

# Vermont Cheese Council

Spring/Summer 2008 • Vol. 8, Issue 1

## What's Next for the Vermont Cheese Council?

Members of the Vermont Cheese Council gathered for their Annual Meeting on February 21, 2008 to look back and look forward as the VCC entered its second decade. Formed in 1997 by a handful of Vermont-based cheesemakers to "advance the production and image of premier cheese from Vermont through public and industry educational activities," the Council has seen its membership and influence swell. Today, the Council represents 38 cheesemaking members (see current list inside) who collectively produce well over 100 varieties of cheeses totaling more than a million pounds per year. As the recognized epicenter of the nation's small batch, artisan cheese making movement, Vermont and its Cheese Council members has been embraced as the premier source for quality, award winning, unique cheeses along the eastern seaboard and beyond.

Approximately 30 members of the council, including four charter members — **Cabot Creamery, Vermont Butter & Cheese Company, Grafton Village Cheese, and Lazy Lady Farm** — gathered to discuss where the Council has been and where it is going. The discussion, led by facilitator, Lynda Brushett from the Cooperative Development Institute, focused on building on the successes of the past decade to provide more opportunity for networking, increasing membership, providing technical assistance, and better addressing distribution, sales and consumer education moving forward. Collectively, the Council also discussed embracing an agenda of "giving back" to the communities in which they operate through product donations and

community support.

After serving as President for two and a half years, Jon Wright of **Taylor Farm** stepped down. New Officers were elected at the meeting. They are: President, Laini Fondiller, **Lazy Lady Farm**; Vice-President, Mark Fischer,

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*The well-attended 2008 Vermont Cheese Council annual meeting.*



Vermont Cheeses as seen  
on the TODAY Show



## President's Message

“Ask not what your cheesemaker can do for you; ask what you can do for your cheesemaker?” And with that petition, we launch our new membership campaign. The Vermont Cheese Council began in 1997 with 10 cheesemakers. We are now nearing 40 cheesemaking members and a dozen more interested parties. This is great news for us and even better news for you. But with growth come a greater responsibility and a greater work load. We are in the process of bringing on our first, paid staff member who will assume the title of Executive Director. Many of you are probably already familiar with Ellen Ecker Ogden, though her publication, *The Vermont Cheese Book*. For others interested in the inner workings of the Vermont Cheese Council, Ellen will continue to serve as the light at the end of the tunnel - someone to answer the phone, respond to emails, organize events, respond to cheesemakers and raise funds to help us continue our growth and impact on the artisan



cheese movement. Another important area of activity for the council is technical services and risk management. This area is critical for an organization of our size and growth potential. We need to work hard at finding funding to have a team working with the VCC members to create protocol and measures for assuring the safety of our products. We want to support all our cheesemakers and are particularly sensitive to protecting the rights of our cheesemakers who make raw milk cheeses. So this leads us back to our opening entreaty. It leads us back to YOU. Your support, as a member, is

key to the future of Vermont Cheese Council. Within the year, this wonderful newsletter will be for members only in order to fine tune our articles and to create a pertinent mailing list. We hope you will join us and thank you in advance for your support.

— Laina Fondiller, President  
*Lazy Lady Farm*

### What's Next for the VCC?

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**Woodcock Farm;** Secretary Nancy Hofer, **Maplebrook Farm** and Treasurer, Andy Kehler of **Jasper Hill Farm**.

Lastly, the issue of how best to communicate with constituents was discussed. Our web site, [www.vtcheese.com](http://www.vtcheese.com), continues to be a primary way of communicating with the public. Cutting back on a printed newsletter in lieu of more electronic based communication is being contemplated as is creating a new brochure and/or continuing to produce the Cheese Trail Map when significant changes occur. Let us hear your thoughts by visiting our web site and clicking on the email option. And, while you're there, consider becoming a Friend of the Vermont Cheese Council so that collectively, we can keep bringing you amazing cheeses from Vermont.

