

Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce and VISITORS CENTER

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The Lark

Jan/Feb/Mar 2023
Volume XXXVII Issue 1

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM YOUR NEW SHERIFF

Greetings, Larkfield and Mark West residents. I took office on January 2, 2023 as the 35th elected Sheriff of Sonoma County. I served with the Sheriff's Office for 20 years, starting as a patrol deputy and spending several years as a Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault detective. I then began earning promotions up the ranks, ultimately serving as the Assistant Sheriff overseeing the Detention Division. I believe that everyone deserves to feel safe and everyone deserves fair treatment. To that end, I have three key goals I'm implementing with my staff:

- **Public safety.** The primary mission of the Sheriff's Office is keeping you safe. It may be easy for this message to get lost in conversations of budget cuts and the complex social issues we are all trying to solve. However, my number one priority is public safety. When you call 9-1-1, a dispatcher will answer your call and a deputy will show up to help you.

- **Recruitment.** I'm focused on hiring talented people who are more reflective of the community we serve. Like many businesses, the Sheriff's Office is experiencing a staffing shortage. We are currently at critical staffing levels, necessitating overtime to provide basic services. Patrol deputies have been working an emergency schedule (12 hour shifts) for well over a year and correctional deputies regularly work doubles (16 hour shifts). I added two additional background investigators to process the extensive background checks more quickly. I'm also contracting with a recruitment firm specializing in law enforcement.

- **Community Engagement.** Communication is key in maintaining a healthy, positive relationship with the Sheriff's Office and the people we serve. I'm focusing on two-way communication so the community understands how the Sheriff's Office provides services, and we understand the community's expectations and needs. I personally attend as many events as I can and I'm launching a series of Town Halls this year. The first Town Hall was held on February 23. The next Town Hall will be held in the Sonoma Valley in May. Follow the Sheriff's Office on social media (@sonomasheriff) for announcements of future Town Halls and events.

I cannot find success alone. Ensuring safe communities takes the cooperation of the Sheriff's Office and the community working together, in good times and in times of crisis. My entire staff and I appreciate the long-standing support and collaboration from the Mark West and Larkfield communities.

Contributed by Sheriff Eddie Engram



Sonoma County's new Sheriff, Eddie Engram.

NEW JUNIOR AMBASSADOR TEAM

For the first time since our establishment in 1980, the Mark West Area Chamber has a Junior Ambassador Team. Two young members, Max Schroeder and Kiera Schroeder, both from Treasure House, have been helping sell 50/50 raffle tickets at several of the last Socials. They were formally inducted into the Ambassador program and received their Junior Ambassador badges at our March Social. It is great to see young people being engaged with the community.

*Head Ambassador Paul Peck,
presenting Junior Ambassador
badges. Photo: Johnathan Williams.*





Steve Plamann
President

Our Mission:

The Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce is organized to advance the economic well-being and uniqueness of the Mark West Area so that its citizens and all areas of its business community shall prosper.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

2nd Tuesday of Month

11:30 am - 1:00 pm

Contact the Chamber for links and attendance information

To host a Ribbon Cutting, contact
office@markwest.org



Interested in joining our Ambassador Team? Contact the Chamber at
office@markwest.org

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

You don't have to know exactly where you are going in order to move forward, and so that is our plan.

There are many things in life that make it hard for us to act or react. Regardless, we must respond. The Mark West Area Chamber is stepping into a new and additional role in the Mark West community. We are best suited to fill this necessary role and deliver a promise made many years ago: a promise for a community park/center, made to the survivors of the fires, to those who have stayed to rebuild their homes and now their much beloved community. So for the good of our community we have formed a non-profit, called the Mark West Area Community Fund. Our first goal is to purchase land for a community park/center, promised in the wake of fire and smoke. We consider it a well-deserved reward, forged out of our resilience. We are only in the beginning stages, but each step brings this dream closer to reality, closer to our goal of a place for the community to gather, to rest, to exhale and to feel the sweetness of perseverance.

