Windsor Snapshots Mural by Artist Christy Litster

Details of Individual panels within the larger mural

Mary Ann Shadd
Vinyl and Acrylic on ½" Plexiglass
24" Diameter
Christy Litster, 2017

Anti-slavery activist and publisher, Mary Ann Shadd was the founder and editor of the Provincial Freeman, a newspaper established for the black community of Upper Canada that began publication in 1853. She was an outspoken anti-slavery activist and advocate of women's rights. Born on October 9, 1823, Mary Ann Shadd was raised in a family of free black abolitionists living in the slave state of Delaware. By 1833, the Shadd family had moved to Pennsylvania where Mary attended a Quaker school for black children. After graduating in 1839, Mary became a teacher at the age of 16. In 1850, the United States Congress passed the Fugitive Slave Act. To escape the threat of unlawful enslavement this act posed, Mary would move to Upper Canada and settle in Windsor, Ontario by 1851. In Windsor, she opened a school for black refugees, similarly escaping the threat of enslavement in America.

Mary saw Windsor as a hostile and racially segregated city, describing it as, "the most destitute community of coloured people known in this province." Mary was one of the most outspoken anti-slavery activists in the region. She helped found the Provincial Freeman in 1853, a weekly newspaper for the black community of Upper Canada. Although listed on the masthead as "M.A. Shadd, Publishing Agent," in reality Mary was the editor of the paper. In 1854, Mary publically corrected the misapprehension that "M.A. Shadd" was a man. After clarifying that she was the editor of the Provincial Freeman, the newspapers suffered a backlash of sexist discrimination from readers and other publishers. Mary resigned from the newspaper shortly afterwards, bidding "Adieu" to Freeman readers in the August 22, 1855 edition of the paper. After leaving the Provincial Freeman Mary resumed her teaching career in Chatham, Ontario. In 1856, she wed Thomas F. Cary of Toronto.

During the American Civil War, Shadd returned to the United States to recruit black soldiers for the Union army. After the war, Mary (now a widow after the death of Cary in 1860) moved to Washington, D.C. where she taught school for many years, worked for the welfare of emancipated blacks, and studied law at Harvard University. She graduated Harvard in 1883 at the age of 60. Shadd would also join the National Woman Suffrage Association and worked alongside Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Staton. Mary Shadd died of cancer in 1893; she was 70 years old.

Resources available at the library:

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- From Midnight to Dawn: The Last Tracks Of The Underground Railroad by Jacqueline Tobin (2007).

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Hiram Walker Distillery
Vinyl on Aluminum
Vector Illustration
Christy Litster, 2017

Hiram Walker, born on July 4, 1819, in East Douglass, Massachusetts, was an American entrepreneur and businessman. He was the founder of the Hiram Walker and Sons Ltd. Distillery in Windsor, Ontario. Walker is also known for having purchased land in Windsor, forming what would come to be known as Walkerville, Ontario (which is presently a neighbourhood in the Windsor area).

In 1838, Walker and his family moved from Boston to Detroit, Michigan. There, he started a successful grocery business and learned the process of distilling cider vinegar. In 1854, he produced his first barrels of whisky and, in 1856, aimed to move operations from Detroit to Windsor. After purchasing several plots of land in the Windsor area, Walker built a distillery and flour mill to allow him to continue to produce high-quality whisky. This product, known as Walker's Club Whisky, was immensely popular, and Walker's distillery quickly became one of the largest in Canada.

However, Walker was forced to include "Canadian" in the product's name due to legislation requiring that all products imported to the United States indicate the county in which they originated. By 1910, Walker's Canadian Club Whisky was Canada's top whisky export. He continued to purchase land in Windsor, and, by 1890, this area, known as Walkerville, was incorporated as a town. To the residents of Walkerville, he provided paved streets, street lighting, water, and fire and police services. Walker was also responsible for the construction of a railway which, by 1888, extended from Kingsville to Walkerville and allowed for the transportation of local goods to America.

Walker passed away on January 12, 1899 in Detroit, Michigan at the age of 84.

