CREATING A LEGACY—More Kids in the Woods
BY WENDY GARTON

In partnership with the Lindsay School District/Roosevelt Elementary School and the Sequoia National Forest, Buck Rock Foundation hosted 120 4th & 5th graders in late September. This two day outdoor educational experience, based on the California Curriculum Standards, was packed with hands-on manipulative learning and creative thinking from “outside the box” with a dash of fun and fresh mountain air for students who, for many, had not ventured very far outside the confines their rural farming community.

Classes began at Kings Canyon National Park. There, they had a scavenger hunt in the Mural Room of the Discovery Center with BRF Director Wendy Garton and hiked up to the General Grant tree with NPS Interpreter Jackie Weiner. After lunch at Columbine Picnic area, classes were entertained by Historian Jackie Weiner who did her one woman living history show as Mrs. Curtis, dressed in period clothing for an authentic feel of life in the 1800’s. She even tied the school’s namesake Theodore “Teddy” Roosevelt into the program where the kids learned how the Teddy Bear came to be.

Each student received their own “Fire Education Team” backpack (thank you Danny Jones & 3FIA) which included a custom written workbook tailored just for their trip. Each book was filled with target information, math, Cinquain, word puzzles, challenges and literary prompts. Also included were BRF Director Lea Dotter’s “Buck Rock Natural History Field Guide”, miniature binoculars and many Smokey Bear activity items.

We then traveled to Buck Rock where small groups were formed for 4 break-out learning sessions: (1) BJ O’Brien creatively kept her groups busy making a watershed pop up card (2) FS Marianne Emmendorfer engaged the kids with Skulls, Scat & Tracks and many “Did you Know” guessing games (3) groups climbed the stairs to the lookout where BRF Director Jeff Hannel gave them a lesson on the workings of the lookout and they actually spotted, plotted and called in a pretend smoke, (4) BRF President Kathy Allison and FS firefighter JR Moreno demonstrated the watershed utilizing the natural beauty of the Middle and South Forks of the Kings River.

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Lights and sirens finished the day with the Captain and crew from SQF Engine 32, Law Enforcement Officers Chris Cagle & Richard Telles and Fire Patrol 33 Nora Ratto. The kids learned that they could be anything they wanted to be if they stayed in school and were treated to live demonstrations by their uniformed instructors.

At the end of the two days, we were all charged with the fact that the lives of all these students had been truly enriched with a new appreciation for nature and the forest environment. For me, as an educator, this brings true meaning to one BRF’s mission goals: education. All you had to do was take a look at their smiling faces, eager participation and fascination with everything presented to them to know that this was good — really good!
All three towers are now shuttered for the 2012 season. The webcams show fresh snow at both Buck Rock and Park Ridge. Winter has certainly arrived, even here in the Fresno County foothills. I especially love the first snow of the season and welcome the crisp air and blue, blue skies.

Our 2012 statistics are amazing! Kudos to all who generously gave their time and expertise. Forest and Park fire managers are grateful for the service, which couldn't be done without your professionalism and dedication. Although it was our smallest "rookie" class, first-time volunteers put in more time than any of our larger freshman classes, while veterans returned with renewed energy and dedication.

The season was uneventful with only one first report of a wildfire, called in by Allen Love from Buck Rock in September. There were several 2nd reports or confirmations from all three lookout points plus a few illegal campfires and debris burns. There was very little lightning activity, with only a few fires in the higher elevations of the Park. All three lookouts witnessed the "Whitaker" prescribed fire (Kings Canyon NP) and it was a doozie, especially for Park Ridgers. A heartfelt thanks to all who diligently kept outstanding smoke and weather observations all summer long – smoke columns were witnessed into October!

Our end of season party was a blast! Jack Huneke & Julie Harcos' beautiful mountain top "Stonehouse Residency" was perfect, with its sweeping 360 degree views and amazing gardens. The food was yummy as always, but it was the fellowship of everyone gathered that was the highlight. The silent auction was again very successful and we appreciate all of you who donated and purchased items.

