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#### President's report by Lois Cantwell

I felt as though I was travelling at warp speed during the speaker program (The Role of Cooperation in Evolution), presented by Kate Borduas at our February meeting. She took our 37 members on a fast paced trip from 2.5 billion years ago to present day in about an hour. Zipping through all of those periods, eras, ice ages and cataclysmic events, bringing us to modern times, the bottom line seems to be that species that best adapt to change are the ones to survive.



Phil Herron asks a question of Kate Borduas following her talk (Ann O'Leary sits next to Kate)

The pace at which evolutionary changes need to take place is exceeding the ability of species to respond. Could it be that what the human race is doing to our planet may culminate in the next cataclysmic event? Insist on responsible stewardship!"

In March we will be learning about North Port's "Fertilizer Ordinance and Plants for Pollution Reduction", presented by Elizabeth Wong, who is their Storm Water Manager. Our March 13<sup>th</sup> meeting will take place after "Plant Native" Day, so you will be hearing about our "big day", as well. Laurel Schiller is working on her presentation, which will include photos of representative container gardens. I should have a flier out to our membership very shortly (hopefully before you read this). Please share our advertising flier with friends, neighbors, post on bulletin boards, take to a business that you frequent, share on social media, etc.

#### **Report from our recent Pond Work Day**

Five of our members and two county workers converged on the cattail-ridden section of the pond nearest to the front parking area at Cedar Point Environmental Park on February 16<sup>th</sup>. Our task was to cut and spray



some of the very numerous willows that are taking over that area. The cattails and willows seem to be having a contest as to which species can overpopulate that section. Having joined forces against a few loppers and sprayers, they seem to be winning the battle.

Phil Herron cutting back willow sprouts among the cattails

So, We made a dent with a bit of a struggle. There was about 4 to 6 inches of water, which we were surprised to see given the dry conditions, so it was advantageous to be wearing boots.

Some kind of bug got down inside my boots and left me with what looked like fire ant bites, even though they didn't sting or burn. It got warm as the morning progressed, so we were ready to call it a day by 10:30 AM. The vegetation is very dense as you make your way through it, and you need to steady yourself against losing your balance. We could hear the voices of the other workers, but it was difficult to see who was on the other side of our work area. A machete and a compass would have come in handy.

, is it worth it to battle Ma Nature, who seems to have other plans? It would be great habitat for nesting birds if left unchecked. The pond itself disappears behind the over-growth and is not accessible by the wading birds. The extreme is looking at shear destruction when the county goes in with heavy-duty equipment and wipes out everything. Surely there can be a happy medium?

**GETTING READY for PLANT NATIVE** DAY, MARCH 2018 The GardenKeepers of Cedar Point, L-R: Lois Cantwell, Deb Wiggins, Bonnie Moore, Sue Freeman, Gail Finney, Rich Freeman, Marcia Gromada, Ann Caron (Jane Wallace absent) Photo by CA Gregsak The Demonstration Garden at Cedar Point Environmental Park in Englewood is looking particularly lovely with the help of the GardenKeepers who tend it every Monday morning, and often in between. They are preparing for your visit on Plant Native Day on March 10 between 9:30 and 1:00. In spite of the arrival of Hurricane Irma, the flooding rains from the

Tropical Depression prior to Hurricane Irma's arrival, and, more recently, four fairly intense cold snaps, plants have survived, bloomed, and borne seeds.

Particular attention has been given to the Butterfly Garden, home to nectar plants that provide food for butterflies. The Gaillardia has been putting on a good show, along with the Painted Leaf, also known as Wild Poinsettia. Starry Rosinweed and Ricebutton Aster are both in bloom, as is Coreopsis, also known as Tickseed, our Florida State Flower. Dotted Horsemint is also in bloom. Look carefully at the creamy petals for the freckles, and subtle pale green and lavender, pink or yellow



colors. Horsemint has a square stem, as do all flowers in the Mint family. It is a drought- and salt-tolerant plant, perfect for our region. Porterweed is an adaptable plant and, when in bloom, is visited often by the Long-wing Skipper Butterfly. Look carefully and you'll see the Porterweed sprouts scattered along the edge of the paths.

