



Winter 2011

Virginia Reporter

Virginia Reporter



Volume 10 Issue 4





President's Message

Happy Holidays to Everyone!! Seasons Greetings from the Virginia Court Reporters Association. The cold weather has ushered in, and we are all preparing for a festive holiday season, celebrating with family and friends, and enjoying some well-deserved time off to relax and prepare for the new year.

The VCRA board is working diligently on the upcoming convention in Virginia Beach on March 9 -11, 2012 at the beautiful Hilton Virginia Beach Oceanfront, a prestigious new hotel with luxurious accommodations. The board has secured an excellent room rate for you, but be sure to reserve your reservations early, as there are a limited number of blocked rooms available to us. We are so very excited that Anita Paul-Johnston will be joining us for the weekend, bringing Virginia reporters her vast knowledge of real time and ethics, as well as techniques to improve our writing skills. Anita will also be speaking to us about embracing change, something we all need to be thinking about, as well as a session regarding CART and captioning.

An NCRA representative will be attending our convention as well and will educate us on important national topics we need to be aware of. Lisa Phelps, the daughter of member Marilou Desetto, will be discussing pathology and how it relates to us. She is a pathologist's assistant at St. Luke's Medical Center in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Lisa will give us a basic foundation in human anatomy and terminology to help make our jobs a little easier, and promises to make it interesting! Diane Gray has asked to present information on the Living Legacy Project, which she joined online to record her life stories. Realizing how little is written about the everyday lives of court reporters, she created a group specifically for the VCRA where we can collectively write and share our unique experiences.

Please be sure to check out the newly updated VCRA website, for important convention information. Our website is a work in progress, with future benefits such as the ability to pay dues online and view your continuing education credits earned.

The VCRA, your association, is seriously lacking in one area in particular, that of member participation on committees. Your participation is sorely needed in all areas, as we currently only have one committee at this time, the certification/licensure committee. Member involvement is the cornerstone of your association. Please consider contributing a small amount of time in areas such as advisory, ethics and voluntary certification. It would even be wonderful to have a convention committee! A small time contribution is all that's needed, and I promise the amount of professional satisfaction you receive will far exceed your time contribution. We also will have several positions on the board open in March, so be thinking about volunteering.

I hope you all have a safe and happy holiday season, and I look forward to seeing you at the convention in March.

Gwenda Applegate, VCRA President

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Living Legacy Project (by Diane Gray)

Recently, I joined the online Living Legacy Project to record my lifestories. As I progressed within the site, I realized how little is written about the everyday lives of court reporters. So to not lose these amazing gems of unique, interesting, and poignant memories, I created a group specifically for the Virginia Court Reporters Association where we can collectively write and share our unique experiences.

To participate, after registering and opening an account at the Living Legacy Project, scroll down, and on the right-hand bottom side of the home page, click on the Virginia Court Reporters Association logo, which is displayed under the heading “Groups.” A new screen will open, and you will see the “Wall,” where you can write a snippet about some of your more exciting or unusual experiences as a student or working Virginia court reporter. I wrote about my first solo job, which you are welcome to read if you “friend” me.

Unique to this Project are Personal Legacy Advisors (PLAs) who act as mentors or coaches to help members overcome documenting hurdles by providing advice, guidance, and ways to stay on track. By opening a larger fee-based vault, members may upload and store an almost unlimited number of digitized photos, which can then be displayed along with an accompanying story. Video-recorded stories using a web cam enables “show-and-tells” where you can hold up a cherished family heirloom, such as Great Grandma’s oil lamp,



and tell the story . about how you acquired it and its significance in your life or theirs. By inviting and “friending” family, they can share their stories and treasures with you.

The Project has created easy-to-use technology to help people share their stories. Tools include simply e-mailing questions or story prompts, which can be answered in minutes. As you reflect and write, the story prompt jogs your memory, and over the course of time, you will build a large archive of your lifestories to be shared with whomever you choose. Your digitized and stored photos are then protected from the elements, natural disasters, lost data, or a hard-drive crash.