Special Awards Were Given To:

**Gretchen Steinman** - "Rookie of the Year" - Gretchen bravely and enthusiastically staffed two lookouts (Delilah and Park Ridge), a milestone for a first-timer. **Jeff Hannel**, co-"Veteran of the Year" - Jeff actively staffed all three lookout points for a whopping 34 days and was especially important for last minute lightning storm detail. Jeff exudes professionalism and we always feel at ease when he is on duty. **Allen Love** - co-"Veteran of the Year" - Allen, who generously staffed Buck Rock for extended periods of time this season, always has a positive can-do attitude and is especially friendly to the multitudes of visitors who climb the stairs to the lookout.

### 2012 Lookout Staffing Days

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<th>June</th>
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### Staffing Hours

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<tr>
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**Note:** Numbers may not balance with individual stats due to several variables, such as 1/2 days (G.S. + Vol) where each person received a staffing day.
It is with great satisfaction and a bit of relief to report that the Buck Rock rehabilitation project was a success. The support and cooperation of Hume Lake Ranger District Forest Service personnel and the generous, capable hard work of dozens of volunteers made it possible to complete our mission. This is not to say the road was an easy one. Staying true to historic preservation guidelines, adjusting to the imperfections of an old building while improving the functionality of the lookout was a challenge. I must admit that the end result was different from my vision (a flawless all new natural wood lookout) but by staying on the side of history, we ended up with a lookout that isn’t very different from the original built in 1923.

We learned to be adaptable and patient as we peeled back the layers, making one interesting discovery after another. We found at least 7 layers of interior paint, evidence of 4 different doorframes, and hollow window braces and siding stuffed with vintage newspaper. Underneath the exterior T-111 siding was beautiful original redwood shiplap while inside, the original beadboard had been buried beneath 1970’s plywood and paneling.

I thought about the changes made to the tower and how they melded in with the times and with the people who served Buck Rock, like intrepid firewatcher Walker Parker with his wife Viola Kanawyer in the 1920’s and 30’s when the walls were a battleship gray, climbing ladders to the top before the stairway was built; a young, independent Lea Evinger Dotters, who in the 1940’s chose a lonely post in the middle of the forest while men went off war - the bleak dark green interior paint didn’t make her love it any less; or Helen Carter Allen and Deborah Cheda Milburn during the tremendous lightning storms and turquoise paint era of the 1960’s and 70’s. The colors themselves almost tell the story.

Guided by the capable expertise of volunteer preservationist Loren Ross, contractor Bill Hurley of Dos Osos Timberworks, retired Forest Service engineer George Kulick, and Sequoia Forest zone archaeologist Linn Gassaway, we carefully chose our path repairing and refurbishing instead of replacing whenever possible.

We were fortunate to have fair weather and the enthusiasm and drive of volunteer Carie Krumme who kept the project on track, tirelessly commuting from her home in Los Angeles. BRF volunteer Ron Westbrook assembled a team to rehab the original redwood exterior siding, first removing it and hauling it down to Visalia, where it was planed and primed, then carried back up to be methodically installed piece by piece. High Sierra Volunteer Trail Crew leader Rick Chappell and Loren Ross worked with volunteers to refurbish the original interior beadboard siding and ceiling and the fir window frames, overcoming lead paint issues, rotting wood and a cab “out of square.”
We hired contractor Bill Hurley, an expert in big timber construction, to replace the rotting section of stairway – a challenge 200’ above ground. Bill also built a new replacement Dutch door. BRF members Jim Ghoslin and Jeff Hannel organized volunteers to add insulation and a vapor barrier in the walls and attic, while below the rock, volunteer Mike Weinberg devoted weekends as docent, entertaining and informing thousands of visitors. Climbers Patrick Paul and David Hickey and volunteer Keith Loftis spent several days improving the catwalk. Keith also assisted with a multitude of tasks as did father and son team Dan and Mike Boydstun, who drove hundreds of miles from Riverside for the project.

Electrician-by-trade Walt Wojewoda very generously donated his labor and expertise for all of the electrical and plumbing upgrades and repairs. Professional painter Dwayne Janzen did an amazing job caulking before giving both the interior and exterior of the cab several fresh coats of paint (a soft battleship gray on the inside, white on the outside). Knotty alder cabinets, custom crafted by Bill Edlund/Cascada Cabinets of Auberry, were added for storage and to accommodate a sink with running water. Simple 1920’s light fixtures and hardware were installed to reflect the lookout style of that period. By season’s end, we were ready to put the project to rest, with a few finishing touches for next summer.

