

# The Meadow Lark

December 2011



A Monthly Publication by and for the Residents of The Meadows, a Family Condominium Community

*Proxies Needed!*

## Annual Meeting & 40th Birthday December 13

The Meadows Council of Co-Owners Annual Meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 13 at 7:30 PM in the Clubhouse at 6100 Strasburg Drive. The Board of Directors has invited speakers from the Fairfax County Police Department to talk to us about crime prevention. You will be able to ask questions. Proxies and ballots were mailed in November. If you did not receive your proxy or misplaced it, please contact The Meadows Office for a replacement. Please mail them in or bring them to The Meadows Office during regular business hours. Proxies/ballots will not be accepted after 4:30 PM on December 12, the day before the Annual Meeting.

The celebration of The Meadows 40th Birthday will also be a part of this important meeting.

## 2012 Budget Passed

At the October 20 Board of Directors meeting the new budget for 2012 was passed, after lots of discussion and hard consideration over what is in the best interest of The Meadows from a financial standpoint. As many of you may already know (as a result of information passed out in September prior to the Open Forum about the budget which was held on September 28, and was attended by about 45 interested and concerned residents), there will be a marked increase next year in the condominium fee. The monthly charges for our condominium fees for the upcoming year will be **\$251 for those with two-bedroom units and \$283 for those Co-Owners living in three-bedroom units.**

While the members of the Board of Directors realize that this is a very substantial increase, especially in these troubled financial times, it is in the best interests of the Association to adopt this budget. The truth of the matter is that for the last few years the community has been operating with budgets that ended the year either in a deficit

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## Holiday Decorating Contests

On Friday, December 23, judges for the Holiday Decorating Contest will be making their rounds of the community from 6:00 to 8:00 PM. They will be looking for the best decorated homes in The Meadows, so be sure you have all your decorations out and the lights on. Gift certificates will be awarded.

The annual Halloween decorating contest winners for this year were:

6172 Strasburg, 6163 Strasburg, 14447 Saguaro, 14473 Cool Oak, 14467 Turin,  
14471 Turin, 14476 Turin, 14405 Golden Oak, 14407 Golden Oak, 14427 Golden Oak

Thanks to everyone for decorating to help make the community festive during both holiday seasons.



## DECEMBER

**Board of Directors Meeting:** Because of the holiday season, the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee will not meet in December. The next meetings will be held on January 19, 2012. Residents and Co-Owners are encouraged to attend.

**Annual Meeting:** Tuesday, December 13, 7:30 PM, Clubhouse.

**Holiday Decorating Contest:** Friday, December 23. Turn your lights on by 6 PM.

**Office Closed:** December 26 & January 2.

**Christmas Tree Pickup:** December 27 – January 11.

*Residents and Co-Owners are welcomed and encouraged to attend any committee meeting. All meetings are held in the Clubhouse.*

## Christmas Tree Pick-Up



According to Fairfax County regulations, Christmas trees must be recycled—they cannot be put out with your trash. For your convenience, a drop off area will be located next to the Clubhouse on Strasburg Drive from December 27 to January 11.

All decorations, including tinsel and garlands, must be removed. If you use a carry plastic bag, this must also be removed.

**INSIDE THIS ISSUE...**

*2012 Budget*

## President's Corner

The results of the current election for Board members in 2012 will be announced at the Annual Meeting on December 13. This year, there are seven candidates seeking positions on the Board. You can vote by submitting your signed and witnessed ballot to the office in person, mailing it to the office or by voting at the meeting itself. Whichever way you as a Co-Owner choose, be sure to vote. It's your community!

~ Joan Orvis

## Board of Directors Motions

*At the November 17 Meeting*

- Passed a motion to approve a bid of \$425 for roof repairs from Katchmark.
- Passed a motion to reaffirm previous email votes to approve two roof repairs, gutter cleaning, a waterproofing job and installation of an outside air conditioning unit.
- Passed a motion to rescind previously approved Policy Resolution No. 11-07.
- Passed motions to approve holding a holiday decorating contest and to spend \$100 for prizes.
- Passed a motion to deny reimbursement of towing expenses.
- Passed a motion to deny a request to waive violation fees but allow a payment plan.
- Passed a motion to approve a contract with Valley Crest for \$63,500 annually for grounds maintenance.
- Passed a motion to accept our attorney's recommendation concerning banning of individuals from The Meadows.
- Passed a motion to approve performance evaluations for our staff members.

