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Historical Society of Santa Rosa

The photo at right shows the ferris wheel on the midway at the Sonoma County Fair in 1955. (Courtesy Sonoma County Library Photo Collection)

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Stanroy Music Center: 78 Years of History

by Denise Hill

Stanroy Music Center is the oldest full-service music store in Sonoma County. In the early years, the store was widely known throughout the area as a magnet for local guitar players and a go-to spot for everything from sheet music and records to school band instrument rentals, local concert tickets, and instrument repairs.

The store had its grand opening on February 26, 1947 with special performances by Clancy Hayes, Dick Gray and his Orchestra, and Phil Ford and the Fil-Tones and featuring "listening booths." Nowadays you can easily listen to new songs on your personal device, but this wasn't the case in the past. Many music stores in the 1950s introduced special sound-isolating booths where customers could sample new "vinyl" without having to wear headphones.

741 Fourth Street. In 2008, struggling against the economic downturn, the store moved across the street to its third location at 640 Fourth Street.



Stanroy Music's Former Fourth Street Storefront
Courtesy Stanroy Music Website

The original owner, Stan Goldman, opened the store on Fourth Street in Santa Rosa when he returned to his hometown after serving in various army bands during World War II. His partner, cousin Roy Chilton (thus the name Stan-Roy), left the business to Stan after the first year. That store grew to become the leading music store in the North Bay. Goldman ran Stanroy for 33 years until selling it in 1980 to Tupper & Reed, which had stores in Berkeley and Oakland. Three years later, Steve Shirrell started working there and never left. After purchasing it, the store was moved from its initial location at 622 Fourth Street to its second and largest location,

In 2013, Stanroy Music Center reinvented itself once again. Hearing in April that Tupper & Reed planned to close Stanroy Music Center in August, Steve Shirrell and Dustin Heald purchased the store. Heald was a salesman at Stanroy from 2001 to 2004 before embarking on a career as a Hollywood special effects artist. He was selling insurance when Shirrell called him. Realizing the potential to work at a job more aligned with his creative talents, Heald agreed to become a partner with Shirrell.

In 2014, the business moved into a newly renovated building at 850 Fourth Street, the fourth and final location thanks to a 99-year lease. The new storefront provided plenty of space for comfortable lesson studios and extra room for a legendary brass and woodwind repair shop – one of the largest instrument repair facilities in the state. The store is also

Records
for everyone's taste
FROM THE LARGEST STOCK
IN THE REDWOOD EMPIRE
3 Listening Booths
STANROY
MUSIC CENTER
BETSY ROSE SPINETS
622-4th St. SANTA ROSA Phone 862

Stanroy Advertisement
Press Democrat
August 13, 1954

Continued on page 6

Message from the Board

We hope you enjoy this summer newsletter, which is devoted to music. From performance venues to bands, we hope you learn something new about Santa Rosa history.

If you've always wanted to research your ancestry or have been met with a "brick wall" in doing so, you might consider the free online classes for seniors at the SRJC through the Lifelong Learning Program. Signups for the fall semester have already begun. For more information: <https://lifelong.santarosa.edu/>

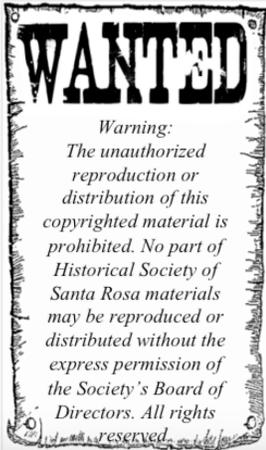
The HSSR Board was saddened to learn that local historian Jeff Elliott passed away in June. Elliott's singular blog, SantaRosaHistory.com, provides more than 800 original articles about Santa Rosa and Sonoma County history. Elliott participated in HSSR webinars on Santa Rosa Creek and Santa Rosa's red-light district and was a contributor to this newsletter. His documentation of local history is unparalleled.

