

ARCADIA THE COMMUNITY

APRIL 16, 2026



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Local

RIDE THE "I SPY DESOTO" BUS FOR FREE FAMILY FUN

DESOTO COUNTY SPORTS
PAGE 4

STEVE KNAPP
sports@peacerrivershopper.com



The "I Spy DeSoto" Bus signs mark the locations where the bus will stop between 9:30 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. on Apr. 18: Walt Brewer Sports Park, South Florida State College, DeSoto County Sheriff's Office, DeSoto County Library, McSwain Center, Friendship Missionary Baptist Church, Church of Christ on MLK, and Casa San Juan Bosco.



CAROL MAHLER
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Photos provided

Ride the "I Spy DeSoto Bus" this Sat., Apr. 18, starting at 9:30 a.m. at the DeSoto County Library, 125 N. Hillsborough Ave., or at Casa San Juan Bosco, 2358 SE Arnold Andrews Ave., as part of Suncoast Remake Learning Days (SRLD), a free festival where children and adults learn together!

SRLD is a 15-day celebration of creativity, exploration and family-friendly learning from Sat., Apr. 18 to Sat., May 2. Presented by the Suncoast Campaign for Grade-Level Reading and The Patterson Foundation, SRLD features 380 free, interactive events in Charlotte, DeSoto, Manatee and Sarasota counties "designed to spark curiosity and celebrate the joy of adults and children learning side by side."

Events are organized around six learning themes – Arts, Maker, Outdoor Learning, Science, Technology



Last year, families enjoyed riding the "I Spy DeSoto Bus" and learning about landmarks and local history—plus singing songs—as they traveled from one free Suncoast Remake Learning Days activity to the next.

and Youth Voice – for youth from pre-K through high school and their families, caregivers and educators. More than 335 local organizations including after-

SEE BUS PAGE 12 >>



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GOVERNMENT MEETING SCHEDULE

CITY OF ARCADIA

CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS OCCUR THE 1ST AND 3RD TUESDAY OF THE MONTH UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED

Margaret Way Building
23 N. Polk Ave., Arcadia, FL 34266

APR 21	DESOTO COUNTY TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
TUES 1:30A	Administration Building 201 E. Oak Street, Suite 103 Arcadia, FL 34266
APR 28	DESOTO COUNTY CANCELED SPECIAL MASTER HEARING
TUES 11A	Administration Building 201 E. Oak Street, Suite 103 Arcadia, FL 34266
APR 28	DESOTO COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS MEETING
TUES 3P	Administration Building 201 E. Oak Street, Suite 103 Arcadia, FL 34266

Active dates and times are subject to change.
County: <http://desotobocc.com/calendar>
City: <https://arcadia-fl.gov/events/>

Realtor Showcase
..... See page 13

DESOTO COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE **ARREST REPORT**
..... See page 15

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COUNCIL APPROVES SPEER CENTER AND WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANT PROJECTS



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 Photos provided

At the Apr. 7 meeting, a round of applause followed the Council's approval of the agreement with the YMCA of Southwest Florida, Inc. and Close Construction Services, LLC, for the Arcadia Speer Center Repair, Restoration and Renovations in the amounts of Category A (City portion) - \$839,377.60, Category B (YMCA portion) - \$1,756,056.93, and Category C (YMCA portion) - \$78,807.11. The City's portion includes a grant from the Florida Dept. of State, Division of Historical Resources, and the YMCA's portion includes two Florida Dept. of Education grants.

YMCA of Southwest Florida President Gene Jones said that his organization was excited about this "public-private partnership" with the City and was "looking forward to great things."

The Council also ratified the agreement with the State Dept. of Commerce for the William Tyson Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) Improvements Project in the amount \$8,514,000.00 through Florida Commerce's Rebuild Florida Infrastructure Repair Program that "funds infrastructure restoration and improvement projects in communities impacted by the 2023 and 2024 hurricanes."

In addition, the Council approved Amendment No. 4 to Agreement No. LPQ0035 with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) to update the original WWTP grant agreement, which totals \$25,368,000.00. The original allocation was structured as follows: \$4.6 million for design and engineering; \$900,000.00 for improvements to the existing plant during construction of the new facility; and \$19,868,000.00 for construction.

FDEP previously had approved transferring \$3 million from this grant to fund the Treatment Wetlands project. Then Senator Ben Albritton and Representative Vanessa Oliver secured a legislative appropriation of \$3 million for the Solids Processing component, so the grant was "restored" to its original total.

PUBLIC HEARING

The Mayor had opened the meeting as a public hearing as required for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to replace sidewalks throughout the City, and the Council also approved an application—with a May 1 deadline—to the Florida Dept. of Economic Opportunity for the Small Cities CDBG with funding of up to \$2 million.

Assistant City Administrator Carl McQuay said that the grant may also fund stormwater ponds, paving of roads,



The Mayor and Council proclaimed April as Child Abuse Prevention Month, and Roslyn Mendoza of the Child Protection Center received the proclamation with Maria McGowan of Healthy Families DeSoto/Hardee.

installing sewer and water lines, building a community center or park, making improvements to the sewage treatment plant, or rehabilitating low income housing. He solicited suggestions from the public. Amanda Reuter thought that the community center "will keep our children safe and give adults a little bit of something to do." After Alibaba Lumumba questioned housing repairs, City Administrator Beth Carsten said that only new housing could be built.

Council Member Keith Keene asked for a public swimming pool: "That's something that could really make a difference to our community along with a community center." In response to Glenn Coone's question as to which projects will be done first, McQuay said that the Council will decide. Council Member Dee Washington asked for a survey of the public. Ashley Brown called for sidewalks for Pine St., and paving for Citrus Ave..