COMPLETE MINUTES OF BOARD MEETINGS  
AVAILABLE AT THE OFFICE

## Utilities Must Remain On!

ALL Co-Owners are required to keep the utilities on in their units. The heat must be set at or above 65°F in all units, vacant or occupied. This temperature may seem a little high, but one must consider that the furnace room where the pipes originate is unheated and may be affected by the wind chill factor. Another thing to consider is if the water is turned off, it remains in the pipes and is subject to even quicker freezing. Every year, major damage to several units has occurred as the result of pipes freezing and breaking in this manner.

*Any damage resulting from broken pipes, etc., caused by improper heat being maintained in a unit will be the responsibility of the Co-Owner. A minimum of 65 degrees Fahrenheit must be maintained during the winter months. – Rules and Regulations.*

In addition, to this regulation, The Meadows Rules also includes a Utility Maintenance Requirement for all units. It states:

*In the event that a Co-Owner does not keep electric and/or gas utilities connected as required, the Council of Co-Owners shall take any and all measures reasonably necessary to protect the common elements of the condominium which shall include but are not limited to the appropriation of funds to reconnect and maintain electric and gas utilities. All costs and changes incurred by the Council shall be accessed against the unit owner.*

You can help by reporting vacant units to the office as soon as you notice them. Send reports to the office via email, fax or phone. Make sure that you include the address. Report any evidence of possible broken pipes or water coming from a unit immediately! See the back of this issue for office and emergency after hour phone numbers.

## Security Totals

October 15 – November 14, 2011

Vehicles Ticketed: 96

Vehicles Towed: 8

Calls for service and/or situations involving or requiring security assistance, by street:

Avocado Court: 1

Cool Oak Lane: 4

Golden Oak Court/Road: 3

Rustling Leaves Lane: 2

Saguaro Place: 4

Saint Germain Drive: 5

Strasburg Drive: 6

Turin Lane: 3

Calls referred to FCPD/FCFD: 4

### The Meadows



## Remodeling?

*Any desired changes to the exterior or interior of your unit must be submitted on an ARF or Request for Interior Alteration form to the Board of Directors for approval PRIOR to the change being done.*

## Satellite Dishes in The Meadows



## A/C UNITS

If you replace your air conditioning unit, you may install it inside your utility room or submit an ARF for proposed exterior installation.



## Responsibilities of All Residents

by Bill Liedtke

What are the responsibilities of all residents—owners and tenants alike? There are many, but perhaps the most important one, and one that carries through to all others, is simply overall consideration for and cooperation with others. We all live very close together. Of course, everyone has their own individual rights, but exercising one's rights must not infringe on another person's rights. Our *Rules and Regulations* are set up just for this purpose. They are not intended to make life difficult for you, but rather are to protect everyone.

If you lived in the middle of a forest or on a large farm with no other people nearby, you could play your stereo as loudly as you wanted or park your cars wherever you wished. Nobody would care. But in a community such as ours, although you have a right to listen to your stereo or use your car, you must be careful that in doing so you do not bother others. Music must be kept at an appropriate level and cars must be parked in designated spaces. Our *Rules and Regulations* provide for these and other guidelines. Each rule is written with the general good of the entire community in mind.

Residents have many other responsibilities, too. The common elements must not be abused, all units must be kept in proper repair, and monthly assessments must be paid on time (the last two apply primarily to owners). All residents should also take an interest in keeping the community clean, reporting violations of the law to the proper authorities, and obeying all rules and regulations.

Everyone can enjoy living in our community, but must respect others' rights and property at the same time. With everybody's help, The Meadows can be a nice place to live 15 years from now.