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- Spencer, D. R. (2008). Hiram walker. The Canadian Encyclopedia.
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Oscar Fleming
Vinyl and Acrylic on 1/2" Plexiglass
24" Diameter
Christy Litster, 2017

Oscar Ernest Fleming (March 17, 1862[1] – after 1929) was a lawyer and politician in Ontario, Canada. He was mayor of Windsor from 1891 to 1893.[1] The son of Samuel Fleming and Sophia M. Harwood, he was born in Milton, Halton County, Canada West and was educated in Windsor. He articled in law in Toronto, was called to the bar in 1885 and set up practice in Windsor. Fleming served two years on the local school board and three years on Windsor town council.[2] He was the last mayor for the town of Windsor and the first mayor after Windsor became a city.[1]

Fleming also served as vice-president of the McAplin Consumers Tobacco Company and as a director for the Standard Paint and Varnish Company of Windsor and of the Windsor Turned Works Company. With his brothers, he was the owner of an office building in Windsor.[1] He was also grand marshal of the Grand Lodge of Ontario.[2]

In 1890, Fleming married Caroline Maud Drake.[2]

In 1919, he became president of the Canadian Deep Waterways and Power Association, an association to promote the building of a seaway connecting the Great Lakes to the Atlantic Ocean.[3]

In 1929, he moved to New York City.[4]

References:

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oscar_Fleming
- 1] ^ Jump up to:a b c d Commemorative biographical record of the county of Essex, Ontario : containing biographical sketches of prominent and representative citizens ... J.H. Beers. 1905. pp. 42–43.
- 2] ^ Jump up to:a b c Cochrane, William (1893). "The Canadian Album: Men of Canada; Or, Success by Example, in Religion, Patriotism, Business, Law, Medicine, Education and Agriculture; Containing Portraits ...". p. 304.
- 3] Jump up^ Stagg, Ronald (2010). The Golden Dream: A History of the St. Lawrence Seaway. p. 114. ISBN 1770705317.

- 4] Jump up^ "Oscar Ernest Fleming". New York, New York Passenger and Crew Lists, 1909, 1925-1957. familysearch.

International Freedom Festival
Vinyl on Aluminum
Vector Illustration
Christy Litster, 2017

The International Freedom Festival was a joint, annual, several days long celebration between Windsor and Detroit in late June that commemorated both Canada Day on July 1, and American Independence Day on July 4. The event drew up to 3.5 million people at its peak, and always culminated in a beautiful fireworks display over the Detroit River.

The event began in 1959, and for most of its existence was sponsored by the J.L. Hudson Company. The festival consisted of various fairs, carnivals, concerts, and shows. In 2007, Windsor and Detroit decided to stop their collaboration, and the International Freedom Festival separated into two different manifestations – the Detroit Riverdays Festival, and the Windsor Summerfest.

Sources:

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Carrousel of the Nations
Vinyl on Aluminum
Vector Illustration
Christy Litster, 2017

Carrousel of the Nations originated in June 1974, when the Arts Committee of Windsor, with the help of a $3,500 grant from the Ministry of Culture and Recreation, presented Windsor's inaugural Multicultural Festival. Held at St. Clair College's Patterson Campus, the first Multicultural Festival was comprised of three days of folk arts, crafts and foods and saw the participation of 27 groups. The weekend's finale featured a concert at the former Cleary Auditorium with eighteen groups performing to an audience of over 800. The festival was regarded as a tremendous success and inspired what we today know as the Carrousel of the Nations.

The following year, with co-operation from the Freedom Festival, a downtown bazaar was held in the Cleary Auditorium parking lot featuring fourteen ethnic food booths together with a large exhibit of cultural artifacts. In 1976, the Ontario Government announced a cultural grants program inviting groups to submit their proposals for the Cultural Olympics.

Formal planning began in February 1976, and the weekend of June 11th was confirmed along with the concept of separate ethno-cultural villages. There are numerous events leading up to the annual Carrousel, which takes place during the last three weekends in June each year.