Deputy Mayor Luis Velasco wanted to make sure the sidewalk repair would include downtown. He also recalled the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Recovery and Resiliency Partnership Projects (R2P2), and he advocated for the downtown drainage one. Carsten said that another public hearing on the grant will the start of the Apr. 21 council meeting.

IN OTHER BUSINESS

Operations Manager Ann Applegate reported that she contacted four companies, and only Butler Aluminum submitted a complete estimate in the amount of \$52,844.00. Approved by the Council, the estimate includes the 24' x 24' x 10' steel building, concrete with footers, insulation, electric, and air conditioning to house the golf simulator.

The Council ratified the Second Amendment to the Lawn and Grounds Maintenance Services with Lawn Leaders Landscape Management for an annual amount of \$202,204.00, extending the original 2021 agreement for an additional two years beginning Apr. 6, 2026, and ending Apr. 5, 2028, with an added three sites: 30 S. Baldwin Ave., 223 S. Parker Ave., and 645 N. Turner Ave..

In addition, the Council awarded the Tributary F Box Culverts Replacement to EZ Contracting, LLC, in the amount

Mayor Wertz-Strickland proclaimed April as Donate Life Month, and accepting the proclamation was Tony Carter of LifeLink of Florida, the "non-profit organization dedicated to the recovery of organs and tissue for transplantation therapy in Florida, with a mission to honor donors and save lives through organ and tissue donation."



of \$4,625,196.99, as the lowest, most responsive, most responsible bid of the seven received. This project is funded by the Florida Department of Commerce (CDBG-MIT).

COMMENTS FROM DEPTS.

The Red Speed Presentation was a video that had been shown at a previous meeting, and City Attorney T. J. Wohl recommended tabling "Ordinance 1116: Providing for Use of Speed Detection systems in Accordance with State Law" until Red Speed could present the statistics for the City's school zones.

In response Keene's question, City Marshal Quinn Jones said that when a school receives a threat, his dept. responds as if it were real and keeps a few officers to check "on the other side of town." He also agreed with Wertz-Strickland, Velasco, and Washington that Bike Fest was a good event.

Airport Director Shelley Peacock announced two airport notices to those flying: no fuel may be sold because of an electrical problem, and wildlife is present next to the runway because of land clearing at the end of Runway 24. She wants fencing on the north and east side of the airport—a project that could be grant funded.

Golf Course Director Jeff Gibson said the course is transitioning from winter to summer grass, and he's working with Carsten to upgrade some equipment. He invited Council members to attend the Jr. Championship this weekend. Revenue is still up, and banquet room rentals are continuing. He hopes the golf simulator will be running by summer during the hot and rainy weather. He is setting dates for the June and July summer camps, and by August, the high school season will start.

Carsten said that the Treatment Wetlands project is "well underway" with good progress, but some "unknowns," such as pipes and old equipment—were uncovered. "You never know what you're going to get when you start digging it up," she said. The rain has delayed the paving of Gibson St., and that project is scheduled for completion by mid-June.

The #4 ball field is lighted, and #3 will be done next week. The McSwain Park walk-through is scheduled for Friday; a punch-list will be compiled;

and the grant deadline will be met. City Hall restoration is nearing completion, so she has been talking about the Way Building with people who are interested in office space, so it can be rented quickly. Because the legislature has not yet decided on ad valorem taxes, staff is looking diligently for any possible source of grant funding to help the City.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

School District Outreach Coordinator Ashley Brown said that today is an historic day because DeSoto Middle School has a boys and girls soccer league competing. On Apr. 15, everyone will wearing purple in support military families. From 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., on Apr. 21, is "Kindergarten Roundup" at all three elementary schools with free dinner provided. At 6:30 p.m., Apr. 22, at the Turner Center is the Fine Arts Festival to showcase students' talents in art and music. She said, "I extend a hearty thank you to the Arcadia Police Dept. and the Sheriff's office . . . the main goal is keep our staff and students safe" and they have done it.

Brown also read a message on behalf of Building A Village from Darien Bailey who thanked the Council for approving the Easter Egg Extravaganza at Louis C. Anderson, Sr. Park where they distributed more than 500 toys and hid 5500 eggs. He also expressed his "deepest gratitude" to Carsten "for her efforts in hiding eggs and distributing hot dogs to hungry kids."

CONSENT AGENDA

Under the Consent Agenda, the Council approved the following four special event permits: two at Louis C. Anderson, Sr., Park: Building a Village Family Kickball Event Kids vs. Parents from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Apr. 25 and Gwendolyn M. Baker Foundation, Inc., Back to School Backpack Giveaway from 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. on July 25, with the permit fee waived; and two for Heartland Fireworks, LLC, for a fireworks tent sale at 414 S. Brevard Ave., from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. June 26 to July 5, and Dec. 20, 2026, to Jan. 1, 2027; and for their 250th Celebration from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. at 1306 E. Oak St. from June 26 to July 5 and Dec. 20, 2026, to Jan. 1, 2027.

THREE GREAT EVENTS, ONE GREAT PLACE: TURNER CENTER PRESENTS SUNCOAST REMAKE SERIES



The Turner Agri-Civic Center will host a series of free, interactive events designed for all ages as part of Suncoast Remake Learning Days in April.

DeSoto County, Fla— Join the Turner Agri-Civic Center and Suncoast Remake Learning Days in April for three free, interactive events designed for all ages.

To celebrate Earth Month and Earth Day, April 22, 2026, the Turner Center is presenting two, earth-friendly events. The series kicks off Sunday, April 19, with a “Florida Wild Nature Experience,” blending indoor discovery with outdoor exploration. Running from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., the event includes a nature movie screening that showcases the many interesting -- and sometimes dangerous -- intricacies of the state’s wildlife. There will also be a guided nature walk to explore the area’s flora and fauna, a hands-on activity, and something fun to take home to remember the experience.

And, of course, there will be free popcorn.

