

'ULL OUT

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Hull LGBT Forum,
supporting lesbian,
gay, bisexual & trans
(LGBT) people in Hull
& East Riding

...Hull & East Riding Speaks OUT

Distributed Free

Welcome

Despite a bout of the flu, the festivities, the loss of our editor before Issue 1 went to press & everything else that life can throw at me, here we are, issue 2.

True there are no fancy graphics as we had hoped and some of the regular columns that were planned are awaiting contributors sending us copy but we have made a start.

As I said last month, your input is vital to ensure the content is both up to date and interesting so start writing those eMails.

Send you're contributions to editor@lgbtforum.co.uk

John Furniss - Editor
Chair of Hull LGBT Forum

Coming-Out Stories

Love After Loneliness: A Story of Survival

Everyone has their own story, some happy, some sad. Read them here.

I am a gay guy in my late forties and this is a summary of my life.

I went to an all boys' school; I was bullied from the age of thirteen, but continued there till eighteen. My instinct was survival in those years, so feelings did not matter.

I left school almost thirty years ago, only been back once, never to this day wished to return. During this time I realised I was different; I did not fancy the opposite sex.

In my late teens I tried to change myself (had a girlfriend), but felt guilty,

stringing somebody along, telling lies about my feelings was not me and still is not today. At that time I started to study and threw myself into that.

My father was anti-gay and at every opportunity verbally attacked them; this made me feel very lonely. I could not confide in anybody, my mother would not have known what to do and my sister would inform my parents immediately about everything.

I moved many years ago, this made life easier, people did not know me, after all I was a loner nobody took a great deal of notice. Years went past but the feelings never died, in truth they became stronger, but I couldn't admit to anything.

My father died, I turned forty, and was still a very lonely person, few knew how old I was, and needless to say there was no party. I made a momentous decision, I wanted to meet somebody like in my dreams and not feel so lonely.

I went to a gay sauna, and that was a disaster. Finally I answered an advert in a paper; the guy did not love me but wanted sex. It was my first experience, I was frightened but his kindness pulled me through. I like to think we are still friends.

I was still in the back alleys; however, I had got some confidence and started to go to the sauna and to lay-bys regularly. It has not been easy.

My first partner's activities put me in hospital, and I

not only had to be circumcised but was also dumped by him. I think he thought I made up the story to get back into his bed but I did not want him to repeat the performance with anybody.

On another occasion I was raped leaving me facing tests and six months of Hospital treatment. I was too frightened to report it.

Many times, I have asked myself, if there is anybody out there for me? Why not go back to being as you were?

Six months ago through Gaydar, I chatted on line and met the most fantastic guy. It has not been easy but it has given me something that has been lacking in my life, not just sex; but love, friendship and companionship.

The time is not right for me to be fully out but I'm getting there. What a great feeling that is.

I hope that people reading this can relate to my problems and find comfort. Keep trying to find that special person. It can be difficult if you are not out but it is certainly worth it.

My hope is that the next generation can be open and accepted as part of society.

ED'S NOTE:

This writer raises the issue of unreported rape. We have assisted him with options for reporting & support.

If you have or know anyone with similar issues there is a special feature in this edition of 'ULL OUT on Hull's new Sexual Assault Referral Centre, SARC.

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Crystal Balls

We are currently researching topics for future issues and at this stage we would like to know your views about; **'True Vision' Hate Crime Reporting.**

- Have you even heard of it?
- Do you know what hate crime is?
- Do you know who can use it?
- What do you think of the packs?
- How easy is it to find a pack if you need one?
- Do you know how many ways there are to report hate crime?
- Have you used True Vision?
- Did it work for you or are there problems with it?
- How did the people who dealt with your report treat you?
- Do you trust that a report can be made anonymously and if not why not?
- Have you ever had any feedback about your case or general feedback about the number of reports being made?

Ed

Rikki's Rants: 'Pontif'...icating

Each month Rikki will seize upon a current topic affecting the LGBT population across the globe and present it from the trans perspective.

Well Christmas and the New Year celebrations are over - thankfully - and this year I had even more reason to get Christianity out of my life when the leader of the largest Christian church, pope 'Benedick' (*spelling intentional*) made one of the most homophobic and transphobic speeches of this century.