## New Advanced Cheesemaking Certificate Program Offered

The Advanced Cheesemaking Certificate Program being offered by the Vermont Institute of Artisan Cheese, located at the University of Vermont, consists of seven advanced level courses on technical aspects of cheesemaking. Some classes require prerequisite courses from the Cheesemaking Certificate Program. Visiting experts from England, France, Spain and Italy in residence at VIAC offer three-day International Artisan Cheese Practices short courses. By learning traditional approaches and techniques from international experts, cheesemakers will improve the quality of their products and become introduced to new products and processes. Through *Cheese and Culture*, the origins of European cheeses will be explored in a historical and cultural context. **Risk Reduction Practices** will help cheesemakers manage the food safety threats posed by bacterial pathogens in milk and the cheesemaking environment through focus on improved sanitation through testing. **Advanced Sensory Evaluation** will assist cheesemakers and other dairy producers to understand sensory evaluation methods used in product development, marketing and quality assurance to evaluate and understand the sensory quality of a particular product. **Cheese Defects** will review common causes of problems developed during cheesemaking and aging, allowing cheesemakers to troubleshoot and avoid future problems. **Affinage** will help to demystify the secret of aging cheese. For program information visit: <http://nutrition.uvm.edu/viac/> or call (802) 656-8300.



## New Members



### Jericho Hill Farm

Jericho Hill Farm is a fifth generation dairy and maple farm owned and operated by George and Linda Miller which has been in the Miller family since November of 1907. The story goes that George Nelson Miller walked up from the train depot in White River Junction with \$1,800 sewn into the lining of his jacket to buy the lovely hillside farm where today two delicious Farmstead Cheeses known as “Jericho Jack” and “Colby Cheddar” are lovingly made. The farm’s mission is to produce the highest quality milk and cheese products with as minimal impact on their natural resources as possible. To that end, Jericho Hill Farm cheese is manufactured entirely from milk from the farm’s own cows which is gently moved from the milk house to the cheese vat using gravity.

Jericho Jack is salt water brined and aged for 60 days and beyond until it has a firm body and soft, smooth texture. It melts beautifully and makes an exquisite macaroni and cheese or grilled cheese sandwich! Jericho Hill’s Colby Cheddar is an old-styled, uncolored Colby which is cheddared using a stirred-curd process and aged for six to eight months.

In 1994, Jericho Hill Farm received the State of Vermont top quality award for pasteurized milk counts. They won the Highest Milk Quality Award in both 1995 and 1999; and in December 2006 received a Second

Place Quality Milk Award in Agrimark Region Nine. Every year since 1976, they have received high quality milk awards from Cabot Creamery.

Jericho Hill Farm welcomes visitors, however, it is essential to call ahead (802-295-5333) to arrange a time to meet. Owner Linda Miller warns, “Do not use Mapquest or any of the other web based maps. They will direct you through the cow pasture if you do!”

### Ploughgate Creamery

Ploughgate Creamery is a newly formed cheesemaking business located in Craftsbury Common. Princess MacLean and Marisa Mauro are the owners and cheesemakers. Marisa found her way to cheesemaking by working after school at Woodcock Farm, and then interning at Shelburne Farms. After that she was never again seen very far from a dairy sheep, goat or cow. Princess found herself at Bonnieview Farm because as a fiber artist she loves sheep and that creative energy quickly took to cheesemaking. She has been working seasonally at Bonnieview ever since, and at Jasper Hill Farm for the past few winters.

They conceived the idea for the creamery while working together at Bonnieview Farm last summer. They quickly realized they share not only passion for cheesemaking but also the same dreams of one day dairy farming with draft horses and oxen. They are driven by their ideals of agricultural sustainability as well as the terroir of the Northeast Kingdom and their rootedness in that landscape where they live and make cheese.

When they begin cheesemaking this May they will be making three types of cheese. “American Cream” is styled after Camembert but made

with sheep’s milk. “Blue Roan” is a soft blue with an earthy sweet complex taste and a creamy buttery texture. It will be made seasonally with sheep and cows milk, and a modified version “Dapple Blue” will be made with cows’ milk in the winter. The third planned cheese will be a fresh Fromage Blanc style soft creamy smooth cheese made with Jersey milk.

Marisa’s Scottish mom came up with the name “Ploughgate”. It is a Scottish Gaelic word that is used to describe a measure of land. At one time in Scotland land was measured by how many days it would take a team of oxen to plow. The term used was a “ploughgate”.

