Interventional Cardiology

“Alive and Improving Because of a Wonderful Resource”
— Brad Mullen

Read his Story p5
The body has an amazing ability to heal itself. The liver and intestinal linings regenerate and the skin replaces itself daily. Yet, with certain injuries, the body becomes its own worst enemy.

This was the case in Bob Schmidt’s life after he suffered a stroke at the age of 53 and found himself in a fight against his own body. Now, a “miraculous little pump” that drips Baclofen into his spinal cord is letting his muscles relax and work with, not against, his body.

Bob’s story began last March, when the Wooster native was living a very full life. He enjoyed his job as a salesman for Dex Media and participated in many hobbies, including biking, bowling and playing soccer, tennis and golf. When he wasn’t participating in sports himself, he could be found cheering for Ohio’s many sports teams, often courtside.

Then, Bob suffered another blow. “He stopped responding to us, and tests revealed he had suffered an ischemic stroke,” said Brenda. His doctor recommended removing part of his skull to relieve pressure on the brain. Brenda and other close family members made the difficult decision to proceed, even though his chest cavity was still open and his muscles were paralyzed. Brenda said.

The next day, he collapsed at home. “Bob underwent a 9-hour surgery to repair the aorta,” said Brenda. He spent the next few days recovering in Cardiac ICU, closely monitored. “Bob underwent a 9-hour surgery to repair the aorta,” said his wife, Brenda. He spent the next few days recovering in Cardiac ICU, closely monitored.

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had suffered a stroke at the age of 68 and Carol found herself in the role of caretaker. Carol and Michael moved to Wooster in the fall of 2016 to be near their daughter and better medical facilities. Michael’s 94-year-old mother joined the household shortly after. Carol is very glad they made the move when her husband and mother-in-law, but they did because a few months later, she was the one facing a health crisis.

At the age of 74, her arthritic hips had become “worn out.” Years of running, bending the hip after surgery, and lifting heavy glazing buckets had taken their toll on her hips, and in the fall of 2017 the pain was “unbearable.” She found herself faced with another huge challenge. “I was given the choice to undergo two separate hip replacement surgeries or be the first at WCH to have one bilateral anterior hip replacement surgery,” she said.

It wasn’t a decision she took lightly. Carol didn’t think she could undergo any surgeries and still take care of her husband and mother-in-law, but “I really had no choice,” she said. “I was bone on bone and the pain was getting worse. I couldn’t walk, sit down or lay down without pain.”

Carol turned to her two daughters, her “caring” orthopedic surgeon, Dr. Steven Widmer of Wooster Orthopaedics and Sports Medicine Center and the “supportive” staff at HealthPoint to get her through. “My two daughters took turns for about six weeks, mostly to care for their dad and of course baby me,” said Carol.

Dr. Widmer explains, “Carol is a great example of how the direct anterior approach in total hip replacement allows me to get patients back to their lives faster. The direct anterior approach has been shown to have a more rapid recovery than traditional approaches to total hip replacement. It also has less precautions with bending the hip after surgery. This as well as how the patient is laying during surgery allows for us to do both hips in a safe and efficient manner and rapidly recover the patient. In Carol’s case, caring for her husband is a big aspect of her life and we wanted to get her back to her role as a caregiver ASAP. It is important to note carol’s dedication to a rapid and safe recovery as well. In addition, her support system made her a great candidate for this procedure.”

Within a few months, Carol was back in her caretaker role and she is so grateful for the part WCH and HealthPoint played in her surgery and recovery. “They literally had me up walking the first day,” she said. Carol spent only two nights in the hospital and was rehabbing within a week. “I haven’t had any hip pain since,” she said. The muscles were a little slower to heal.

“Walking has been the best thing for me,” said Carol. She rehabbed under the care of her physical therapist, Erin Ransom and her team. “They challenged me. First they took my walker and then my cane and I realized - I can do this.”

Carol feels so “lucky” to have found Dr. Widmer. “He was so efficient and kind,” she said. “He knew my circumstances before I talked to him and he assessed that I was strong and healthy and would be a good candidate for the bilateral surgery.”

In hindsight, it was “an excellent decision,” said Carol. “It was one hospitalization, one surgery, one recovery and one bill. It just made sense to me.”