OK I expect a pope to maintain the Catholic Church's unfounded discrimination against homosexuality and transsexuality, but what was said on December 22nd went well beyond maintaining a bigoted view. This pope is now entering the realm of "Incitement to Hatred" and ironically at a time when the general Christian message is one of good will and love.

At GenderShift we spend much of our time helping to repair the damage caused by the behaviour and attitudes of bigoted Christians. Don't misunderstand me, my life is strongly influenced by the teachings of Jesus and other great teachers but I do have a problem with the Catholic Church and evangelical churches in particular who seem to ignore those teachings, relying instead on twisted interpretations of poorly translated writings from the distant past.

Just in case you missed the pope's comments, he said in his speech that "saving humanity from homosexual or transsexual behaviour was just as important as saving the rainforest from destruction." and that "[the Church] should protect

man from the destruction of himself." He also said humanity needed to "listen to the language of creation" to "understand the intended roles of man and woman" and compared behaviour beyond traditional heterosexual relations as "a destruction of God's work".

Wow! I wonder, after hearing that message, how devout Catholics might react if their children express any atypical gender behaviour. This statement almost authorises child abuse as "saving the planet from the destruction of God's work," and reinforces gender stereotypes.

Fortunately there seems to be little vocal public support for this and there were attempts by church leaders at damage limitation. With the Single Equality Act due this year, I for one will be lobbying hard to ensure that faith groups generally do not secure any further rights to discriminate against us, and that those they have are removed as soon as possible.

Perhaps pope Benedick is the Anti Christ that Christians have all been waiting for. It is well documented that Joseph Alois Ratzinger was a member of the Hitler Youth at a time after 1939 when membership was compulsory for 14 year old boys. So could it be that this indoctrination has rubbed off on him and he is now leaning towards the incitement of ethnic cleansing of the gay and transsexual population as was done by Hitler?

Did you know that 15,000 gay and transsexual people were sent to concentration camps? Not only that, but after the liberation the few surviving gay and trans people were then re-imprisoned by the

allies because homosexuality was illegal.

Something else you may not know is that all UK LGBT legislation in the past decade has been designed to limit the impact of EU directives and court judgments and provide exemptions to church groups, and that this was largely led by Tony Blair and Ruth Kelly - both staunch Catholics.

We know 2009 is likely to be difficult economically - we need to watch out that these difficult times are not used as cover for homophobic and transphobic discrimination. If you see this happening - let me know because we will fight it.

Have an abundant new year.

**Rikki Arundel
Gendershift**

ED'S NOTE:

Someone asked the other day, "There are perceived contradictions between sexual orientation and faith & belief, how do you reconcile the two?"

I think that the answer is in the word faith.

Religion is reliant on the interpretation, by a few, of ancient text and is open to misinterpretation and/or abuse for personal power, benefit or the wealth and profit of extremists.

Faith on the other hand is a personal belief in something that cannot be proven with physical evidence. As faith is personal it will fit with whomever that person is and again, as faith is personal, they will not use it to contravene another's rights.

Scene Queen

Well Happy New Year Darlings... you all detox'd out yet, clutching your Woolies closing down bargains.... NOT!

It seems as if the Scene is suffering the credit crunch... cough... recession and most action seems to be weekend based in the venues. No real choice at the beginning of the week but don't forget if you want a safe haven with no real hassle give Frankie's a go... feather boas at the ready. Nice hiding place to take this week's squeeze.

Nice food in Prop. 2 for £7.95 meals still on offer... just need to grab a random outside St. Stephen's and head across but don't upset the tourists... they don't know how gay it really is. Shhhh! Don't tell 'em they'll choke on their potato wedges.

Star has some news... Jim & Tony are the new owners (thought they were anyway)... congrats boys. Cissy & Lucy do their bit... bits... or yours if they can get hold of you. Once you get over it's like Shameless for gays... drink it in.

The PB, what is happening lads? Too much time in the countryside me thinks... meow!

Fuel is plodding on and on and on... did you get there for NYE? Afterparty? Can't remember? Sounds about right... what has happened to all the entertainers? Oh those were the days.

