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Believe it or not it is more difficult to gather Jew's Harp news than you might think. That's why so many JH newsletters and journals have been published at "irregular intervals..." Like many of the other endeavors in my life, it is either feast or famine. And, being primarily a percussionist, timing is everything... so sometimes I wait until the "timing is right" to get a newsletter started. This usually means that in the space of a day or two, a whole bunch of JH related tidbits hit my inbox and I take that as THE sign to get in to gear. If that doesn't happen to happen by the time I'm feeling stressed about the newsletter, and I have already scoured the "usual suspects," it's time to start calling in a favor or two. Luckily, in my position, favors are easily given and repaid and my correspondents rise to the occasion and come to the rescue. Unfortunately, over the last few newsletter cycles, I've already called in all the JH favors I feel I am allowed... and I'm already in debt to a few folks (no worries.). This is all fine and good, but I (we, the JHG) take our responsibility to our members to publish a newsletter three times a year ("including double-issues") very seriously!

The "festival issue" of this newsletter is most times a no-brainer, other than pulling some arms to submit reports & pics from what-ever given fest someone may have attended. This year, however, given the economic situation which appears to have touched us all, the input has been purdy darn sparse. A brief perusal of the websites of formerly-mentioned festivals shows that attendance in general has been much lower and many of my contacts could not make the trip; or the entire event had to be cancelled (i.e. Ancient Trance Festival in Germany).

Here we do give you a taste of this year's NAJHF... and maybe of the next one. We hope to inspire you to take part in this, and other JH festivals around the world. This is a unique musical instrument with a unique following. Help us sustain this art with your input. As always contact us at newsletter at jewsharpguild.org or write the JHG.



The 2009 NAJHF Logo embroidered patch is now available for purchase—See Page 9



A Word from the Executive Director Janet Gohring

Hello Harpers,

As the end of another year approaches, I hope this finds all of you enjoying fond memories of the past year. This is our special NAJHF issue of the Pluck 'N' Post. I hope you will consider it the 'next best thing to actually being there'. Many, many thanks to Ingrid Berkhout (and others) who took photos to share with all of us.

Festival News:

Certainly one of the highlights of my year was attending the NAJHF in Bay City. This was the first festival I've been able to attend in 5 years and I had surely missed seeing all of my Jew's harp friends! Unfortunately, my hubby, Bill, wasn't able to attend this year ... much to the disappointment of everyone, he was greatly missed. But my sister, Joanne, came to the festival with me and we had a great time singing and playing piano together.

The backdrop drawing that Neptune Chapotin created at last year's festival became the T shirt logo for this year. It is very beautiful and dramatic on the black T shirt. Neptune was also able to enlist some of his friends in India to make em-

broidered patches of the logo. We have a supply of the patches for sale ... and they will be included in the Guild's 2010 "incentive" to become a "Top Twanger" member (see membership form).

I was very impressed with the quality and quantity of Jew's harp players who performed at this year's festival: I hesitate to mention names in case I leave someone out ... but it was great to hear all our 'regular' festival harpers (you know who you are). And what a joy to meet and hear Jew's harpers attending their first NAJHF: Jeff Greene (from New York City), Kenneth Dean (from Albuquerque, NM), Deidre Morgan (from Vancouver, BC), Gary Nunokowa (from Bellevue, WA), and several 'newbies' from Oregon. They all provided such a wide variety of entertaining performances that I almost burst from the sheer wonder of it all!

Of course, the festival wouldn't be the same without the "back up" and unusual instrument musicians who regularly attend and lend their musical expertise to accompany the Jew's harps ... folks like Jim Nelson, Gene Ralph, Joe Wrabeck, Curtis Chamberlain, Rob Hoffman and others who provide the "solid foundation" to our bands.

The new sound system and tiered spectator seating funded by the Bay City Arts Center were

AWESOME ... as was Jim Nelson (who researched and purchased the new sound equipment AND spent hours on end at the mixing table ensuring we had the best sound possible). I don't know what we'd do without them! And did I mention the excellent FOOD provided by the BCAC? As always, it was delectable and most appreciated.