From the 19th Century

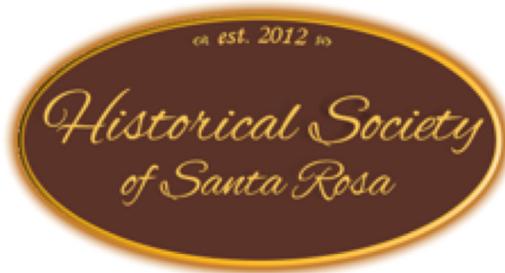


This image shows the Athenaeum, a large performance venue built in 1884 at Fourth and D Streets in downtown Santa Rosa. The ground floor included the post office and a fire company.

Courtesy Museum of Sonoma County Collection



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Want to Contribute Content for the HSSR Newsletter?

The HSSR seeks Santa Rosa-centric memoirs and research-based articles for the newsletter. For more information, contact us at Newsletter@HistoricalSocietySantaRosa.org

The HSSR Acknowledges Its Donors and Patrons

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Our events and programs are made possible through membership renewals and the generosity of our members and community partners

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Welcome New HSSR Members

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Creativity and Innovation Thrived at Studio KAFE

By Lisa Kranz

Studio KAFE was a full-service restaurant and bar with live entertainment and its own cable radio station – KAFE FM. The venue opened in Spring 1987 at 418 Mendocino Avenue, site of the former Sundance Nightclub and currently the location of the Felix Santa Rosa, a recently completed, 8-story apartment building.

Studio KAFE was unique and innovative, focused on bringing a wide variety of entertainment to Santa Rosa while offering radio programming at 96 FM. The radio booth was at the front window in the small venue, and guests and passersby could watch the DJ at work. The sound engineer was upstairs in the “skybox” mixing the sound of live performances. The restaurant, bar, stage, radio booth and offices occupied 3,680 square feet and could host 130 patrons. A 1991 expansion to the north increased occupancy to 190.

KAFE FM was unlike other FM stations in that it was only available via cable, to cable television subscribers of Total TV and Storer Cable. In addition, KAFE and local television KFTY Channel 50 collaborated on a new local TV program called “On the Air” which featured music and comedy taped live at the Studio KAFE.

The radio station would broadcast independently while live performances occurred in the club. As the mixer upstairs perfected the mix of the live show, the radio station would switch over to broadcast the live club performance. The club performances were recorded and were played from 2 a.m. to 8 a.m., when the radio station was not staffed and broadcasting live.

The business was owned by John Duran, a former owner/manager of the Belvedere Restaurant and Cabaret, his wife Rande Duran and John Gilbert, who was an investment banker from Huntington Beach. John Duran had worked in television, initially as a child actor and later as a prop man, had managed entertainment at the Belvedere, and had made arrangements to acquire a radio station; these interests all

came together in Studio KAFE.

Along with Duran, Doug Smith booked music and Terri Paulsen booked comedy at the club, which featured a range of music, dancing, stand-up comedy and dinner theater. Terri was the daughter of Pat Paulsen, who was an actor, comedian, and satirical candidate for President of the United States. He was booked as an early celebrity DJ at Studio KAFE. Duran called Pat Paulsen the “patron saint of Studio KAFE” in that he helped promote the venue: he announced his presidential run from the club, which was covered by CNN, and also occasionally held dinners and events there.

Steve Jaxon, a local radio personality then and now, served as the first Program Manager. Bill Bowker, another local radio icon, joined Studio KAFE in mid-1989 after local station KVRE went off the air. Bowker was on the air with his trademark “Blues with Bowker” show five days a week. Bowker continues this show on Sundays on the KRSH.

Studio KAFE, “the Place to Play in the North Bay,” hosted local talent as well as many nationally known performers in hundreds of shows. Originator of roots rock Dave Alvin played with Lucinda Williams, Jimmy Dale Gilmore and Butch Hancock in a “Singer/Songwriter Acoustic Showcase” in 1990, with admission of \$10. Audiences were treated to blues shows featuring Joe Louis Walker and the Boss Talkers and Charlie Musselwhite. Banjo player Bela Fleck and the Flecktones performed. Mick Taylor of the Rolling Stones played a solo show.