You will also find Coonties, a low-growing plant with dark green, leathery leaves that resemble a combination of palm and fern. Coonties are from ancient times, and were once used by Indigenous Peoples for flour, after a lengthy process to remove poisonous chemicals from the roots. You may find some round, fleshy seeds near one of the Coonties. The seed pods of a female Coontie resemble a pine cone and as it develops, these beautiful, bright orange seeds, larger than grapes, appear. Coonties are "dioecious," which means the female plant must have a male plant nearby in order to be fertilized. Varnish Leaf has finished its bloom and the delicate, papery clusters of seed pods are dangling from the tips of several branches.

Nearby, are two bushes looking quite dried out and leafless. They are Beauty Berries, both dormant now, one a White, the other a Purple, referring to the color of their fruit.

The berries are borne along the stems near the leaf axils. The bushes are definitely in their "Happy Place." This year, they produced an extraordinary display of colorful fruit. In spite of this, the birds showed little interest in the berries, usually a favorite food for them. The berries are edible for humans, as well, and make delicious jelly.

A WIld Lime tree overhangs the northern path around the Butterfly Garden. This garden edge is being prepared for Florida native ferns and orchids.

Along the sidewalk's edge under the deck, the GardenKeepers have weeded and mulched the Mimosa strigillosa. It is a sweet groundcover much loved by honey bees. Although it's had a slow start, we'll soon see round, fuzzy pink blossoms filling that area.

The Rain garden is starting to flourish, and there you'll find both Pink and

White Milkweeds, two favorite host plants for Monarch butterflies. A plaque next to this lovely spot explains the function and purpose of a Rain garden. Roadside swales are a form of rain garden with a rotating show of a variety of wild native flowers.

Come and visit us on Plant Native Day to see the progress so far. We look forward to seeing you on March 10 at 9:30!

## **Plant Native Day March 10**

Our 14<sup>th</sup> Annual "Plant Native" Day is on the horizon. In preparation, our Garden Keepers participated in a "plant-a-thon" on February 19<sup>th</sup>. We filled 15 planters (donated by various members) with a variety of native nursery plants (40 in all), which included combinations of wildflowers, grasses, and ground covers for that "thriller-filler-spiller" look. These will be utilized as demonstration examples for the event as well as a silent auction feature. Thanks to many of you who signed up to help in various capacities on the big day, most of the "helping hands" jobs have been filled. We do need someone to lead a nature walk at the end of the event, between noon and 1 PM. An email reminder to all who volunteered for the event will be sent out as we get closer to March 10<sup>th</sup>.

We will need donations of food items, beverages, paper plates, cups, napkins, etc. for the refreshment table. We also need plants for the sale in the garden. They must be healthy looking, labeled with common and scientific name, plus adding information (i.e. dry/wet/sun/shade requirements) is always helpful.





The Mangrove Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society will host Plant Native Day on Saturday, March 10 at Cedar Point Environmental Park. The park is located at 2300 Placida Rd. in Englewood.

Plant Native Day is a FREE half-day event open to the public, beginning at 9:30 am and lasting until 1 pm. This year "Container Gardening with Native Plants" will be the featured subject.

**PROGRAM** 

9:30 - Greetings with Al Squires, Vice President of the Mangrove Chapter,

**FNPS** 

10:00 - "Container Gardening with Florida Native Plants," a presentation by

Schiller of Florida Native Plants Nursery, Inc in Sarasota. Learn about using

native plants in containers to accent patios, walkways, and open spaces. 11:00 - "Creating a Container Garden," A Potting Demonstration by Laurel Schiller

12 Noon - A Tour of the Demonstration Garden and a Trail walk Throughout the morning, visitors can observe Monarch butterflies in their four stages of metamorphoses at the Peace River Butterfly Society exhibit. PRBS members have fascinating information to share about the transformative aspects of a butterfly's life, the necessary role they play in ecology, and the wonder and beauty they bring into our lives. Be sure to stop by and have a chat with them.

The Mangrove Chapter will have available for donation, member-grown plants, planters, and pre-planted container gardens and lots of good information about the benefits of using natives in your landscape.

Container gardens and planters will also be available to the highest bidder at a Silent Auction.