Of special interest

was Deidre Morgan's presentation of her master's thesis presentation: "Organs and Bodies: The Jew's Harp and the Anthropology of Musical Instruments". You can access her thesis at the following website:

<https://circle.ubc.ca/handle/2429/1559>



Deidre Morgan

My deepest thanks go to everyone who participated in making this year's festival unforgettable!

I think it admirable that, despite all of our busy schedules, so many of us set aside this time to come together and have a twanging great weekend to share our love of this mystical little instrument. Some of us go to great extents to attend the festival, while some of us find our best efforts foiled (see the related story in this issue of Sushil Gautam from India).

Guild News:

2010 Guild Membership renewal – If you have not yet renewed your Guild membership for 2010, a renewal form will be included in this newsletter. If no membership form is included, you have already paid for 2010.

2010 Ballots for election of Officers – If you were not present at the Jew's Harp Guild Board meeting following the festival, you will find your 'ballot' for election of officers included in this newsletter.

Our best wishes go out to our webmaster, Mark Poss, who is recovering from surgery.

PLUCK-N-POST

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newsletter@jewsharpguild.org

Janet Gohring - Executive Director

Mark D. Poss - Editor, Pluck-N-Post & Webmaster

The Jew's Harp Guild is a non-profit organization under section 501C(3) of the Internal Revenue Service code of 1954.

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We're on the Web
www.jewsharpguild.org

To conclude, I want to personally thank each one of you for your membership in, and support of, the Jew's Harp Guild ... YOU are the ones who enable the Guild to continue its services. We are, indeed, in troubled economic times and the Guild feels the pinch of declining membership. We are cutting costs wherever possible and urging our members to sign up for electronic subscriptions to the newsletter. As always, we remain committed to sharing our information via the internet or regular mail, at no cost to those who are interested. Without your continued support, these services would no longer be possible.

Here's to better and brighter times that will surely be enhanced by more 'VIBRATIONAL TONES TO THE HEAVENS' ... so KEEP TWANGIN' !!!

See you here next time, Janet Gohring

Executive Director

The Jew's Harp Guild 



Jew's Harp Guild membership:

Welcome to our newest "Top Twanger" Jeff Greene (above) New York City

Sushil's Foiled Attempt to Attend the NAJHF:

Sushil Gautam is from Nepal, India and is the President of the Jew's Harp Forum Nepal. He applied for a VISA to attend the 2008 NAJHF and was denied. The application cost him \$130, and since the fee was good for one year, he decided to attempt a VISA for the 2009 NAJHF.


Sushil lives in a remote village near Nepal. During the monsoon season the month prior to the festival, he was in the fields planting rice. For each step of the VISA process, he had to travel to the US Embassy in Katmandu, which was far from his village and not easy for him.

Sushil is a part-time music teacher; he also mixes instruments in studio recordings and conducts stage performances at the Orbit International College in Katmandu. The Orbit College offered to be the host organization that would sponsor his trip to America, paying for his air fare, lodging and food. He had enough money to pay for travel insurance and other travel costs ... and had all the required paperwork. Despite all these things, the US Embassy denied his VISA, saying he did not have enough financial resources. They told him, "There is an economic crisis in the world, so you may overstay in the USA

like many others." Even when he assured them he had a new wife, a job and a career as a musician in Nepal, that he had every reason in the world to return to India, still he was denied.

By this time it was July 21 ... only two weeks from the festival ... and he felt it was too late to start an appeal.

Despite this obvious disappointment for himself (and to us!), he remained very positive by writing: "Please convey my invitation to all your Jew's harpists to NEPAL IN 2011. You can give them my email (murchunga@gmail.com) . Jew's Harp Forum Nepal will organize a Jew's Harp Guild ('Murchunga Utsavae' in Nepalese language) to be held in the "lap" of Mt. Everest, Katmandu and Pokhara (in three places). This will be a big program but our organization apologizes that it cannot afford to help pay for air fare. Other lodging, food and local transport will possibly be provided by our local supporters."