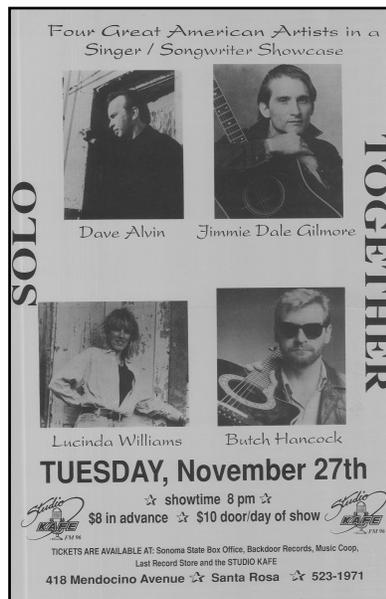
Outside the 50-mile radius of San Francisco, and with strong relationships with other clubs, Studio KAFE was able to book well-known acts even though the venue was

small. Duran remembers a few notable times: when Tom Waits came to see Dave Alvin perform, and leaned against a wall with his head down to remain unrecognized; when blues pianist Charles Brown performed; when former Saturday Night Live comedian and actor Rob Schneider brought his comedy show to the KAFE; when stand-up great Richard Pryor performed; when comedian and social satirist Mort

Continued on page 7



Advertisement for Studio KAFE
Press Democrat, July 26, 1987



Flyer for 1990 Show
Courtesy John Duran Collection

Teen Bands Rock Santa Rosa and Beyond

by Karen Stone

In the 1960s, Santa Rosa was home to a long list of teen bands and singing groups: Associates, Castells, Crickets, Fabulous Tridents, Malibus, Naked Sound, Nomads, Rob Roys, Running Waters, Sol Surfers, Sons of Liberty, and Worthy Cause — to name a few.

The Castells formed in 1959. A singing group, they were an offshoot of Santa Rosa High School's men's glee club. The band's original members were Santa Rosa High School students Chuck Girard, Warren Hays, Tom Hicks, and Montgomery High School student Bob Ussery. Their piano player, Jeff Bush, attended Santa Rosa High School.

In March 1959, they entertained at a Santa Rosa High School benefit to raise money for the school's foreign exchange student program. After the concert, students from Santa Rosa High School and Montgomery High School mingled at a dance.

In July 1959, the group recorded background music for two songs on the Guyden label. In 1960, they signed a contract with Era Records.

By early 1961, the group was living in southern California. Their first recordings with Era Records, *Little Sad Eyes* and *Romeo* were released that year. In the summer of 1961, their recording of *Sacred* reached #20 on the charts. The group made an appearance on American Bandstand in May 1962.

The Castells continued to record for a few years, then disbanded in 1965. Some of their audio recordings can be found on YouTube and eBay.



Announcement of the Rob Roys' New Release
Press Democrat, February 12, 1967

The Rob Roys formed in 1965. They were unrelated to Norman Fox & The Rob Roys, a 1950s doo-wop group from New York.

The members of The Rob Roys were local students:

- John Blackman — rhythm and lead guitar, sang harmony, attended Cardinal Newman High School.
- Dan Maes — lead guitar and sang harmony, attended Cardinal Newman High School.
- Bill Mullan — lead singer, attended Montgomery High School.
- Mark Poznanovich — electric organ, attended Santa Rosa High School.
- Dan Smith — bass guitar and sang harmony, attended Santa Rosa Junior College.
- Ken Strout — drummer, attended Montgomery High School.

In 1965, the group had a hit single with Accent Records, *Roses Are Red*, which sold over one million copies. The B side was *Judge Me Not*. Another single, *Do You Girl?*, with *Yes I Do* on the B side, followed in 1966.

In 1966, they performed at the Miss Teenage Santa Rosa Pageant, a Halloween dance at the Veterans' Memorial Building, and grad night cruises on San Francisco Bay for Santa Rosa High School and Montgomery High School students. Some of their audio recordings can be found on YouTube and eBay.

Santa Rosa Bands of Bygone Days



At left, Santa Rosa Junior High School Band, circa 1946. At right, Band on Hinton Street, 1883. Courtesy Sonoma County Library Collection.