Light refreshments will be served and educational handouts will be available throughout the program. For more information contact Cedar Point Environmental Park at 941.475.0769

## **Mangrove Chapter Meeting**

On March 13, 2018, the Mangrove Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society will welcome Elizabeth Wong, P.E., Stormwater Manager of North Port, Florida. Elizabeth will speak on "North Port's Fertilizer Ordinance and Plants for Pollutant Reduction."

From her earliest years, Elizabeth's goal has been to save the world. On March 13th, she will share with her audience the steps she has recently been taking in that direction. Elizabeth was born Hong Kong, grew up throughout the world, and has spent much of her time in Trinidad and Tobago West Indies. Elizabeth will discuss North Port's fertilizer ordinance and the challenges presented by surface water quality in North Port's ditches, canals and creeks, which are the sources of North Port's main drinking water supply. She will also discuss littoral zone aquatic plantings in stormwater ponds for nutrient pollutants removal.

Mangrove Chapter meetings are held at Lemon Bay Park, 570 Bay Park Blvd. in Englewood, Florida with speakers beginning at 7:00 p.m. Doors open at 6 pm. We encourage Floridians and our winter visitors to learn more about the importance of Florida's native plants and communities by becoming a member of the Mangrove Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society.

For more information about Mangrove Chapter activities and events, please visit <u>mangrove.fnpschapters.org</u>. FNPS is a nonprofit organization whose mission is the preservation, conservation, and restoration of the native plants and native communities of Florida.

# What's Up In My Garden by Lois Cantwell

Thugs! At least that is the term that many of my up north garden club friends use to describe certain plants that start out good and go bad. Some plants grow so effortlessly they can be aggressive in certain circumstances. Some descriptions of plants that proliferate somewhat rapidly might include: "will naturalize", "can be aggressive", "somewhat invasive" or (watch out for this one) "will form a thicket". Some of you from the Northern and Midwestern states may think of things like Euphorbia, Snow-on-the-Mountain, Wild Geranium, Feverfew, Japanese Barberrry, Autumn Olive, Honeysuckle, Star of Bethlehem, Ribbon Grass, Sweet Pea, Purple Loosestrife, and the list goes on.

In my Southern garden there are a few natives that get a little out of hand. Mist Flower, the self-seeding annual in the Ageratum genus gets into every plant bed, as well as the lawn, and has ventured forth into neighboring yards, too. Scorpion Tail is another self-seeder that can be rather pesky. I have several confluent patches of sprouts that need to be weeded out of the landscape rock areas. Sprouts left to their own devices turn into sizable shrubs while I am away for the summer months.

Another prolific self-seeder is the Spiderwort, which I tolerate most of the time. It's a good plant to dig up for sales and sharing with others, so I mostly let it grow wherever it pops up. Love those splotches of blue in the landscape no matter where I look this time of the year. This season, I am also seeing Wild Petunia sprouting up more frequently. The Rouge Plant I added to my garden just a few years ago is replicating itself which I am enjoying at least for now. So, what's up in your garden? Tell us about your experiences.



[Spiderwiort]



Wild Petunia



Rouge Plant

#### LSS Monitoring rare orchids

In January I received a request from Lawry Reid of the Friends of Little Salt Spring. He was asking various "environmental" groups to write letters of support to the President of the University of Miami. The University has decided to retain ownership of Little Salt Spring and Preserve, which means that there will be a continuation of scientific research and development of future educational opportunities associated with this property.

One of the concerns of note is the rare orchids that reside there. I mentioned this as a potential project in a previous newsletter. From our membership

roster, I noted that there are 3 in North Port and about a dozen in Port Charlotte, representing quite a few people. For starters, there is some potential for volunteering to take on this project. Searching on the leafy beaked ladiestresses, *Sacoila paludicola* may give anyone interested some information about this plant. You may also find an article, circa 2008, authored by Craig N. Huegel and Kathleen K. McConnell, "General Notes on the Ecology of Sacoila Paludicola, Sarasota County, Florida". For more information on the status of this project, contact Lawry Reid at <a href="mailto:friendsoflittlesaltspring@gmail.com">friendsoflittlesaltspring@gmail.com</a> or <a href="mailto:viaspeech@gmail.com">viaspeech@gmail.com</a>.