The “Remake Music Day” follows on Tuesday, April 21, featuring Sarasota-based band The Garbage-Men, among other presenters. The event takes place from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. where guests can learn to create their own instrument using recycled materials. Other experiences will also be available, including soundboard instructions from sound technicians, on-stage performances and lessons about broadcasting life with an experienced radio disc jockey.

This three-part series wraps with a career fair, “Bots, Bolts & Boots Career Discovery: Skip the Degree, Not the Dream” on Thursday, April 30, hosted by the DeSoto Economic Development Department.

This interactive, hands-on event invites guests of all ages to explore high-demand, high-skill careers that offer excellent wages and rewarding work---many of which do not require a four-year degree. Attendees will engage directly with industry professionals, local employers, and real-world tools and technology across multiple fields. This event runs from 3:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. Guests will also enjoy free hot dogs or pulled pork sandwiches, chips and

other goodies.

“If you’re dreaming of a career that’s high-wage, skilled and doesn’t necessarily require a college, this free event is for you, featuring interaction with people in the field,” said Economic Development Director Sondra Guffey. “Connecting our community with opportunities like these is essential to building a strong and sustainable workforce for the future.”

The Turner Agri-Civic Center, 2250 NE Roan Street, Arcadia, FL. All three events are open-house formats. Registration is encouraged but not required. Sign-up links are available for all three events at VisitDeSoto.com/3-events.

Additional details and information are also available at GoDeSotoFL.com or by calling 863-993-4807.

Suncoast Remake Learning Days is a 15-day, hands-on learning festival, underwritten by The Patterson Foundation, across Charlotte, DeSoto,

Manatee, and Sarasota counties— focused on youth from birth through 12th grade and their families. The festival runs from Saturday, April 18 through Saturday May 2. For more information about Suncoast Remake Learning Days, call 941-952-1413 or go to www.SuncoastRemakeLearningDays.org.

For more information about The Garbage-Men, go to <https://www.thegarbagemen.com>.



FREE FAMILY FESTIVAL

THE 15-DAY HANDS-ON LEARNING FESTIVAL!
CHILDREN + ADULTS LEARNING TOGETHER

Saturday, April 18
through
Saturday, May 2
2026

Suncoast
remake
learning
days

380 FREE FAMILY-FRIENDLY EVENTS

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SRLD2026





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PEACE RIVER SPORTS

BOBIT RETURNS IN 12-5 LOSS



STEVE KNAPP

Sports Writer
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Many years ago Monty McLeod was coaching the baseball team and he had a team that he called, "Best One Bad Inning Team" he had ever seen. I took the first letter of each of those words and we called the team "The Bobit Boys".

That team would play great for 6 of the 7 innings but you never knew when one of those innings they would implode. Balls took bad hops, easy throws looked like they were throwing a shot put. Fly balls would get lost or wind driven to safety or suddenly the plate would be dancing for the pitchers and nobody could throw strikes. One bad inning would nullify 6 good innings and bring a disappointing defeat.

The season finale loss at Oasis had the "BOBIT" feel to it but it wasn't anything the Bulldogs did wrong. They made all the plays but in the 4th inning the Sharks decided to hit the ball hard and hit all the gaps and had the Bulldog flychasers running like a track team.

Oasis trailed 4-0 through three, but put up that 9 spot and followed it with 3 more in the 5th inning to take a 12-4 lead before the Bulldogs could add a final tally in the 6th inning. DeSoto scored first and scored last and scored in more innings than the Sharks did but they still came away with their 10th loss of the season to match their 10 wins.

The Sharks banged out 13 hits but committed 5 errors while DeSoto had 8 hits. It was a case of being unable to string together a few timely hits to get them back in the game. After the big 9 run inning, the Bulldogs only trailed 9-4 and were still in the game. The Sharks pitcher had a long time between innings and was wild when he returned to the mound in the 5th.

He hit Owen Roe open the inning and after a fielder's choice, he walked Abel Nedley and then hit Braden Deluca on the left forearm to juice the bases. Aiden Angeles blooped a single to short right, but with the possibility of the ball being caught, the runner on third couldn't drift too far off the bag. A perfect throw forced him at the plate while a pop up to



A pick off throw to Cameron Nummedor comes in a little too late to nail the runner in the 12-5 loss at Oasis.

Abel Nedley gets hit by the pitch in the first inning. Obi Strader ran for Nedley and scored the second run of the game.



Josue Hernandez scores the first run of the game on a ball that Braden Deluca hit that was too hot to handle by the Sharks shortstop.



Cole Rhoden got some time on the mound in the season finale at Oasis.



Cameron Nummedor dives back safely to first in the second inning. He stole second and scored the Bulldogs' run in the second inning on a Trent Alley base knock.

first ended the potential threat.

The Bulldogs opened the game with three in the first. Josue Hernandez was safe on the third baseman's error and was wild pitched to second. Nedley was hit by a pitch and Hernandez scored when Deluca was safe on the shortstop's

error. Angeles' single scored Obi Strader who was running for Nedley who was the starting pitcher. Aiden Adkins drove home Deluca with a long sacrifice fly. Adkins was the hard luck player of the game as he absolutely tattooed three balls that were hit deep but right at the

outfielders.

Trent Alley drove in the second inning run with the first of his two singles while Roe singled in Cameron Nummedor for the final run in the sixth.

DESOTO COUNTY

ATHLETES OF THE WEEK



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This past week five members of the DeSoto boys soccer team were honored with All Area awards presented by the Daily Sun newspaper.

Djefely Felixe and Kevin Ortiz were named to the first team while Josue Hernandez, Edivier Vargas and Darrian Warren each received second team honors.

Felixe had an area high 30 assists along with 5 goals. He had 7 matches with multiple assists including 8 assists in a 16-0 win over Babcock Ranch. He had 5 assists in an 8-0 win over Lake Placid and 4 assists in an 8-0 win over Imagine.