“We’re so fortunate to have a hospital in a community of our size that does joint replacements,” she said. “Their surgeons are so good. Every time we have had to use WCH for surgery or the emergency room, it has been a good experience.”

Back in her role as caregiver, Carol’s situation hasn’t changed. She admits “it’s a tough job” at times. But she remains a fighter and an optimist. She continues to embrace each day. “You can’t always change your circumstances,” she says, “but you can change your attitude. We all have a choice every day whether we’re going to be happy. I simply choose to make the best of it.”

Carol stays in touch in person and by text with her daughters, enjoys the good moments she has with her husband and lives with the assurance that WCH is close by should she need it.
Everything has an expiration date and Brad Mullen will readily tell you his could have been June 26, 2018. But thanks to a thorough ER staff and a doctor who refused to let him leave the hospital, Brad is alive today to tell his story. Like a bad dream you can’t shake, Brad, of Wooster, remembers every detail of that fateful Tuesday. The day was warm and sunny, and he had a full schedule ahead of him. First on his plate was picking up a business partner at the Cleveland Airport. As he backed out of his garage and headed toward the road that morning, he felt a familiar pain in his chest – hiatal hernia. “It was like swallowing too many mashed potatoes too quickly,” he said. The last act he recalls is stepping toward the road. It was during the admission process that event occurred. Brad explained, “the last thing I really recall is the overwhelming pain and telling my wife, this is different this time”. At that moment a code was called and the emergency response team descended on Room 126. Dr. Rehan, interventional cardiologist, and his support staff went into overdrive. He placed two stents in Brad’s arteries. After recovery, Brad began cardiac rehabilitation and in July, he had two more stents inserted and made some serious lifestyle changes. Learning back, he recognizes that he had many risk factors for such an event. “I was diabetic, overweight, had high blood pressure and cholesterol, didn’t exercise much and had a lot of stress in my life,” he said. “Now food is my fuel, I exercise daily and have lost 30 pounds.” Managing stress has been his biggest challenge. He names them one by one: Debi, Brittany, Jo, Janet, Chad, Dr. Rehan, Dr. Southern, Dr. Moodispaw, Dr. Newton - the list goes on. Brad was so pleased with the level of care he received at WCH that he reached out to hospital CEO Bill Sheron, and penned his testimonial. On August 9th, Bill clicked on his inbox and got a pleasant surprise. An e-mail from Brad read, “I have used WCH three times for my heart since June, with the first being a life-saving event due to the critical thinking of an ER doc, the attention to detail of a PCU nurse and rapid work of the folks in your Cardiovascular Institute. At every level, the people I experienced have been exceptional. I am so thankful to have your hospital in my community and grateful to the people who saved my life...” Brad was thrilled to learn that Bill shared the email with individuals within the organization whom cared for him. “I’m the owner of a company,” said Brad. “So often we only hear the negative. It’s nice to hear that you’re doing something right once in a while. I’m glad he shared it with them”. Brad continues to work on his recovery, both physical and mental. He’s learning to appreciate each day God has given him as a “true gift.” He’s learning to “let go” of things he can’t control. And he’s happily sharing with everyone around him what a “gem” Wooster Community Hospital truly is. One final comment from Brad is that he hopes his story is read by many of his neighbors. “Community after community is losing its local hospital. “Community after community is losing its local hospital... closer to home. For more information, please call Angela Rincon at 330.263.8701.”

Thankfully Brad didn’t leave, because a short time later he suffered a massive heart attack, referred to as a STEMI (ST-segment elevation myocardial infarction) “known as the widow maker,” said Brad. Had he driven to the hospital, Brad is sure his business partner would have found him dead at the wheel of his car sitting in the arrivals section at Hopkins Airport. “People who suffer this type of heart attack generally don’t survive I have come to understand” said Brad.