Don't be boring, never mind staying at home... get your shimmer on and pop to Dazal then taxi or peasant wagon to The PB, Star, Frankies, Yorkshireman (if it's open and Rusty's on top form, more shots please), Propaganda and Fuel and of course if it's Fri or Sat night back to Prop (Afterparty).

Oh and before I sign off... that lovely gay national treasure Jonathan Mayor (Comedian) is back in Hull... Carnivale 69 (ooer) Sunday 18th January at Zest (Newland Ave)... Dazal opposite!!

Tickets £5... 7.30pm (show starts at 8.15pm) get yourself there. Then Fuel.

**Keep smiling!
SQx**

Boxing Day 'Crisp'... mas Social



Picture "Quentin Crisp" by Ella Guru
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We had a great 'Crispmas' Social Event at the Community Enterprise Centre on Boxing Day.

The event was to celebrate 100 year since the birth of Quentin Crisp.

A gay man who faced public rejection and violence throughout the 20th century for nothing more than openly declaring that he was homosexual at a time when homosexual acts were a criminal offence.

Around 20 people attended at some time during the day to share food & drink and to watch the "Naked Civil Servant". The film is a portrayal of Crisp's flamboyant life, starring actor John Hurt.

Quentin died in 1999 having spent much of his later life in New York, inspiring the hit single by Sting, "An Englishman in New York".

Out Spoken: 'Honour' Based Violence/Forced Marriage: A Gay Issue?

Just one person's view on the topic of the month... Don't agree? Have your say, write to:

editor@lgbtforum.co.uk

We hear more and more about women from a variety of cultures who are suffering violence because they exercised their human right to freely choose who they marry or who have been forced into marriage against their wishes.

So why am I suggesting that this issue is as much

Dates for the Diary

- The first Thursday of every month we will be hosting a Movie Night at the Community Enterprise Centre
- Watch out for news of more 'Movie Night' socials throughout February in celebration of 'LGBT History Month'.
- 2009 is the 40th anniversary of the 'Stonewall Riots' so we will be doing something in June in recognition of this.

a gay issue as a heterosexual one?

I would like to tell you about Sukhtinder, a very close friend of mine. This is the story he told to me.

Suki was born in India and migrated to the UK many years ago.

As a gay man he had been in a long-term relationship for a number of years but his family would not accept this. As a result he very rarely saw any of his siblings and when he did there was usually ill feeling and conflict between them.

On occasions they had imprisoned him for extended periods in the UK. On one occasion they took most of his possessions including his passport.

After breaking out through a window Suki went to the police. They were very supportive and recovered his belongings.

Sadly, his mother died a few years ago and Suki returned to India to attend her funeral. Regrettably, just before she died she had made him promise to marry.

Suki's family in India constantly asked "Is Sukhtinder married yet?" and so for the 'honour' of the family they had decided he would marry, just as he had promised his mother. He told me that he was held in India

against his will and only permitted to return to the UK if he consented to this sham of a marriage before he left. Once he was back in the UK he then began a long and painful process to end the marriage.

He reported to immigration the fact that the 'bride' had consented to marry him so that she could gain entry to the UK (thus blocking her entry). He then began the task of annulling the marriage, with the family fighting him all the way.

This all put huge strain on both his partner and on him. The stress that Suki was under caused him to seek solace in alcohol and his health suffered over a number of years.

In 2008 Sukhtinder sadly died aged 40. Most people close to him who know about this chapter in his life believe that his death was an indirect consequence of his 'forced marriage'.

'Honour' based violence and forced marriage can originate from a desire to conceal sexuality (gay or lesbian), to ensure someone marries within the cultural values, to punish those who have not married as the family or community have dictated

or numerous other reasons. The result of this can be physical or mental pain and suffering, systematic rape or even death.

Regardless of the reason and the gender or sexuality of the victim let us stand together in protecting everyone's human right to choose how he or she lives their life and whom they want as a partner.

Suki could be strong willed but was a very honourable and sensitive man. The family that he loved and that tried to change him are now the family he died for. The people who loved him for who he was are the people who will always miss him. I dedicate this article to the memory of Sukhtinder in the hope that it makes a difference and I thank his partner Paul for supporting me in publishing it.

