School is about sitting down and listening to women talk.” So declared Michael Thompson, author of *Raising Cain*, a book about raising and educating boys. As you might imagine from his quip, Thompson blasts conventional schools: they are not boy-friendly; schools, he says, are not designed to meet the needs of boys. Channeling his “inner boy,” he fantasized what he himself would like to do to schools—a comment I will not put in writing—and said to the audience at a recent Houston Boys’ Choir luncheon, “Am I the only one who feels this way?” Look again at his description of what conventional schools invite children, boys and
girls, to do: sit down and listen. Sit down and listen. Most girls, according to Thompson, are better able to do that than most boys. But is it really the ideal for anyone?

Where did Michael Thompson choose to enroll his own children? Montessori school. Why? Because the Montessori approach invites active engagement and hands-on activity as opposed to days spent listening to the teacher talk. Because Montessori allows and encourages movement rather than sitting down in desks.

Sitting down in desks? This is from a college application essay written by a Montessori alum:

"On my first day of seventh grade, I was bewildered by the idea of sitting at a desk. Every classroom was filled with desks, carefully placed in straight, orderly rows. How strange middle school seemed, after spending ten years in a close-knit Montessori environment. The idea of a desk was fascinating and yet, disturbing—I now had my own, assigned space, but how was I expected to work with my classmates if we were separated? The desks seemed like they would hinder learning, rather than facilitate it. A strong contrast from Montessori school, this concept of desks triggered my concern with conventional education."

Google the term “educating boys” and you get 6 million entries—and counting. Several times a week I receive summaries of all that’s been published about educational issues in the press, online, and in professional journals. This one came in today:

**WHY SOME BOYS MAY NOT WANT TO SUCCEED IN SCHOOL**
Nationwide, there is evidence that schools are facing a "boy crisis," with fewer male students enrolling in college and female students closing the achievement gap to outperform them in math, science, and English, writes author Michael Kimmel. In this blog post, he suggests that male underachievement can be linked to the traditional views boys have about what is masculine. “We must make academic engagement a sign of manhood—which we can only do by interrupting those other voices that tell our young boys to tune out,” he writes. *The Huffington Post/The Blog*

So what about Post Oak? Is academic engagement a sign of manhood here? "This is the first place I’ve been where it’s cool to like school." That comment was made by a high school boy, a student who attended several schools before joining this year's freshman class at the Post Oak High School.

This question about the education of boys is an interesting one. We at Post Oak do recognize clear differences in the way boys and girls approach school, and we never believe we have the final answer about how best to serve the needs of each individual child. At the same time, we do actively work to create a culture that values "academic engagement" (current education-speak); or as Montessori said, "to fan the flame of imagination." We also aim to create learning environments that meet the intellectual, social, and physical needs of our students, both girls and boys; and that does not include sitting down in desks, in rows, listening to teachers talk for most of the day. ☯

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Links in this article:
www.michaelthompson-phd.com/
aocparentpeek.blogspot.com/2011/11/high-school-seniors-tribute-to.html
r.smartbrief.com/resp/euhBDSzxnwbHAkkl andmqkalgFFJ?format=standard

Underlined phrases in this article are links to websites—access them in the online edition (link on the left side of the homepage).
High School Corner

WIND TURBINE PROJECT
by [Names] Class of 2016

Monday evening, four of us from Post Oak High School gave a presentation at Energy Hour, the Spring Environmental Lecture, at The Post Oak School. Our presentation was on our year-long project in science class. Earlier in the year we divided into small groups and chose topics depending on our interest. Our group chose alternative energy through wind turbines and solar panels. At Energy Hour we talked about what we have accomplished so far on the project and what we hope to accomplish in our upcoming years of high school. We also had our first wind turbine prototype and talked about how it works. The goal is after perfecting the prototype wind turbines, to put permanent wind turbines on the high school roof and on the bridge that crosses over highway 59 behind the school to help power the high school.

CORD GRASS PLANTING IN GALVESTON BAY
by [Names] Class of 2016

In the first semester, the class at Post Oak High School got the opportunity in our science class to raise smooth cord grass. We went and harvested 300 plants from NRG in Baytown and planted them in pots behind the school. Over the next few months, we worked to maintain them and grow them so that they could go to a distressed area of the bay in Galveston. Every two weeks, we tested the salinity of the water and made sure that they were healthy and disease free.