Although he regained consciousness on the brakes before he blacked out, Brad, of Wooster, remembers every detail of that fateful Tuesday. The day was warm and sunny, and he had a full schedule ahead of him. First on his plate was picking up a business partner at the Cleveland Airport. As he backed out of his garage and headed toward the road that morning, he felt a familiar pain in his chest – hiatal hernia. “It was like swallowing too many mashed potatoes too quickly,” he said. The last act he recalls is stepping toward the road. It was during the admission process that event occurred. Brad explained, “the last thing I really recall is the overwhelming pain and telling my wife, this is different this time”. At that moment a code was called and the emergency response team descended on Room 126. Dr. Rehan, interventional cardiologist, and his support staff went into overdrive. He placed two stents in Brad’s arteries. After recovery, Brad began cardiac rehabilitation and in July, he had two more stents inserted and made some serious lifestyle changes. Learning back, he recognizes that he had many risk factors for such an event. “I was diabetic, overweight, had high blood pressure and cholesterol, didn’t exercise much and had a lot of stress in my life,” he said. “Now food is my fuel, I exercise daily and have lost 30 pounds.” Managing stress has been his biggest challenge. He names them one by one: Debi, Brittany, Jo, Janet, Chad, Dr. Rehan, Dr. Southern, Dr. Moodispaw, Dr. Newton - the list goes on. Brad was so pleased with the level of care he received at WCH that he reached out to hospital CEO Bill Sheron, and penned his testimonial. On August 9th, Bill clicked on his inbox and got a pleasant surprise. An e-mail from Brad read, “I have used WCH three times for my heart since June, with the first being a life-saving event due to the critical thinking of an ER doc, the attention to detail of a PCU nurse and rapid work of the folks in your Cardiovascular Institute. At every level, the people I experienced have been exceptional. I am so thankful to have your hospital in my community and grateful to the people who saved my life...” Brad was thrilled to learn that Bill shared the email with individuals within the organization whom cared for him. “I’m the owner of a company,” said Brad. “So often we only hear the negative. It’s nice to hear that you’re doing something right once in a while. I’m glad he shared it with them”. Brad continues to work on his recovery, both physical and mental. He’s learning to appreciate each day God has given him as a “true gift.” He’s learning to “let go” of things he can’t control. And he’s happily sharing with everyone around him what a “gem” Wooster Community Hospital truly is. One final comment from Brad is that he hopes his story is read by many of his neighbors. “Community after community is losing its local hospital and we are so very fortunate to have this golden resource here in our back yard.” In parting Brad graciously said, “I want to thank my loving wife Kathy as she went through the ordeal with me and has been my biggest supporter and best friend.”

The Cardiovascular Institute

At the Wooster Community Hospital Foundation, every gift matters. Your support will make a genuine difference, and your investment in our Hospital’s work promises an invaluable return: ever-more-advanced care for our patients. We hope you’ll join us in helping to ensure a healthy future for our entire community — closer to home.

For more information, please call Angela Rincon at 330.263.8701.
Welcome Dr. Joseph Borruso

Orthopedic surgeon Dr. Joseph Borruso joined Wooster Community Hospital Health System as Bloomington Orthopedic Specialists in January. Recently moved from Chardon, Ohio, Dr. Borruso says he was drawn to the Wooster area for many reasons.

"Wooster seems like a good place to raise my family," Dr. Borruso says, referring to his three children, ages 10, 6, and 4 years. He enjoys the city’s culture and friendly, "small-town feel." He noted that the area has a significant orthopedic need that he is glad to help meet.

Dr. Borruso quickly came to appreciate how WCH Health System operates. "It’s an independent hospital where you don’t have the bureaucracy of the larger institutions," he points out. He says he found the administration approachable and able to accomplish things quickly.

"The entire staff, everyone at the hospital, has been amazingly friendly and seem to enjoy working there," Dr. Borruso says.

"Meeting my future partner, Dr. Anne Marie Chicorelli, was helpful during my interview process," he adds. "She had a busy operative day, but was able to make time to meet with me and tell me about not only WCH, but life in Wooster. I had the pleasure of meeting with her husband over dinner, and we could tell right away that they were good people. I think we will share a similar vision for high-quality orthopedic care."

Dr. Borruso attended medical school at Nova Southeastern University in Fort Lauderdale and completed his residency in Erie, PA. As someone with a "hands-on" personality, orthopedic surgery came naturally to him.

Although Dr. Borruso focuses on joint replacements, such as hips and shoulders, he also works in general orthopedics. He finds it rewarding, with straightforward problems and solutions, and considers himself a "carpenter for medicine." Patients especially appreciate how surgical treatments can help improve their abilities.

