

SUMMER BODY WORKOUT
LAST MINUTE WEIGHT LOSS | BUILD YOUR BEACH MUSCLES

Men's Journal

ADVENTURE LIFE

A Perfect Summer

MAKE EVERY DAY COUNT!

100

REALLY GREAT IDEAS

*Weekend Getaways
Beaches ■ Islands
Mountains ■ Rivers
Day Trips ■ Festivals
Summer Sports*

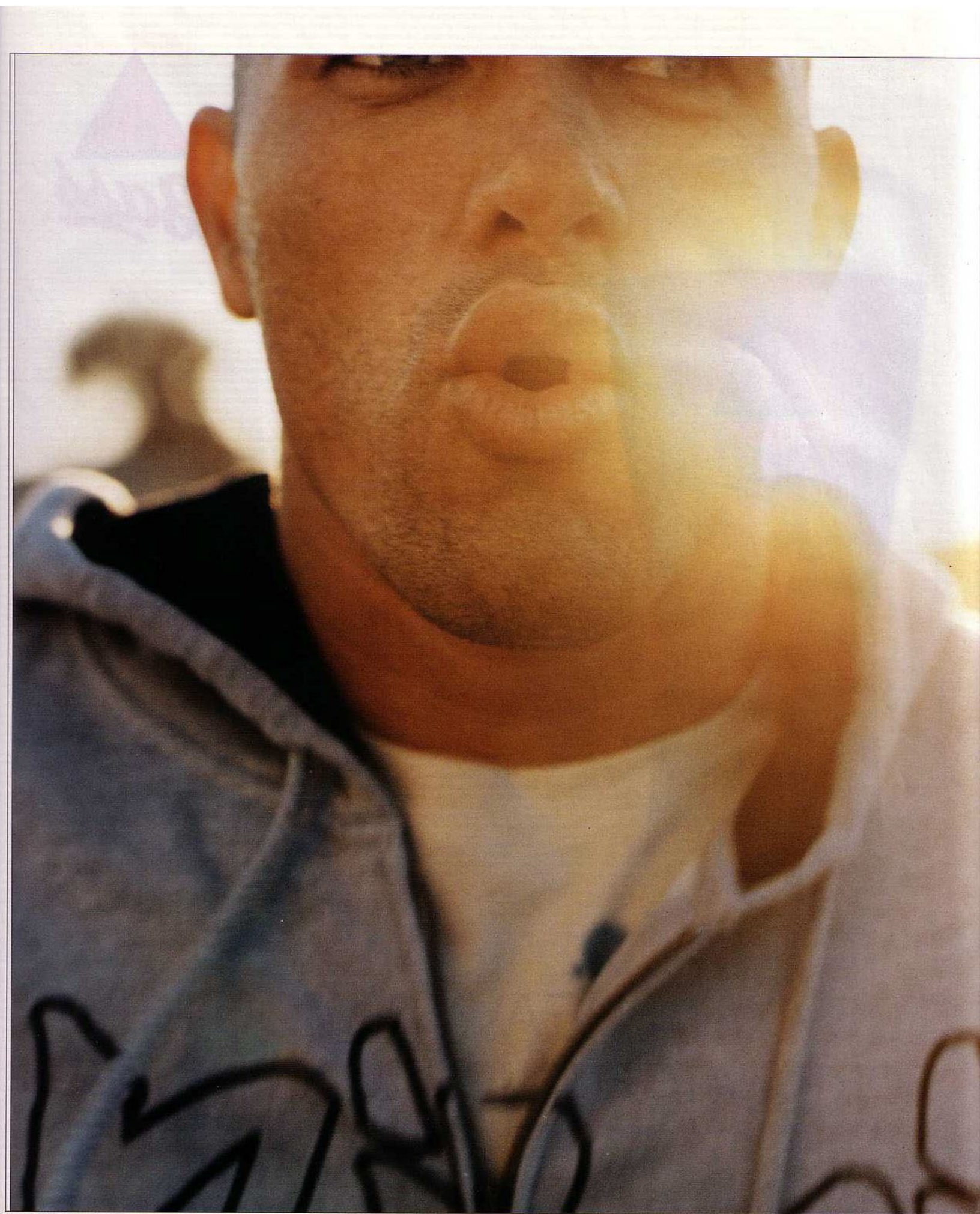
Kelly Slater

*Life Lessons from a Guy Who's Got It All
The Job, the Homes, the Supermodel*

Secrets of the
**NATIONAL
PARKS**
Crowd-Free
Trails, Lodges,
Campsites,
Waterfalls,
Swimming Holes

Gear Guide Sunglasses, BBQs, Coolers, Sunscreens, Running Shoes, Knives, iPod Speakers