In 1999, an Expo to the World was held at Windsor's Festival Plaza with the Detroit River and its magnificent skyline as the backdrop. This event gathered together ethno-food, music, dance, arts and crafts in one place giving birth to Expo by the River a preview and prelude to the annual Carrousel of the Nations. Since then, the Multicultural Council of Windsor and Essex County changed the name of Expo to Carousel by the River to merge the two events as one.

Source:

- https://www.carrouselofnations.com/

George William Wiley
Vinyl and Acrylic on 1/2" Plexiglass
24" Diameter
Christy Litster, 2017

Son of Morley Riley and Ethel May (nee Root) Wiley of Windsor, Ontario and brother of Marjorie Rhea, George enlisted in the Royal Canadian Air Force in 1940. He flew a Kittyhawk for the 112th Squadron (RAF), and while supporting the British 8th Army in Tunisia his plane crashed. Flight Lieutenant Wiley was taken Prisoner of War in March 1943 and was sent to Stalag Luft 3. On the night of March 24th, 1944, he and seventy-nine other prisoners escaped from the prison camp through a 400-foot long tunnel. This would become known as “The Great Escape.” He was one of six Canadian airmen shot after being recaptured during escape from Stalag Luft 3.

In 1963, this true escape incident from World War II inspired a movie. The film was called The Great Escape, and starred Steve McQueen, James Garner and Charles Bronson. The movie was directed by John Sturges.

Born: January 24, 1922 London, Ontario
Enlistment: December 4, 1940, Windsor, Ontario
Military Service Number: J/7234
Age: 22
Force: Air Force
Unit: Royal Canadian Air Force
Division: 112 (R.A.F.) Squadron

Citation(s): 1939-45 Star, Africa Star with North Africa 1942-43 Clasp, Defence Medal, Canadian Volunteer Service Medal and Clasp, War Medal 1939-45, Mentioned in despatches.
Burial Information: POZNAN OLD GARRISON CEMETERY , Poland.

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Rosalie Trombley
Vinyl and Acrylic on 1/2" Plexiglass
24" Diameter
Christy Litster, 2017

Rosalie Trombley was born circa 1940 in Leamington, Ontario. In 1968, she was hired by Radio Station CKLW. First, she worked as a receptionist and switch board operator. Later, she was promoted to the music library. She was then asked to become the music director for CKLW. She had the uncanny ability to pick songs that would become big hits on the radio. Because of her ability, she became known as “the Hitmaker” and “the Girl with the Golden Ear.” She continued to influence the play charts throughout the 1970’s and into the 1980’s. She retired from this position in 1984 when CKLW was struggling with Canadian-content regulation. After leaving CKLW, she became the music director at radio station WLTI-FM in Detroit; after that, the music director at CKEY in Toronto.

In 1979 she was honoured by an invitation to attend the White House Dinner for the Black Music Association. At the White House, she met President Jimmy Carter. She received many other awards. In Detroit, she received an award from the Detroit Music City. In 2011, she received an honorary degree from St. Clair College and the Rosalie Trombley Scholarship at the college was established. In 2005, she was awarded the Radio Trailblazer Award – mentoring and inspiring Canadian women in radio. This award was named the Rosalie Award after the first recipient, Trombley. In 2016, the Canadian Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences (CARAS) awarded the Walt Grealis Special Achievement Award to Trombley at the Juno Awards in Calgary. In 2023, the City of Windsor unveiled the Rosalie Trombley Commemorative Sculpture, by artist Donna Jean Mayne, installed at Windsor’s waterfront, and the accompanying commemorative website www.HonouringRosalieTrombley.com.

Rosalie’s ability to spot hit songs influenced the musical careers of Canadian performers including the Guess Who, Bachman Turner Overdrive, and Gordon Lightfoot. Her radio recommendations also launched the careers of U.S. artists Bob

Seeger, Kiss, and Earth Wind and Fire. Alice Cooper gave her credit, and said “We owe her everything”.

Indeed, many music listeners across North America owe her a great deal.