So, put Nepal 2011 on your calendars. Sushil will keep us updated as this event progresses ... and we will include updates in the Pluck 'N' Post.—JG 

NAJHF

2009

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18th NAJHF— July 30 & 31, 2010

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Or use the
Feedback Form: www.jewsharpguild.org

From: Wright, Michael
Subject: **The Pickard Family**

Greetings from across the water. Last week I got hold of a CD of The Pickard Family, with Obed Pickard playing the most fantastic Jew's harp - some of the best melodic playing I've heard. Has anyone done any research into the family - I presume most if not all are dead now, but I'm hoping someone in your Society has done some research on them and if so, I'd like to make contact.

—
Fred Crane responds:

You'll find most of your answers in Bob Butts's article on the Pickards in VIM 4 (1994), pp. 18-26.

—
And I found some *Grand Ol Opry* shows on YouTube featuring the family as well as a few other cuts. See:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=erUIYQaO2EM>

"Daddy Bubb" Obed Pickard, Jr. from an original 78rpm disk. "Great mouth harp work on this 1929 recording of the traditional folk tune "Sally Goodin" by Obed "Dad" Pickard."

Little else seems to be known about the family after the death of Obed. [Can anybody help? - Ed.]

From Aksenty Beskrovny
in Russia
khomus.info

Hello!

My name is Aksenty. I am jew's harper from Russia.

I recently recorded an album of jew's harp music. Album is free and you can download and listen to the link:

<http://en.khomus.info/>

I would be grateful if you place your announcement of the album on your website. I will be very interesting to get feedback from the jew's harpers from other countries.

From: Daniel Fidler
email: [dopplefurzer at yahoo.com](mailto:dopplefurzer@yahoo.com)
Subject: Where can I find tang steel

Hello, I have just begun to look at your excellent newsletter this evening. I would like to make my own jaw harp. Could you tell me where I might purchase steel for the tang. I have some steel that might do the job, but wasn't sure if I should heat treat it. Where do all the makers get their tang steel?

From: jackie janssens
email: [info at arttout.be](mailto:info@arttout.be)
Pease can you keep me informed [about the NAJHF]. I'm from Belgium and a musician. Who do I have to contact to participate. Here are some links from the group:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8TTNLCfgr0>
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LG1Tm8uqiMM>
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4xq4mAg7znY>

Thanks, Jackie Jassnes [these are pretty good. Ed.]

Now on Facebook

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Jews-Harp-Guild/172020557199?ref=ts>

Or search Jew's Harp Guild

We're just getting started.

**Become a fan— Chat in real time
Help spread the word**
Contact me if you want to help. [Ed.]



A BIG THANK YOU!

To Ingrid Berkhout and Jim Nelson for all the great photographs they sent. The NAJHF 2009 photos used in this newsletter were all contributed by Ingrid

An Orchestra Musician's Perspective on the North American Jew's Harp Festival

by Ken Dean



Ken Dean is a New Mexico Symphony Orchestra musician and an active member of the Church of Beethoven in Albuquerque, New Mexico

NAJHF 2009 Performers:

Adam Sears Tennessee, (Jew's Harp)
Bruce Hodges Portland, OR (Jew's harp)
Charles Davis Venonia, OR (Autoharp, Bones, Jew's harp) - **Curtis Chamberlain** Portland, OR (Uke, Jew's harp) - **Deidre Morgan** Vancouver, BC (Jew's harp, geengong) - **Gary Nunokawa** Bellevue, WA (Didgerido, Jew's harp, Shakers) - **Gordon Frazier** Seattle, WA (Jew's harps and bones) - **Ingrid Berkhout** Seattle, WA (Jew's harp, singing bowls) - **Jane Greenbaum** - **Jerry Stutzman** Hillsboro, OR (jazz singer, Jew's harp, misc. percussion) - **Janet Gohring** Cove, OR (piano, vocal, Jew's harp) - **Jeff Greene** New York City, NY (Jew's harp, various percussion, Yayli Tambur, mouthbow, mandolin and overtone flutes) - **Joanne McCarthy** Arlington, OR (piano, vocal, misc. percussion) **Joe Wrabeck** Garibaldi, OR (Guitar) - **Jon Hanzen** Roseburg, OR (Harmonica, Guitar, Jew's harp, spoons) - **Ken Dean** Albuquerque, NM (Jew's harp, other percussion)
Marcus Tenaglia Portland, OR (Jew's harp)
Nikki Jones Portland, OR (Uke, Washboard, Kazoo, Cat & Canary whistles, Jew's harp)
Ralph Christensen Eureka, CA (Jew's harp, spoons)
Richard Ackerman Garibaldi, OR (Guitar, Jew's harp)
Rob Hoffman Portland, OR (Jew's harp, celtic harp, autoharp and other "strange stuff")
Robert Lichner Garibaldi, OR (Musical Saw, Harmonica, Jew's harp)
Robert Wilson Huntington, OR (Jew's harp)
Roger Tendick Veneta, OR (Jew's harp, Harmonica)
Terry Hughes Portland, OR (Guitar, Mandolin)
Toni Cole Oceanside, OR (Guitar)