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*Author's note: I wrote this article for The Meadow Lark, April 1986, during our 15th anniversary year. Its content is as true today as it was then, or—for that matter—will be in another 15 (or 40) years.*

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### **Budget**, continued from page 1

or very close to one. At this point of 2011 the budget for this year has been overspent by about \$48,000. We cannot continue to operate in this manner and be a financially viable community which will be attractive for prospective homeowners to buy into.

Each member of the Board is a homeowner in this community and will have to pay the increased fees starting in January. They would all have preferred not to increase the fees so drastically, but realized that from a fiscal standpoint it was required for the protection of the community. The Boards of Directors over the past several years have opted to keep the fee increases as low as possible (some years at zero) in deference to the Co-Owners, when in fact the standard recommended within the condominium industry according to experts in the field is small increases each year (2% to 4%) to help build up cash which goes into a fund called Members Equity. This fund is like a "rainy day" account

which can be used for unexpected emergencies which always seem to occur when they are least expected. Right now this fund for The Meadows is practically non-existent, and may be in the red by the end of the year depending on how finances go for the rest of the year.

Everyone must remember that the most important investment that they have is their home. Each family sets up their own budget to parcel out their wages and other sources of income so that all of the needs of the family can be met. The same is true within The Meadows, there are many needs within the community which require funds to be maintained. The Board felt it was important not to reduce any services that are provided, and because funding brought in by condo fees has been too low in preceding years, the increase this year was proper and justified, as well as being necessary if we are to maintain the community so that it is a safe and desirable place to live.

## Bits & Pieces from the Past

*Excerpts from old Meadow Larks*

### January, 1986

The design of the traffic signal at Machen Road and Lee Highway is almost complete. Hopefully, it will be installed early this year. Keep your fingers crossed.

Metro has proposed running a rush-hour bus from Centreville (stops along St. Germain Drive) to the new Vienna Metro station beginning in June. Approximate times are 6:15 and 7:15 in the mornings and 5:30, 6:00 and 6:30 in the evening. Public hearings will be held this month.

### March, 1986

Route 28 (Centreville Road) will be widened from two to four lanes from Centreville (Rt. 29) to the Prince William County line. Tentatively, work is scheduled to begin later this year. Also, one park-and-ride lot located here in Centreville, sponsored by the County, will soon be opened. Others are being planned for the future.

### January, 1991

We have taken possession of the new 20-space parking lot at the end of Golden Oak Court. The spaces will help alleviate the need for overflow parking on that street (it is a lot closer than parking on St. Germain or the pool area). Our guard service is patrolling this area. It is adequately lit with street lights. Residents are now welcome to use this lot for parking.

**COUNCIL OF CO-OWNERS OF THE MEADOWS**  
**APPROVED OPERATING BUDGET (January 1, 2012 - December 31, 2012)**  
2BR Fee = \$251 / 3BR Fee = \$283

	<b>Adopted 2011</b>	<b>Projected 2011</b>	<b>Approved 2012</b>
<b>INCOME</b>			
Assessment Income	\$1,767,558	\$1,766,304	\$2,000,477
Late Fee Income	12,000	11,219	11,000
Interest Income	12,000	7,261	7,200
Owner Interest Income	0	1,441	1,200
Owner Admin. Fees Income	0	350	350
Miscellaneous Owner Income	0	896	800
ARC Violation Income	0	(2,660)	2,500
Miscellaneous Income	25,000	2,661	3,400
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	\$1,816,558	\$1,787,473	\$2,026,927
<b>EXPENSES</b>			
<b>UTILITIES</b>			
Electricity	\$31,000	\$35,214	\$36,000
Telephone	4,800	5,377	5,500
Gas - Clubhouse	1,800	1,697	1,800
Water & Sewer	320,000	340,000	350,000
<b>Total Utilities</b>	\$357,600	\$382,288	\$393,300
<b>GENERAL &amp; ADMINISTRATIVE</b>			
Education & Training	\$250	\$195	\$350
Newsletter	4,000	3,550	3,500
Office Equipment & Repairs	500	929	500
Office Supplies	2,350	2,052	2,350
Lease Exp.- Office Equipment	4,800	4,162	4,500
Uncollectible Charges	7,000	20,000	50,000
Legal - General	20,000	47,464	50,000
Legal - Collections	57,000	31,752	40,000
Legal Fee Reimbursements	(20,000)	(5,847)	(6,000)
Legal Fees Other	0	63,804	40,000
Uniforms	500	102	500
Insurance Loss/Deductible	0	(1,506)	0
Social & Rec	300	300	1,500
Postage & Mail	2,000	1,131	1,500
Printing & Reproduction	400	436	450
Website	400	250	400
Miscellaneous Expense	2,500	2,400	2,500
<b>Total General &amp; Administrative</b>	\$82,000	\$171,175	\$192,050
<b>MAINTENANCE &amp; REPAIRS</b>			
General Maintenance & Repairs	\$6,500	\$11,000	\$15,000
Plumbing Repairs	8,700	8,549	9,800
Painting - Supplies	500	0	250
Exterminator Services	5,000	5,369	6,000
General Supplies	7,400	5,494	6,000
Welding	500	400	500
Antenna Repairs	1,500	1,431	1,500
Roofing Repairs	4,600	1,000	3,000