Buck Rock is now less likely to be closed and ultimately forgotten thanks to the care, hard work and partnership of so many volunteers, local contractors and the Forest Service, and especially the support of those who believe in and donate to the Buck Rock Foundation. Buck Rock is once again a place to take pride in -- restored for conservation history, education, heritage, nature, a refuge from modern life, a premier location for fire detection, and a room with a terrific view. I believe that Buck Rock represents the best of us and I am privileged to share this special place with all of you.

We would like to especially thank the Kern and Tulare Counties Resource Advisory Committee, who approved our vision and provided the majority of the funding for the project.

Partners and volunteers made the project a success:

**Partners**
- Tulare and Kern Counties Resource Advisory Committee
- Dos Osos Timberworks
- Cascada Cabinetry
- High Sierra Trail Crew
- Dwayne Janzen Painting
- Sequoia National Forest/Hume Lake Ranger District
- Buck Rock Foundation

**Volunteers**
- Carie Krumme
- Nancy O’Bosky
- Loren Ross
- David Hickey
- Jeff Dearborn
- Kathy Allison
- John Wagy
- Candice Young
- Jim Ghoslin
- Stacy Hannel
- Judy Futrell
- Doug Snider
- Raymond Ahumada
- Brent Iden
- Corey Johnson
- Rich Pisor
- Walt Wojewoda
- Bill Edlund
- Dan Boydstun
- Tammy Ahumada
- Marsha Iden
- James Ramirez
- Bill Hurley
- Keith Loftis
- Patrick Paul
- Odie O’Neal
- Bob Lehman
- Linn Gassaway
- Steve Fuhrman
- Doug Wachtell
- Ron Westbrook
- Jeff Hannel
- Mike Weinberg
- Cesar Baez
- Steven O’Neal
- Lori Luscomb
- Susan Loucks
- Ken Pisor
- G.C. Construction
- George Kulick
- Mike Boydstun
- Juan Lopez
- Dennis Lehman
- Rick Chappell
- Shirley Main
- Jessica Furth

**Forest Service**
In 1981, the National Park Service decided to organize several wildland fire suppression crews (later to be referred to as “hotshots”). The NPS largely depended on loosely organized local crews or other agencies to respond to fires on their lands. The agency decided that they needed to have their own fire crews ready for and to develop the expertise for fire response.

One of the first of the NPS hotshot crews was established in Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. Crews were also established in Rocky Mountain National Park (the current Alpine Hotshots) and in Yellowstone (the now disbanded Bison Hotshots). Initially, all three crews were called Arrowhead Crews 1, 2, and 3; so named to honor the NPS arrowhead shield seen on uniforms and signs. The Arrowhead Hotshots name remains with the Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks crew today.

The obstacles for the crew’s formation were numerous. The first Arrowhead Hotshots camped in tents while they built their barracks at the Swale Work Center. The US Forest Service was pressuring the NPS to be more involved and to shoulder more of the responsibility for fire response. However, the NPS crews needed to prove themselves to their interagency firefighting peers. After all, hotshot crews are often referred to “elite” firefighters, expected to meet exacting skill and fitness standards. For the Arrowheads, several tough assignments helped quiet that concern.

Today, the Arrowhead Hotshots are one of 110 hotshot crews in the nation and are available as initial response for fires throughout federal lands. They meet the interagency standards as a Type 1 hotshot crew.

Reflecting on thirty years of service, the formation of the hotshot crews for the NPS have had significant impacts on NPS fire management beyond the initial response that these crews provide. The hotshot model helped formalize NPS fire response within the agency and without. It has broadened the NPS perspective on fire management by responding to fires for different agencies, within different fuel types, and in a range of environments such as complex wildland urban interfaces. It has provided training opportunities for firefighters throughout the parks and has helped develop generations of leaders within fire management in the NPS.