I first took up the Jew's Harp 10 years ago in order to play Charles Ives' Washington's Birthday. At that time I found out about the North American Jew's Harp Festival and the other activities of the Jew's Harp Guild. My usual Summer activities wouldn't allow me to attend the Festival until now. I must say that I am very glad I came.

After seeing some videos of the festival it was apparent that this wasn't going to be quite like any of the festivals I usually attend: Slickly organized, high stakes (for the performers) affairs where most people are very careful not to explore beyond the expectations of those in attendance.

Orchestra players tend to be a pretty jaded bunch, so it takes some work to get out of a "seen it all" attitude. Our world is one of precision: Exact rhythm, precise intonation and careful phrasing. We can get so wrapped up that we forget there are other ways of making good music.

It was refreshing to come to a place where exploration and experiment were the main

focus. The workshops, lectures and performances told the same story: It is the nature of the Jew's Harp that invites exploration, inward and outward. There are so few expectations for the instrument that one is free to go in any direction they wish.

There was something for everyone at this festival, from basic instruction to Deirdre Morgan's lecture and demonstration from her Master's thesis.

Everywhere I turned people were having fun trying new instruments, learning new techniques and discovering different cultures. All this in a tremendously supportive and friendly atmosphere. Even before I entered the door someone was helping me find my way.

So this is a different kind of festival. If you want to try new things or just be in a friendly nurturing atmosphere for a little while this is the place for you. I urge all of you to come and see for yourselves.



See a photo gallery of NAJHF 2009 at:

<http://www.jewsharpguild.org/images/Fest2009/index.htm>

Another Year in the Life of a UK Jew's Harper

by Michael Wright



Michael Wright,
IJHS General Secretary,
Newsletter Editor



The 6th
International
Jew's Harp
Congress will
be held in
Kecscemet,
Hungary July
2nd - 4th 2010.
For more infor-
mation contact
Aron Szilagy.

[http://www.widgetwell.com/
internationaljewsharpsociety](http://www.widgetwell.com/internationaljewsharpsociety)

In 2007 I wrote something on what had been a pretty exciting year. 2008 proved to be rather quiet, though I did a few talks, the odd performance and was involved in the first go of The Wright Family, (John, David, David's daughter, Lucy and myself), at getting our music recorded.

2009 has gone a bit manic again. The Wright Family continued their recording and now have a basic recording, though we recognise it needs mastering. I'm looking to get something on a website (one of the many projects waiting for my attention, though).

In April I started working with a very exciting singer, Sam Lee, and a banjo player, Ed Hicks. We've been joined by a multi-talented, multi-musician, Dogan Mehmet, and a bass player, Laurel Swift performing as The Gillie Boys ('Gillie' being the Romany word for 'song'). Sam has a great ear for musical arrangements - Jew's harp, banjo, fiddle/mandolin, bass and voice is unusual over here, even if it's not over where you are. He also has the knack of picking up gigs, the most weird being a builders safety awards dinner! More normal bookings have been at Sidmouth Folk Week, Whitby Folk Week, the Musical Traditions Day in Suffolk (eastern England) and various concerts, the most impressive being 'The Ballad of Britain' concert in London reviewed by the national UK newspaper The Guardian. The good news is that my playing was described 'pulsing' and the band 'added brilliant backing to Lee's baritone', though the bad news was that they said I was playing a mouth organ! Not happy, but at least they gave us five stars.