For more information, contact [ploughgate@gmail.com](mailto:ploughgate@gmail.com).

### Old Member: New Owner, New Name

The company that brought a herd of 40 water buffalo to Vermont in 2002 for the purpose of making a traditional mozzarella cheese has been sold. The Woodstock Water Buffalo Company assets, now including 680 water buffalo, were purchased from Castle Island Partners in March by Frank Abballe, previously of Marc Angelo Foods in Toronto. The new, Vermont-based company has been renamed Vermont Water Buffalo.

Vermont Water Buffalo will produce a line of specialty cheeses and yogurt using only the premium water buffalo milk. Fresh mozzarella will continue to be made on site at the South Woodstock creamery in the authentic Italian style. In addition, Vermont Water Buffalo will partner

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## Vermont Water Buffalo

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with other local cheesemakers to produce aged cheeses. “We are open to trying all different types of cheese and are excited to have the opportunity to work with various Vermont cheesemakers. We will see what works and then continue to produce only the very best products,” states Mr. Abballe. “We want to work with the community and utilize the many great resources that are already available in Vermont while also contributing to those offerings.” Batches of water buffalo cheese have already been made at both **Crowley Cheese** and **Frog City Cheese** using their own recipes. Plans are also being made to age selected water buffalo cheeses in the newly built Cellars at **Jasper Hill Farm**.

Preliminary products, including a line of specialty meats, will be available as early as this spring. The company will initially focus distribution locally in Vermont and New Hampshire; expanding later to other regions in the Northeast. The company also plans to make its products available for purchase via their own retail store, location to be determined, and through an online store. Vermont Water Buffalo products were regionally premiered at the Flavors of the Valley event at Hartford High School held on April 15th and will be available at local farmers markets throughout this summer and early fall. The company’s headquarters will continue to be located in South Woodstock, VT. For more information, contact Carey Clifford 802-457-4540 x11; carey@woodstockwaterbuffalo.com; www.woodstockwaterbuffalo.com.

Visit our  
Cheese Trail Map  
on-line at  
[www.vtcheese.com](http://www.vtcheese.com)

# VCC Board Expands

In an effort to bring fresh perspectives to VCC activities, the membership voted at its annual meeting to add three non-cheese-making members to its Board of Directors. They are:

**Montse Almena-Aliste, PhD**, is a member of UVM’s Vermont Institute for Artisan Cheese (VIAC), which supports and strengthens the state’s artisan cheesemakers. Her current scholarly interests include consumer’s attitudes toward dairy products and characterization of sensory quality of artisan and raw milk cheeses.

Among her many professional food science accomplishments: helping to develop the first fresh Mozzarella and yogurts made with water-buffalo milk sold in the US. Dr. Almena-Aliste. She holds a PhD in Food Science from the University of Santiago de Compostela (Spain) and is a current member of American Dairy Science Association, Institute of Food Technology and the American Cheese Society.



*Montse Almena-Aliste*

**Christopher Coutant Wainhouse** has been the Marketing Director for Provisions International, located in White River Junction, Vermont, for the past 6 years. Prior to that, she worked with food in various venues for about 10 years. Christopher is also a freelance writer with her most recent article appearing in



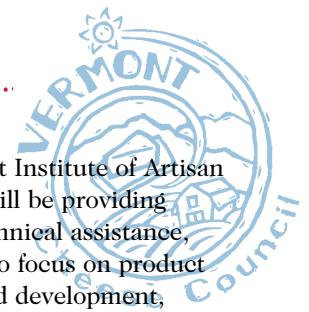
*Christopher Coutant Wainhouse*

the January Issue of *Edible Green Mountains*. She lives in Brattleboro and is a member of the American Cheese Society, The Vermont Fresh Network and Slow Food USA.

**Jeff Egan**, Cliff House Chef, has worked in various culinary roles at Stowe Mountain Resort since the winter of 2003. Born in Lowell Massachusetts, Jeff began his culinary career in Toronto at the Fairmont Royal York and has since worked in kitchens ranging from a remote tree planting camp in Northern Alberta to a yacht club on Cape Cod. Upon returning to the United States after a decade in Canada, a rekindled passion for skiing made Stowe Mountain resort a natural fit for Jeff. Having settled here, he found an ideal place to explore the culinary possibilities presented by Vermont’s vibrant local food community. He lives in Wolcott Vermont and when not cooking can be found skiing, mountain biking eating good cheese and foraging for mushrooms in the woods of Vermont.