We also have very good news regarding our more regular activities. We have had some really amazing Socials already this year. I would like to thank all our hosts for providing a fun opportunity for members to get together and mix, mingle, eat and drink. January was co-hosted by COOKIE...take a bite! and Postal Plus. Thank you, Tracy and Paul. We had a great turnout and the event was held at both locations, as they are next to each other in the Larkfield Center. Our February Social was co-hosted by Assisted Living Locators and Best Western plus Wine Country Inn & Suites. We really appreciate Ramona for all the great food we enjoyed and Todd Anderson for providing such a classy venue. Our March Social was very special as well, as we celebrated St. Patrick's Day with a scrumptious meal of corned beef and cabbage. It was hosted by Todd Walling Real Estate, at his office in the Sonoma County Airport Center. We not only hung out with great people, but we also toured a hangar full of amazing private jets. We had many winners in our Business Card Drawings at all three events. We also gave away big bucks in each month's 50/50 Cash Drawings. And the "Pot of Gold" drawing winner received \$300.00 at the March Social!

You can see photos of all the winners at <https://www.facebook.com/MarkWestAreaChamber>.

Steve Plamann, President

MARK WEST AREA COMMUNITY PARK ON THE HORIZON

The Mark West Area Community Fund is our community's new non-profit 501(c)(3) with a mission to improve the quality of life in the Mark West Area (including Larkfield, Wikiup and Fulton) through neighborhood improvements. The MWA Community Fund's board of directors include Steve Plamann, president; Brad Sherwood, vice president; Heidi Would, secretary; Dmitri Menzel, treasurer; and Roni Berg, director. The MWA Community Fund will work in close partnership with the MWA Chamber and the Mark West Area Citizens Advisory Council to raise funds for neighborhood improvement projects, such as a proposed community park on Old Redwood Highway. The former Mark West Community Preschool property located next to the former Cricklewood Restaurant is for sale and the MWA Community Fund is looking into acquiring the property for a community park. This is just one example of how the MWA Community Fund is working with our area to improve the quality of life by supporting parks, recreation and infrastructure improvements. As the possibility of an acquisition of the park on Old Redwood Highway gets closer, we will make sure to provide you with an update. For more information about the MWA Community Fund, please visit www.markwestarea.org.

Contributed by Brad Sherwood



Proposed site for the Mark West Area Community Park. Photo credit: Steve Plamann.

JANUARY SOCIAL REPORT

With a new year come new opportunities for businesses all around the Mark West area, and the Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce was glad to be able to meet for another amazing social. Hosted by COOKIE...take a bite! and Postal Plus, Inc., the January social brought in a large crowd, wonderful food from local restaurants, and delicious cookies from COOKIE...take a bite!

The evening was mercifully free of rain, and opened with the opportunity to mingle, network, and enjoy food from local restaurants. In addition to Mexican food from Mi Ranchito provided by Postal Plus, COOKIE...take a bite! offered a wide variety of their amazing cookies. Following this initial period of mingling, the evening's announcements were made by Paul Peck, Head Ambassador for the Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce and a representative for Chamber member The Lodge at Piner Road. Paul then introduced our co-hosts. Both Tracy Mattson of COOKIE...take a bite! and Paul Gibson of Postal Plus, Inc. told us about their businesses.

Host Paul Peck introduced us to new Chamber Ambassador Deborah Pulido of Treasure House. The Chamber looks forward to working with her. Paul also welcomed new members Rebecca Lucas of IMS (International Monetary Systems) Barter and Tabatha Bonetti-Asker of Notary Maven, and awarded them their membership plaques. Paul also acknowledged potential members who were attending as guests: Peggy Martin of Rainbow Investment Solutions, and Maya Thomas of the Press Democrat.

Next, the Pot of Gold was drawn. However, as with many prior socials, the winner was absent, once again leaving the pot at \$300. Chamber Members must be present and up-to-date on membership dues for the current year to win the prize.

Next, the 50/50 raffle was drawn. \$65 was awarded to Max Linowski, a guest of our hosts.