The Wright Family were also booked at Whitby Folk Week, performing at five concerts and running a week-long workshop culminating in a showcase performance by about fifteen of the participants. Very worthwhile, if rather demanding. We, that is Lucy, David and I, have also done or have offers for a few of gigs, though we still see ourselves as 'work in progress'.

On the research front my focus has been on the USA - or to be more accurate, the Colonial America period. It all started last year when I was

told about a fantastic newspaper website that led me to around 500 entries of storekeepers importing Jew's harps from mainly England from 1733 to 1782. This expanded to over 2,000 after a pointer from Fred Crane. The most interesting find is one of the earliest uses of the word 'jaw harp'. It was only used for about a ten year period in the 1760's and at the same time as the usual 'Jew's harp', but is the first use in advertising I've come across to date. There is also mention of 'Stonybatter Jew's harps'. Is there anybody who can shed light on that name? The article is supposed to be published by the Galpin Society Journal, though it seems to be stuck with the editor at the moment. I'm hoping it will be in next year's journal - and if not, the IJHS journal for sure. As a taster, you might enjoy this:

Intelligence Extraordinary

Great complaints having been made of the bad quality of the sixty thousand pounds worth of Jews harps and razors, sent out last year by Mr. contractor Knox for our Indian allies in North America! The lords of the treasury, that they may not be again deceived, it is said, have been pleased to appoint (with a salary of 200l. a year) doctor Duncan Moffat, one of the American refugees, to be essay-master of all the Jews-harps, fifes, bagpipes, and other instruments of wind music, that may in future be sent out; and that he, the said doctor, or essay-master, shall personally make trial of every such Jews harp, and see that it accords and sounds well to the tune of Yankee Doodle, before it be shipped to our great and good allies, the brave savages in the western world. Pennsylvania Packet., 10th March 1781.

Finally, earlier this year I was asked to put together an exhibition for the University of Oxford, Faculty of Music, Bate Collection of Musical Instruments. It has run since June of this year and will be up until the end of November.

So, like I said, all a bit manic, but would we want it any other way? Be good to see those of you who get to Hungary next year.

TTFN* (for those who remember Sergeant Bilko).— Michael

*"Ta, ta for now!" - a fond farewell.



THE GOLEM

Another 'harp made by Steven Stoops

Of the Netherlands

See and hear his creations at:

jewsharper.com



SHOW-N-TELL

"Show-N-Tell" is a recurring feature of *Pluck-N-Post*. Please submit your own photos and stories. Do you have an unusual Jew's Harp, or one with an unusual history? We'd love to hear about them.

<http://jewsharpguild.org/PicSubmit.html>

CLASSIC JEW'S HARP ALBUM COVER

This photo was taken by Ingrid at NAJHF 2009. Sonny Terry, best-known as a harmonica player from the Southeast, was born Saunders Terrell in 1911 in Greensboro, North Carolina. In 1985 he was heard in the soundtrack of the Oscar-winning movie *The Color Purple*. [I suspect he was the JH player in that film—Ed.]

Sonny Terry died in 1986

<http://www.myspace.com/sonnyterry>



Band #1

- Janet Gohring
- Joanne McCarthy
- Dan Gossi
- Katherine C.
- Ingrid Berkhout
- Jon Hansen

Band #2

- Jim Nelson
- Karen ?
- Rob Hoffman
- Terence Hughes
- Bruce Wayne
- Joan Broughton

Band #3

- Gene Ralph
- Elizabeth Nelson
- Marcus Tenaglia
- Denise Harrington
- Charles Davis
- Jeff Greene

Band #4

- Toni Cole
- Ken Dean
- Jerry Stutzman
- Deirdre Morgan
- Roger Tendick
- Adam Sears

Band #5

- Alice Ralph
- Gordon Frazier
- Toni
- Gary Nunokawa
- Meg Moss
- Ralph Christensen



Did you forget who was in your band?