### **Rare Plant Task Force Meeting**

Bok Tower Gardens and Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden are hosting the **2018 Rare Plant Task Force** meeting to be held on April 12 <sup>th</sup>-13 <sup>th</sup>, at Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens. This is a state-wide meeting to bring together conservation professionals from a variety of disciplines and agencies to share approaches and findings, forge new partnerships and discuss rare plant conservation priorities. This year's meeting theme is "The Impact of Climate Change and Natural Disasters on Rare Plant Conservation". Activities include oral presentations, poster sessions, the second annual meeting of the Florida Plant Conservation Alliance (FPCA), and half-day field trips to local native habitats. For more information, go to

https://boktowergardens.org/conservation/rare-plant-task-force

### **Deeringothamnus Conservation Grant**

Lee Amos, Land Steward for the Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast is submitting an application to FNPS for a conservation grant. The project title is "Genetic assessments to guide conservation of Beautiful Pawpaw, *Deeringothamnus pulchellus*".

The Conservation Foundation is partnering with Bok Tower Gardens. Other anticipated partners include Mangrove Chapter and Coccoloba Chapter, the Florida Parks Service, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission, Rancho Sana Ana Botanic Garden, Marie Selby Botanical Gardens, and the Florida Plants Conservation Alliance.

The Beautiful Pawpaw is one of Florida's rarest and most endangered plants. Found in only 3 counties, less than 5,000 individuals likely remain in this species. The grant will enable genetic study of plants selected from private and public areas using genotyping technology on leaf samples. With an understanding of genetic variation within and between populations, and across the distinct locations, high-risk populations will be identified, and conservation partners will be able to intervene to prevent extinction.

### Field Trip Report for Manasota Scrub Preserve

It was a promising to be a lovely day as I drove up behind the last car in line on the side of the road on Bridge Street. There were many cars there ahead of me, as I was about 15 minutes late in arriving. As I walked past all of those cars, I thought to myself that we would probably have too many people in attendance to walk in one large group (the old "herding cats" thing that we joke about on these walks).

Sure enough, not only was I able to catch up with the group, as they were doing that "slow stroll" thing in botanizing fashion, I noticed a second group up ahead of them. There were probably 35 to 40 of us out for this field trip.

Being the month of January and following a spate of rather chilly weather, there wasn't a great deal in bloom, but we identified quite an assortment of flora nevertheless. The specimen that stood out for me was the Lizard's Tail, *Saururus cernuus*, the only member of the Saururaceae family. Not to be confused with Scorpion-tail, *Heliotropium angiospermum*, which resides in drier coastal upland habitats, Lizard's Tail resides in swamps, marshes and shallow ditches. We observed it in a low area accompanied by Swamp Fern and Leather Fern, among others.

This was the first time that I have ever had the opportunity to see this plant in the wild. It's reddish, hairy stems growing to 3 feet in height, with heart-shaped leaves and its long, tapering spikes of white flowers are very noticeable in contrast to the surrounding biota. Interestingly, this plant is hardy beyond Zone 5. They often form extensive colonies through rhizomes. Since it was rather breezy, there was some difficulty getting this lovely plant to stand still for a photo-op, but after about 4 attempts I was able to catch a reasonable shot for my wildflower file. Sure made my day!



The Group Doing the "slow stroll" down the trail



Lizard's Tail, Saururus cernuus

#### Where are we Going?

Over the many years of our Chapter, we have visited places far and near to observe & discuss the native wildflowers and plants found within. But there are SO MANY new places to explore & we ask your help! Do you have a special place that you may or may not have visited that you would like for us to schedule for one of our monthly Mangrove Chapter Guided Walks which take place on the last Saturday of each month? Our schedule is being compiled for the 2018 – 2019 season and visits to a few new spots would be exciting! Some may be far (we've traveled as far as Bok Towers) but mostly fairly close (Sarasota to Lee Counties). Please send any ideas to Al Squires at ahsquires1@comcast.net.

Thank you for your continued support!

# Field Trip to Amberjack Slough

The Mangrove Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society invites the public on a trail walk through Amberjack Environmental Park at 6250 Gasparilla Pines Blvd. in Cape Haze, Florida on **March 31, 2018 from 9 am to 11 am**.