June 2006 \$3
mensjournal.com



In the water, on the links, on MTV, and with Gisele,

KELLY SLATER

*lives a life that few can even dream of. His secret?
It all boils down to these few simple rules.*

BY JOSH DEAN PHOTOGRAPHS BY JEFF LIPSKY

STOKED

KELLY SLATER HAS AN IDEA FOR HIS NEW BACKYARD, FOR WHAT IS NOW A patch of dirt and weeds that stretches from his house to an empty dock. It's something he saw at a friend's place in Australia: a putting green, complete with contours and a bunker for kicking up sand. He mentions it to Carl, the contractor in charge of this Cocoa Beach, Florida, condo-in-progress. Carl says that what he had in mind was a bocce court. Slater considers the idea.

"Maybe we do both."

Such are the concerns of Kelly Slater on this warm March afternoon, a few months after winning his record seventh Association of Surfing Professionals (ASP) title. It was his most improbable win, snatched from 27-year-old arch-rival Andy Irons, and it made Slater the oldest champion ever, at age 33. (In 1992, at 20, he was the youngest.) He won, he says, because he felt no pressure, just as he feels no pressure now to win any other contest. And yet, when he flew to Australia for the 2006 season opener, what happened? He won again.

Widely known as the greatest competitive surfer of all time, Slater not only holds every possible record but one, he is also credited with redefining the sport by incorporating skateboard moves such as 360s and aeriels. And despite all that, he has yet to commit to competing for the full season. He could quit tomorrow and supervise home construction (after this one, he'll start work on his North Shore spread). Or he could lie around with his supermodel girlfriend (Gisele Bündchen, if you've been neglecting the tabloids), host MTV specials (a celebrity surf contest aired in March), pimp his Quiksilver clothing collection (new this year), perfect his near-scratch golf game, or help market a new business venture: bringing pro-quality wave pools to the world's landlocked billions.



A 17-year-old Kelly Slater at a contest in Fiji, a year before going pro

Whatever he does in the future, you can bet Slater will have fun doing it. "There will be a few years when I'll just follow swells," he says, as the sun sets over his Cocoa Beach plot. "I'll go to places I've never been: Central America, Peru, Chile, the Philippines, islands in Micronesia and the South Pacific. I might go for a year." He pauses and smiles in a way few men — only those with the vision and the means to live out their fantasies — can. "I might go for five years. I don't know."

Not all of us can retire by 35, but we can still learn from Slater's ethos: that work isn't everything, that happiness comes first, and that, at the end of the day, what's important is that you enjoy your life, wherever or whatever it is. How, exactly? Slater has some ideas.

KNOW HOW TO LET LOOSE (WITHIN REASON)

EVEN WHEN YOU THINK HE ISN'T FOCUSED, WHEN HE MIGHT BE letting down his guard, Slater surprises you. The night after meeting with his contractor in Cocoa Beach, he and his big brother Sean decide to experience the "culture" of their hometown with this reporter and a group of friends. They lead a tour of the many gentlemen's clubs that dot the beach community, starting



Clockwise from above: Slater in his hometown, Cocoa Beach, Florida; winning his seventh world championship, in 2005; with girlfriend Gisele Bündchen

with Lido Cabaret in nearby Cape Canaveral and continuing on to Cheaters, a pink palace abutting the Days Inn. The next morning, when most of the crew are shaking off hangovers, Slater laughs. "I think I had one beer at the first place. I was just drinking ginger ales and Cokes after that. I had to stay on my game to beat the strippers at pool."

EAT YOUR FRUITS AND VEGGIES

THEN AGAIN, MAYBE THE STRIP CLUB TEMPERANCE isn't so surprising. "I read about everything I put in my body," Slater says. His diet is heavy on avocados, almond milk, juices, and organic produce. "I can't always abide by it, because it's unrealistic. You're not always next to a health food store. And it's tough when you're traveling the world. But if at all possible, I eat healthy."

ELIMINATE WORK FROM WORKOUTS

KELLY SLATER, WORLD-CLASS ATHLETE, DOESN'T work out. Really. "Sometimes I lose my surfboard and I have to swim," Slater says. "And I do a little bit of yoga here and there. If I feel as if all of a sudden I need to build up strength and endurance, I kill myself for a week or two. But the best thing for me is to stay limber. You gotta stretch and stay loose. And drink lots of water."