Dr. Borruso is joining orthopedic surgeon, Dr. Anne Marie Chicorelli, at the HealthPoint Rehabilitation facility at 3727 Friendsville Road. To schedule an appointment with Dr. Borruso, please call 330.202.3420.
Putting Together the Pieces to a Healthier Lifestyle

Every once in a while in life one has an “epiphany” moment. It happened to Julia Blaker last fall in Dr. Efewongbe Oleghe Oleghoe’s office at the Wound Healing Center where she was being treated for an infected foot. While Dr. Oleghoe gently removed the dead skin layers from her toes, she suggested that perhaps there could be a connection between her ailing foot, Julia’s diabetes and her overall health.

“How’s your incision?” Dr. Oleghoe had asked. She and Larry are enjoying time together in the hotel pool. And that was when Dr. Oleghoe suggested there may be a connection between Julia’s diabetes and her foot problems.

“She felt the diabetic medication I was on was not working well for me and said I should consider changing or adding another medication,” said Julia. Julia was eager to see what she could do with diet and exercise and while Dr. Oleghoe had some concerns, “she was definitely my advocate to give it a try.” Julia’s husband was also a huge support.

Larry got her a Fitbit for Christmas and Julia started tracking what she ate, the steps she took and how much sleep she was getting. She aimed for 10,000 steps a day, 1700 calories or less and 7 hours of sleep. With a Fitbit, “there’s a new template when I wake up every morning” said Julia. “If I didn’t have the greatest numbers yesterday, I have a new chance to achieve my goals today. Focusing on each day keeps this journey from being insurmountable or overwhelming.”

In less than a year, Julia lost 70 pounds and learned how to better control her blood sugar and blood pressure with food and exercise.

Today, her foot is back to normal and she feels better than she has in years. She and Larry are enjoying time with family and friends, gardening, working outside on the family farm in West Salem where they live, and traveling for work and pleasure.

She credits Dr. Oleghoe for her amazing journey of discovery and recovery. “I know I wasn’t, but I felt like I was her only patient,” Julia said. She remembers after her annual checkup in March, she got a personal call from Dr. Oleghoe. “It turns out she was at a conference in Orlando and yet when she saw my numbers and how good they were, she was so excited for me that she just had to call and let me know. She tells me I’m her poster child patient.”

Julia appreciated Dr. Oleghoe’s interest in her vitamins and supplements and other holistic remedies as well. “She would take the time to read each bottle and was very open to natural treatments.”

Julia can’t say enough good about Dr. Oleghoe. She was so impressed with her that she took her on as her primary care physician. Yet Julia has learned the lessons of self responsibility as well and has some “tips” for others struggling with health issues. “First, it is very important to find a doctor that you feel is your partner and advocate. Listen to their advice; then ask yourself the hard questions of what steps can I take to start improving my health?”

“Dr. Oleghoe helped me to see beyond my infection, to consider the big picture, the state of my overall health, and she gave me options. From there, it was my responsibility to decide what actions I would take. I’m here today to share it is never too late to take the first step to better health.”

To schedule an appointment with Dr. Oleghoe, please call 330.202.3477.

Bob’s Story Continued on p2

“A stroke can affect the brain and block messages between the brain and muscles, which hinders the recovery process,” says Dr. Basali. This was the case with Bob. His muscle spasticity caused muscle stiffness and tightness that interfered with his ability to walk.

“I had reached a plateau in PT and Kelli suggested I look at a Baclofen pump,” Bob said.

In November, Dr. Basali inserted the pump under Bob’s abdominal wall. The pump began dispensing small doses of Baclofen to a targeted site in Bob’s spinal cord.

“It’s an effective way to deliver the medication and can usually be given at lower doses than oral medication, which reduces side effects as well,” said Dr. Basali, currently the only doctor in the area who performs this procedure.

“Bob was able to walk in mid-December. He was walking again. He had been a wheelchair user for so long. He is slowly feeling the Baclofen relaxing his muscles. Kurt Gerschutz, his WCH Home Health physical therapist, works with him three times a week for an hour and a half. Bob is still working on walking normally. In particular, he has to retrain his left foot not to cross in front of his right foot.”