Ortiz led the area in goals with 20 and was second on the Bulldogs with 12 assists. His best game was in a 7-2 win over Port Charlotte when he scored 3 goals and 4 assists. He also had a hat trick and an assist in an 8-0 win over Imagine.



Djefely Felixe, Kevin Ortiz, Edivier Vargas all earned post season All Area honors as they stand with DeSoto coach Fernando Zepeda.



Edivier Vargas is just a sophomore and made the second team All Area.



Djefely Felixe made the first team with an area high 30 assists.



Josue Hernandez is a senior and made the second team All Area squad.



Kevin Ortiz and Djefely Felixe both earned first team All Area honors.



Kevin Ortiz led the area with 20 goals and landed on the All Area first team.

RECORDS FALL AND NEW PR'S AT LAKE PLACID



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Payton Naro, a transfer from Texas, broke the school record for the 1600 meter run shattering the 6.21 time with her 6.10 run. The Shine brothers set new personal records in the long jump and several other Bulldogs improved their season performances at the meet at Lake Placid. The district meet begins next week.

SEE TRACK PAGE 7 >>



Luc Morgan gets a good handoff in the relay race for the Bulldogs.



Hayden Ames clears the high jump, he also competed in the hurdles.



Nolan Hernandez gets up in the long jump for the Bulldogs.



Cruze Miethke gets his steps right for his discus throw.



Basketball player Sa'niyah White gets airborne for her jump.



Senior Jaliyah Luther and coach Darrel Nicklow after Luther's throwing events.



There were 4 separate heats for the 100 meters race and all four of them were won by a DeSoto girl. They are Aaliah Gonzalez, Kamyrea Brown, Za'niyah King and Neveah Johnson.



Richard Coone prepares to throw the discus.

DESOTO COUNTY

GAME OF THE WEEK



WELL PLAYED GAME NOT ENOUGH IN 4-2 LOSS



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Sometimes a team can win a game while not playing very well. That is called an “ugly win”. Other times a team can play well but go home with a loss. That is what happened in the 4-2 loss to Mulberry.

The game was well played on both sides, especially the Panthers’ outfield who saved the game with their defense. If you look at the linescore, both teams had 6 hits and both left 7 runners on base. There was just one error in the entire game which led to the first Bulldog run. DeSoto played clean on defense and even turned a nice double play.

In the circle starter Livia Evans pitched well enough to win most games as she went 4 innings and gave up 3 runs of which none of them were earned. Jo Duke went the final three and gave up just one run while fanning three.

The Panthers struck for 3 runs in the first on a pair of singles, a couple of stolen bases mixed in with a couple of wild pitches/ passed balls and they quickly had all they needed to win.

DeSoto notched a run in the first with two outs as Amiyah Smith ran hard all the way and reached second on a ball that the left fielder couldn’t make a shoestring catch on. Juliette Wolcott got the first of her team leading 2 hits to plate Smith.

Both teams put up goose eggs over the next three innings until the 5th when Mulberry scored their final run. There was a 10 minute delay in the top of the fifth as a heavy mist/light sprinkle sent both teams to their dugouts. That may have contributed to the Panthers’ run as the ball was hard to grip.

The Mulberry pitcher struggled after the delay as Smith and Wolcott opened the 6th inning with base hits. Evans dropped a perfect sacrifice bunt to advance the runners into scoring position. Mya Goodnoe was hit by a pitch to load the sacks and bring up Layla Morales.

Morales took a pitch off her leg to score Smith and keep the bases loaded. Trailing by two, a base hit could have tied the game. The inning took a big hit when a runner got picked off third and a ground out ended the potential big inning.

The Bulldogs started barking in the 7th as Ellie Whidden kept the game alive with a two out base hit bringing up the number 3 hitter Smith. Smith got a hold of a pitch and drove it deep into left center where the fleet footed center



DeSoto starter in the circle Livia Evans looks at the Mulberry hitter with a menacing stare.



Mulberry scores a run with pitcher Livia Evans covering on a close play at the plate.



Lacey Berini delivers a chest high throw to second sacker Layla Morales for a force at second in the 4-2 loss to Mulberry.



The Mulberry runner pops up from her slide as she reaches third before Amiyah Smith can put the tag on her.



Layla Morales takes a bases loaded pitch off her leg to score Amiyah Smith for the last Bulldog run in the 6th inning in the 4-2 loss to Mulberry.



It was no contest as Amiyah Smith waits for the Panther runner at third after a throw home was cut off and the runner was easily retired.

fielder hauled it in to end the game and give the Bulldogs’ their 6th loss. There was a strong breeze blowing in from left which kept the ball in the park or at least kept it from bouncing off the wall.

Wolcott had 2 of the 6 Bulldog hits and drove in a run while Morales drove in the second run while going 0-2 at the plate. Smith scored both runs in a 1-4 game.

Coach Fernando Zepeda summed up the game well by saying, “We just didn’t put our hits together to get a rally going.”

ROUND-UP

THE WEEK IN REVIEW



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The spring seasons are coming to an end with district play going on now and over the next two weeks.

The baseball team ended their season with a pair of losses 4-1 to Avon Park and 12-5 to Oasis. They are now playing in the district tournament with the quarterfinal game against Lake Placid on Tuesday with a win taking them to Bishop Verot yesterday.

The softball team had a battle with Mother Nature last week as a full schedule was shrunken down to one game. They lost 4-2 to Mulberry which is covered in more detail in this section. This past Monday the JV girls beat Avon Park 17-1 while the varsity was shut out 10-0. The Bulldogs will be home tonight to face Lake Placid, then home next Monday against Lemon Bay and they wrap up their season at home hosting Booker.

The DMS girls soccer team had their first home game and came away with a 3-1 win over Lake Placid. Both the boys and girls will be home a week from today.