	<b>Adopted 2011</b>	<b>Projected 2011</b>	<b>Approved 2012</b>
Gutter Repairs & Cleaning	10,000	9,599	10,000
Vehicle Expense	800	820	500
Pool Repairs, Supplies, Maint	500	52	350
Playground Repairs	500	0	250
Landscaping Improvements	3,000	0	1,000
Tree Planting	5,000	5,000	5,000
Tree Maintenance	10,000	16,671	15,000
<b>Total Maintenance &amp; Repairs</b>	<b>\$64,500</b>	<b>\$65,385</b>	<b>\$74,150</b>
<b>CONTRACT SERVICES</b>			
Pool Contract	\$58,550	\$58,550	\$56,125
Management Contract	79,722	77,868	80,983
Auditor	5,700	5,700	5,800
Architect & Engineering Services	0	0	8,000
Insurance Master Policy	131,997	150,380	157,796
Painting - Exterior	90,000	89,600	93,000
Grounds Maintenance Contract	62,368	62,368	64,218
Security Contract	149,968	148,272	149,968
Snow Removal	10,000	17,518	22,400
Trash Removal	81,428	82,033	84,801
Pet Waste	5,500	5,350	5,500
<b>Total Contract Services</b>	<b>\$675,233</b>	<b>\$697,638</b>	<b>\$728,590</b>
<b>PAYROLL</b>			
FICA Payroll Taxes	\$18,972	\$12,679	\$18,000
Unemployment Taxes	558	583	600
Group Health Insurance	45,377	45,402	47,000
Life Insurance	7,122	3,262	3,900
Pension Contribution	9,145	6,201	9,425
Staff payroll	233,167	203,660	235,667
Swim Team Coaches	4,000	3,300	3,000
<b>Total Payroll</b>	<b>\$318,341</b>	<b>\$275,087</b>	<b>\$317,592</b>
<b>TAXES &amp; LICENSES</b>			
Income Taxes	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000
Personal Property Tax	325	325	325
Licenses, Fees & Permits	1,010	2,500	2,500
<b>Total Taxes &amp; Licenses</b>	<b>\$4,335</b>	<b>\$5,825</b>	<b>\$5,825</b>
<b>TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$1,502,009</b>	<b>\$1,597,399</b>	<b>\$1,711,507</b>
<b>RESERVE EXPENDITURES</b>			
Expected Reserve Expenditures	\$124,500	\$122,858	\$313,155
<b>Total Reserve Expenditures</b>	<b>\$124,500</b>	<b>\$122,858</b>	<b>\$313,155</b>
<b>RESERVES CONTRIBUTIONS</b>			
Replacement Reserve	\$314,549	\$314,549	\$314,549
Transfer from Reserves	(86,533)	(132,387)	(124,500)
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>\$228,016</b>	<b>\$182,162</b>	<b>\$190,049</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$1,816,558</b>	<b>\$1,911,948</b>	<b>\$2,026,927</b>
<b>SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>(\$124,475)</b>	<b>\$0</b>

## Get Involved

By Jason Spessard

*This is the second edition in a series of articles I will be writing over the next several months. My intention is to bring the residents of our Meadows community together in a way that will improve our community.*

In October, I gave my “Top Ten” ways of being a good neighbor. I assume we all took time this month to meet our neighbors and started building a relationship. Ok, too “kumbaya” for you? Well how about my next suggestion, then? It’s time to get involved in the Meadows. Nothing gives a sense of pride in our community better than volunteering.