“It is a great honor for me to run this crew,” said John Goss, Arrowhead Superintendent. “I follow in the steps of the incredible leaders who instilled pride, safety, and teamwork into the foundation of the crew. I work hard to ensure that the Arrowheads continue to be respected in the firefighting community.”

For more information about the Arrowhead Hotshots, please visit www.arrowheadhotshots.org
Buck Rock Foundation Newsletter

BUCK ROCK ANNUAL OPEN HOUSE

The Buck Rock Foundation’s annual Open House at Buck Rock was PHENOMENAL! We had 632 visitors sign the register in just a few hours, delicious barbeque, entertaining kids crafts, lookout merchandise, artisans with uniquely local crafts to sell and enough sunshine and mountain air thrown in to make the day perfect. Smokey Bear was his usual attraction, charming young’ins and adults alike and Eddie Tupishna Sartuche’s popular Native American “Blessing of the Rock” truly inspirational.

The Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter #643 from Dinuba presided over a formal flag raising ceremony and with a brand new and beautiful American Flag donated by volunteers Allen and Donna Love, brought the entire audience to a silent repose as we watched our country’s colors be raised up on the catwalk followed by the pledge of allegiance.

A new and exciting addition to our Open House was a HAM radio "Special Event” station hosted by Buck Rock volunteer amateur radio operators designed to spark interest about our Foundation among HAM enthusiasts. BRF Director Brent Iden headed up a group of operators who made over 100 contacts from all over the country including Alaska.

There is something extraordinary about hearing the melodic tones of French Horn music wafting through the forest as the perfect background to a lookout celebration. The rock seems to provide a natural amphitheater and the sound of music couldn’t be sweeter. Talented French Horn players Amanda Dennison & Gabe Peterson returned this year adding a nice touch of class and culture to our event.

We have a special place in our hearts for Forest Service employee, Marianne Emmendorfer, who has participated in the Open House since the beginning back in the year 2000. Her specialty is interpretation, and her Skulls, Scat and Tracks booth is one of the most popular of the Open House attractions - and for good reason. After all, who doesn’t love holding a replica of mountain lion scat! Marianne has a knack for interacting with the public, and enjoys sharing her knowledge about the forest. We enjoy that, too.

The Central Valley Crawlers 4-wheel drive club, who once again accepted the challenge of directing traffic and organizing the parking, deserve a mountain-load of praise for that daunting task. In addition to volunteering at our event, the "Crawlers" have adopted the Buck Rock Jeep Trail working to re-establish the correct trail and block bypasses, collect debris and identify areas for improvement opportunities.

An enormous “thank you” to all of the volunteers who participated in, contributed money and donated food and supplies to our event – we Ray Ahumada, Jeff and Cindy Bart, Ron & Karen West, Wojewoda, Doug “Fuzzy” Belt, Keith Loftis, Mike Weinberg, Cindy Chick, Gretchen & Chuck Steinman, Allen & Donna Love, the Nordquist Family, Sue Loucks, Alex Woods, Camille Reese, Ray O’Bosky, Ryan Ward, Dan Genova, Jack Van Amringe, Brian & Kathy Allison and Chuck & Wendy Garton.
This has been a very busy year for the Buck Rock Foundation with the major rehabilitation effort of the Buck Rock Lookout. Some may not be aware that the Foundation has interest in more areas than just lookouts. This year the Buck Rock Foundation contributed funds to help with the restoration efforts at Cannell Meadow Cabin on the Kern River Ranger District of the Sequoia National Forest near Kernville.

Cannell Meadow Cabin was built as a ranger’s residence in the early years of the U.S. Forest Service, between 1905 and 1906. The barn was built in 1914. The instruction for the original rangers was to get to know your area and establish a place to live. This resulted in a wide variety of construction styles and amenities in each cabin. This one room cabin was built with hand hewn logs, exhibiting a high level of craftsmanship.

Cannell Meadow Cabin was used continuously until the 1980’s, with the first restoration efforts beginning in the late 1980’s. In 1996 a major effort was undertaken by the Forest Service to stabilize the cabin by replacing the sill logs. At that time a change in personnel and priorities caused a period of inactivity in the restoration efforts.