The boys and girls tennis teams started district play yesterday and will conclude it today.

The track and field team will have their district meet next week.

The boys weightlifting team advanced 3 lifters to the regional tournament which will also be next week.

In Miss DeSoto action, the 10U Nancy team hung on for an exciting 10-9 win over Port Charlotte. Anna Miller got the game ball for scoring the winning run. Bryah Brady picked up the Bulldog chain for her overall play and excellent fielding. Coach Garcia said, "These girls showed lots of progress and fought to the very end. I am so proud of them."

The 8U Jos team played well against PG2 and got an 8-6 win. Coach Jos



said, "They had great plays both defensively and offensively. I've seen so much improvement from every single one of these girls." Kinsley earned the Bulldog chain for her nice job behind the plate and the Dugout chain went to Bella for her sportsmanship. The game ball went to Gianni for a ball she hit that nearly made it to the fence.

They also beat Englewood 16-5. Jos added, "Their bats were on fire and our defense was the best I've seen yet from these girls and they were very

aggressive on the bases" Paisley had an inside the park homer to earn the game ball. Vayda also got a game ball for her hitting. Maribella got the Bulldog chain and Oaklee got the dugout chain.



TRACK

FROM PAGE 5 >>



Luc Morgan had his family on hand to support him in his running events.



Payton Naro shows her excitement and joy as she crosses the finish line to set a new school record in the 1600 at 6:10.



The DeSoto 4x100 team features three football players and had a nice run.

BIKE FEST CELEBRATES “AMERICA 250”



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 Photos provided

On Apr. 2, motorcycles ruled downtown Arcadia as bikers enjoyed Bert’s Arcadia America 250 Bike Fest held in celebration of the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. Motorcyclists often speak of freedom because of their experience feeling the wind and a strong connection to the open road.

The street party included food trucks, and vendors filled the side streets, with live music in the Tree of Knowledge Park. However, Oak St. was the scene for motorcycles and their riders.

Sponsors included Bert’s Black Pearl, Bert’s Black Widow, Bert’s Barracuda, and Bert’s Buccaneer Harley Davidson; City of Arcadia; Visit DeSoto; plus Fran Hasch Law Group and “Florida Full Throttle Magazine” that held a 12-class bike show.

“It was such a great day to be in downtown Arcadia,” Arcadia Main Street Director Pam Ames said. “Bike Fest was another success. We are already making plans for November’s Bike Fest.”

Mark your calendar for Bert’s Arcadia Bike Fest on Nov. 7. For more details, check online at arcadiamainstreet.org or call 863-494-2020.



During Bert’s Arcadia America 250 Bike Fest, bikers rode into downtown Arcadia while the band Jack’D Up provided live music on the gazebo stage in the Tree of Knowledge Park.

Vendors filled the side streets—including N. Monroe Ave.—during Bert’s Arcadia America 250 Bike Fest on Apr. 2.



The crowd enjoyed viewing the motorcycles lining W. Oak St. in front of the Rosin Arcade, also known as “The Pink Building” in downtown Arcadia.



Recalling Arcadia’s early days of hitching posts and saloons, riders parked their “steel stallions” and bought beer at the Polk Ave. and Oak St. intersection.

AMERICAN LEGION THANKS COLLINS



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 Photos provided

On Apr. 7, Ron Jones, Sr., commander of the Arcadia American Legion K-Post 11, presented Dan Collins, publisher of the “Peace River Shopper,” with a handsome wooden plaque in appreciation for his “unwavering support of the American Legion and DeSoto County.”

Jones said, “I’ve been commander for ten years, and Dan has supported every event the American Legion has done—most recently, our Antique Tractor and Hit & Miss Engine and Hotrod and Classic Car Show—held together with the DeSoto County Historical Society’s 22nd Annual Pioneer Day and BBQ.

“Whenever I go talk to him for the American Legion, it’s always positive, and he helps us out however he can.



Dan Collins, publisher of the “Peace River Shopper,” and owner of Collins Management & Realty, Inc., received a plaque of gratitude for his “support of the American Legion and DeSoto County’s many charities and non-profit organizations” presented by Commander Ron Jones, Sr.



Angie Duckett received a gift card from the American Legion in appreciation “for all she does to support the residents of DeSoto County through her work and assistance” presented by Commander Ron Jones, Sr..

And he does a lot for the non-profits and charities in DeSoto County. He’s got a pretty good heart even though he’s a business man.”

Jones also presented a gift card to Office Manager Angie Duckett because

“she makes things happen and follows up and calls you back,” he said.

SARASOTA GUN SHOW

ROBARTS ARENA

3000 RINGLING BLVD. • SARASOTA, FL 33948

MAY 2ND & 3RD

SATURDAY 9AM-5PM & SUNDAY 9AM-3PM

UPCOMING

CHARLOTTE COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS

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BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES:

“LET YOUR SPEECH ALWAYS BE GRACIOUS, SEASONED WITH SALT, SO THAT YOU MAY KNOW HOW YOU OUGHT TO ANSWER EACH PERSON” (COL. 4:6).

PASTOR DAVID STEWART

Grace Presbyterian Church of Lake Suzy
DeSoto County Ministerial Association

Our audience should always inform our speech. Just as we should always listen to understand, we should speak so as to be understood. That means that how I say something is just as important as what I say.

It is always the case that the context helps us to understand the text. The apostle Paul is giving final instructions to the church at Colossae here in chapter four, and begins in verse two to exhort the church to be in prayer, particularly for him and his team, “that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ on account of which I am in prison – that I

may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak” (Col. 4:3-4).