Bob is working with a speech and occupational therapist as well. While it’s all hard work, the “fantastic” staff at WCH and a “miracle” drug pump, gives Bob hope he will get his mobility and independence back. And he will never again take one day for granted.

This past Thanksgiving, Bob celebrated his 54th birthday. While the past year has been challenging, Bob says there is much to be thankful for. He is grateful for his wife, who has been a stalwart at his side fighting for him the whole way. Family and friends have offered prayers, visits, meals and fundraisers. Slowly but surely, Bob is making progress. “I’m alive, I’m progressing and I have hope,” he said.

Dr. Basali is pleased with Bob’s response to the treatment. “Intrathecal therapy can also be utilized for other medications for various conditions,” he said. “Wooster Community Hospital has always been supportive of new and advanced evidence based treatment modalities.”

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Gary Klepper believes in angels, because he’s seen them at work in his life this past year. They took many forms: his wife who called 911, his neighbor who responded to his cries for help, a doctor who let him try and heal a gaping wound without additional surgery or skin grafts, and especially the “fantastic” home health staff who took his calls at all hours, day and night. And, true to their name, they made house calls!

Gary became acquainted with this doctor and home health staff after he suffered a life threatening injury last spring. He was in his barn attempting to pull apart two baskets when he stumbled and fell against a spring. He was in his barn attempting to pull apart two baskets when he stumbled and fell against a spring. He was in his barn attempting to pull apart two baskets when he stumbled and fell against a spring. He was in his barn attempting to pull apart two baskets when he stumbled and fell against a spring. He was in his barn attempting to pull apart two baskets when he stumbled and fell against a spring.

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The alert did its job and Gary’s wife called 911. A neighbor heard him call for help and came and wrapped a towel around his leg to stem the bleeding. Medics arrived within 10 minutes, recalls Gary. They whisked him away to the WCH emergency room where he required surgical intervention and received 48 stitches in his calf. After that, it was up to Gary to clean and dress the wound and watch for signs of infection.

Two days later, Gary said he “could smell the wound and the gauze felt wet to my touch and I knew it was infected.” Back in the emergency room, they removed his stitches, cleaned out the wound and made another game plan. Gary met with Dr. James Slaby, who specializes in wound healing and plastic/reconstructive surgery.

Instead of pushing for another surgery and skin grafting, Dr. Slaby was open to trying a wound vacuum procedure. “I was thrilled when I heard this,” said Gary. “If I could avoid surgery I wanted to give it a try. It saved me from another surgery, skin grafts and losing my leg. I’m glad I went this route and I would highly recommend it to anybody.”

“Wound vac is about the size of a standard tissue box that is portable and battery operated,” said Connie Rebane, the director for the Hyperbaric Medicine & Wound Healing Center at WCH. “It provides negative pressure through suction to draw healthy cells to the surface. It supports healing by reducing swelling, removing excess fluid, reducing the wound size and helping the migration and formation of healthy cells and tissue. A wound vac is ideal for patients like Gary with large and/or deep wounds to expedite the granulation and closure of the wound.”

Gary also helped himself by being a “great patient,” Rebane said. “He followed the physician’s orders, maintained weekly wound care appointments and made lifestyle changes to reduce his risk of trauma wounds.”

The challenge was that the procedure required multiple visits to the wound center each week, but Gary had given up driving a few years back. That’s when the “angels” in WCH home health came on the scene.

The home health staff came out three times a week to check on him and change the dressings. Any time Gary had questions or concerns, they were there. “I remember calling them in the middle of the night with questions,” said Gary. “If we couldn’t get it figured out over the phone they’d say, ‘I will be right there.’ And they were - at any time of the day or night.

“They were never grouchy or irritated,” said Gary. “They were the greatest people and I started calling them my ‘angels.’ They were also so courteous and accommodating and would call ahead to schedule visits. They got me set up and ordered all my supplies. It looked like a pharmacy in my room.”

They were also quick to notice when something didn’t seem right. On one appointment, Gary said, “there was just something wrong.” Dr. Slaby hadn’t been feeling all that great and it turns out he had a temperature and cellulitis and was back in the hospital for four days.

Home Health is available for those with “skilled nursing, physical therapy, occupational or speech needs,” said the director of Home Health Services, Alexandra Davis. “In Gary’s case he had a wound that was not healing and needed nursing to do teaching, dressing changes and monitoring signs and symptoms of an infection.”