Recently efforts have begun to restore the cabin’s character and return it to a livable condition. I have volunteered my labor and used native and donated materials to begin the process of rehabilitation. I made windows and shutters, and repaired the fence surrounding the cabin. I have also built stairs and repaired the stove pipe making it functional once again.

A fellow Kern County Fire Department Retiree, Joe Sepulveda, donated a small range and also provided the expertise and materials to ensure a safe installation.

One of the major accomplishments in this project was installation of a new ceiling. The funds for this project were supplied by the Buck Rock Foundation. The addition of the ceiling has provided a feeling of comfort and warmth.

During my first trip to the cabin in the spring, it was evident that the barn was about to collapse due to many rotten logs. This problem had been identified in 1996 during the evaluation of the site by the preservation specialist. Unfortunately, nothing was able to be accomplished at that time. But it was now obvious it could not be postponed any longer.

A project date was set for mid August. I was able to call on friends, fellow retirees, and members of the Kern River Valley Back Country Horsemen’s Association for help and support. These volunteers provided enthusiastic and energetic efforts resulting in the completion of more work than I could have imagined. This has created a much more stable condition for the future of the barn. Volunteers also worked to install a flagpole with an eye catching rock base created with native stones.

The Forest Service owes a debt of gratitude to these volunteers and to the Buck Rock Foundation for making this project possible.
“You want to do what?” This tends to be the response from my friends and colleagues upon hearing that my summer plans include staffing a fire lookout. After I explain the job description, living conditions, and expectations, I believe most people are assured I am utterly crazy, but seem intrigued to know more. It is difficult for them to envision a summer without electricity, cell phone, drinkable running water, showers, and the modern comforts and amenities we give up to work at a fire lookout. Yes, there are comforts that must be forfeited, but I explain that our job repays us one hundred fold and that the view that makes us stop and catch our breath in wonder is more than an even exchange. Maybe we are a little crazy, but then again, how many people can say their job is to live on a mountain and look out over hundreds of miles of some of the most beautiful country on God’s great earth.

To truly understand the job, a person must experience a day in the life of a lookout. The radio chatter that keeps us connected, the excitement of spotting a smoke and reporting the fire, and the busyness that ensues. The suspense of towering thunderheads building, collapsing, and growing, as we wait for the first bolt of lighting and roll of thunder. To be in the middle of the cell, not just under, but in the storm itself. To watch the world go by below and watch the changing weather from a broad perspective many would not fathom.

Maybe after experiencing the magic we witness from the cab of a lookout and finding the amazing world on the mountain peaks, they too would be drawn back year after year, becoming new recruits to the elite group of eyes in the sky who keep watch over the forests.

In the solitude and time to reflect, we learn to live without modern technology and conveniences. That which we once thought we could not do without become obsolete in the reality of the solid rock, ancient trees, and the forces of nature for which we are ever watchful. And so we return each summer, to climb the stairs and gaze at the views. We feel the wind on our faces as we stroll the catwalk scanning for fires. Days are timed to the rising and setting of the sun. When thunderheads build, we keep watch during the storm and drink in the freshness after the clouds have passed. Each night we sleep enveloped in the soft glow of the dusk, wrapped in the velvet blanket of sky, and each morning we rise to greet the dawn and watch the sun touch the far peaks.

Around us the natural world unfolds, changes, and renews, all at the command of an unheard voice. No motor powers the processes we witness. No human hand or invention directs the transformations around the towers. Silently, imperceptibly, the forest changes and seasons march on. Even the sentinel granite domes, immortal and unchanging in our minds, undergo renovation before our gaze. One pebble, one grain at a time the mountains change, too minimal for our eyes to comprehend on the grand scale of the peaks. Buffeted by winds, hammered by rain, they appear unchanged each summer. Strong, solid landmarks on the fire finder map, each ridge, drainage, and contour memorized, each tree, granite face, and meadow familiar. This is our forest, our mountain, our world...and though they may not know it, this is their world too.
On July 21, 2002 an illegal campfire started the largest and most costly forest fire in the history of the Sequoia National Forest. The McNally Fire burned for 37 days and scorched 150,700 acres. It was twice the size of any fire previously recorded in the area. By September 8th, the fire had cost taxpayers $53,342,000 in fire suppression.