The day we went to plant them was a beautiful day as if to welcome us to Galveston and to say sorry for the mishap of the first date, which was rained out. Upon arriving at the bay where we were scheduled to plant, we unloaded the buses and cord grass and made our way down to the water. We were split up into pairs, one to dig the hole in the mud and the other to bury the root of the plant in it. We were given quick instruction and then got right to work. No doubt it was a task to stay upright with all of the mud that was grabbing onto our shoes, and not all of us stayed dry by the end of it. When we finished planting and had eaten our lunch, we were split into two groups and introduced to either ways of maintaining and finding out statistics about the water, or netting fish and learning about them. All in all this experience was very fun and interesting, and I know we are all looking forward to doing it again in the future.
Middle School Mock Trials

by [Middle School student]

The second one walked into the courthouse, one would not be surprised to be startled by the infinite beauty of the place. It had been recently restored to its former beauty, and the result was a timeless piece of history, memories embedded deep within its glistening interior. A circling staircase lined the left and right walls and, above it all, a colorful, stained glass dome awaited, ready to startle visitors with its beauty upon first glance. However, the majority of the occupants in the room were already buzzing with so much energy that all they could think about was their case. Who would win? Would they mess up? What if such-and-such went wrong? The questions were endless. However, time did not feel like waiting for their minds to catch up with their bodies, so before they knew it, they were walking up the grand staircase and into a place whose beauty could never be amounted to.

Pale blue walls accented by a wooden trim that led up to the stained glass ceiling. Rows of lustrous benches waited to be sat on, and so they were. The students gathered into the benches, sitting by case. Some minds were occupied with nervous thoughts, others with self-confidence, and then there was my own mind in the midst of it all. A sticker with the student’s name or, in the case of a witness, the witness’ name was given to each student. However, there was a still an unspoken question hanging in the air: Who made this happen? Who are we to thank? The answer to that was spoken aloud soon after, Justice Boyce and Chris Prine helped obtain the beautiful courtroom in which the students held their mock trial. They worked hard to help us have the benefit as well as the pleasing memory of having the mock trial in such a great place. It was amazing to be able to sit down knowing that decades earlier, another person had occupied that exact same space. However, in the midst of it all, there was a case to be debated upon, and so here comes in Post Oak parent Kevin O’Gorman. He not only took upon himself the task to be a judge but also helped obtain the courtroom for the students’ usage. Hours upon hours he took upon himself to help out our school with our two cases. What was the first case though?

Pat Smith vs. Old Man of the Mountain School had a multitude of noticeable highlights. This case involved a high school boy who wore a T-shirt with an objectionable political slogan on it to school, was suspended from school for the day when the math teacher saw him, and, as a result, was absent four days meaning he could not play in the championship soccer game. This meant that he could not be scouted for a possible scholarship, and a scholarship was his only chance at furthering his education because his family could not afford to after high school. Now, Pat Smith is suing the school. The plaintiff consisted of [Witness] and [Witness]. The plaintiff witnesses consisted of [Witness] who plays the role of Pat Smith, [Witness] who plays the role of Sam Houston, and [Witness] who plays the role of Dr. Kerry Brady. The plaintiff had good questions, but nailed the other team when it came to redirect examination. The defense team consisted of [Witness] and [Witness]. The cross examination that the defense did was truly exceptional and brought the defense victory. The jury, also known as half of the
sixth grade currently at Post Oak, ruled in the defense's favor.