After the 50/50, the business card drawings were held. The prizes and winners were:

- A bottle of wine from Notary Maven, won by Paul Gibson of Postal Plus, Inc.
- A bag of goodies from Postal Plus, Inc., won by Nancy Wheeler of Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Drysdale Properties.
- A bag of goodies from Postal Plus, Inc., won by Sabrina Wei of Treasure House.



Tracy from COOKIE...take a bite! treats us to a large variety of scrumptious cookies. Photo credit: Steve Plamann.



Paul from Postal Plus welcomes fellow chamber members. Photo credit: Steve Plamann.

- A tin of cookies from COOKIE...take a bite! won by Steve Plamann of Aaction Rents.
- A Gift Card for Jamba Juice from Assisted Living Locators, won by Doug Williams, retired.
- A teacup set from Treasure House, won by Melissa Moholt-Siebert of Ancient Oak Cellars.
- A bottle of wine from Ancient Oak Cellars, won by Cindy Butner of Mayacamas Mountain Living magazine.
- A bag of goodies from Postal Plus, Inc., won by Wendy Davies of Treasure House.
- A gift card to and from COOKIE...take a bite! won by Carolyn of COOKIE...take a bite!
- A teacup set from Treasure House, won by Coco Alfaro of COOKIE...take a bite!

The evening concluded with the announcement of the next social, which was a co-hosted social by Assisted Living Locators and Best Western Plus Wine Country Inn & Suites. More about that social can be found in the article on page 5.

Contributed by Johnathan Williams

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FEBRUARY SOCIAL REPORT

The second Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce social of 2023 was also our second co-hosted social of the year! Food was provided by Assisted Living Locators, while Best Western Plus Wine Country Inn & Suites provided the location. With a great gathering of members representing different businesses, the evening was a delight for all in attendance.

The evening began with a great spread of food provided by Assisted Living Locators. Attendees had the opportunity to mingle and network prior to the announcements. When the announcements began, it fell to Paul Peck, Head Ambassador for the Chamber, to do the honors.

Paul began by thanking the evening's hosts, Ramona Maurer of Assisted Living Locators, and Todd Anderson of Best Western Plus Wine Country Inn & Suites. Both hosts had the opportunity to tell the crowd about their businesses and what services they offer, and also took the time to thank the attendees for coming to the social.

Following this, Paul announced upcoming Chamber events. Most notable of course is the Chamber's annual Installation Dinner, which will be held on July 13, 2023. More info about the Installation Dinner



Jodi Williams takes home the 50/50 drawing cash at our February Social. Photo credit: Steve Plamann.

will be coming soon!

The Chamber was also delighted to welcome new member Cindy Butner of Mayacamas Mountain Living magazine. In addition to receiving her new member plaque, Cindy had the opportunity to speak to the Chamber about her business and magazine.

After the announcements were the drawings. As in January, the Pot of Gold was drawn, but the selected business was absent. As such, the prize remained at \$300 for yet another month. Chamber Members must be present and up-to-date on membership dues for the current year to win the prize.

Following the Pot of Gold, the 50/50 raffle was drawn. The prize this month was a total of \$37, and the winner was Jodie Williams, wife of Doug Williams, Chamber Treasurer.

After the 50/50, the time came for the business card drawing. The prizes and winners were:

- A Peet's Coffee gift card from Alegre Home Care, won by Doug Williams
- A Bottle of Wine from Notary Maven, won by Lori Rooney of NorthBay biz magazine
- A Bottle of Wine from the Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce, won by Steve Plamann of Aaction Rents
- A Bottle of Wine from the Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce, won by Sabrina Wei of Treasure House
- A Jamba Juice Gift Card from Assisted Living Locators, won by Johnathan Williams of the Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce
- Free use of the meeting room for one day from Best Western Plus Wine Country Inn & Suites, won by Karla Perez of Best Western Plus Wine Country Inn & Suites
- A one night stay in the Jacuzzi Suite from Best Western Plus Wine Country Inn & Suites, won by Mabel Anderson of Home Grown Pet Supply
- A set of dessert plates from Treasure House, won by Jodie Williams

After the last of the prizes had been distributed, the evening came to its conclusion with the announcement of the next social. The March social was hosted by Todd Walling of W Real Estate. More about that social can be found in the article on page 6.