The context is how Paul should speak to those who have not believed the gospel of Christ. He goes on in the next verse to encourage the church to do the same. “Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time.” I don’t want to make too much of this, but I find it interesting what Paul does not tell us to do. He does not say, “Walk with outsiders...” Matthew Henry comments on this verse, saying, “Be careful, in all your converse with them, to get no hurt by them, or contract any of their customs; for evil communications corrupt good manners; and to do no hurt to them, or increase their prejudices against religion, and give them an occasion of dislike. Yea,

do them all the good you can, and by all the fittest means and in the proper seasons recommend religion to them.” Thus, guarding our hearts in wisdom, we should “walk toward outsiders.” We should desire to bring the good news of Jesus to everyone we meet.

When we are exhorted in this manner, the first question we should ask is, “How do I do that?” And Paul answers it in the next verse. “Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.” Our speech should be composed of two things: grace and truth. If we are to speak graciously, it must be thoughtful and winsome, not combative and threatening. But it must also be truthful, which is what Paul is implying in our speech being “salty.”

When we hear that phrase, we might think of some sailor letting the expletives fly. But it implies usefulness. Salt is a preservative, and the only balm for our souls is the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Jesus tells us that we “are the salt of the earth.” If we lose our saltiness, that is, the gospel, we become useless. In a remarkable way, our grace is the salt that seasons our speech. We have received grace upon grace from the Lord Jesus Christ, and it is that grace that we use to bring grace to others. So, we must “always [be] prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect” (1 Peter 3:15).



2026

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Publishing May 29, 2026

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BUS

FROM PAGE 1 >>

school organizations, churches, early child care centers, media outlets, museums, libraries, schools, and universities are participating as event hosts and partners.

In Arcadia, the DeSoto County Historical Society is partnering with Links To Success and the School District to provide the “I Spy DeSoto Bus”—free transportation to nine locations offering free hands-on learning activities. While you’re riding, you’ll learn about local history and landmarks, sing songs, and enjoy free snacks.

You can hop on or hop off the “I Spy DeSoto Bus” at any of the locations: 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.: STEM Day at **South Florida State College**, 2251 NE Turner Ave.; 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.: Everyday Science by Team Arcadia at the **McSwain Center**, 16 S. Volusia Ave.; 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.: Cake Creations at the **Church of Christ**, 710 SW Martin Luther King St.; 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.: Crack the Case with the **DeSoto County Sheriff’s Office**, 208 E. Cypress St.; 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.: Football & Cheer Clinic by DeSoto Youth Football & Cheer at **Richard Bowers, Jr., Stadium**, 1175 SW Hillsborough Ave.; 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.: Arts and Crafts Fun and Learning at **Friendship Missionary Baptist Church**, 304 W. Myrtle St.; 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.: **Casa San Juan Bosco** Family Fest at 2358 SW Arnold Andrews Ave.; 11:00 to 2:00 p.m.: Together in Teal: A Child Safety Day by SPARCC at **Walt Brewer Sports Complex**, 1347 Hargrave St.; and at the **DeSoto County Library**, 125 N. Hillsborough Ave.—9:30 a.m. to 12:30 a.m.: Activate the Future: The Next Chapter Starts Here by Psi Zeta Zeta Chap. of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority; 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.: Color Me Beautiful - Spring Remix by St. Mark AME Church; 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. A Look Within by Step Up Suncoast; 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.: Create Mosaic Art.

Also on Sat., Apr. 18 are other family-fun events: 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.: Unlock Your Phone’s Photo Power Part 1 for Teens and Adults by DeSoto Art Center at **Pletcher’s on Monroe**, 16 S. Monroe Ave.; 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Practical Hand Sewing Skills and 1:00 to 4:00 p.m., Machine Sew a Tote



One of the locations on the “I Spy DeSoto” bus route is the DeSoto County Library, where four different free family-fun activities are scheduled on Apr. 18 thanks to the Library, Psi Zeta Zeta Chap. of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority; St. Mark AME Church, and Step Up Suncoast.



Last year, one of the Suncoast Remake Learning Days included a chance for families to meet farm animals such as this cow.

Bag—both events for Teens and Adults at **Pine Level Church**, 9596 NW Pine Level St.; Berenstain Bears Compassion Reading: Helping The Homeless by DeSoto Cares Homeless Services: 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. at **Three Trees Brewing Co**, 5 E. Oak St.; 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.: Community Day at **Mount Olive CME Church**, 7653 SW Hull Rd.; 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. **Arcadia Main Street Program**: Biz Kids Young Entrepreneurs at 13 S. Monroe Ave.; 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.: “Hello Spring” Community Fun Day at **Ivey Chapel AME Church**, 2895 Terrell St.; 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.: Dragon’s Den Interactive Story Adventure at **Dragon’s Den Books**, 101 W. Oak St.; 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.: The Ohana Experience: Lilo & Stitch Live-Action Free Family Movie Night by Saturday Night Lights at the **Family Service Center Annex**, 311 N. Orange Ave.; and 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 pm. Family Movie Night at **Catholic Charities**, 1210 E. Oak St.,.

Suncoast Remake Learning Days family-fun hands-on learning experiences continue through the week:

SUNDAY, APRIL 19TH

2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Florida Wild: Nature Movie and Nature Walk by the DeSoto County Turner Center at the Turner Agri-Civic Center Arena, 2250 NE Road St.;

MONDAY, APRIL 20TH

5:15 p.m. to 7:15 p.m. Suncoast Remake Learning Days Softball Clinic by Miss DeSoto Fastpitch Softball, Inc. at Storybook ParkSpeer Center, 185 W. Winifred St.;

TUESDAY, APRIL 21ST

3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.: “Let’s Design Our Own Tote and Go Grocery Shopping at All Faiths Food Bank, 1021 E. Oak St.; 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Make Magic with Light: Paper Circuits at the Library, 125 N. Hillsborough Ave.; 4:00 to 7:00 p.m.: Re-MAKE Music Day by DeSoto County Turner Center at the Turner Agri-Civic Center Arena, 2250 NE Roan St.; 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. Kindergarten Round-Up & Rodeo at Memorial Elementary School, 851 E. Hickory St. and Nocatee Elementary School, 4846 Sw Shores Ave. and West Elementary School, 304 W. Imogene St.; 5:00 to 6:30 p.m.: A Seuss-Tastic Celebration: Oh the Fun You Can Have by the Florida Center/Healthy Family DeSoto at the Turner Center Exhibit Hall, 2250 NE Roan St.;