*Jeff Egan*



## Grafton Cheese Expands

The new Grafton Village Cheese facility at the historic Retreat Farm in Brattleboro is 27 miles from their flagship location in Grafton. The new plant's design was approved by the Vermont Office of Historic Preservation.

Adam Mueller, Grafton Village Cheese Company president said, "We'll go into full scale production and open up the retail store probably by early summer."

The production facility is approximately 25,500 square feet. The large retail space, which includes a viewing area, will showcase all of Grafton's cheeses, as well as a selection of other fine Vermont cheeses. Fresh bread, a coffee corner, maple and other food products, a "book nook" focusing on cheeses and cooking and other goodies round out the store's interior space. Grafton cheese tasting will be offered daily, and regular tasting events of other products will also be held.

"It is important to us that this store reflects the Windham Foundation mission of supporting Vermont agriculture, said John Bramley, Windham Foundation President. "This is a major investment in Brattleboro and in Vermont's dairy industry," added Mueller.



The new Grafton Village Cheese facility in Brattleboro.

## Technical Grant Awarded

Mark Fischer of Woodcock Farm has been the recipient of a Farm Viability Enhancement Grant, sponsored by the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board in collaboration with the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets. The grant provides for four-days of on-site technical assistance at four different farm locations. Marc Druart, the master cheese-maker

from the Vermont Institute of Artisan Cheese (VIAC) will be providing the hands-on technical assistance, and is expected to focus on product enhancement and development, between the months of April and October. Druart joined the VIAC as an instructor and technical consultant in 2004 and, in addition to cheesemaker, serves as technology advisor on raw milk research projects. The four VCC members who will participate are Woodcock Farm, Lazy Lady Farm, Jericho Hill Farm and Crawford Family Farm.

## Beer and Cheese, Please

In February, the Vermont Pub Brewery hosted a Vermont Cheese and Beer Tasting, featuring VIAC faculty member, and VCC Board member, Montse Almena-Aliste – an expert on understanding and explaining the sensory attributes of cheese, and Brewmaster Greg Noonon. Featured Vermont beer and cheese pairing included:

**Fresh Mozzarella** (Maplebrook Farm) paired with Burly Irish Ale (**Vermont Pub Brewery**)

**Tomme** (Twig Farm aged at Jasper Hill Caves) paired with Wolaver's India Pale Ale (**Otter Creek Brewing**)

**Menuet** (Dancing Cow Farm, aged at Jasper Hill Caves) paired with Beetle Juice (**Vermont Pub & Brewery**)

**Clothbound Cheddar** (Shelburne Farms) paired with Dogbite Bitter (**Vermont Pub & Brewery**)

**Clothbound Cheddar** (Cabot aged at Jasper Hill Caves) paired with McNeills Pullman's Porter (**McNeills Brewery**)

**Paniolo** (Willow Hill Farm) paired with Forbidden Fruit Framboise (**Vermont Pub & Brewery**)

**Bayley Hazen Blue** (Jasper Hill Farm) paired with Trout River Scotch Ale (**Trout River Brewing Company**)

### Also on tap:

In May, the first ever "SAVOR: An American Craft Beer & Food Experience" was held in Washington, DC. This event was sponsored by The Brewers Association in Colorado as part of their annual American Craft Beer Week celebrations. To that end, **Rock Art Brewery's** owner/ president and Brewmaster, Matt Nadeau sampled over 20 Vermont cheeses in an effort to find the perfect cheese to pair with and complement their "Vermonster."

After sampling a wide variety of cheese types and textures, they settled on **Taylor Farm** Maple Smoked Gouda. The creamy texture and milder flavor brought out the malt body of the beer, while the maple smoked aspect matched the darker roasted grain flavors and complemented the plentiful hops in the beer.