The affection Gary had for his caregiving staff went both ways, said Davis. “Gary was very engaged in his own care and followed instruction and recommendations from the physicians and home health nurses. Because of his engagement, he did have a great recovery. In as much as he appreciated the home health staff, we also appreciated his confidence in us.”

In addition to home health visits, Gary met with vascular surgeon Dr. Larry Stern and his staff weekly. Dr. Stern and his workforce were “always knowledgeable and pleasant,” said Gary.

His last home health “angel” visit was in September, and Gary is feeling pretty good right now. He is back to walking his Corgi Shepherd daily, enjoying his family, taking care of his two acre property and feeding the birds. “I probably go through 400 to 500 pounds of bird seed a year,” he said.

But there are some things he doesn’t do. “I’m much more cautious now,” he says. He doesn’t use a chainsaw much anymore and he’s aware that a fall can happen “just that quick.” He’s grateful for God; his three sons and his wife, Marty. And in spite of the difficulties this past year, he’s glad he got to meet a “caring doctor and my home health angels,” he said. “I just adored them.”
Jeanne (not pictured) had a wonderful life, with a loving husband, kids, and grandchildren. She was eager to help others, whatever they asked of her. But under the surface, she was dealing with depression, anxiety, and unhealthy boundaries. She struggled to get up in the morning, and sometimes just sat in bed, staring at the walls. “I spent probably a month crying almost every day,” she says. Referred by her family doctor and encouraged by her husband, Jeanne started an Intensive Outpatient Program through the Behavioral Health Services at Wooster Community Hospital Health System. “My first day, I was greeted by the receptionist with a big smile, and such warmth that I was drawn in,” Jeanne says. Three days a week, Jeanne attended group sessions that allowed participants to “check in” with each other and share their insights. She also had individual therapy sessions each week and medication management through the department’s psychiatrist. She struggled to open up to her group at first, but soon learned how much they all had in common. “It helps to share because people might throw their two cents in, they might give you a different perspective that you didn’t even think about.”

Over time, Jeanne learned to set healthy boundaries and take better care of herself. In group and individual sessions, she learned tools to manage her anxiety and “face things head-on.” Jeanne cannot say enough good things about the WCH behavioral health staff. “They’re there to listen, they’re there to help, they’re there for everything,” she says. “They just changed my life.”

To schedule an appointment with Behavioral Health Services, please call 330.263.8710.

Early detection is key to survival for many cancers. For example, the 5-year survival rate for early-stage lung cancer is 50 percent, but only 17 percent at stage 4.

To help better detect lung cancer in at-risk patients, WCH Health System’s Wooster Cancer Care will begin a screening clinic beginning in February.

“There’s a direct correlation between screening and patient outcomes, most notably survival,” says Tyra Schlabach, MSN, NP-C, AOCNP, nurse practitioner at Wooster Cancer Care. With lung cancer screening, we have the opportunity to improve patient survival if we are able to detect malignancies at earlier stages.” Patients will meet with a provider to discuss the risks and benefits of a low-dose CAT scan of the chest. If appropriate, patients will go on to complete an imaging study and receive same-day results.

Schlabach is leading the initiative to help expand what she considers an underused service. She hopes the weekly screening clinic will enhance awareness of availability of low dose chest CT at WCH, educate the local community about the importance of screening for individuals identified at high risk and promote opportunities for smoking cessation.

LUNG CANCER SCREENINGS

Tuesday afternoons, starting February 12 in the WCH Outpatient Pavilion.

Patients may be referred by another healthcare provider or contact Wooster Cancer Care directly at 330.262.2800.

Current smokers who do not otherwise meet screening criteria are still welcome to contact Wooster Community Hospital to discuss tobacco cessation. To schedule a tobacco cessation consultation, please call 330.263.8329.

ELIGIBILITY FOR SCREENING

Patients must meet all of the following criteria:

- Ages 55-77 years
- Have a 30-pack-year or more smoking history
- Current cigarette smoker or quit within the last 15 years
- No current signs or symptoms of cancer and willing to undergo treatment if cancer is detected
- Have no current signs or symptoms of lung cancer

Early Lung Cancer Detection for At-Risk Patients

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