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22ND

3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.: DIY Suet Bird Feeders by the DeSoto County Library and 4:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.: Earth Day Tree Planting & Vegetable Gardening by the Arcadia Garden Club at the DeSoto County Library, 125 N. Hillsborough Ave.; 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.: Cratie Painting at Vasa San Juan Bosco, 2358 SE Arnold Andrews Ave.; 5:15 p.m. to 7:15 p.m. Suncoast Remake Learning Days Softball Clinic by Miss DeSoto Fastpitch Softball, Inc. at Storybook ParkSpeer Center, 185 W. Winifred St.;

THURSDAY, APRIL 23RD

3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.: Word Collector Jars at the Library, 125 N. Hillsborough Ave.; 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.: Discovery Dash Family Wellness Adventure by Drug Free DeSoto

Coalition at the Family Service Center, 310 W. Whidden St.;

FRIDAY, APRIL 24TH

Puppet Show on the Go by DeSoto County Library at the Walt Brewer Sports Complex Small Pavilion, 1347 Hargrave St.; and 5:30 p.m. to 7 :00 p.m. Hair Care Made Simple at the House God Youth Center, 200 S. Alabama Ave..

All Suncoast Remake Learning Days events are free to attend through generous funding from The Patterson Foundation to foster wide participation around everyday learning. More SRLD activities are planned for DeSoto County for Apr. 25 to May 2: check out SuncoastRemakeLearningDays.org to view a full online event list for Suncoast Remake Learning Days or download a free event guide app.



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OBITUARIES

RICHARD LOUIS PEACOCK, JR.



A Life Well Lived

Richard Louis Peacock, Jr., a devoted son, brother, educator, journalist, and lifelong learner, passed away on March 5, 2026, leaving a legacy of curiosity, compassion, and love for family, friends, and community.

Born in Fort Myers, Florida, to Sandra Hill Peacock and Richard L. Peacock, Sr., Richard spent his early years in Punta Gorda before moving to Arcadia, where he excelled academically and graduated with honors from DeSoto County High School.

He continued his education at Morehouse College, graduating with honors in 1996. There, he served as an Office Manager and Editorial

Assistant for The Journal of Negro History, supporting scholarship that preserved and advanced African American history. He later earned a master's degree from Florida Atlantic University and further honed his journalism skills at The Poynter Institute. His work earned multiple awards, including recognition for highlighting the story of the "Fighting Bailey Brothers."

After a successful journalism career, Richard answered a calling to education. He furthered his training at Columbia University and dedicated himself to teaching and mentoring. As Chair and Professor at Bethune-Cookman University, he empowered students through knowledge, critical thinking, and

historical understanding.

Richard leaves to cherish his memory his loving mother, Sandra Hill Peacock; his sisters, Yolanda Peacock and April Peacock; his beloved dog, Max; his aunt, Charlotte P. Carter; his uncles, Booker M. Hill and James B. Hill, Sr.; and his cousins, Romona Gollman, Vonda Morrison, Tonya Carter, Falana Staples, Sundiata Hill, Sonni Hill, Csorrell Cason, Sandra Hill, James Hill, Jr., and Jamon Hill. He is also remembered fondly by many extended family members and dear friends. His legacy of love, wisdom, and joyful spirit will live on in all who knew him.

Our Father,
who art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy Name.
Thy Kingdom come.
Thy will be done in earth,
As it is in heaven.
Give us this day,
our daily bread.
And forgive us

our trespasses,
As we forgive them that
trespass against us.
And lead us not
into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
The power, and the glory,
For ever and ever. Amen.



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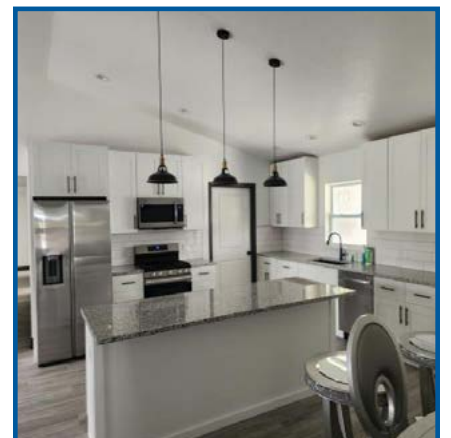
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ARREST REPORT |

4/3/26 - 4/9/26

Arnold, Trejer Malik:

Failure To Appear - Written Promise To Appear; Out-of-County Warrant - Out-of-County Warrant

Buckwalter, David Allen:

Aggrav Battery - Aggrav Battery Cause Bodily Harm Or Disability; Battery - Touch Or Strike

Crouse, Kyle Matthew:

Moving Traffic Viol - Dwlsr Revocation Equiv Status 2nd Subs Off

Faulkner, Rusty Lee:

Prob Violation - Prob Violation

Gayosso-Posadas, Irvin Jonathan:

Moving Traffic Viol - Operate Motor Vehicle W/O Valid LIC 1st Conv; Nonmoving Traffic Viol - Attach Registration License Plate Not Assigned; Nonmoving Traffic Viol - Fail To Register Motor Veh

Guzman Peterson, Arturo Juan:

Disorderly Conduct - Brawling Fighting Corrupt Public Moral Decency

Guzman, Arturo:

Battery - Touch Or Strike; Disorderly Conduct - Brawling Fighting Corrupt Public Moral Decency

Hernandez, Omar:

Moving Traffic Viol - Dwlsr Revocation Equiv Status 2nd Subs Off; Nonmoving Traffic Viol - Fail To Register Motor Veh

Hodges, David Allen:

Damage Prop-Crim Misch - Over 200 Under 1000 Dols Previous Conviction

Ibarra, Roberto Carlos:

Moving Traffic Viol - Driv While LIC Suspend Revocation Equiv Status

Jimenez, Jose Antonio:

DUI-Unlaw Bld Alch - DUI Alcohol Or Drug 3rd VIOL/CONV Outside 10yr; DUI-Unlaw Bld Alch - Refusal Submit DUI Testing; Moving Traffic Viol - Driv While LIC Suspend Revocation Equiv Status

Kleis, Arthur Harry:

Battery - Battery By Strangulation

Mobley, Telly Savales:

Prob Violation - Prob Violation

Pacheco Epitacio, Nicholas:

Obscene Communication - Use Comp Seduce Solicit Lure Child Misrep Age (x3); Obscene Material-Distrib - Transmit Info Harmful To Minors (x3); Obscene Material-Possess - Poss Control View Depiction Child Pornography (x2)

Peterson, Arlene Carol:

Possession Of Weapon - Or Ammo By Convicted Fla Felon

Ramirez, Carlos Roberto:

Damage Prop-Crim Misch - 1000 Dols Or More (x4); FLEE/ELUDE Police - Flee Elude LEO At High Speed; Resist Officer - Obstruct Wo Violence; Veh Theft - Grand Theft Of Motor Vehicle

Randolph III, Charlie John:

Out-of-County Warrant - Out-of-County Warrant

Randolph III, Charlie John:

Out-of-County Warrant - Out-of-County Warrant

Richardson, Dequan Rashaud:

Drugs-Traffic - Traffic FENTANYL/FENTANYL Analogues 4 Grams+

Rodriguez, Adan:

Larc - Other Theft

Sanchez-Deara, Noe:

DUI-Unlaw Bld Alch - DUI Influence Of Alcohol Or Drugs; Moving Traffic Viol - Operate Motor Vehicle W/O Valid LIC 1st Conv

Schiele Jr., Peter Charles:

Condit Release Violation - Condit Release Violation

Wickward-Vega, Ryan Alexander:

Moving Traffic Viol - Dwlsr Revocation Equiv Status 2nd Subs Off

Zapata, Jesus:

Disorderly Conduct - Brawling Fighting Corrupt Public Moral Decency

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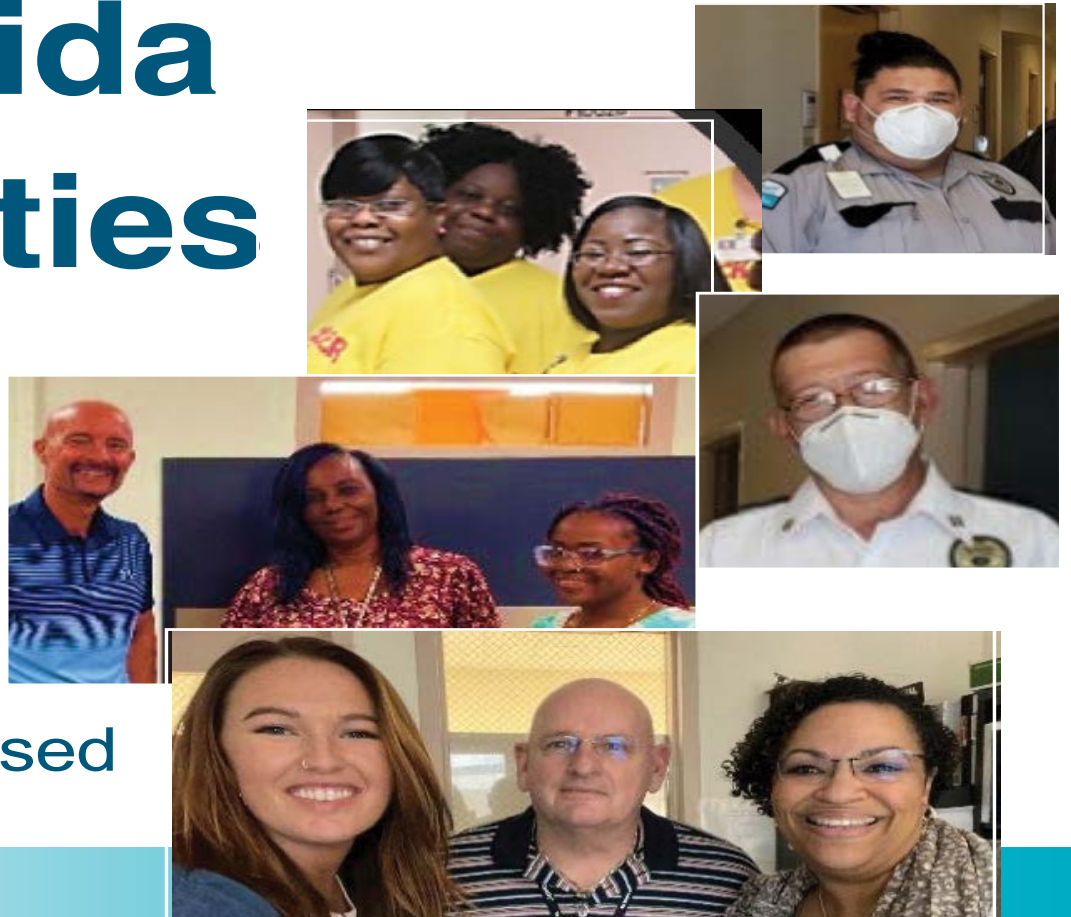
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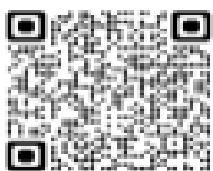
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