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The Right Honourable Herb Gray
Vinyl and Acrylic on 1/2" Plexiglass
24" Diameter
Christy Litster, 2017

Herbert Eser “Herb” Gray was a Canadian politician. He was born in Windsor, Ontario on May 25, 1941. Gray was a prominent member of the Liberal Party of Canada and held various positions including Deputy Prime Minister, Government House Leader, and Solicitor General of Canada. He passed away in Ottawa, Ontario on April 21, 2014. Gray attended Victoria School and Kennedy Collegiate Institute in Windsor, after which he pursued studies in commerce at McGill University in Montreal, Quebec. He also attended Osgoode Law School in Toronto, Ontario. He received a Bachelor of Law degree, making him a member of the Ontario Bar.

Gray first entered Parliament as a member of Essex West and Windsor West and belonged to the Liberal Party of Canada. He was appointed to the Cabinet in 1969. Having been re-elected as a Liberal in the twelve subsequent elections, Gray holds the longest continuous record as a Member of Parliament in Canadian history. In 1972, he held a position as Minister of National Revenue. In addition, Gray was the Chair of the House of Commons Committee on Finance, Trade, and Economic Affairs; Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance; Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs; and President of the Treasury Board, among others. He was deputy leader of the Opposition from 1989 to 1990 and leader of the Opposition from 1990 to 1991.

Between 1997 and 2002, Gray acted as Deputy Prime Minister, a position given to him by Prime Minister Jean Chretien. He was also named Government House Leader and Solicitor General of Canada during this time. Gray was given the title of Right Honourable by the Governor General on January 15, 2002. Gray’s significant impact as a politician in this region is evidenced by the Rt. Hon. Herb Gray Parkway, a major highway located in Windsor, LaSalle, and Tecumseh.

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Charles Brooks Memorial Peace Fountain
Vinyl on Aluminum
Vector Illustration
Christy Litster, 2017

Trade Union Leader and Community Activist (1916-1977). Charles Brooks was born in 1916 in Windsor. He was seventeen years of age when he began working as a spray painter in a factory, and was employed at Chrysler in 1937. When the union was chartered in 1957, he was elected the first president of Local 444, which represented hourly workers at the Windsor Chrysler facility. He subsequently served eleven consecutive terms until his life was tragically ended in 1977 by a disgruntled fired Chrysler employee.

Holding tenaciously to his commitment to improving the working conditions of the workers of Local 444, Charles Brooks struggled relentlessly to achieve these objectives. Through bargaining and negotiations the workers at Local 444, led by their indomitable President Charley Brooks, won significant improvements in wages, protection against inflation (Cost of Living Allowance), improved working conditions, Supplementary Unemployment Benefits, pensions and relief time.

Charlie Brooks was not just a Trade Unionist, but also demonstrated a humanitarian and social duty to improving the lives of others and was very active in community affairs. He founded the first industrial credit union in Canada and served as President of the Cooperative Dwellings Association. He also served as President of the Canadian Council of the UAW and was named Man of the Year by the United Community Services in 1974 for his efforts in the United Way campaign. Charlie Brooks' twenty-one

years as President, his devotion to duty in the service of the workers and the community and his perspicacity and visionary leadership is credited with laying a solid foundation for Local 444 and its clear social vision.

In honour of his memory and his efforts towards world peace, the Charles Brooks Memorial “Peace Fountain” in Coventry Gardens in Windsor existed as a standing monument to his endeavours and achievements. His memory was also honoured through the establishment of the Charles Brooks Labour Community Service Award, as well as an annual golf tournament which bears his name.

Sources:

- http://www.windsorpubliclibrary.com/?page_id=16727
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The First Minivan
Vinyl on Aluminum
Vector Illustration
Christy Litster, 2017

On November 2, 1983, the world's first minivan rolled off Chrysler's assembly line in Windsor, Ontario. It was the vehicle that saved Chrysler from financial doom — and in the process, shaped the automotive landscape for thirty years to come.

In the late 1970's and early 1980's, there was no ideal vehicle for families. Sedans and station wagons were shrinking to save fuel in the wake of two oil crises. Full-size vans were built on pickup underpinnings, with truck-like driving characteristics and poor fuel economy. The term "sport utility vehicle" had not yet been coined, but the four-wheel-drive vehicles that would later take on that name were rough, unrefined off-roaders, best suited for snowy or rural parts. What was missing from the market was a family vehicle that drove like a car, achieved good fuel economy, and had room enough for a family.