1. **Run for a Board of Directors’ seat or support a neighbor who would like to run.** Be a part of the decisions and gain an understanding from the other side of the discussion. Also, vote for candidates! Election votes have been sparse in past years. This is your opportunity each year to select your representatives.
2. **Adopt-a-Highway clean up.** The portion of St. Germain right outside of the Meadows has been adopted for clean-up. This happens a few times per year, but has been poorly attended. Look in the Meadow Lark for upcoming clean-up dates.
3. **Join a committee.** The Meadows has several committees that meet regarding various topics. Are you tech-savvy? Join the Technology Committee. You could volunteer to help maintain or improve the Meadows website. Do you have a green thumb? You could volunteer on the Landscape Committee to help improve the look of our community.
4. **Get a group together for small projects.** Ask our property manager about current tasks that can be done by volunteers. Also, you may provide your suggested ideas of how we can complete minor tasks on a regular basis to ease the financial burden of the association. Note: There will be certain tasks that we are unable to allow volunteers to do due to legal or insurance reasons, but that shouldn’t stop you from asking.
5. **Write the next Community Improvement article!** Do you have a good topic that would be appropriate for this article? Volunteer by writing next month’s edition. Contact the office (meadowsoffice@verizon.net) to submit your topic and article.

## A Co-Owners Comments

*This is an unsolicited comment sent by email from a Meadows Co-Owner.*

First, I would like to thank the Board members for giving residents the chance to meet and discuss the budget for next year.

While I realize that the proposed raise in the condo fee is larger than we have been used to, I also realize that it is necessary if we are to maintain our complex so that it is comfortable and attractive. I am retired and live on a fixed income, and while I wish the fee had been raised proportionately in the last few years, we have to deal with the realities of today. What I hope we will not do is cut vital services that will ultimately lower our property values.

I feel that it is necessary to have security in the complex. I have lived here since 1986 and conditions in the last few years are much improved. Cutting or reducing security services would be a false savings, in my opinion. I also feel that our pool complex is a plus in maintaining quality of life and an asset to prospective home buyers. Closing and covering part of this complex would make a statement that would be detrimental to future property values.

Serving on the Board and making these decisions is difficult, and I thank the Board members for their service.

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## Thank You to Area Merchants for Their Donations to The Meadows

### Giant Food

14125 St. Germain Drive  
Centrewood Plaza  
Centreville, VA 20121  
(703) 631-3310  
(703) 631-7720 Pharmacy

### Tropical Smoothie Cafe VA-081

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Centreville, VA 20121  
703-830-1333  
www.tippystaco.com

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Dine-In • Carry-Out • Delivery  
14115 Saint Germain Drive  
Centreville, VA 20121  
703-825-7790

### BBQ Chicken & Beer

14109 St. Germain Drive  
Centreville, VA 20121  
703-815-7777  
www.bbqchickenusa.com

### 2 Maids & A Bucket

A Green Home is a Healthy Home  
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703-314-8467  
www.2mainsandabucket.com

# The Meadows Trash/Recycling Guidelines

To keep your community clean, please contact the Management Office at 703-830-4464 or meadowsoffice@verizon.net to report any neighbors who are not following these rules.

Trash is certainly no one's favorite topic; however, in order to keep our community free of odor, pests and debris, we all need to do our part to ensure that trash is disposed of properly. Please review the following guidelines for trash and recycling:

## When are trash and recycling picked up?

- Trash is picked up on Mondays and Thursdays
- Recycling is picked up on Mondays only

## Where and when to leave trash/recycling for pick up

- Trash should be in trash bags and left on the curb *after* 5:00pm the night before scheduled pick up.
- Recycling should be prepared as outlined below and left on the curb in the black recycling bins *after* 5:00pm Sunday evening.