Unlike Facebook, you can communicate the stories that shaped your life, rather than telling everyone what you had for lunch! When taken as a whole, through this Project, we will create a body of knowledge about our industry unlike anything ever available before. Our stories can be easily accessed years from now and not lost somewhere on Facebook or in a hard-to-retrieve forum. Best of all, sharing your stories with your family, friends, and colleagues will be enjoyable for you, all the while creating a living legacy of our profession for those who follow.



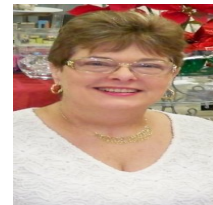
“At our next convention held in Virginia Beach in March, I will be showing you more about the [Living Legacy Project.](#)”

As encouragement for you to record your own lifestories, if you sign up for a fee-based personal vault account, a portion of the sign-up fee will be donated to the Marshall-Wythe School of Law Foundation, which supports the court record manager’s position at the Center for Legal and Court Technology. Since the majority of funding was eliminated for this position, it will help to maintain a *live* court reporter demonstrating our value to the legal community.

At our next convention held in Virginia Beach in March, I will be showing you more about the [Living Legacy Project.](#)

It’s your legacy. Pass it on!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Diane Mason Gray, RPR, CRR, CVR, CCR is the court record manager at the Center for Legal and Court Technology at William and Mary Law School in Williamsburg, Virginia. She also is a personal historian, genealogist, personal legacy advisor for the Living Legacy Project, consultant for Heritage Makers, and co-owner of North Bay Shore Campground in Virginia Beach, Virginia.



RECIPE CORNER



With Christmas just around the corner and our bank accounts on the lean side, what better way to give this year than wrapping some homemade baked goods?? I've been making these two delicious breads for years now and giving them to my "bank ladies," my neighbors and friends. I make some for home as well, and a few extra for unexpected needs. Last year I had so many recipe requests, I included a nice recipe card attached with the bread! You can purchase the foil bread pans and Christmas wrapping bags to fit perfectly, and tie with a twist tie -- thoughtful, homemade, and delicious!

Dish _____ **Recipe** _____ **Serves** _____

CREAM CHEESE BANANA NUT BREAD

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 3/4 cup butter | 1/2 tsp. baking powder |
| 8 oz. cream cheese, softened | 1/2 tsp. salt |
| 2 cups sugar | 1/2 tsp. baking soda |
| 2 large eggs | 1 1/2 cups mashed bananas |
| 3 cups all-purpose flour | 1 cup chopped pecans |
| 1/2 tsp. vanilla | |

Beat butter and cream cheese with mixer until creamy. Gradually add sugar, beating until light and fluffy. Add eggs one at a time, just until blended. Combine flour and next three ingredients. Gradually add to butter mixture, beating at low speed until blended. Stir in bananas, pecans and vanilla. Spoon into two greased and floured loaf pans. (I use sugar instead of flour). Bake at 350 degrees for one hour, shielding with foil for the last 15 minutes to prevent browning if necessary.

Dish _____ **Recipe** _____ **Serves** _____

EVERYBODY'S FAVORITE PUMPKIN BREAD

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 2 cups flour | 4 eggs |
| 2 tsp. baking soda | 2 cups sugar |
| 2 tsp. cinnamon | 1 cup vegetable oil |
| 1 1/2 tsp. salt | 2 cups canned pumpkin or pie filling |

Mix sugar, oil and pumpkin. Add one egg at a time, mixing in between. Sift dry ingredients and gradually add to pumpkin mixture. Spoon into two greased and floured loaf pans and bake at 350 degrees for 40-50 minutes. Makes two loaves.

(Submitted by Gwenda Applegate, RPR, CRR)

SNACK TIME - ANYTIME!!

Although Halloween just passed, here is a great guide published by --Hungry-Girl.com --to all your favorite goodies that you like to eat year round. Pack them in your steno bag for a pick-me-up treat!

LOW-CALORIE CHOCOLATE TREATS:

These tiny treats can't be beat. Each one has 20-35 calories and 0.5 - 1.5 grams of fat (PointsPlus value 1)

- 3 Musketeers Minis
- Hershey's Kisses
- Sixlets 8-piece tubes
- Tootsie Roll Midgees
- Whoopers Malted Milk Balls 3-piece tubes



CHOCOLATE MINIS:

Minis are the small, typically square morsels. The kinds below have 35-55 calories and 1.5 - 3 grams of fat (PointsPlus value 1) per piece.