Amberjack Park is 225 acres of conservation land, resting upon high ground in the Cape Haze peninsula of Charlotte County. It an interesting combination of scrub and mangrove habitats. Accessed via a boardwalk through a mangrove tunnel, Amberjack Slough provides a prominent feature at the north end of the park, an excellent spot for birding. Elsewhere, the view of pine flatwoods and scrub oak is expansive and panoramic, revealing the gradations between the scrub and mesic ecologies. The scrub environment of Amberjack is home to a large growth of wild rosemary and scattered areas of white sugar sand that was washed down from the Appalachian Mountain range eons ago.

Join us for a relaxing and informative morning as we search out early signs of Spring with Trail Guide, Al Squires.

DIRECTIONS: Travel south on CR 775 (Placida Rd) to Gasparilla Pines Blvd. Turn east onto the boulevard and drive 1.2 miles to the end of the road. Turn into the entrance to the park on the right. Walkers will meet at the kiosk in the parking area.

Directions are also available on the Mangrove Chapter website: <a href="mangrove.fnpschapter.org">mangrove.fnpschapter.org</a>. For more information you may contact Trail Guide, Al Squires at 941-769-3633 or email him at <a href="mangrove.ahsquires1@comcast.net">ahsquires1@comcast.net</a>
We encourage Floridians and our winter visitors to learn more about the importance of Florida's native plants and communities by becoming a member of the Mangrove Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society. The Florida Native Plant Society promotes the preservation, conservation, and restoration of the native plants and native plant communities of Florida. Meetings, field trips and special events are free and open to the public.

Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center and the Charlotte County Natural Resource Department will be conducting the following free guided walks and programs in **March 2018** 

Unless noted, all walks begin at **9:00 AM**. For directions or further information, call Cedar Point Environmental Park at **941-475-0769**WWW.CHECflorida.org

**Thursday March 1** Join **Jim Knoy** on a guided walk through **Tippecanoe II Mitigation Preserve** in Port Charlotte. This 150 acre preserve is home to several families of the threatened Florida scrub jay. Meet in the parking lot.

**Tuesday March 6** Join **Kate Borduas** on a guided walk through 308-acre **Tippecanoe Environmental Park.** This Charlotte County park includes habitats such as scrub, pine flatwoods, marsh and wetlands. Meet behind the Charlotte County Sports Park.

<u>Wednesday March 7</u> Join **Bob "Coop" Cooper** on a guided walk through the old growth pine flatwoods and mangrove fringe of 125-acre **Oyster Creek/Ann Dever Regional Park** in Englewood. Meet at the San Casa entrance.

Wednesday March 7 Explore the "Mysteries of Migration" with Kate Borduas at Bayshore Live Oak Park in Port Charlotte. Kate will focus on the fall and spring migration of birds that we see here in Florida and she will explain how and why birds are able to make these epic journeys. **Reservations** 

advised. Program begins at 10:00 am.

Saturday March 10 Come to Cedar Point Environmental Park in Englewood for the annual Plant Native Day with the theme, "Container Gardening". A partnership with the Mangrove Chapter of the Florida Native Day Society, this half-day event includes lectures, exhibits, free information, nature walk, garden tour, plant sales and refreshments. Events run from 9:30am to 1:00 pm.

Sunday March 11 Join Dave Clayton on a guided walk through the 81-acre Bill Coy/Buck Creek Preserve in Englewood. The scrubby flatwoods and mangrove swamp border Buck Creek, which flows into Lemon Bay. Meet in the parking lot.

Monday March 12 Get wild & wet! Join CHEC naturalist at Cedar Point Park on a Seagrass Adventure Wading Trip into Lemon Bay in search of marine organisms such as sea horse, crabs and juvenile fish. Registration required

**Tuesday March 13** Join **Nancy Clayton** on a guided birding walk through the scrub and pine flatwoods of 217-acre **Amberjack Environmental Park** in Rotonda. Meet at the end of Gasparilla Pines Blvd. **Walk begins at 8 am.** 

**Tuesday March 13** Join **Kate Borduas** on a guided walk through the old growth pine flatwoods and mangrove fringe of 125-acre **Oyster Creek/Ann Dever Regional Park** in Englewood. Meet at the San Casa entrance.

