilty until proven innocent in the eyes of the Saudi Government. Luckily, I was released in about 6 hours.

I, and many others, helped to bring ARAMCO training to the forefront of world wide training. In 1980, Saudis comprised 50% of the total workforce of 45,000 people in ARAMCO. In 1999, the Saudis comprised over 87% of the workforce of 80,000. Today, the world’s largest oil company, Saudi ARAMCO, is managed and operated by Saudis.

Our vast training effort made it possible and I feel proud to have been a part of it.

My family and I had many wonderful experiences while living and working in Saudi Arabia. It was truly an incredible adventure.

Dave Miller

Editor’s note:

Thanks to both Dick Kent and Dave Miller for sharing some of their experiences with us all. It takes time and effort to put together articles like these two and we’d like to acknowledge our awe of them both.

We are therefore asking Dave to use all of his oil rich influences in Saudi Arabia to arrange for cheaper oil so that Dick will be able to afford to drive his motor home further than from Bend to Coos Bay this summer!

Seriously, we appreciate your efforts and admire your results. And we know there are many other experiences out there in the class of 1959 yet to be shared with classmates. Who’s willing to share a piece of their past 49 years with us?

Again – that email address is mhs59@comcast.net. Let us here from you!

REUNION CORNER

Reunion Activities and Information

The first planning meeting was held at the home of Marilyn Whipkey Speidel in Coos Bay on April 26th. The crew that arrived for this meeting is featured below. (No, you're correct... Whalen and Willie are not classmates of ours, but they live in the household).



Front Row (from left): Franklin Huntley, Ted Ploof, Marilyn Whipkey Speidel, MaryAnne Jacobson McKinley, Tina Holland Weekly, Durwood Post
Back Row (from left): Harvey Koski, Don Steen, Bill Lawrence, Dick Kent

The many suggestions that classmates had already submitted were reviewed and discussed. The group determined that a great deal of the detailed activity planning would be dictated by how many of us were going to be attending the 50th. So, we now have a tentative date set for **August 14–16, 2009**. Emails and letters have been sent to all classmates that we are able to contact asking about their plans to attend. If you haven't replied yet, please take the time to do so ASAP. As always, your comments, questions and suggestions can be addressed to mhs59@comcast.net and they will be passed on to the reunion group.

We have also learned that the **North Bend Class of '59** has set their 50th reunion for **August 7–8, 2009**. If you want to make a double weekend of it, this

may be your opportunity to catch up with any of your "old Bulldogs" friends. We do have contact information for many of them, so if you've lost touch, but would like to reconnect, contact us at: mhs59@comcast.net

"What Grandkids Say and Do"

Grandkids are great! If you would like to share a memory of them with your classmates, just send it in to: mhs59@comcast.net

Our oldest grandchild was, in her parents view, the first child born of human parents in the history of the world. They posted pictures of her sonogram on the internet! Long before she was born, they had to know what we grandparents wanted to be called. What a shame it would have been if she emerged from the womb and used the wrong reference. Well, my wife said "Grandma" would do nicely for her, and my daughter-in-law's mother opted for "Granny." For some reason, I said I should be referred to as "The Grandfather." I suppose I was mostly kidding, but when my son made a fuss about it I dug in my heels. It all went as planned and although Becca didn't actually begin talking that first week, when she finally got around to it, she didn't speak all that clearly. The result: I am known to this day as "The Grandfarther."

Marv Stottlemire



Sharing Thoughts

When I was writing a story about our school bus experiences (in the Winter 2008 issue), and somewhere between that and the "where I am today" suggestion, I wrote a little story of my own. This was a personal story written just for myself, but I ended up sharing it



with family and a school friend. Though the story is true and personal, it was suggested that I share it.

Jo Ann Wright Warner

From There to Here

She was born in the Midwest close to the southern tip of Lake Michigan, the second of four children. It is said she was in such a hurry to enter the world that it was remarkable that she lived.

WWII. Polio epidemic. At thirteen months old, the baby girl became ill and somewhat crippled. With the usual childhood diseases being more severe than normal, it was again said, it was remarkable she lived.

At 5 years old, she awoke knowing something was not quite right. Too scared to move or call out, she waited, trying to see into the dark. But, then a reassurance came. It is all right! Life is here for the Living and Living is for Life. Oh, I understand. You are with me.

The Northwest coast? Where is that? She was only 8, but knew it was a long way from what she knew of life and her family members. When arriving in the new area,

other family members were there to greet them. But, oh, how different life was. Walk to school? But we have to walk over a mile, and across the gravel road that is flooded at high tide in the slough. And cook dinner and clean house before dad and mom get home? Where are the promises of a better life? Oh, but you said, you are with me.

Live on a logging road at a place on a creek? Even at 10, she knew it was a long way from the family members she knew. And ride three school buses an hour and a half to and from home? A beautiful place full of natural beauty. But, isolation and loneliness? And, of course, children should be seen and not heard. Struggles and trials? Oh, but you said, you are with me.

The Korean War. The Vietnam War. Flower children. Life is changing. Marriage. Children. A good home and a place to be blessed. And, a time to learn.

Divorce? Children leaving? Beginning a career and a new life in a different place. War in Saudi Arabia? But now.....oh, she is no longer with us? No, you said, you need to stay. More to be done. It was again said, it is remarkable that she lived.

War in Iraq. The age of computers. Life is changing again. But, You said.....Just be.....Watch.....Do..... Yes, Life is in the Living Time. Tell them. Show them. Oh, but you said, you are with me.

Living is where Life is found. Oh, You are the Life in the Living Time. And You are the Life after the Living Time. It was again said, it is remarkable she lived.

Oh, You, Life, said You are with me.

Remembering...