- Baby Ruth
- Butterfinger
- Hershey's Special Dark, Krackel, Milk Chocolate, and Mr. Goodbar
- Kit Kat
- Milky Way
- Nestle Crunch
- Reese's Peanut Butter Cups
- Snickers
- Twix



SNACK-SIZE/FUN SIZE CHOCOLATE:

Snack-size and fun-size candies are usually about 2 inches long and weigh in at around half an ounce. The ones listed here have 60 - 85 calories and 1 - 4 grams of fat (PointsPlus value 2) per piece, pack, bag or box.

- 3 Musketeers
- Baby Ruth
- Butterfinger
- Hershey's Milk Chocolate
- Junior Mints
- Kit Kat (one 2-piece bar)
- M&M's Milk Chocolate
- Milky Way
- Nestle Crunch
- Raisinets
- Snickers
- York Peppermint Patties



Go to Hungry-girl.com to see a more comprehensive list of your favorite snacks so you can eat sensibly (but still indulge) during your work day.

(Submitted by Tracy W. Koschara, CCR)



Dear Nancy

Dear Nancy: My state association has filed a bill with the legislature which would require us to be licensed. Or is it certified? Our members say licensing and certification interchangeably. Do they mean the same thing?

Signed, Grandfather Me In!

Dear Grandfather Me In:

When our state was considering licensing, I'd find myself wondering if some state legislature granted Agent 007 his license to kill. I'd fantasize about how useful it would be as some fast-talking expert tied my fingers in knots for hours on end. I'd have M rig up special exhibit labels for me that, when affixed to a document, released an invisible odorless neurotoxin just strong enough to slow down his speech. Never know what hit 'im! But I digress.

A license is a permit granted by a governmental body. It can be revoked if you fail to do something really important, such as pay your annual fee. A certificate is a credential you earn, such as your RPR. It can expire if you do fail to do something really important, such as meet your continuing education obligations.

Each state with licensing has different requirements. Typically, when licensure is passed, reporters are "grandfathered in" and don't need to be tested. The state won't put people out of a job who are already working. Reporters who don't have a CSR or RPR might have to prove they've worked as a reporter in that state. Once the grandfathering grace period has passed, any new applicant must meet the requirements of that state's licensing laws. Most states require that you possess the RPR. There may be continuing education requirements as well.

If you have any other questions, my name's Bond, Nancy Bond

Dear Nancy: I took a deposition in which neither attorney in the case ordered a transcript. The expert medical witness is, two weeks later, demanding to sign the transcript. He is not willing to pay for my time or expense of transcribing it. He's threatening to sue the owner of the firm if she doesn't send him a copy. Does the witness have that right, if neither party to the lawsuit wants it transcribed? Can I be forced to work for free?

Signed, What to do with a Whacky Witness

Dear What to do with a Whacky Witness:

Hmm. Wish you had that license to kill too, huh? Lacking that solution, check out the Rules of Civil Procedure in your state. They probably say that once the transcript is prepared, the witness has 30 days to read and sign. If that's the language in your jurisdiction, tell the witness you will follow the rule. Put it in writing, and refer the witness to the attorneys in the case if he has further questions.

Don't be bullied.

-(Continued on Page 6)

Dear Nancy

(Continued from Page 5)

If your local rules are ambiguous, talk to the attorneys in the case. It's their problem, after all, not yours. You aren't required to work for nothing – and you don't work for the witness. Maybe you would feel more sure of your ground if you consulted a lawyer. It's a legal question, and legal advice is what lawyers get paid for. We are court reporters; we get paid for our transcripts. And we don't have to work for free.

Dear Nancy: In court the other day an attorney, trying to make his way through dense medical testimony, confessed to the doctor he was “nummah than a hake” when it comes to medical words. Say what? Isn't a hake a fish?

Signed: Buffaloed in Maine

Dear Buffaloed in Maine:

A hake is a food fish, similar to cod, found in the waters of the North Atlantic off the coast of New England. It lives in really cold waters, hence it's numb. According to MollySmiles at www.city-data.com/forum/maine, the expression “number than a hake” means “really, really stupid”. (Gotta love my quality references, eh?)