KSRO, Live from the Chapel of the Chimes

by Lisa Kranz and Karen Stone

Plans to build a \$30,000 community chapel on a five-acre tract one and a half miles south of Santa Rosa were announced in the April 22, 1937 edition of the Santa Rosa Republican. The Chapel of the Chimes company proposed the development of the chapel, which was to include facilities for inurnment. A pipe organ was part of the plan and was to be available for weddings, meetings, and musical events.

L.L. Nusbaum was the architect of the Spanish-style chapel, which was designed to accommodate 100 persons. The Secretary-Manager of Chapel of the Chimes, Lawrence Moore, owned patents for cremation apparatus that was to be installed in the chapel buildings and that had been used in other Chapels of the Chimes and similar institutions.

Once completed, the Chapel of the Chimes was host to a variety of musical events. Many of these musical presentations were broadcast live on KSRO, which had begun broadcasting in September 1937. Ernest Finley, who was editor and publisher of the Press Democrat and the Santa Rosa Republican, was also the owner of KSRO radio. Early KSRO broadcasts consisted of a mix of local, often live, programming and that from a subscription service which included recorded music and other shows.

Vincent Trombley was named leader of a new, 11-piece KSRO Orchestra, which was to play regularly over the new radio station. The orchestra played accompaniments for other performers as well its own arrangements.

The "Procession of the Wedding Gowns" in June 1938 was an early broadcast from the Chapel of the Chimes. The program included not only historical and the latest trends in bridal apparel, but vocal and instrumental music as well.

In September 1938, Evelyn Billing, an accomplished pianist and organist who played the organ at the California Theater and who often also played the organ at the Chapel of the Chimes for local radio audiences, became the first bride to exchange marriage vows there with Alfred Gallo. Mutual interest in music had brought the pair together.

In fall 1938, the Gospel Hour, a new KSRO Radio program, was broadcast every other Sunday from Chapel of

the Chimes at 9:30 p.m. The program was sponsored by the congregation of the Christian and Missionary Alliance Church and included a message from the pastor and a 25-member youth choir who sang to organ music from the Chapel of the Chimes pipe organist. This program continued at least until the early 1940s.



Christmas Music
Tonight Over KSRO
9:30 to 10
Ancient Carols
In Story and Music
FLORENCE HUNTER Organist
KENNETH BROWN Tenor
EDWARD FOSTER Narrator
★
Invite your friends to come and enjoy this feast of lovely music, or to listen in family and neighborhood groups over KSRO
FROM THE
Chapel of the Chimes
CREMATORIUM - COLUMBARIUM
MAUSOLEUM
Redwood Highway, One Mile South of
Santa Rosa, California

Advertisement for Live Music on KSRO
Press Democrat, 12-24-1942

For Thanksgiving 1938, Thomas Beverly Marsh, the pastor of the First Baptist Church, read Thanksgiving poetry while Mrs. Georgia Wood Foster played background music on the chapel's organ in a special broadcast on KSRO. Reverend Marsh was a collector of non-denominational poems which he read for radio broadcast. He was a regular guest performer.

Florence Hunter was the KSRO organist who played for the station's nightly organ concert from the Chapel of the Chimes. Music varied, with an early 1939 program featuring Strauss waltzes. The programs were often arranged by Everett Foster, manager of the chapel and a radio vocalist who was sometimes accompanied by Mrs. Hunter on the organ. On another occasion, harpist Erlene Trombley appeared as a guest artist with Florence Hunter for a harp and organ concert which included playing of Chinese Lullaby.

"The Messiah" was presented in March 1939 by the Santa Rosa Evening High School adult choral group and broadcast by KSRO. The 30 members of the choral group were accompanied by Georgia Wood Foster on organ, and Everett Foster was the guest soloist, singing the bass role.

A new Sunday evening KSRO program introduced in June 1939 was the Everett Foster vocal program. He was accompanied by Mrs. Foster on the organ.

Organist Alta Smith presented a "June and Romance" program offering a collection of love songs and wedding songs, including the Wedding March, Rose in the Bud by Forster, and I Love You Truly by Carrie Jacobs Bond.

Chapel of the Chimes expanded in 1941 with the addition of 288 crypts. Designed by Nusbaum with architecture in keeping with the existing building – the new structure was located south of the existing structure and joined to the main building with an ornamental concrete wall. Musical events and radio broadcasts continued after the expansion.

known for selling entry-level and first-upgrade guitars.