DON'T FORGET YOUR ROOTS

SLATER LOOMS LARGE OVER COCOA BEACH. THERE'S a street, Slater Way, named after him. But the love goes both ways: The two-story condo will soon be one of Slater's three retreats because this town, he says, "will always be home." Cocoa Beach is where Slater grew up and where he learned to surf, at age four. (He

won his first surfing contest at eight and turned pro at 18.) Slater's dad Steve, a bait shop owner, died in 2002 (his parents had split long before), but his mom and two brothers still live here. Sean, 38, works for the board sports company Volcom and is the unofficial mayor of Cocoa Beach. There isn't a resident who doesn't know him. Stephen, 28, is known locally as Skippy and is also something of a town favorite. (True story: When Slater won last season's title, the local weekly paper ran a photo of the two drinking from the trophy cup, under the headline "Skippy's Brother Wins Seventh World Title.")

GET A HOBBY (OR TWO OR THREE)

SLATER MIGHT GO WEEKS WITHOUT SURFING, AND that's just fine. He needs time to work on his golf game and his guitar playing. Slater and his friend Jack Johnson learned guitar together, and Slater still plays every day. "There's a real connection between music and surfing. The same kind of imagination happens," he says. "If there's a sort of family tree in your brain, they're connected on the same branch. I woke up the other morning with an R&B soul song in my head. I dreamed it, and I woke up and was singing it. I was like, Where the hell did that come from?" And the golf? Slater is the leader of the Golf Geeks, a crew of pro surfers who travel the world with their golf clubs. With a handicap under two, Slater is easily the best in the group. "I'd like to get to scratch," he says. "And I'd like to do the senior tour. I could retire for 10 or 15 years and have another career. That's a lot of time to practice."

MAKE YOUR OWN FUN

LOOKING OUT AT THE BREAK OFF COCOA BEACH, where Slater picked up the sport, it's clear that you don't need massive swells to surf. Even with a stiff west-blowing wind that stirs up whitecaps, the

waves here are maybe three feet tall. He says that's actually an advantage, that the reason he's so good on big waves is because he learned on small ones, whereas a guy who grew up surfing Jaws has a lot of trouble making things happen on two-footers.

Similarly, the Golf Geeks don't necessarily require an actual course. They can scratch their itch anywhere, even in their friends' backyards or on the beach. "You just pick something on the beach and hit to it. Say, a beach chair, or a patch of seaweed," he says. "There's no putting. You have to hit it on the fly with your sand wedge or whatever."

APPRECIATE YOUR BUDDIES

SLATER AND JACK JOHNSON FIRST MET AS TEEN-agers, when both were competing in surf events, though neither can recall exactly where or when. And even before Johnson was famous, Slater was into his music. "I actually hired his band to play a party once," Slater recalls. "I paid him, like, \$500. I was probably the last guy to pay Jack Johnson \$500 to play a private gig."

Their friendship has stayed strong through the years. "Jack is one of the biggest artists in the world at this point. And you know what? Thank somebody. Thank the Lord or whoever you thank, because Jack's, like, the best role model for people — men, women, and children. He says the right things. His words are universal lessons of taking responsibility and doing the right things by people and thinking kind thoughts. You listen to him and know he's in touch with people on a one-on-one basis. I've listened to Jack's songs and cried. Sometimes I hear them and it feels like he's trying to tell the story of what I'm thinking."

HAVE NO FEAR

"WE HAVE THIS QUOTE FROM A RACE CAR DRIVER that we always use: 'You're [continued on page 116]"

JOSH DEAN, a former deputy editor of MJ, wrote about the Dodge Viper in the April 2006 issue.

never as real as when you might die.' Your real feelings come out when you're that scared. You surf Pipeline and you're always afraid something's going to happen. The reality is our friends have died there. There's a different instinct that happens on a huge wave. It's deep water, so you're not concerned about hitting the bottom. When you go down, you have to put yourself in Zen mode, like when Happy Gilmore talks about going to his happy place. The way I picture it is that you're in a situation with so much energy throwing you around that you have to put your mind in a place where you're counting numbers, or pretending you're in a pool. You're holding hands with a girl in the park. When you feel it's starting to let you go, that's when you fight it, because you have to get out of that main area of energy in the water. I've had a few really long hold-downs when I thought, I don't know if I'm gonna come up before I black out. But I did, and I didn't take in any water. Obviously, I could have handled a little more."

STOP WORRYING SO MUCH

SLATER GOT OFF TO A ROUGH START IN 2005. He finished a disappointing fifth in the first event, and then dropped to 17th in the second. He was in a downward spiral. He'd always been ruthlessly competitive, to the point where the need for results dominated his life. But this time, the more he

stressed out about his results, the worse he did, and skeptics began to think his skills were vanishing. With nothing left to lose he decided to simply start enjoying himself. And it worked. In the next contest, in a quarterfinal heat against Bruce Irons with 30 seconds on the clock, he caught a beauty and scored a perfect 10. In the finals he scored two more 10s, an ASP record. He won again at the next competition, in Fiji, and suddenly Slater sat alone atop the rankings. "I'm just in the moment. If my mind's not clear, if my mind is elsewhere, I can't compete at my top level. I'm much more tuned into it in competition, because the results are a feedback for me. I notice it. If I'm in the wrong place, if I'm one paddle from where I'm supposed to be, or if the guy next to me gets the wave and I don't, these are little keys that something's not right in your life," he says. "When everything in your life is all lined up, then you do what you do better."