I guess I am a true Coos Bayite as I could respond with a yes to every one of those questions about the “old days” in Coos Bay (see the Winter 2008 issue). It took me a few minutes to remember the Coos River ferry but I did ride it. I remember lots of people fishing for striped bass near the ferry landing on the North side of the river. They would walk out on the logs and sit there and fish. There aren't any logs to sit on now and if they put any in the river and you tried to walk or sit on them you would probably sink they are so small.

I also remember spending many hours in the hallways of Marshfield "pumping" information about good fishing and hunting spots from all the guys (girls didn't do that in those days). All that interest in the outdoors including writing for the Ma-Hi Times influenced my career choice. I spent 20 years as a fish habitat biologist with the Bureau of Land Management in Coos Bay before moving to Baker City and doing the same until I retired from the Forest Service.

Sometime you should ask Franklyn Huntley if he remembers (when we were in our senior year) our great duck hunting adventure to Henderson Marsh sea wall where we got lost. Well... we weren't lost we sort of knew where we were... we just couldn't figure out, after it got dark and we were still walking, which of a thousand dune buggy tracks was the one back to Hauser we had hiked out on in the dark that morning?

As far as stories from the good old days, I am sure there are some more. I wonder how many people remember when we were juniors and the Asian flu wiped out everyone including the football team's chances for a state championship. With all the concern about flu these days, I think our class certainly had a dose of just how

bad it could be. I think I remember that they said 1/3 of the student body was out sick. I know I was on the team the night we played South Eugene and we lost by a small margin with mostly 2nd and 3rd string players filling in for the 1st stringers who were out sick.

And, I do remember one duck hunting story. The guys from Eastside used to hunt out on the mudflats at low tide including Tony Humphreys, Larry Clark, Harry Kelley and others. Mel Counts who was a year behind (Class of '60) also went along. Someone asked how they ever managed to hide Mel since he was so tall. They laughed and said he was so tall that all he had to do was stand still and the ducks flew right over him because they thought he was just another piling!



John Anderson

How about using a little higher tech to display of local Coos Bay history...

The two internet links below will each provide you with some nostalgic looks at Coos Bay (and that area just between the two jetties)!

Put your mouse over a “link”, hold down your CTRL key and left click your mouse to see each file.

Coos Bay, OR history (by KEZI News)
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V4HV1kGSY8w>

Crossing the bar at Coos Bay, with small craft warning flying!
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=948_vOfI2GA

... Remembering – continued ...

Remember the Egyptian?

Cecilia Ash Watson forwarded this information to the reunion group for consideration. We also thought you might be interested in what is being done with the old haunt.

“...I was in Coos Bay this weekend and had occasion to visit the old theatre which has recently reopened under volunteer management after being sold to the City of Coos Bay a couple of years ago. It has been completely remodeled and renovated and is being preserved by a group of very caring, enthusiastic people who volunteer their time every Friday and Saturday night, and Sunday for a matinee' at 3:00. Tickets are only \$4/adult, with large sodas and popcorn for \$1/ea. (what a deal!) They have hosted many fund raisers for local schools, the Southern Oregon Coast Music Festival, live concerts, etc. So it's actually more than just a movie theatre now. It's a grand venue that seats approx. 800 people (500 on the main floor and 300 in the balcony.)

When I mentioned that the Class of '59 was going to have a reunion, they were very enthusiastic about letting our reunion committee choose the movie (a vintage one from our era would be great!) and they would set aside a block of seats just for the class. We could all meet in the lobby beforehand and remember back to those days when

we watched cartoons, ate tons of popcorn, and smooched in the balcony!

The theatre is a great old landmark (dating from 1935) in Coos Bay and I was thrilled to see that these folks are dedicated to saving it for future generations. It might be a nice Friday night meeting place for us on that homecoming weekend...just a thought. Or we could use their stage to put on another one of those great old Marshfield talent shows...now that would be a hoot!

You can reach them by Googling: Egyptian theatre, Coos Bay, Oregon. Or by going to their website: www.egyptian-theater.com. Event line: (541)269-8650. e-mail: publicity@egyptian-theatrecom. A good contact name would be: Susan@mikegordoncpa.com. (She's their treasurer and my sister!)

Cecilia Ash Watson

We remember *Ruth Walters Snodgrass* who passed away in March,

Chuck Sasse Sands who passed away in April, and

Cap Johannesen who passed away in May.

And, we've just learned that *Ken Johnson's wife, Nickalene*, passed away in April... our thoughts and prayers are for you, Ken.

The crew that has been working to obtain current addresses, phone numbers and email addresses for our “missing” classmates have been using a number of the great tools now available on the internet that support “searching”. But, “Googling” can still find a lot of references that might surprise you.

Here are some for you to play with...

... again, just put your mouse over a “link”, hold down your CTRL key and left click your mouse to see each file.

Steve Beckham <http://www.lclark.edu/faculty/beckham/>

Susan Bowers http://www.susqu.edu/womens_studies/faculty.htm

Mel Cone (MHS musings) <http://melcone.com/MHS%20CLASS%20OF%2059.htm>

Patti Alter Fisher <http://www.doclab.com/>

Warren Muench <http://www.zoominfo.com/Search/PersonDetail.aspx?PersonID=14567095>

Gary Rossi http://www.ticoamerican.com/index.php?action=page_display&PageID=3

Lynn Savage <http://www.cambridge.org/us/esl/ventures/Pedagogy.html>

Patty Smith Vaughn (the family business) <http://www.vaughanplanning.com/profile.htm>

Marv Stottlemire <http://www.laugh2learn.com/>

Gary Topping http://www.slcc.edu/history/faculty_topping.asp

And finally:

Marshfield Class of '59

<http://www.marshfield.coos-bay.k12.or.us/alumni/4s9s/1959/1959aaReunionhome.htm>