Contributed by Johnathan Williams



Lori Rooney, from NorthBay biz magazine, won a bottle of wine donated by Tabatha from Notary Maven. Photo credit: Steve Plamann.

MARCH SOCIAL REPORT

Not many would expect to have a social hosted in a combination of a real estate office and an airplane hangar, but that was exactly where the Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce found itself for its March 2023 social. Hosted by Todd Walling and Tracey Cooper of W Real Estate, the March 2023 social took place on the night before St. Patrick's Day. With a delicious corned beef and cabbage dinner and plenty of wonderful drinks to pair with it, the evening was warm and welcoming to all.

As is usual, the social began with a period of mingling and eating that gave Chamber members a chance to relax and talk to their fellow business owners. After giving everyone plenty of time to get and eat their food, the announcements were made. Our emcee was, once again, the wonderful Paul Peck, Head Ambassador for the Chamber.

Paul thanked Todd and Tracey for hosting our mixer in their office. Both Todd and Tracey spoke about their work with W Real Estate, and Tracey expressed interest in working further with the Chamber as a member.

After Todd and Tracey's introductions, Paul moved on to announcing the upcoming events for the Chamber and its members. Chief among them was a reminder of the Chamber's annual Installation Dinner, which will be held on July 13th at Charlie's Restaurant. Paul also announced the Grand Opening ceremony for The Lodge at Piner Road, which was held on March 30th. Paul then invited up Elijah Runyan of The Pursuit to speak. Elijah shared the goals of The Pursuit as a nonprofit, as well as information about a blood drive that will be held at The Pursuit in May.

After these announcements, Paul welcomed up the Chamber's Junior Ambassadors, who were awarded with their badges.

Following the announcements, it was time once again to hold the social drawings. The first drawing to be held was the Pot of Gold, which, after years of absent winners, finally had a winner! More about this can be found in the article "Pot of Gold: WON!" on page 9.

Following this, the 50/50 raffle was held. The prize of \$35 was won by Tim Campbell, retired (formerly of Friendly Feed).

Five great prizes were awarded through the business card drawing this month:

- A Bottle of Wine from the Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce, won by Willie Lamberson of Lamberson Tile
- A Bottle of Wine from Lescure Engineering, won by Elijah Runyan of The Pursuit
- A Bottle of Wine from Notary Maven, won by Richard Maas, retired
- A Bottle of Wine from Treasure House, won by Tracey Cooper of W Real Estate
- A St. Patrick's Day Gift Bag from The Lodge at Piner Road, won by MJ Girard of Girard Communications and KOWS Radio

After the prizes were handed out to the lucky winners, the next social was announced: April 13th at Treasure House on 3450 Airway Drive, Unit E (Santa Rosa, CA 95403). The Chamber looks forward to seeing its members and their guests there.

Contributed by Johnathan Williams



Chamber members tour a private hangar during the March Social. Photo: Steve Plamann.

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RIGHT OF PETITION FOR SEATS ON THE MARK WEST AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

As required by the Chamber By Laws, the President appointed a nominating committee of three Directors who have nominated a slate of candidates to fill expiring Board of Directors positions. Each candidate will fill a two-year term and needs to be an active member. The slate of recommended candidates is as follows:

Member / Business

Term

TO BE ELECTED

Todd Anderson, Best Western Plus Wine Country Inn and Suites	2021 – 2023
Alicia Mills, Mark West Union School District	2021 – 2023
Doug Williams, former Chief of Central Fire Authority of Sonoma County	2021 – 2023
Willie Lamberson, Lamberson Tile	2021 – 2023
Samantha Paull, Samantha Paull Planning & Consulting	2021 – 2023

HOLD OVERS

Brad Sherwood, President Elect	2022 – 2024
Jason Riggs, Extended Child Care	2022 – 2024
Margaret DiGenova, California American Water	2022 – 2024
Pete Lescure, Lescure Engineers	2022 – 2024
Paul Peck, The Lodge at Piner Road	2022 – 2024
Brian Molsberry, Molsberry Markets, Inc.	2022 – 2024

Right of Petition:

Additional candidates may be nominated by petition, which must bear the signatures of at least ten (10) active members. Such petitions shall be filed with the judging committee by April 30th. The determination as to the legality of the petitions shall be supervised by the judging committee.