*Billings vs. Pearson* was a bullying case where Alex Billings, a former of student of King High School, was bullied by C.J. Pearson and the result was her having Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, referred to as PTSD. Did Pearson intentionally bully Billings? Or was it simply the teenage banter one can find in any school? The school did take means to stop the bullying by emailing the principal and having the school psychologist visit with Billings. However, the bullying itself never ceased until she moved to St. Joseph's Academy, where psychologist Gabriella Rodriguez was able to confirm that Billings has PTSD. Francis Billings, Alex's mother, was notified of the bullying via a concerned parent that saw a MyFace page created by Pearson that was named I Hate Alex Billings!!! Whenever a MyFace page was created about a teacher at KHS, the faculty and administration immediately got rid of the page and punished the student(s) who had created it. Yet, this never happened for Alex Billings, or at least after the fact that she was threatened with a picture of a gun saying, “This is for you, Alex!” Or was it a bubble gun similar to the ones given out at Field Day, a suggestion of apology and a way of saying I am sorry? But, if Alex missed a lot of school because of fear of being bullied and the pain that came with revisiting old memories, how could Alex have perceived it as anything but a gun and, as a result, a threat towards not only her mental state but her life as well? Francis Billings reported that Alex had stayed up all night doing video games but not her homework, and skipped out on school unnoticed by her through a fake phone number. However, video games could easily prove to be a distraction from Alex’s everyday life. Since Alex had been told by seniors to give a fake phone number, could that have been considered peer pressure, something Alex was very susceptible to? It could go on, and on, and on. That is exactly what it did.

The defense and plaintiff teams had a tricky case. On the side of the plaintiff, there was and . The plaintiff witnesses consisted of who played the role of Alex Billings, who played the role of Francis Billings, and who played the role of Dr. Gabriella Rodriguez, PhD. The plaintiff team had good questions that were a result of teamwork and hard work. The witnesses were exceptional, having seemed to memorize their witness statements flawlessly. The defense team and made a truly spectacular performance with her cross examination. Both teams were neck and neck with each other, but, in the end, the jury ruled in the favor of the plaintiff.

How did this happen? This happened through teamwork, discussion, the sharing of ideas, hard work, and a multitude of other things. It was a game of wits, of arguments that meant something, and it was fun. There was the learning of rules, and the writing of the closing and opening arguments. Throughout the process, Attorney Jeff McClure (a Post Oak alum parent) and Shae Wilson helped coach us. They explained legal principles and answered our questions about anything on the matter. Without them, we would have had a significantly harder time doing this. Also, credit must go to our teacher, Mr. Tucker, for getting this arranged for us and helping us with questions, too. Thanks also goes to Mrs. Madiman and Mrs. McNamara, who brought it upon themselves to be experts for a specific case in order to help us. All in all, it was a fun experience that not only taught us the skills of teamwork but the true value of everyone's input and ideas on things.
The Mystery of the Garbage Disposal, Revealed!

by Daniela Weil, Post Oak parent and Green Team member

So, do you actually know what happens to all that leftover dinner that you effortlessly throw down the drain and let that amazing high-tech garbage disposal wipe out from existence? It seems terribly convenient. Out of sight, out of mind. But let’s trace what actually happens to solid food waste after it leaves your kitchen pipes.

About 70% of all food waste is dissolved in water. When the remaining 30% of solids arrive at the water treatment plants, they get screened out and taken to a landfill! This may not seem like a big problem, as one might think organic matter will decompose in the landfill. However, landfill decomposition occurs in the absence of oxygen, and the end product of anaerobic breakdown is methane. Methane, aka natural gas! A ton of money is being spent to frack it out of the ground... here’s the solution to all our energy problems! Well, there’s a ton of it being produced in our landfills. Unfortunately however, the vast majority of landfills do not harvest this gas, which is both gold to energy companies and one of the main culprit greenhouse gases responsible for climate change. Currently no states require the capture or destruction of methane gas emitted by waste water treatment plants.

And then, there is the problem with fats. Unsaturated fats, which solidify at room temperature, build up inside pipes. This is not only a huge headache for your own household, but also causes roughly 75% of all sewer overflows, where untreated sewage is diverted from treatment plants into natural bodies of water. Grease-related blocks cost cities millions, and often result in unintended pollution of natural water systems.

As for the dissolved solids at the water treatment plants, enzymes are added to the water, and wastes break down into carbon dioxide or methane. Increased levels of dissolved solids at the plants result in an increased amount of treatment required, which means more chemicals and more energy being used to address this issue.

Okay, so that’s step one. Hopefully I’ve gotten you to think about this subject, which is so “easy” to “dispose of.” Tune in next time when we consider some solutions.