“Number than a hake” is a regionalism; you'll probably only hear it in Maine. But it loses its local color if you ignore the wonderful Maine accent that produces “nummah than a hake.” As the down-easters say it, the accent is on num and the ah kinda trails off. Try it. With a little practice, you can even sound authentic yourself: “You can't get theyah from heeyah.” The accent is on they and hee and the ah trails off. And can't rhymes with want.

Local dialects can be fun to hear, but how should we transcribe them? A recent JCR article advises using the proper English spelling -- unless the speaker was intentionally making a point of his mispronunciation, like Gotcha. You wouldn't transcribe that as “Got you” cuz that'd miss the point and, frankly, look silly. So I'd opt for “nummah than a hake” in my transcript, because “number” just doesn't cut it.

I'm sure the locals in Bah Habbah would approve!

Nancy Varallo, FAPR, RDR, CRR, owner of The Varallo Group, offers customized business development and administrative services to court reporters and reporting agencies. Nancy has been a court reporter since 1979, has trained hundreds of court reporters, and has fielded thousands of questions from reporters. Please ask your question at www.dearnancy.com.



DAV/VHP DAY

A Volunteer Opportunity with Continuing Education Points

The Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Charitable Service Trust has awarded a \$5,000 grant to the National Court Reporters Foundation (NCRF) in order to expand the Veterans History Project (VHP) by interviewing and transcribing the oral histories of disabled American veterans. The VHP of the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress collects, preserves, and makes accessible the personal accounts of American war veterans to inspire future generations with these stories of service to our country.

A DAV/VHP Day has been scheduled for Saturday, January 14, 2012, in northern Virginia. The site will be announced at a later date, but most likely will be located in Fairfax County.

Please help NCRA in its request for volunteers to transcribe veterans' stories at the DAV/VHP Day. These oral histories will be made a part of the Veterans History Project at the Library of Congress. We hope to have 15 to 20 veterans attend the VHP Day, so it would be wonderful if we could get five or six court reporters to volunteer.

As you know, effective October 1, 2011, CEUs will continue to be awarded for formal instructional courses accredited by the Accrediting Council for Continuing Education and Training (ACCET.) However, NCRA also kept in place some of the noninstructional activities, such as transcribing interviews for NCRF's Oral Histories Program. Reporters participating in noninstructional activities will be awarded Professional Development Credits (PDCs). Specifically, NCRA requires that 3.0 units of continuing education be earned each three-year certification cycle.

Reporters can earn 2.0 CEUs and 1.0 PDCs in order to maintain their certification. Court reporters will earn 0.25 PDCs for each transcription they complete, and can earn up to a maximum of 1.0 PDCs for completing four transcriptions within their three year certification period.

Please consider volunteering your time in January. What a special event to be a part of!

Contact Beth Kilker

Oral Histories Coordinator
National Court Reporters Foundation
8224 Old Courthouse Road
Vienna, VA 22182-3808
Telephone: 703-556-6272
Email: bkilker@ncrahq.org

(Submitted by Gwenda Applegate, RPR,CRR)

Volunteering Can Be Tax Deductible

Are you getting the most out of your time? Volunteering is a great way to give back to your community or profession. And yes, your services can be tax deductible. There are strict guidelines, but here are ways you can reduce your taxes through giving of your time if you volunteer during the holiday season, on a regular basis for your favorite charity or donate court reporting services:

First, the organization(s) for which you are performing services must qualify by IRS guidelines in order for you to receive deductible contributions and to deduct out-of-pocket expenses in giving services. The following organizations fall under that “qualified” category:

1). A community chest, corporation, trust, fund, or foundation organized or created in or under the laws of the United States, any state, DC, or any possession of the US (including Puerto Rico). It must be organized and operated for one or more of the following purposes.

- a). Religious
- b). Charitable
- c). Educational
- d). Scientific
- e). Literary
- f). the prevention of cruelty to children or animals

Certain organizations that foster national or international amateur sports competition also qualify.

2). War veterans’ organizations, including posts, auxiliaries, trusts or foundations, organized in the US or any of its possessions.

3). Domestic fraternal societies, orders, and associations operating under the lodge system.