**Wednesday March 14** Join **Bob "Coop" Cooper** on a guided walk through the scrub and pine flatwoods of 217-acre **Amberjack Environmental Park** in Rotonda. Meet in the parking lot at the end of Gasparilla Pines Blvd

**Sunday March 18** Join **Greg Brezicki** on a guided walk through the old growth pine flatwoods and mangrove fringe of 125-acre **Oyster Creek/Ann Dever Regional Park** in Englewood. Meet at the San Casa entrance.

**Monday March 19** Join **Al Squires** on a guided walk through the scrub and pine flatwoods of 217-acre **Amberjack Environmental Park** in Rotonda. Meet in the parking lot at the end of Gasparilla Pines Blvd

**Tuesday March 20** Join **Kate Borduas** on a guided walk through 308-acre **Tippecanoe Environmental Park.** This Charlotte County park includes habitats such as scrub, pine flatwoods, marsh and wetlands. Meet behind the Charlotte County Sports Park.

Wednesday March 21 Lichen enthusiast Kate Borduas hopes to open your eyes to the "Wonderful Whacky World of Lichens", at Bayshore Live Oak Park in Pt. Charlotte. Lichen are a food source for many animals and have been put to multiple uses by man including pollution monitoring. What's not to love about these intriguing and beautiful organisms? Reservations advised. Program begins at 10:00 am.

**Saturday March 24** Join **Cindy Christel and Phyllis Cady** on a guided walk through **Charlotte Flatwoods Environmental Park**, a 487-acre Charlotte County property of mature pines, dry prairie, marsh wetlands and freshwater ponds. Its location adjourning state lands make it an important wildlife corridor. Meet at the parking lot on US 41 at **8:30 am.** 

**Saturday March 24** Come do your part in cleaning up your local environment at the **Great American Cleanup** at **Cedar Point Environmental Park.** Trash bags, gloves, and light refreshments provided. First 20 to register will receive a T-shirt but no registration is necessary.

**Tuesday March 27** Join **Gloria Hansen** on a guided walk through the scrub and pine flatwoods of 217-acre **Amberjack Environmental Park** in Rotonda. Meet in the parking lot at the end of Gasparilla Pines Blvd

Wednesday March 28 Join Bob "Coop" Cooper on a guided walk through the 81-acre Bill Coy/Buck Creek Preserve in Englewood. The scrubby flatwoods and mangrove swamp border Buck Creek, which flows into Lemon Bay. Meet in the parking lot.

Thursday March 29 Get wild & wet! Join Eileen Teel at Cedar Point Park on a Seagrass Adventure Wading Trip into Lemon Bay in search of marine organisms such as sea horse, crabs and juvenile fish. Registration required.

It's time again for Charlotte County's Great American Clean Up! Interested individuals and groups are encouraged to participate in this annual event scheduled for

**Saturday March 24 from 9:00 am to noon.** We will meet at Cedar Point Environmental Park in Englewood and clean up local parks which may include Cedar Point Environmental Park, Oyster Creek Environmental Park and/or Buck Creek Preserve.

This is our country's largest community improvement event and engages 4 million volunteers in 20,000 communities nationwide.

Come help clean up your community. Trash bags, refreshments and T-shirts (to

first 20 who register) will be provided. Just bring a commitment to help. And remember, do your part every day by picking up trash that you see, not just during special clean ups.

Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center, Inc. is a non-profit organization serving

the Charlotte Harbor area with environmental education, recreation, research and

preservation land management. This Great American Clean-up is sponsored by Keep

Charlotte Beautiful and the clean-up locations are a part of the Charlotte County Parks

and Natural Resources Department. For additional information and/or to register for the clean-up, please phone (941) 475-0769.

# The Mysteries of Migration

Join Florida Master Naturalist, Kate Borduas, at 10 AM on Wednesday, March 7 as she discusses, "The Mysteries of Migration", at Bayshore Live Oak Park in Pt. Charlotte.

Kate will focus on the fall and spring migration of birds that we see here in Florida and she will explain how and why birds are able to make these epic journeys.

This program is presented by Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center. Bayshore Live Oak Park is a Charlotte County facility located at 23157 Bayshore Rd, Pt Charlotte, FL 33980. For information and/registration for this FREE program, call 941-475-0769.