## Where to leave trash prior to pick up date

- Each unit has a small storage area (approximately 3'x3') with a black door which should be used for this purpose. Your trash storage is near your outdoor stairwell. Please note that this is the only acceptable place to store trash prior to pick up.

## What items should I put out for recycling?

- Our recycling service will take glass, metal food and drink containers and #1 and #2 plastic bottles and jugs. These items must be rinsed out to minimize insects and odor. They will also pick up bound or bagged newspapers and magazines. Please note cardboard will be picked up as trash *not* recycling.

## What items will the trash service pick up?

- The trash service will take all normal household garbage and debris that is left on the curb in trash bags. They will also take corrugated cardboard, which should be broken down prior to leaving on the curb. Please do not leave any trash or debris in boxes.

## What items will not be picked up on trash day?

- Any items such as carpet or construction debris will not be picked up by our trash service and must be disposed of by the unit's residents.
- No recycling will be picked up except on Mondays.
- Any trash not in a trash bag will not be picked up.

## What should I do if I have large items to dispose of?

- For large items such as appliances or furniture call American Disposal Service at (703) 368-0500 in advance of Thursdays pick up to notify them of bulk items. These pick-ups are scheduled for Thursdays only. Please be advised that depending on the items left for pick up there may be a charge, which will be billed to you directly.
- If Management is required to call for a special pick up on your behalf, a charge may be assessed to your account.

## Tips and suggestions

- If there is a lot of snow on the ground, please use black trash bags since white bags may be hard to see and could be missed.
- If your trash is still out after 10am or your recycling still out after 4pm please place these items back in your trash storage area until the next scheduled pick up day.
- If you see a neighbor has left trash/recycling out before or after trash day, please contact the Management Office at (703) 830-4464 or via e-mail at meadowsoffice@verizon.net.

Since The Meadows is a multi-family community it is important that we all fulfill our responsibilities as owners/residents. We appreciate your cooperation in our efforts to keep your community clean and orderly.

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## Ice & Snow and Our Trash Service

In the interest of safety, drivers will make a judgement call as to whether they can make it up and down our streets in inclement weather. If your vehicle skids five feet in the snow, a large trash truck will slide at least thirty feet. The rule of thumb on snow/ice days should be to put your trash out. If the trucks can't get there that day, they will not return for it until the next scheduled pickup day. (If your trash is not picked up, remove it until the next scheduled pickup.)



days should be to put your trash out. If the trucks can't get there that day, they will not return for it until the next scheduled pickup day. (If your trash is not picked up, remove it until the next scheduled pickup.)

## Fire Regulations

- Kerosene, or any fuel heaters, are forbidden by Meadows regulations.
- Residents should not store combustibles in furnace rooms. It is a serious fire hazard and is against County and Meadows regulations. 
- Smoke detectors are required on *each level* of homes in The Meadows.
- Residents should maintain a fire extinguisher in their units. It should be rated at least 2A:10BC.

Council of Co-Owners  
**The Meadows**  
6100 Strasburg Drive  
Centreville, VA 20121

The Meadow Lark is published each month exclusively for the benefit of the residents and owners of The Meadows. It is the official publication of the Council of Co-Owners and is under the purview of the Board of Directors. News items, personal ads, and such are welcomed and should be placed in the large mailbox in front of the Clubhouse, emailed to meadowsoffice@verizon.net or faxed to 703-815-0755. The deadline is the 20th of each month. Personal ads must be 25 words or less, on 8½x11-inch paper. Include your name, Meadows address, and telephone number. They must be renewed each month. The Meadows does not endorse any advertisers.

EDITORS: Bill Liedtke and Joan Orvis

**Meadows Office**  
Monday–Friday, 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM  
Phone: 703-830-4464  
Fax: 703-815-0755  
E-Mail: meadowsoffice@verizon.net  
Website: mymeadows.net

**24-Hour EMERGENCY ONLY  
Service First: 1-800-309-4709**

**Security**  
703-628-9481

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