# SMALL BITES

**Franklin Foods** has secured distribution for their award winning Hahn's Yogurt & Cream Cheese with the Hillsborough, FL school system. Hillsborough is the fifth largest school systems in the United States and serves 235,000 meals daily. According to Rocco Cardinale, Director of Marketing, "Our strategy to rollout the patented-approved Yogurt & Cream Cheese technology to 15,000 Schools and 40 million students across the U.S. is taking traction and this will be an exciting year for Franklin Foods."



On March 12th a Vermont Wine and Cheese party was hosted for members of the Vermont Legislature. Participating cheesemakers included **Grafton Village Cheese Company, Jericho Hill Farm, Neighborly Farms, Jasper Hill Farm, and Taylor Farm.** In addition cheese was sent along for the occasion by **Lazy Lady Farm, Cobb Hill Farm, Shelburne Farms, Cabot Creamery, Peaked Mountain Farm and Blythdale Farm.**



An interview with **Willow Hill Farm** completed the series of audio interviews with Vermont cheesemakers conducted for the web site, Cheese by Hand. It's a searchable site available on iTunes as a free podcast. Listen to Vermont cheesemakers share their viewpoints about cheese, farming, labor, the economy and a host of other related topics. More podcasts from around the USA will be uploaded over time. Check out [www.cheesebyhand.com](http://www.cheesebyhand.com) and click on the various interviews.



As last year's American Cheese Society Annual Meeting host, Vermont is hoping for a strong showing at this summer's ACS Annual meeting in Chicago in late July. Plans are to sponsor a breakfast with plated cheese from Vermont Cheesemakers. So far, more half of all Vermont's cheesemakers are on board to share their cheeses with the more than 1,000 attendees who come to the event from all over North American and many other countries. Those signed up include **Peaked Mountain Farm, Jericho Hill Farm, Taylor Farm, Jasper Hill Farm, Blythdale Farm, Maplebrook Farm, Grafton Village Cheese Company, Shelburne Farms, Crowley Cheese, Frog City Cheese, Twig Farm, Bonnieview Farm, Blue Ledge Farm, Neighborly Farm, Lazy Lady Farm, Woodcock Farm, Cobb Hill Cheese, Dancing Cow Farm and Vermont Water Buffalo.**



## Members in the News

**Dancing Cow Farm's** cheese, Sarabande, was mentioned in November, 2007's issue of *Food & Wine* which focused on "The Great American Cheese Plate" by Laura Werlin. Sarabande, which is named after a sensual Baroque-era dance from Spain, is a washed-rind cheese with a flattened-pyramid shape and a delicately buttery, grassy flavor. The silky paste is semi-soft with a slightly chalky center, and the cheese has a beautifully long and complex finish.



*Dancing Cow Farm's Sarabande*



Freelance writer Peggy Shinn wrote a story for *The Boston Globe* entitled "Vermonters aim to be



*Cheesemakers on hand at the Vermont Hospitality Council's "Taste of Vermont" event were L to R: Linda Dimmick, Neighborly Farms; Jed Davis, Cabot Creamery; Willow Smart, Willow Hill Farm; Wendy Brewer, Grafton Village Cheese Company; Jon Wright, Taylor Farm; Jamie Yturriondobeitia, Shelburne Farms; and Mark Fischer, Woodcock Farm.*



the big cheese” for the March 9 issue. The article featured **Taylor Farm, Vermont Butter & Cheese Co., Woodcock Farm, Crowley Cheese, Grafton Village Cheese** and quoted from Ellen Ecker Ogden, coordinator of the council and author of *The Vermont Cheese Book*, which sketches the landscape of the state’s artisanal industry.

**Frog City** Cheesemaker Tom Gilbert was on the front page of March 13 edition of *The Rutland Herald*. Frog City Cheese is a family owned and operated cheese manufacturing business located at the Plymouth Cheese Factory on the President Calvin Coolidge Historic Site Cheese Factory in Plymouth Notch, Vermont.