In July of 2021, Steve Shirrell left ownership of the store to Dustin Heald (although Steve still works at the store doing repairs and sales). In March of this year, Dustin returned full ownership to Steve while staying on as General Manager. Today, Stanroy Music Center is recognized as the oldest full-service music store in Sonoma County. Besides carrying a wide selection of name brand instruments ranging from acoustic and electric guitars, basses, woodwinds, brass winds and violins, they also carry amplifiers, harmonicas, recorders, and various hand drums along with a large selection of books and sheet music. Lessons are still offered on a multitude of different instruments by professional teachers. Stanroy Music continues to be the place where musicians can come by, hang out, try out an amp or a guitar, or just rap about music.

Stanroy
Advertisement

Press
Democrat
2-20-1977

STANROY
30TH Anniversary Sale

Barbra Streisand
Kris Kristofferson
A Star Is Born
including
Love Theme From "A Star Is Born" (Evergreen)



A popular record at a popular price!
Reg. \$7.39
NOW \$4.99
Now thru Feb. 26

JS 34403 The sound track from the motion picture event of the year, featuring classic performances by Barbra Streisand and Kris Kristofferson.

STANROY
MUSIC CENTER

TAPES A DOLLAR MORE
622 Fourth Street
downtown Santa Rosa
545-4827

Local Teens Stoked about Surf City

by Karen Stone

Surf City, Santa Rosa's first teen nightclub, opened in the Montgomery Village shopping center in July 1964. Located near the Thrifty Drug Store (approximately the current location of Copperfield's), it was open Tuesday through Sunday. The owners were Bob Mezzanatto and Norman Williams.

No one over 19 was allowed. Admission was \$1 on weeknights and \$1.50 on Friday and Saturday nights. The dress code was specific. To be admitted, boys were required to wear a tie, or at least a neat sport shirt, and slacks. Girls were required to wear dresses or a skirt and blouse. Capri pants were specifically prohibited.

The entrance hall was painted with red, white, and blue stripes, and featured a mural of a ship. In the bar area, the walls were decorated in red and white stripes, with red and white checkered floors.

Pepsi and mixed soft drinks cost 25 cents and up. The mixed soft drinks were pineapple or grape juice with Tom Collins mix, or grenadine and sweet and sour mix. The drink names referenced surfer terms: The Surfer, The Watusi, The Ho-Daddy, and The Pipeline. Clubgoers enjoyed

dances such as The Swim, The Monkey, and The Watusi. Local teen bands provided live entertainment: The Fabulous Tridents (Scott Hall, John Kinsel, Tom Sinclair, Don Geary), The Rob Roys (Bill Mullan, Dan Maes, John Blackman, Ken Strout, Dan Smith, Mark Poznanovich), and The Nomads (Terry Thompson, John Harvey, Pete Lang, Chandler Lane, Richard Freitas).

On August 2, 1964, The Beach Boys made a surprise appearance at Surf City, after performing at the Veterans' Memorial Building earlier that night. The Righteous Brothers and Oakland Raiders players also made impromptu appearances at Surf City during the nightclub's run.



The Fabulous Tridents appeared at Surf City
Press Democrat, May 3, 1964

By the summer of 1965, the City of Santa Rosa was receiving noise complaints about Surf City from nearby residents, particularly after closing time. It was discovered that the nightclub had been operating without a permit, so hearings were held to bring it into compliance. In October 1965, new owners Jerry Smith and Marvin Henthorne reopened the nightclub as The Spot, a club for young adults. The age limit was 16 to 21. The Spot closed in 1966.

Studio KAFE, continued from page 3

Saul spent time at the club; when Peanuts cartoonist Charles Schulz paid a visit.

Studio KAFE hosted a wide variety of entertainment, with offerings featured nowhere else in town. Monthly entertainment calendars included nights for comedy, jazz, comedy/music, and dancing, along with singles parties, live radio dinner theater, murder mystery dinners, and celebrity DJs who were often local business people. The biggest draws were new, emerging bands who were appreciated by younger audiences along with older, established acts.