Chrysler's minivan was the first vehicle designed from the ground up to fit that need, and it was a revelation. The boxy design and high roof maximized interior space. A sliding side door made stuffing kids in the back a breeze. Since it was built on a small car platform, it sat lower than a truck--like full-size van, and the front-wheel-drive architecture gave a flat floor for passengers and cargo. It fit in the same parking spaces as a car, but the huge cargo area and rear hatch let it carry everything a suburban family might want to haul around. With the seats removed, it could even haul 4'x8' plywood sheets laying flat, something no sedan or station wagon could do.

Chrysler's van triplets — the Chrysler Town and Country, Dodge Caravan, and Plymouth Voyager — sold like mad. Even after competing American and Japanese brands caught on, Chrysler's minivans still dominated the segment they invented. The success brought Chrysler back from the verge of extinction and into profitability in the 1990's; in 2008, with the company once again teetering, Chrysler still held 41% of the

US minivan market. Just as Chrysler became synonymous with minivans, minivans became synonymous with 1990's suburbia. But even as the craze died down, the influence of Chrysler's original minivan shaped car design.

In the 90's, with gasoline prices dropping to baffling lows, families turned to sport utility vehicles. SUVs had the same rear hatch, cargo capacity and passenger space buyers had come to love in minivans, with a macho image no frumpy Caravan could touch. But the smooth ride of a car-based people hauler was hard to part with. In a weird form of automotive evolution, SUVs started getting lower to the ground, less threateningly truck-ish and more comfortable for running errands. In short, they were turning into minivans.

Take a walk down any suburban street today. Look at what most families drive their kids around in. Chances are it's roomy, car-like, low enough to the ground for short legs to hop in, but with a roof high enough that mom and dad won't hit their heads adjusting a car seat. It's likely got a hatch at the rear, and with the seats folded down it'll swallow up all the sports equipment, camping gear, and kid detritus a parent could want to haul around. Depending on the make and model, it might be termed a sport utility vehicle, a crossover, a wagon, or a people hauler. No matter what people call it, it has been shaped by Chrysler's minivan.

Source:

- http://gizmodo.com/30-years-ago-today-chrylser-invented-the-minivan-and-1457451986

1946 F4 Tornado
Vinyl on Aluminum
Vector Illustration
Christy Litster, 2017

Formed: June 17, 1946 approximately 6:00 pm.
Max Rate: F4 Tornado
Damages: $9.663 million
Casualties: 17 fatalities
Areas Affected: Windsor, Ontario; La Salle, Ontario

The Windsor – Tecumseh Tornado of 1946 was the most powerful tornado, being a category F4 in strength, to ever hit Windsor, Ontario. It happened June 17th 1946. The Tornado touched down near River Rouge, Michigan, then crossed the Detroit River and made landfall in the Brighton Beach neighbourhood of Windsor. It then passed across Southern Windsor and northern Sandwich West Township, Ontario. This was the third deadliest tornado in Canadian history. Seventeen people were killed and hundreds more were injured. Approximately 400 homes were damaged or destroyed, orchards were uprooted and 15 farm buildings were smashed; people were astonished at the intensity of the tornado. Railroad boxcars were thrown off their tracks and tossed onto their sides, roofs of houses were torn off, and some houses were lifted off their foundations. Other buildings were completely destroyed.

The path of the tornado started in Brighton Beach, then went through Sandwich West (now LaSalle), crossed Malden Road, and Huron Line. It then travelled along the 3rd Concession until Howard Avenue, and then continued along Grand Marias Road to Pillette Road. There, it went eastward through Sandwich East and finally lost its destructive force in Tecumseh.

Some people who lost everything still remember it. “You don’t forget,” said Don Sigrist, whose family lost everything in the tornado. “It just seems to play in your memory over and over again.”