## Become a Friend of VCC

*The Vermont Cheese Council is dedicated to the production and advancement of Vermont cheese. Thank you for joining us as a new member. We greatly appreciate your support!*

**Individual/Friend Members:** Cheese Lovers who support our efforts:

\$50.00

**Associate Members:** Trade members: Non-cheesemaking members who distribute, sell & market cheese;

\$ 75.00: Individual

\$150.00: Small business membership

*You will receive: VCC logo sticker, choice of e-newsletter or hard copy newsletter — 1 year subscription*

**Corporate Sponsors:** Members who would like to do more to help us achieve our goals:

\$250. “Velveeta Defeatahs” member

\$500. “Got Your Goats” member

\$1,000. “Knights of the Round Gouda” member

\$2,500. “High Order of the Sharp Cheddar” member

*You will receive: VCC logo sticker, choice of e-newsletter or hard copy newsletter — 1 year subscription, plus a free ad in our newsletter and listed as sponsor on our website and brochure*

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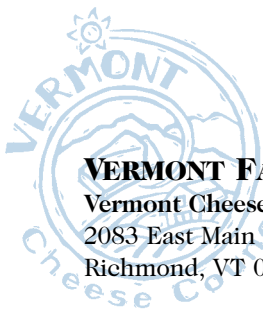
Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Fax Number \_\_\_\_\_

*Please make checks payable to: The Vermont Cheese Council  
Mail to: c/o Ellen Ogden, P.O. Box 1007 Manchester Village, VT 05254  
More info: 866.261.8595 / e-mail: info@vtcheese.com*

## Vermont Cheese Council Member Cheesemakers

Blue Ledge Farm  
Blythedale Farm  
Bonnieview Farm  
Cabot Creamery  
Champlain Valley Creamery  
Cobb Hill Cheese  
Consider Bardwell Farm  
Crawford Family Farm  
Crowley Cheese Inc.  
Dancing Cow Farm  
Doe’s Leap Goat Farm  
Franklin Foods  
Frog City Cheese  
Grafton Village Cheese Co.  
Green Mountain Blue Cheese  
Hope Farm Sheep Cheese  
Jasper Hill Farm  
Jericho Hill Farm  
La Fromagerie du Royaume  
Lake’s End Cheeses  
Lazy Lady Farm  
Maplebrook Farm  
Neighborly Farms  
Orb Weaver Farm  
Peaked Mountain Farm  
Ploughgate Creamery  
Shelburne Farms  
Taylor Farm  
Thistle Hill Farm  
Three Owls Sheep Dairy  
Three Shepherds of the Mad River Valley  
Twig Farm  
Vermont Butter & Cheese Co.  
Vermont Milk Company  
Vermont Shepherd  
Vermont Water Buffalo  
West River Creamery  
Willow Hill Farm  
Woodcock Farm



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## Calendar of Upcoming Events

Find seasonal **Farmers Markets**,  
 May – Oct, [www.vermontagriculture.com/farmmkt](http://www.vermontagriculture.com/farmmkt)

**June 7: Strolling of the Heifers**  
 (Parade and Dairy Festival)  
[www.strollingoftheheifers.com](http://www.strollingoftheheifers.com)



**June 13-22: VT Culinary Classic at Stowe**

**July 18-19: Vermont Brewers Festival:** [www.vermontbrewers.com/overview.html](http://www.vermontbrewers.com/overview.html)

**July 23-26: American Cheese Society Annual Awards**  
[www.cheesesociety.org/](http://www.cheesesociety.org/).

**July 25-27: Stowe Wine and Food Tasting** [www.craftproducers.com](http://www.craftproducers.com)

**August 3: Vermont Fresh Network Forum** [www.vermontfresh.net](http://www.vermontfresh.net)

**August 30-31: Southern Vermont Garlic Festival**  
[www.lovegarlic.com](http://www.lovegarlic.com)

**September 20: Plymouth Cheese Festival** [www.HistoricVermont.org/Coolidge](http://www.HistoricVermont.org/Coolidge)

**September 26-28: Vermont Life Wine & Harvest Festival:**  
 Wilmington, Vt.

**October 11: Autumn Harvest Festival:** Taylor Farm,  
 Londonderry, Vt.

**October 19-20: ABCs of Farm Education.** Shelburne Farms, VT

Check [www.vtcheese.com](http://www.vtcheese.com) for updates

### *The Vermont Cheese Council*

*Newsletter* is published for food professionals. With written permission, reprinting is encouraged.

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