Blues shows and reggae were also popular. Buck Naked and The Bare Bottom Boys, who performed wearing only chaps, were another popular draw, particularly to female clientele.

Teen comedy nights were also a big draw at the club, often packing the house to capacity. These nights were sponsored by Friday Night Live, an alcohol and drug prevention program that offered activities for youth designed to get them "high on life."

A recession in the early 1990s affected Studio KAFE and

caused it to reduce offerings. First, the restaurant scaled back dinner options to snacks and then tried contracting for food service. Then comedy nights were dropped due to low attendance, along with the TV show on KFTY TV Channel 50. The radio station didn't take off due in part to inability to sell advertising - since there were no ratings for cable radio, advertisers could not be certain of the number of listeners. Weekends were strong, but weeknights were slow.



Studio KAFE Closing Advertisement, *Press Democrat* 2-28-1992

Studio KAFE ceased operation in winter 1992. Owner Duran cited mounting financial losses during a tough economic period that also included more comedy programming on television.

Additionally, financial partner John Gilbert had stopped backing the operation. Despite paring offerings to music only, these efforts were not enough to save the club. Duran noted that the nightclub business was hurting and that Studio KAFE was ahead of its time and would have been a smash success if the internet had been available then. He recalled Studio KAFE's run as a profound, creative time which was one of the most exhilarating times of his life.

Duran is currently working to digitize the more than 600 live recordings from the Studio KAFE so they will be available to lovers of music, comedy, and history.

Did You Know? A Few Musical Notes

Famous Santa Rosan

Singer Julie London was born in Santa Rosa on September 26, 1926. The future singer and actress moved with her family to southern California when she was three years old. Her parents were a vaudeville song and dance team, and Julie made her singing debut on her parents' radio program.

Gone But Not Forgotten

A 2,000-seat performance venue, the Athenaeum, was built at Fourth and D Streets in 1884 by a consortium of local businessmen. (See photo on page 2.) The venue provided a location for theatrical performances including concerts, lectures, and plays. The theater was destroyed in the 1906 earthquake and was not rebuilt.

Fantastic Fair Fun - 1949

Seven bands were featured in a pre-Sonoma County Fair parade which ended in the courthouse square where the bands joined in a concert and played together. The seven bands featured were the Marine Band, the Navy Electronics School Band, the Sixth Army Band, the Hamilton Field Air Force Band, the Sonoma County Fair Band, and the Santa Rosa Junior High School Band.

97 and Going Strong

The Santa Rosa Symphony was founded in 1928, making it one of the oldest symphony orchestras in the western states. Past conductors include George Trombley (1928-1958); Corrick Brown (1958-1995); Jeffrey Kahane (1995-2006); and Bruno Ferrandis (2006-2018). The current conductor is Francesco Lecce-Chong.

A Family Legacy

Juilliard Park, in central Santa Rosa, was the site of the Juilliard family home and orchard. Along with managing the 14-acre homestead near downtown, the family ran a hardware business on the square and a winemaking business in Sebastopol. Son Frederic Juilliard graduated from U.C. Berkeley and came home to Santa Rosa in 1891. He moved to New York City in 1899 and went into business with his uncle, Augustus Juilliard, who had become very successful and who was a patron of the arts. Augustus bequeathed \$5 million to create the Juilliard Music Foundation in 1919, and Frederic was a trustee. In 1926, it merged with the New York Institute of Musical Art and became the Juilliard School. Frederic donated the family land to the City of Santa Rosa in 1931, and the treasured park is named for the Juilliard Family.



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Historical Society of Santa Rosa *Membership Application*

The Historical Society of Santa Rosa intends to build a strong and diverse organization of individuals, families, and groups to investigate, record, and relate the history of the city of Santa Rosa. Membership includes subscription to the newsletter and priority invitations to HSSR-sponsored events.

Memberships make wonderful gifts! Share the benefits of membership with your family and friends. Dues are paid annually, and membership is valid for one year.

\$30 Individual membership

\$50 Household membership

\$100 Patron membership

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Name _____ Amount enclosed _____

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Additional donation _____ Join online www.HistoricalSocietySantaRosa.org

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