Lemonade Day Houston

by Lower Elementary student

I’d like to share with you that I’m doing a Lemonade Day Houston on May 5 which will teach me how to be an entrepreneur through a lemonade stand business. It all started when a girl named Lissa Holthouse wanted a turtle to put in her pet collection of one gold fish, two dogs, a cat, and a bunny. When she asked her dad for it, he said, “We have enough pets around the house.” Then she said she will have a lemonade stand to earn money for a turtle, so from that she and her dad started a Lemonade Day to teach other kids how they can make their dreams into goals and earn money for that goal. My goal is to buy or adopt a puppy that doesn’t shed so my dad is not allergic to it. I will have my lemonade stand called Cool Breeze Energy Lemonade at Uptown Park in front of Crave Cupcakes store. They are so good and support me and other children for Lemonade Day Houston. I have Lupe Tortilla’s at Kirby helping me with money for supplies as my investor, and my mom and dad helped me make all natural lemonade with honey and ginger—yummy! There will be lemon cupcakes specially made for the event by Crave Cupcakes, too. I also plan to save some, and give $50 to the Post Oak Fund for school repairs from money I earn. As Lissa said on Lemonade Day: Save, Share, and Use.

I’d like for all my schoolmates to come see me and try my energy lemonade and a cupcake on May 5 from 12–5 p.m. at Uptown Park in front of the Crave Cupcakes store.
Extended Family

communicate with them about your child-rearing decisions. “You need to pick your battles,” says Orly Kluk, lead teacher in one of Post Oak’s Lower Elementary classrooms. “When my Mom comes to visit and hides chocolate eggs for my children once in a while, I think the happy memories she is creating far outweighs the added sugar they are getting.”

Extended family members who regularly take care of children or those who live in the same household may need to get more involved in the parents’ decisions about raising their children. If my sister is taking my children after school every day and feeding them popsicles and letting them watch TV., then I probably need to let her know my family’s limits on screen time and sugar.

“Communication is the most important thing,” says Orly. “In our classroom we have a system for solving conflicts involving non-violent communication. First describe how you feel, then discuss why you feel that way, and let them know what you need to feel better (i.e. space, respect, etc.).” We can use this method with our extended family, too.

Sharing our child’s interest or struggles is one way to start a peaceful conversation with our extended family. For example, if an extended family member is allowing too much TV, watching, we might say, “Arthur is picking up very violent behaviors from TV. I am struggling with getting him interested in things that aren’t on a screen.” Sometimes an extended family member may have strategies that we haven’t tried, and just opening the conversation to them lets them know what areas of child development we ourselves are focused on. Acknowledging an extended family member’s efforts or activities that we do like, make it more likely they will be repeated. For example, “Jessica really loved it when you took her for a nature walk the other day after school. She talked and talked about the caterpillar you showed her.”

“Probably the most important communication you have is with your spouse,” says Sarah. You are much stronger communicating to your extended family if you and your spouse are aligned. It takes out the triangulation and allows for much more direct communication. “Young children especially need consistent rules and boundaries. Otherwise they use a great deal of their developmental energy testing the different rules and boundaries,” says Sarah. This is developmental energy they could spend on vocabulary or learning numbers.

We all experience frustration with our family from time to time. I have to remind myself that my family’s influence is just that, an influence. When I get frustrated, I try to remember the African proverb: it takes a village to raise a child.

by Nikayla Thomas, Post Oak parent

FLSH is a parent group focused on helping families create their own Montessori environment at home with the guidance of experts and ideas generated by parents. See page 8 for the next meeting date and topic.

“But Grandma gives us chocolate ice cream before bed!” a second grader told his Mom. “I am not Grandma,” she replied calmly, making a mental note to have a discussion with her husband about his mother. Again.

“All you need is a little discipline,” said one grandfather to his son who was trying to mollify his screaming three-year-old.

We have chosen how to raise our children and yet the influence of our extended family can strain relationships and make communicating clear boundaries to our children harder.

“Most family members are trying to be part of the solution,” says Sarah Moudry, lead teacher of a Post Oak half-day infant community classroom. “When we choose to raise our children differently than we were raised, our parents can see it as a rejection of how they raised us.” It is important to acknowledge our family member’s effort without criticizing or blaming. “Grandparents are learning how to be grandparents just like we are learning how to be parents,” says Sarah.