4). Certain nonprofit cemetery companies or corporations. Your contribution to this type of organization is not deductible if it can be used for the care of a specific lot or mausoleum crypt.

5). The United States or any state, DC, a US possession, a political subdivision of a state or US possession, or an Indian tribal government or any of its subdivisions that perform substantial government functions.

Note. To be deductible, your contribution to this type of organization must be made solely for public purposes.

Specific Examples: The following list gives some examples of qualified organizations.

Churches, a convention or association of churches, temples, synagogues, mosques, and other religious organizations.

Most nonprofit charitable organizations such as the Red Cross and the United Way.

Most nonprofit educational organizations, including the Boy and Girl Scouts of America, colleges, museums, and daycare centers if substantially all the child care provided is to enable individuals (the parents) to be gainfully employed and the services are available to the general public.

Nonprofit hospitals and medical research organizations.

Utility company emergency energy programs, if the utility company is an agent for a charitable organization that assists individual with emergency energy needs.

Nonprofit volunteer fire companies.

Public parks and recreational facilities.

Civil defense organizations.

Not deductible as charitable contributions.

Civic leagues, social and sports clubs, labor unions, and chamber of commerce.

Foreign organizations (except certain Canadian, Israeli, and Mexican charities)

Groups that are run for personal profit.

Groups whose purpose is to lobby for law changes.

Homeowners’ associations

Individuals

Political groups or candidates for public office

Cost of raffle, bingo, or lottery tickets

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CEUs for Legal Skills Trials

NCRA has revised their rules, and Virginia's court reporters can receive continuing education units for helping out with the Legal Skills trials held at the McGlothlin Courtroom of the William and Mary Law School this coming Jan-Feb, 2012.

Diane M. Gray confirmed it with Karen Ruud, CRI, Director, Education & School Development at headquarters today. What she said is below, and she gave Diane permission to print it in our newsletter.

"Beginning on October 1, you'll be able to get the submission form from NCRA. Have the pro bono work documented and verified with a signature from the host or organizer of the event, and submit it along with the fee to Sandra Bryant at sbryant@ncrahq.org or by sending it to her attention at the NCRA address listed below my name. And yes, this would qualify or be eligible for the new Professional Development Credits (PDCs). You will earn .25 PDCs for a minimum of 2.5 hours of service, of which 30 minutes can be assignment preparation (which you'll document yourself on the honor system). And members will be limited to a total of 1.0 Professional Development Credit (which could consist of four instances of providing at least 2.5 hours of pro bono services or could be made up of a combination of pro bono service plus some combination of the other options, such as mentoring, board service, promoting the profession to external audiences, presenting, or serving as a lead chief examiner, etc."



Diane Gray, will be needing help again this coming Jan-Feb reporting the Legal Skills trials and now you can receive CEUs for your hard work. Please let Diane know of your willingness to volunteer by calling or emailing her at dmgra3@wm.edu.

Diane Mason Gray, RPR, CRR, CVR

Court Record Manager

Center for Legal and Court Technology

William & Mary Law School

613 S Henry St., Ste 211C

Williamsburg, VA 23185

757-221-7759 (direct line)

757-221-2494 (receptionist)

Email: dmgra3@wm.edu



Homonyms

English Tip

Carat - unit of weight pertaining to jewels *"The treasure chest was full of 14-carat diamond rings."*

Caret - a proofreader's mark *"Use the caret symbol to delete a space in your Eclipse dictionaries."*

Carrot - the vegetable *"While writing this newsletter, I ate a whole bag of carrots."*

Karat - one 24th part of gold *"The necklace was 14-karat gold."*

Taken from the RFO Website newsletter at www.realtimefitness.com.

(Submitted by Tracy W. Koschars, CCR)

Advertising for the



The rates are as follows:

FULL PAGE AD.....\$45

HALF PAGE AD.....\$25

QUARTER PAGE AD.....\$15

BUSINESS CARD AD.....\$10

Please contact Colette Boes if you have any questions or are interested in advertising in the Virginia Reporter.