Sources:

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Windsor Sculpture Park
Vinyl on Aluminum
Vector Illustration
Christy Litster, 2017

Open year-round. Free admission. Parking available within the park. The Windsor Sculpture Park is a museum without walls, a unique park showcasing more than 31 large-scale, internationally recognized works of contemporary sculpture by world-renowned artists. It is a place of convergence and divergence, difference and similarity. The Windsor Sculpture Park is located on the shores of the Detroit River within Ambassador and Centennial Parks, between the Ambassador Bridge (Huron Church Road) and Art Windsor-Essex (Church Street).

The Windsor Sculpture Park was originally made possible by the generosity of Mr. and Mrs. Louis Odette and the P & L Odette Foundation. The park is maintained by the City of Windsor, Parks and Recreation. For Mr. Odette, it was extremely important to have art in public spaces. He generously donated to Windsor and viewed his gifts as part of the Windsor culture scene - an outdoor public gallery open every day of the year, free of charge to Windsorites and visitors.

The name change to Windsor Sculpture Park reinforces the importance of the sculpture park as a significant cultural asset and a place that welcomes new sculptures donated by other individuals and groups. The Odette Family continues to have very strong ties to Windsor and a strong commitment to recognizing our city as a cultural leader. Mr. Odette's greatest wish was that Windsor's outdoor sculpture park would be widely known and firmly positioned as a Windsor cultural asset. His legacy, including the gifts of numerous sculpture, transformed the riverfront parks. We are truly grateful to the Odette family and their vision for art in the riverfront lands.

View all the sculptures here: https://www.citywindsor.ca/residents/culture/windsor-sculpture-park/sculptures-sculptors.

Sources:

- http://www.windsorpubliclibrary.com/?page_id=15713

Great Canadian Flag Project
Vinyl on Aluminum
Vector Illustration
Christy Litster, 2017

In May, 1980, a man named Thomas G. M. McDade proposed a giant Canadian flag project to then Mayor Bert Weeks and members of Windsor City Council. McDade was new to Windsor from his native Montreal, Quebec. He was very patriotic man. He loved his family and his country, and he had a great and abiding respect for our nation's flag. He recalled having witnessed in person the raising of the "new" Canadian Flag over the Peace Tower in Ottawa on February 15, 1965, and hearing the Prime Minister of Canada, the Rt. Hon. Lester B. Pearson declare:

"May the land over which this new flag flies remain united in freedom and justice; a land of decent God-fearing people; fair and generous in all its dealings; sensitive, tolerant and compassionate towards all men; industrious, energetic, resolute; wise and just in the giving of security and opportunity equally to all its cultures, and strong it its adherence to those moral principles which are the only sure guide to greatness."

Though he worked in earnest to see this project succeed, the proposal for a large and substantial flag in Dieppe Gardens did not pass. Mr. McDade died ten year later never realizing his dream. His idea for a flag lay dormant for many years. Though many have talked about it—some talk predating McDade's proposal —it wasn't until 2012 that the present project began to take shape. In a letter submitted to City Council on December 4th, 2012, a formal proposal was made to City Council to fly a substantial flag—60 ft. by 30 ft.—on a flagpole that rose 150 feet out of the ground just north of the intersection of Ouellette Avenue and Riverside Drive. A detailed proposal dated May 8th, 2013, was directed to the City Clerk in accordance with the City's Plaques, Monuments and Memorials Policy and the Public Art Policy. Windsor City Council approved the project in principle subject to a detailed reporting by City Administration and soil testing to be completed on the proposed site. Soil testing was completed by C.T. Soils and a soil drilling engineering report dated February 25, 2014, was submitted for review. An analysis and review of the project was completed by City Administration and submitted. On Tuesday, February 17, 2015, in a unanimous decision of City Council, the Great Canadian Flag Project was officially approved. The Great Canadian Flag project, originally proposed by Thomas McDade, was about to become a reality!

- Flag pole height above ground – 45.7m (150')
- Size of flag – 18.24m wide x 9.12m high (60' x 30')
- Weight of flag – approximately 45 kgs. (100 lbs)
- Weight of pole – approximately 6,090 kgs. (13,400 lbs)
- Pole finish – epoxy paint

- Hoisting mechanism – electrically operated internal halyard
- Flag illumination – in final design
- Foundation – in final design

Source: http://www.greatcanadianflag.com/