In the fire’s first hour historic Road’s End Resort, built by Earl Pascoe in the early 1900s, was completely destroyed. This original pack station, once literally the end of the road, served hunters and fishermen heading to the back country. Wildlife, livestock and native vegetation were trapped in the flame, killing them and leaving landscapes severely changed for future decades. Over 73,000 acres burned at high or moderate severity, leaving denuded and unstable soils vulnerable to erosion and contributing to the potential for downstream flooding. The drive along the west side of Sherman Pass Road, up the Brush Creek drainage, once shaded above 6,000 feet, is open and hot, due to the loss of forest canopy. Some have shared, “Driving up Sherman Pass, along Brush Creek feels like walking through a home without walls.”

A Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) team assessed the watershed damage and developed an action plan to reduce effects of the fire. Before restoration action could be completed, an intensive rain storm affected the area in November 2002. The storm dropped approximately twenty inches of rain within a forty-eight hour period at the Johnsondale weather station. The North Fork of the Kern swelled from 300 cubic feet per second (cfs) to 25,500 cfs with mud and debris overnight. Over $3,000,000 in emergency watershed rehabilitation funds were spent to stabilize soils and reduce the potential for further destruction from floods and erosion.

10 years later, a look at the natural regeneration of the forest combined with the efforts for ecological restoration of the Forest Service and many volunteers, reveals the beginning of a new forest.

Gone are the “walls” of lush tall pines and fir at the lower elevations. These have been replaced with fields of wildflowers and brush as the forest begins the long process of regeneration. Poking up through the wildflowers are small trees - some planted by the Forest Service and volunteers, some natural regeneration and sprouting after the fire. At the higher elevations, much of the forest remains intact with more subtle changes. The Forest Service planted over 400,000 tree seedlings (white fir, western white pine, and sugar and Jeffrey pine trees) over the past decade enhancing restoration efforts. Volunteer support including donations of $30,800 from the Penny Pines Foundation (www.pennypines.org), helped plant trees, cleared trails and bolstered the restoration efforts.

We invite you to visit your forest by taking a drive along Sherman Pass Road. The vistas are ever changing as the forest regenerates. It will be decades before the McNally burn area is fully restored; however, some things are already fairly amazing. Someday, the fire scars will not be visible and stands of green trees will again be present for future generations to enjoy. The Kern River Ranger District of the Sequoia National Forest would like to thank the citizens, cooperators, civic organizations and community groups involved. The McNally Fire can be reviewed, in its entirety, through written format, photographs and maps by visiting www.fs.fed.us/r5/sequoia/projects/mcnallyfire/, or www.mcnallyfire.com.
THANK YOU RECENT DONORS!

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Friends: Donna May, Christy McGuire, Joe Sobelman, Bachrun and Mahalia Lomele.

In Memoriam

Larry and Kay Coffin in memory of Park Ridge fire watcher Mattie Sims and in honor of her birthday on Sept 11th.

STANDING IN THE SHADOW OF A GIANT

On my first day on duty at Bald Mountain
I was standing in the Shadow of that Giant.
   I was humbled by its beauty
   and proud to be walking in the footsteps
   of such great men and women who came before me.

I will always believe that the Fire Lookout
   is the first line in the defense of this beautiful forest.
The information collected and passed on
to our diligent dispatchers by the lookout
give our brave fire fighters on the ground and in the air
   the tools to quickly find a fire
   that could cause great loss to the forest,
   and stop it in its tracks.

I feel that while we watch for fire weather
during clear days or during lightning storms
we should always remember
how important the lookouts are
   and those who came before.
I hope that when the day comes
when I no longer can perform my duties,
   that I will be remembered.
Help us Preserve Fire Lookouts!

The Buck Rock Foundation is a nonprofit corporation dedicated to preserving fire lookout for fire detection, education and historic preservation. Our vision is to create an atmosphere where the concept of stewardship of our conservation heritage can flourish with children and adults from all walks of life.

Yes! I would like to support the Buck Rock Foundation. My tax deductible donation is enclosed.

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With your annual donation of $15 or more, you will receive the Buck Rock Foundation newsletter. (The date of your last donation will appear in the address label.) Thank you for your contribution!