If no petition is filed within the designated period, the nominations will be closed, and a slate of candidates shall be elected at the regular May Board of Directors meeting.

If one or more legal petitions are received with additional candidates, the names of all candidates will be presented on a ballot in alphabetical order, and with instructions for voting for the correct number, shall be given to all members. Notice shall be given no later than ten (10) days prior to the May Board meeting. The ballots must be received by the Chamber office no later than 4PM the day before the May board meeting and at this meeting the Board of Directors will declare the candidates with the greatest number of votes elected.

Petitions and ballots should be mailed to The Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce, 4787 Old Redwood Hwy., Suite 101, Santa Rosa CA. 95403

Sincerely,
Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Center



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BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT: ARBOL RESIDENCES

One of the most important responsibilities a person can have in their life is ensuring that their elderly parents are cared for properly if they can no longer care for themselves. Sometimes, this means living with them and helping them yourself. But for many others, this can mean making the sometimes intimidating decision to entrust them to an assisted living facility. For those living in Santa Rosa, however, Arbol Residences of Santa Rosa seeks to ensure families that their loved ones will be given the best care possible.

Located on Foutaingrove Parkway, Arbol Residences of Santa Rosa first opened its doors in 2000. In addition to traditional assisted living services, Arbol offers memory care for residents who may be struggling with diseases such as dementia. Arbol also has skilled nursing services on-site, in order to provide additional care for their residents. Seeing a need to improve on these already valuable services, Arbol underwent a significant renovation in 2021, a renovation that not only improved the existing areas of the building, but added additional features. Some of those additional features include the Grove Bistro to give residents an additional dining option, luxury one-bedroom apartments, and a fitness center.

At Arbol, the core mission for both staff and management is to keep a focus on hospitality. Arbol has ten hospitality promises that employees are expected to know and act upon in order to ensure that they care for their residents in the best possible way. "Our dedication to a warm and hospitable environment is what sets us apart from other assisted living spaces," says Sean Baron, Director of Marketing and Sales for Arbol.

Another major focus for Arbol is ensuring that they not only care for their residents, but keep them entertained by organizing community events. These events can take many forms, ranging from casino nights to fiesta days with taco trucks. Additionally, Arbol makes sure to have a presence at other events in multiple industries to stay visible. Sean Baron often attends outside events in order to show support for the community, while also telling people about Arbol through both face-to-face interaction and presentations.

Recently, Arbol Residences of Santa Rosa has also joined the Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce. At the urging of Paul Peck, who has known Sean for many years, Arbol applied for and received Chamber membership in order to add another great avenue for promoting Arbol.

All in all, Arbol Residences of Santa Rosa seeks to offer peace of mind to the families of those who are entrusted to their care. With a wonderful hospitality focus and dedication to the comfort of their residents, Arbol is a great location for those in need of assisted living services. To the Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce and its members, Sean Baron says: "I'm looking forward to getting to know everyone. I may not have been able to make it to recent events, but I love visiting other businesses and forging personal relationships. I love that the Chamber is all about local support – community helping community. I'm happy to have already begun working with other Chamber members on things, and I see forging long-lasting professional and personal relationships as a long-term goal and perspective!"

Contributed by Johnathan Williams



POT OF GOLD: WON!

At every Business After Hours Social, members who are up-to-date on their membership can participate in the Pot of Gold drawing. This Pot of Gold starts with a prize of \$60, but this amount is only awarded if the winner is present at the social. If the winner is absent, the prize increases by \$20, to a maximum of \$300.