You can reach Colette at:

757-646-3294

or

executivedirectorcb@cox.net

Volunteering Can Be Tax Deductible (Continued from Page 7)

Dues, fees, or bills paid to country clubs, lodges, fraternal orders, or similar groups
Tuition
Monetary value of your time or services
Value of blood given to blood bank

These are what qualify as out-of-pocket expenses in giving services:

Although you cannot deduct the value of your services given to a qualified organization, you may be able to deduct some amounts you pay in giving services to a qualified organization. The amounts must be:

Unreimbursed,
Directly connected with the services
Expenses you had only because of the services you gave, and
Not personal, living or family expenses.

You can deduct volunteer miles (\$.14 per each mile) You can also deduct parking fees and tolls.

You can deduct the cost and upkeep of uniforms that are not suitable for everyday use and that you must wear while performing donated services for a charitable organization. (Girl or Boy Scout leader, nursing aide, church T-shirt)

You cannot deduct the costs of child care expenses incurred while you are performing charitable work.

If you have unreimbursed expenses of \$250.00, or more you must get a written acknowledgement from the organization that you had those expenses and that they were not reimbursed.

(Information courtesy of Langley Federal Credit Union Tax Division)

(Submitted by Lois Boyle, RMR
VCRA Treasurer)



"MY AWESOME WEEKEND STAY AT THE HILTON VIRGINIA BEACH OCEANFRONT"

(by Linda Becraft-Hall, CCR)

Well, sometimes a person gets lucky, and I got lucky. There was a drawing at Fall Education Day and my name was picked for an awesome weekend stay at the Hilton at Virginia Beach.

I decided to use it during my birthday weekend and really make it a special birthday. The room had a beautiful view of the beach; it was so relaxing listening to the ocean and watching the seagulls. There were fire pits outside the hotel where one could enjoy being outside in the chilly spring air but still be able to stay toasty warm from the fire. The restaurant had a lovely ambiance and the food was well prepared. And, of course, let's not forget the super-fun bar where folks could gather, have drinks, conversation, and watch the Big Game if they so desired. Another thing that really stood out for me was the elegant swimming pool with rolls of big fluffy white towels stacked up next to the lounge chairs. But oh, darn, I forgot my bathing suit! So consider this fair warning, don't forget your swimming trunks, and be prepared to have a most enjoyable stay at the Hilton Virginia Beach Oceanfront.



LOBBY



FIRE PITS



ROOFTOP INDOOR POOL

A Note From The Executive Director



VCRA 2012 Annual Convention

March 9-11, 2012

Hilton Virginia Beach Oceanfront, Virginia Beach, Virginia

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

The Annual Convention Packet will be emailed, as well as posted on our website, in mid-December, 2011. The packet will include registration form, detailed convention agenda, Pro Bono Nomination Form and Frank G. Tayloe Award Nomination Form. Stay tuned to our website at www.vcra.net for updates.

The group rate and reservation information for the hotel room block at the Hilton Oceanfront are outlined below. Rooms are limited so be sure to make your reservation early.

I look forward to seeing you all in March!

Hotel Reservation Information

Hilton Virginia Beach Oceanfront
3001 Atlantic Avenue
Virginia Beach VA 23451
757-213-3001

www.hiltonvb.com

Group Name: Virginia Court Reporters Association

Dates: March 9 - 11, 2012

Group Reservation Code: VCR

Group Room Rates: Superior City View - \$129

Superior Ocean View \$159

Rate Available Until: Wednesday, February 8, 2012

Guestroom Reservations by Phone:

Guests may make reservations by calling the Hilton Virginia Beach Oceanfront directly at 757-213-3001 and requesting to speak with In-House Reservation Department or by calling Hilton Central Reservations at 1-800-HILTONS. Attendees should identify themselves as part of the Virginia Court Reporters Association. (GROUP CODE IS VCR)

Guestroom Reservations Online:

Reservations may be made online at the hotel's website www.hiltonvb.com.

Once at this site, Guest will click "Check Availability" and be taken to the Dates & Preferences page.

The Group Code VCR must be entered in the "Group/Convention Code" field listed under SPECIAL ACCOUNTS to access the contracted guestroom rates.

VIRGINIA COURT REPORTERS ASSOCIATION

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We're On The Web!

www.vcra.net



SEASON'S GREETINGS FROM THE BOARD



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