DON'T FOLLOW THE HERD

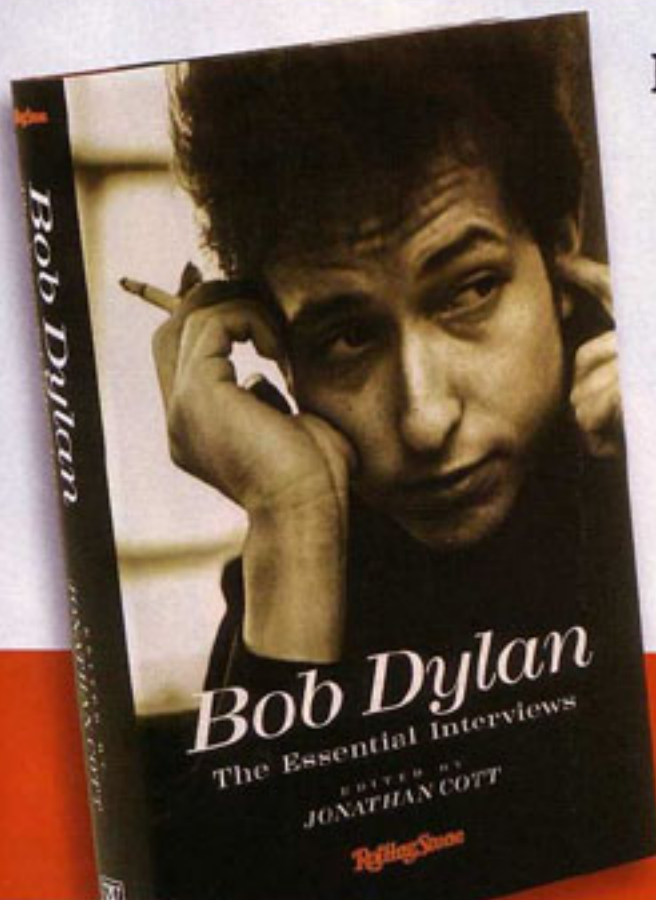
"PART OF THE EXCITEMENT OF THE BIG WAVES is flirting with danger. Shane Dorian wants that, and Laird might want that secretly, even though he says he doesn't care. There's a handful of guys who do want it, and I think it's awesome that guys are putting themselves on waves that I never thought could be ridden. It's awesome that somebody surfs the biggest wave that this earth has. But adrenaline doesn't rule me. I don't care if I get the biggest wave of the year."

CONNECT WITH YOUR DAD

IN 2002, SHORTLY AFTER REJOINING THE ASP tour full-time, Slater got some terrible news. His father, with whom he'd recently reconciled after having a strained relationship for many years, was losing his fight with throat cancer. Slater flew home to Cocoa Beach and, along with his brothers, stayed at his dad's side until he died. "It was important to do that," he says. "I got to spend some time and ask him some questions that a son wants to hear his father answer. It's strange to think I'll never ever see my father again. It's a strange feeling, but I'm comfortable with it now."

NEVER, EVER, EVER STOP

EVEN THOUGH HE'S FULLY CONTENT WITH HIS enviable life, Slater's not about to settle down into a routine. He'll always keep pushing, always try new paths to fulfillment. "I've got my eye on this seaplane," he says. He doesn't yet know how to fly, but there's "a one-week crash course" he's contemplating. If you can forgive the unfortunate word choice, you have to admire the idea, especially when Slater explains it in greater detail. "It's more of a long-term goal. I'm just starting to do my research. I call it the ultimate surf vehicle. Land outside the break; anchor it right in the surf. There are all these islands in Central America, off of Panama and El Salvador, that no one's surfed. I can just pick up some friends, fly down, buzz the breaks, pick a spot, set down, and surf." ☐



Bob Dylan: The Essential Interviews captures Dylan's essence with 31 of his most significant and revealing interviews.

"Some people work in gas stations and they're poets. I don't call myself a poet because I don't like the word. I'm a trapeze artist."

- DYLAN

At your local bookstores
now or online at
www.wennerbooks.com
\$23.95 US / \$32.95 Canada



Among the highlights are groundbreaking interviews—anthologized here for the first time—with Jann Wenner, Kurt Loder, Nat Hentoff, Studs Terkel and Nora Ephron among others.