And for many socials in a row, starting back before COVID caused a huge delay in socials, the Pot of Gold has sat at \$300 due to absence after absence! But on March 16, 2023, the Pot of Gold was finally won. Elijah Runyan, representing his nonprofit The Pursuit, was present and received the \$300 prize.

Not only does the Pot of Gold serve as an incentive to attend socials, it is also an opportunity for the Chamber to support its members. The Chamber encourages all members to attend socials and stay up-to-date on their dues so that they too have the chance to follow The Pursuit in finding the Pot of Gold. Congratulations Elijah!

Contributed by Johnathan Williams

HELP DOCUMENT MARK WEST AREA HISTORY

The Mark West Area Chamber has started a project to help preserve the history of our unique area. We will feature articles in future Lark newsletters regarding our history, and share that information on our Facebook page and on the Chamber's website. All residents of this area are invited to contribute any important or interesting historical facts, information or photos.

Send your contributions or questions to the Chamber office at office@markwest.org, or call us at 707-578-7975.

THE LIBRARY...WHAT'S NEW!

Visit California State Parks for Free with a Library Card

Did you know that your library card helps get you into over 200 California State Parks for free? Use your Sonoma County Library card to check out a California State Parks Pass. Day-use passes can be checked out at library branches or requested through the library catalog.

To view an interactive map and list of participating state parks, visit www.parks.ca.gov.

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Sonoma County residents can now receive live, free, 24/7 online tutoring and homework help in every K-12 subject with HelpNow by Brainfuse. This eResource joins dozens of other school resources offered by the Sonoma County Library.

"Students and parents in our communities are doing a lot of great learning out there, but the library knows they could use more expert help with homework. HelpNow by Brainfuse is a wonderful addition to Sonoma County Library's online study tools," said Rachel Icaza, Education Initiatives Librarian at the Sonoma County Library. "Students and parents can log in 24/7 to receive one-on-one homework help in English, Spanish and French!"

Brainfuse has provided supplemental educational services for more than 20 years, including online homework help, practice tests, study tools and collaborative tools. Students communicate with live tutors via the internet. Brainfuse offers assistance with math, science, language arts and other core K-12 subjects in English, Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese, Vietnamese and Tagalog. There's no age limit to who can use the service. Adult learners also have access to writing assistance, citizenship resources and other skill-building tools. Visit sonomalibrary.org/school.


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Contributed by Ray Holley, Public Information Officer, Communications Manager, Sonoma County Library



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The Lark Newsletter is emailed to member businesses each month.
For more information, contact the Chamber office at 707-578-7975.

Content Coordinator: Johnathan Williams
jdwl1993@aol.com

Editor: Peter Loughlin, Loughlin Marketing
707-704-6498 peter@loughlinmarketing.com

Deadline for publication is the 3rd Wednesday of the month.
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Doug Williams
707-696-8244

dougw1955@aol.com

Corporate Secretary

Alicia Mills Mark West Union School Dist.
707-524-2970 amills@mwusd.org

Corporate Treasurer

Doug Williams
707-696-8244

dougw1955@aol.com

VP Business Services

Todd Anderson

Best Western Plus

Wine Country Inn & Suites

707-545-9000 tanderson@heritagehotelgroup.com

VP Community Services

Margaret DiGenova California American Water
707-542-8329 margaret.digenova@amwater.com

VP Publicity & Public Relations

Samantha Paull Samantha Paull Planning & Consulting
707-494-2845 samantha@spaulplanning.com

VP Membership

Paul Peck

707-828-9302

ppeck26@yahoo.com

VP Government Affairs

Willie Lamberson

Lamberson Tile

707-483-0784 willielamberson24@gmail.com

DIRECTORS

Laura Buhrer Exchange Bank, Larkfield Branch
707-523-4392 laura.buhrer@exchangebank.com

Peter Lescure

Lescure Engineers, Inc.

707-575-3427 plescure@lescure-engineers.com

Brian Molsberry

Molsberry Markets, Inc.

707-546-5041 brianm@molsberrymarket.com

Jason Riggs

Extended Child Care Coalition

707-545-2402 jason@extcc.org



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