The amount of time your child spends with the extended family member directly correlates with how necessary it is to
F.I.S.H. Meeting
Fri., May 10
Summertime Doesn’t Have to Be Screen Time
Tips for managing technology & family time
9:00 a.m. in the Common Room

The Great Post Oak Book Exchange
for Lower & Upper Elementary

What: The Great Post Oak Book Exchange—turn in old books for new, gently used ones.

When: Donate gently used books May 6–May 15 in specially marked boxes in the library.

The Book Exchange will take place on Thursday, May 16.

Where: The Post Oak Library

Harnessing the Dark
A Post Oak Middle School Art Production

Please join us Monday, May 13 at 6 p.m. to open our week-long art gallery, exhibiting the photography work of the Middle School Students.

Monday, May 13, 2013, 6–7 p.m.
The Post Oak School Common Room

The Middle School micro-economy will be selling treats and refreshments at the event. The Middle School Photography group will also be taking orders for merchandise such as T-shirts, photographs, cards, etc.

We hope to see you there!

The POST OAK high school
in the Museum District

Admission Open House
Tuesday, May 14 and Thursday, June 6
7 to 8:30 p.m.
1102 Autrey Street
Houston, 77006
713.661.6688
postoakhighschool.org
Accepting applications now for fall 2013 for grades 9 and 10
B.R. Simon, Post Oak’s librarian for the past 15 years, will retire at the end of the current school year. Her career at Post Oak goes back to the days when Post Oak was called The Little Schoolhouse. From 1970 to 1973 she was a Primary teacher, leaving when her older daughter, Sarah, was born. Seventeen years later, she returned to Post Oak and for two more years directed a Primary classroom. But she couldn’t stay away. In 1998 B.R. returned to the school as its librarian, completing the reorganization of the book collection and the physical layout. At the time, the library was housed in half of the room that is now Kathy Long’s Lower Elementary classroom. Two years later the library moved into the space that is now Debbie Nickerson’s classroom. And then three years ago she oversaw another relocation of the library to its current site. That was definitely Big Work. In each of these three locations, B.R. created a beautiful environment for the children and the books. She also made the library a desirable volunteer opportunity for parents. I am incredibly grateful to B.R. for her years of service and dedication to Post Oak. All of us will miss her.

by John Long, Head of School

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**Gentle reminder… pledges due**

All Post Oak Fund pledges are due by Friday, May 31.

Please contact Christina Cantu in the Development Office if you have any questions.

Thank you.

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**DEAR VOLUNTEERS, YOU'RE INVITED TO A**

**Thank You Ice Cream Social**

**at Post Oak**

**WEDNESDAY, MAY 15**

3:30 – 4:30 P.M.

**THE PLAYGROUND GARDEN**

(RAIN LOCATION TBD)

Join POPA leadership, faculty, and staff as they say thanks to everyone who has volunteered over the year. No volunteer job is too small to be recognized! Children are welcome to attend with parents. Ice cream & sprinkles for all!

*Note: this date has changed from the original calendar of 5/14*
An Active Year for Post Oak Girl Scouts

by Rennae Henry, Post Oak parent

Building girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place... that's the mission of Girl Scouts. Whether girls are staying in a tent by themselves for the first time, working to master a new skill, planning and carrying out a service project, working out how to make decisions as a troop, attending a Girl Scout event planned and run by (you guessed it) other scouts, or yes, even selling cookies, that is the guiding objective. As with Montessori education, it's not just what the girls do, but how they are engaged that matters. The Girl Scouts’ philosophy is that as much as possible, activities are girl-led and emphasize learning-by-doing, and cooperative-learning.

This school year was a big one for Girl Scouts at Post Oak! New troops at the first grade and second grade level were formed and over 20 new girls registered. We now have five Girl Scout troops, one at each of the grades first through fifth. Troop outings this year included the Nature Center, Museum of Fine Arts, Museum of Natural Science, Bellaire Fire Department, and HSPCA, and several troops also attended a theater workshop followed by a performance of Camelot. Girls had a chance to visit a Girl Scout camp, with some girls staying overnight and others visiting for the day, and the eldest troops spent the night together on the tall ship Elissa in Galveston. The girls earned badges on a variety of topics including First Aid, Geocaching, Art, Cooking and Inventing. The fifth grade troop also earned their Junior Aide award for helping with younger troops, and finished their Bronze Award, the highest award that Juniors can earn, by doing a number of service and education projects relating to water pollution and marine science.