I would like to make it clear that forced marriage is distinctly different to arranged marriage (providing the participants are both consenting adults) and this article is not intended to consider the complex cultural issues or make any judgement in regard to arranged marriage.

John Furniss
Chair LGBT Forum

Research Appeal: Appealing Female Faces

My name is Elodie Naidu, a member of Northumbria University LGBT society. I have recently set up a research project that has been given full ethical approval by Northumbria Universities School of Psychology and Sport Science Ethics Board.

The research is looking at whether the menstrual cycle influences female preferences for other female faces.

The project can be completed by email so can be done from the comfort of your own home.

Participants needed must not be heterosexual or bisexual, not under 18 or over 35, not on the contraceptive or any medication that may affect hormone levels and not have irregular menstrual cycles.

This is a new area of research and I am keen to gain as many participants that are willing to come forward.

For more information or to participate contact:

Elodie Naidu eMail: elodie.naidu@northumbria.ac.uk

There is a gay man's drop-in night every Tuesday evening 7-9pm (volunteer availability permitting) at the LGBT Forum office (see address below).

Special Feature: Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC)

Provision for male rape, well we don't really need any do we? After all the statistics prove that?

Well for a gay man on the pick up in a public place and wondering if he is doing something illegal, a married man exploring his sexuality and in fear of his family finding out or a straight man who was overpowered and wonders if he could have fought back, reporting is often not seen as an option.

As a result of that these attacks will never become statistics.

Also, in the past if you decided not to report a sexual attack it was unlikely that you would find it easy to access other forms of support. If you did report the assault you would also have had to do so by attending a police station and that was just the start.

It is likely that after a spell in the Cop-Shop with a number of officers that had little understanding of your situation you would be shepherded to medical facilities, forensics, who knows where else and then given the contact details of a support agency and left to your own devices.

Well not any more;
Opened on 14 November 2008, the sexual assault

referral centre is supporting the needs of victims of sexual crime.

Not one to trust everything that I am told I paid a visit to the centre in December and was impressed by the emphasis on the victims needs. Indeed the centre is known as the CASA suite (Care After Sexual Assault).

Set between domestic dwellings with no signage and a ban on marked police vehicles parking at the facility the only clue would be the large twig (aerial) on the roof.

Yes, the unit does have a discrete police presence inside on the first floor, but they are working for you to gather the evidence if you later wish to take things further. As a victim you would only deal with one or two members of staff throughout your visit.

The unit is supported, not only by Rape Crisis, but also by Survivors, an organisation dedicated to supporting male survivors of sexual abuse, and there are fully trained crisis workers at the centre as well as fast access to specially trained Doctors and Nurses.

The LGBT Forum has offered to work with the unit on training, role play and mystery shopper exercises to improve exposure and understanding of the needs of male victims.

When I visited, the building was operational and there was a victim present in one of the soundproofed suites.

In a cleverly choreographed set of moves that

would not have been out of place in a Brian Rix farce, including being locked in the kitchen; I was whisked around the building without any contact with the victim.

As a previous assault victim I could appreciate the benefits of the relaxed surroundings, including shower facilities.

Also there is a dressing room off the medical suite with separate exit opposite the two counselling suites. So, no trip back through the clinical area where medical and forensic samples were taken.

The fact that everything takes place in the one building, including contact with counsellors, is a definite bonus.

The mission statement of the suite is as follows: The CASA suite has been developed for the care and support of victims of rape and sexual assault by providing a sensitive and dedicated service to meet the needs of victims across the Humberside area through partnership working with the health service, the voluntary and local authority sectors and the police.

- You do not have to report to the police to access our services.
- You can speak to us and gain all relevant information so you can make an informed choice.
- We will offer you support whatever you decisions.

John Furniss
Chair of Hull LGBT Forum

Homophobia, Transphobia & Poor of Social Provision

A study carried out in Hartlepool revealed that there was a lack of social provision in the town.

Most of the respondents reported making trips to the 'gay scene' in surrounding towns and cities. With an average spend of £50 per person on a night out this is clear evidence of the loss to the local economy if the pink pound is not catered for.

If these findings are typical of other areas of the country this could mean that many East Riding towns are losing out financially to places like Hull where there is a more established gay scene.