Here's a reminder

PLUCK-N-POST

NAJHF
2009

The Russians Are Coming!

A Last Minute Note from Gordon Frazier

Date: Wednesday, December 09, 2009



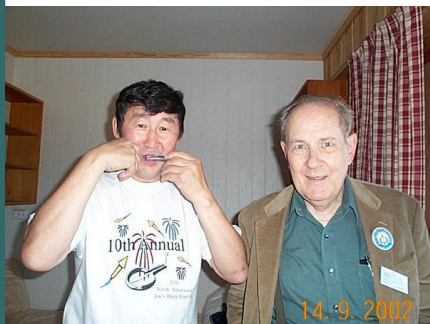
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2010

Last week Ivan Alekseev, Spiridon Shishigan, and Spiridon's brother Nikolay were in Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, visiting Fred Crane. The main reason for the visit was that Fred wanted to

donate his collection of early American and English trumps to the [International Khomus Museum](#) back in Yakutsk (in eastern Siberia), so the three were there to receive the donation (and bestow Fred with honors). Larry Hanks and I went to Iowa as well, making it a reunion of sorts as Ivan, Spiridon, Larry, Fred, and myself were all attendees at the Yakutsk Jew's Harp Congress in 1991. Anyhoo, a grand time was had by all; see the next newsletter for a full report.

But how does this directly affect the next North American Jew's Harp Festival? you may ask. What an excellent question! For at some point during our visit, Spiridon told me that they were very keen to attend our festival next summer, as they have valid visas and want to make use of them while they're still good. They are quite serious about this -- they have fundraising support back home, and all they need is the letter of invitation from us to make it happen. That means knowing how many are coming, and how long they are staying, and I think maybe which cities they will be visiting.

So I told Spiridon I thought we could probably offer room, board, and LOCAL transportation, but I would want to check in with the gang concerning details before I made any promises. And I'll be emailing them again to make sure they are aware of the specific scope and size of our festival. By the way: For those who don't know these guys, they are really, really, really good.




Spiridon Shishigan and Fred Crane at the Norway Congress

Questions for y'all:

1. How many guests could we handle? It would be Ivan and Spiridon for sure, but they could bring literally dozens more, just a matter of how much airfare they can raise and how many people we can handle. (Realistically, what, four to six?) Neither of them have much in the way of English skills, by the way, so if they brought a younger player or two who knows English that would be darned handy. Putting at least some of them up in tents at the campground is, I think, a viable option.
2. Speaking of translators: Does anyone know Russian, or German? (Spiridon knows German fairly well.) Myself, I can order a beer, and ask where the toilet is, in both languages. I also know "Take me to the American embassy."
3. Could we offer transportation from the airport?
4. For the Iowa trip, they made stops in Boston and Washington, D.C., and I think they gave concerts in both places where they earned some money to offset their airfare costs. I think I could scare up a gig in Seattle for them, but I'd want to start now. Does anyone have other thoughts in that regard? Portland, Bay Area, Vancouver BC? Is it a good idea at all?
5. They will certainly be bringing some nice khomuses with them to sell, as well as CDs and souvenirs. (A good khomus can run \$100 to \$250, so start saving them pennies!) I guess that's not really a question.

SOOO ... whattya think?

Gordon 

Learn more about these folks at:
[International Khomus Museum](http://www.sitc.ru/culture/museum/vargan/index_e.html)
http://www.sitc.ru/culture/museum/vargan/index_e.html

Translators, Promoters, Folks in the Portland area... CAN YOU HELP?

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- ___ Bumper Sticker "Harpers Do It With Spring" US\$3 ea
- ___ World of the Jew's Harp Postcard US\$2 ea

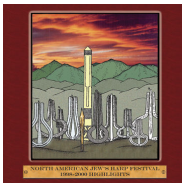
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"HARPERS" DO IT WITH SPRING!
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North American Jew's Harp Festival 1998 - 2000 Highlights

"Twenty-two samples from three years of the NAJHF are as diverse as anyone could imagine. There are a passel of world-class players; wonderful solo improvisations; compelling duets; tradition; frivolity."

- Fred Crane, PNP 2003

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