In Girl Scouts, troops “age” with their members, so in the fall, the existing Girl Scout troops will serve the second through sixth grade. New members to those troops at those grade levels are welcome. It would be wonderful to form a new Daisy troop at the first grade level. If your daughter will be a first grader at Post Oak in the fall and interested in Girl Scouts, please contact Rennae Henry. Parents, please consider volunteering to help with a troop (and we do mean parents—dads are welcome too!) The Girl Scouts have a comprehensive leader training program and the existing leaders will be happy to help get new troops on their feet. NOW is the time to form a troop to help ensure a smooth and fun beginning for girls and parents alike in the fall. Spring formation gives the volunteers a chance to do training, get familiar with the program and take care of troop startup tasks. In addition, girls who register now can attend Girl Scout programs, day camps, and even resident camp over the summer if they like. Please contact Rennae Henry at or if you are interested in Girl Scouts. • (photos continue on next page)
Good Times at Post Oak

Events

We’ve enjoyed a myriad of events the past few weeks including the assembly for the Patch physical fitness equipment, BBVA Movie Night, the annual Spring Environmental lecture, and two Cinco de Mayo performances by extended-day Primary students, as well as Middle School girls (look for Cinco photos in the next edition). A huge thank you to all our guests, participants, and performers for making these such festive and informative occasions.

Don’t miss out on upcoming events such as the ASEP Chinese performance at 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, May 7, the POPA Volunteer Appreciation Ice Cream Social on Wednesday, May 15 at 3:30 p.m. in the nature center, and also the Middle School Moving Up Ceremony on Friday, May 31 at 6:30 p.m. in the gym.

New Troop

Will your daughter be a first grader at Post Oak next year? Then it’s time to join Girl Scouts and earn Daisy petals! Each petal stands for a part of the Girl Scout law.

Contact Rennae Henry at rennae@postoak.org or
CALENDAR

MAY 5–11

Sun 5/5
Orthodox Easter

Mon-Fri 5/6–10
MS Texas Odyssey trip
6th graders to Williamsburg

Tue 5/7
Love and Logic Follow-ups
9–10 a.m.
Chinese ASEP performance
4–4:30 p.m. in gym

Fri 5/10
F.I.S.H. meeting
9–10 a.m.

MAY 12–18

Sun 5/12
Mother’s Day

Mon 5/13
Harnessing the Dark:
a MS Art Production
6–7 p.m.

Tue 5/14
HS Admissions Open House
7–8:30 p.m.

Wed 5/15
POPAA Volunteer
Appreciation
3:30–4:30 p.m.

Thu 5/16
New PRI parent gathering
7 p.m.

Check out our calendar
online or download a copy
at www.postoakschool.org

NOTICE BOARD

New Classified Ad Section

As part of the Green Team initiative, a classified ad section is coming soon to The Weekly Post. Do you have child-related items (furniture, bikes, a baby jogger) that need a new home? Let other parents in the Post Oak community know!

Please send a brief description of the item including price to elaineschweizer@postoakschool.org

(Your contact info will be redacted in the online version of the newsletter.)

Student Musical

The students in the ASEP Chinese class are working hard on a musical “Good Little Bunnies and The Gray Wolf”, based on a popular children’s story in China. Parents, friends, teachers and students in the extended-day program are invited to the performance.

May 7, 2013, 4:00 to 4:30 p.m. in the gym.

ABOUT THE WEEKLY POST

The Weekly Post appears on most Fridays of the regular school year.
You can receive a printed copy from your oldest child, or a PDF version online.

Submit letters, articles, or photos in electronic form by 5:00 p.m. on the Tuesday before publication to Communications Coordinator Elaine Schweizer (elaineschweizer@postoakschool.org). If publication is on a Thursday due to school closure on Friday, then the deadline is 5:00 p.m. on the preceding Monday.

All photos in The Weekly Post are by Elaine Schweizer unless otherwise noted.

The Post Oak School was founded in 1963 and accredited by both the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) and the Independent Schools Association of the Southwest (ISAS)

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