What is perhaps more interesting is that the vast majority of the people surveyed did also regularly visit a wide variety of other venues across Hartlepool, suggesting that there is not a major problem with homophobia on the social scene in Hartlepool.

Despite this, evidence suggested that both homophobia and trans-phobia is very evident in the residential parts of the town.

It would be interesting to see a similar study take place across Hull and the East Riding with analysis including a comparison of the findings in the City of Hull against the rural East Riding.

For the full report: www.lgbtforum.co.uk/research.htm
Hart Gables

HI'...3 – Do you know your HIV status?

In this column we invite 3 people to give their views on a single HIV issue... Marek presents the facts as the HIV prevention officer working in our region. Local residents (names on-file) write the next two articles. One is living with the news that he is HIV+ and the other is his long-term partner.

All three welcome your letters sent to editor@lgbtforum.co.uk

The Hardest Thing I Have Ever Had To Do

So I have been diagnosed HIV+, what now? I was told that I would have to go to the hospital and see the consultant, so again off I go.

Monday morning and here I am at Castle Hill hospital waiting again when finally my name gets called. Into this little room I go with a doctor trying to explain everything to me and nothing going in. The more he says to me the more I seem to be lost in a mass of words.

Then I asked if there is anything I can take away to read because nothing is registering with me. I have some blood tests and a talk with the pharmacist who tells me all about medication options and the medication itself. Yep that's more information washing over me. She gave me a few leaflets to take home to read.

Now here is my next major problem, telling the people I have slept with that they might be infected. The hospital told me that they would be able to contact people anonymously and advise them to go for a test.

I didn't know what to do about telling my partner. I just didn't know how he would react. I felt alone, I felt scared. I didn't want for us to end but how could he still love me? Any way, I went home.

By now I had my speech in my head, but that is still

the easy part, nothing can prepare you for telling a loved one. Anyway all plans vanished, as did the meal, and sat waiting for fish 'n' chips I told him that I thought it was time he went for a test. He questioned why and I felt I had to tell him and then face the consequences. He cried and said "I will stand by you no matter what". I felt so guilty.

Anonymous

The Bomb Shell Had Been Dropped

Well it was a summer's day and we had been out having a laugh and the boy friend said, "I'm sorry love I have some thing to tell you". I was thinking like, what do you mean you got some thing to say to me?

We sat down and he said, "You need to go to get a test". I thought, "What sort of test?" Then he told me he was HIV positive and that there was a high chance I could be to.

That was it; the bomb shell had been dropped and what a bomb shell it was!

I felt, well to be honest, it was a feeling of sh*t; what can I do how could I have been so stupid?

Apart from that I thought my world had ended. I remember also, I could not stop crying.

All I could think of was what if it comes back positive what am I gonna do and also what if it comes back negative at

this time I had convinced my self it was gonna come back positive .

He said, "I have only just found out myself." I replied "I will stand by you no matter what".

The next day I phoned the GUM Clinic [Genito-Urinary Medicine] and requested an HIV test. My head was all over the place thinking, "What the hell am I gonna do if I have got it and how can I support him if I haven't?" I knew absolutely nothing about HIV at all.

As the days passed and it was test time the trip to the clinic seemed to be never ending. I had the initial counseling session were they ask why I want an HIV test and then it was time for the test. At this time I didn't even know that it is just one simple blood test to test for HIV.

I had it done and was told I had 3 to 5 days to wait for the test results to come back. For me that was the hardest part. Waiting and not knowing. Am I HIV or not? It was awful even though my boy friend was very supportive at this time.

Now we are talking results day and I am 'bricking it' but I have to go to get my results. I set off to the clinic and I'm waiting when they call me in and sit me down. They look at me and say, "You'll be pleased to know that your HIV test came back negative". I just burst into tears. They were tears of relief.

My feelings were of joy that I had not contracted HIV but at the same time I was thinking how can I support someone that is HIV? How can I still be the same boy friend that I was to him before?

It is something that I am going to have to learn to deal with.

Anonymous

HIV Testing... So How Does That Work Then?

1. Where to get tested?

There are a number of GUM clinics across Hull and the East Riding where you are able to be tested for HIV:

- Conifer House – Hull
- Castle Hill Hospital
- Beverley Health Centre
- Bridlington Hospital

The clinic timetable is available from the www.luvhull.co.uk website.

Each centre provides a friendly, professional, non-judgmental service and offers confidential and anonymous HIV testing. Other sexually transmitted infection (STI) tests are also available upon request.

2. How to book?

You can get tested for HIV using the 'walk in' clinic without the need for an appointment, Monday to Friday. Alternatively, you can make an appointment for another day, depending on how busy you and/or the health professionals are.

Appointments can be booked over the phone or in person by calling into the clinic.

3. What is involved in having a test and advice given before test?

What happens will depend on whether you are in an "at risk" group or not. People who are most likely to be classed "at risk" include those who have had unprotected sex or engaged in some other kind of risky behaviour.

Those who are concerned about being infected with HIV via touching etc. (HIV phobic) will be offered a pre-discussion where the nature of HIV transmission, methods of protection and the testing procedure will be discussed, and a number of questions asked about a person's activities and how risky they may be.

If you are not "at risk" and decide to come into the clinic for a full STI screening programme, the HIV discussion will not be provided.

Before an HIV test is carried out, it is very important that the 'window period' (seroconversion) is explained. This is the time it takes for a person who has been infected with HIV to react to the virus by creating HIV antibodies.

They generally appear within three months after infection with HIV, but may take up to six months in some people. This is why, when you are in the 'window period',

regardless of whether your result was positive or negative, you will be advised to come back to the clinic after few weeks for another test just to make sure that result was correct.

5. Getting test result, how long, how you are told, etc.

If a person wants to find out their test result via phone, the health advisor will do this but it is strongly recommended that they still attend the clinic to discuss the result.

If a blood sample is taken, a person will wait no longer than 7 days for the result. If a mouth swab is taken, perhaps because a person is needle phobic, the result will be back within 10 to 14 days. However, those who are needle phobic should be aware that if they receive a positive result, a second test must be taken which requires a blood sample.

There is no post HIV discussion for negative results.

6. Counselling.

The GUM clinics do not provide HIV counselling as this is not compulsory (in line with UK National Guidelines for HIV testing 2008). However, the health advisor can arrange a meeting for you with HIV social workers or persons who have been trained in pre and post HIV counselling.

7. Advice and support offered.

If a result comes back positive, the appropriate advice and support will depend on the person, what their particular needs are etc. The Body Positive Group is a group of people living with HIV in Hull and the East Riding who can provide an appropriate response to the needs of other local people living with and affected by HIV.

They provide a range of different services including peer support, group support for men and women, one to one peer support, advocacy, HIV awareness and more.

8. The first appointment after a positive result, booking it, what you will be told, what information you supply, etc.

After the first visit, you will be given an appointment to see a consultant within two weeks – he or she will take care of you from a medical point of view and carry out the full screening/examination.

In the time between your first and second appointments, you can also have an 'open appointment' to see the health advisor or other relevant person as many times as you need to, and at any time in GUM clinics.

The health advisor or consultant will also provide you with appropriate information, leaflets and website references in respect of HIV.

Marek Mironski
HIV Prevention Officer, Hull
NHS



Clarification Statement

The Hull LGBT Forum has been active in the area for almost 10 years and has built up excellent working relationships with the authorities, both public & private sector and with other community & voluntary organisations. We wish to make it very clear that we are in no way associated with the LGBT Switchboard, which is a brand new and totally separate entity.

It would appear that numerous organisations that have been approached by the LGBT Switchboard have initially formed the opinion that the Hull LGBT Forum operates the LGBT Switchboard. This is wholly incorrect.

We can only speculate as to just how this misunderstanding has been allowed to happen but stress that the Hull LGBT Forum has no involvement with the LGBT Switchboard, what so ever.

John Furniss
Chair of Hull LGBT Forum

Apology:

In our issue one the article entitled Lollipop was attributed to Helen Jones but was actually written by Elaine Bell. We would like to apologies for this error.

Getting Involved

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If you want to get involved just become a member of the LGBT Forum by picking one of the following methods:

- Join via Yahoo group at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/hulllgbt>
- Attend meetings @ 7pm, Guildhall 2nd Wednesday every month
- Visit our Website at <http://www.lgbtforum.co.uk>
- Visit our office

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