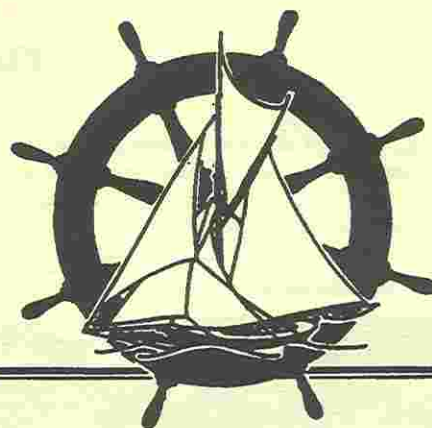


THE HELM

Winter, 2002 - Volume 20, No. 1



A PUBLICATION OF THE CLASSIC YACHT RESTORATION GUILD, INC.

Elf, past and future



President's Message

Attention to Detail

... by Rick Carrion

Over the past year we have all experienced and witnessed many interesting and some alarming events. Our daily actions, thoughts and activities have been redefined with the current world conflicts – which have now touched our own soil. We must all remain strong and focused with a continued attention to detail. The amount and quality of our progress are direct factors of the degree of attention we pay to details.

A case in point: over the last year, how many times have you ordered a specific item only to be disappointed with the wrong item when it arrived at your door? I must admit I get frustrated when that happens, and it causes additional time allocations to correct someone else's mistakes. As a public high school science teacher, I am constantly emphasizing the need to create a sincere awareness of attention to detail – a personal ethic to develop to be successful in today's ever-changing world.

Over the past few months, we have worked on several projects: painting, varnishing, taking off her lines (to document her shape), engine beds, cabin layout and engine restoration. I know the last item — engine restoration — may be shocking to many people who know me because I have sailed *Elf* since 1971 without an engine. Well, as we get older, perhaps smarter, and more anxious to satisfy U.S. Coast Guard requirements, an engine is seen as an instrument to assure *Elf*'s arrival at future events and helpful when becalmed with passengers aboard.

Many evenings and Saturdays recently have been filled with the fine points of restoration of our Westerbeke 33 hp diesel. Thanks to the skills and talents of Henry Long (one of the best diesel mechanics on the East coast), we are nearing completion of the engine's restoration, with the hope of having it actually installed soon.

Getting the correct parts has been challenging and time consuming. For everything to work at the turn of a key, exacting attention to detail is demanded. Design upgrades (as the engineers call them) created additional need for patience, but when all is said and done, we will have a finely-tuned power plant for *Elf*.

I must say that at this point in time, I consider myself as the guardian of one of America's nautical and yachting treasures. Throughout the process of *Elf*'s restoration, I have had a critical eye on attention to detail, perhaps almost to a fault. I must say, it is time-consuming, but well worth the effort in the long run. I often ask myself, "How far do I want to be offshore in a full gale???" I use that as a golden rule because I want to do coastal travel, eventually repeating *Elf*'s historic voyage of 1893 from Marblehead to Halifax, when she was credited with initiating offshore cruising in small yachts.

On the other hand, I really do not want to be offshore in a full gale, but if it happens, we will be well prepared. Let's be honest, in my mind there is no perfect storm! Therefore, all systems and features must be in top condition to avoid the domino effect that leads to disaster.

In closing, I want to say that progress may be slow, but it is of the highest quality possible.

Encouragement

Please consider writing an article for our news interest features. When you see your article published I will give you a gift of an official *Elf* T-shirt or *Elf* mouse Pad. We may, at times, need to edit your contribution for space considerations. Thank you!

Topics to consider:

- Historical or unique moments on *Elf*
- Tools or gear and their uses on traditional boats
- How-to articles
- Special Environmental moments that you enjoyed
- You and your boat adventures
- Other... your choice

Graham's Letter

Having said just about everything I can think to say about the project at its current stage, and having talked about the historical significance, emotional involvement, hopes and plans for the future and so on, I've been stuck about this newest letter. I'm sitting here in my shop avoiding painting the interior and bilges of a small sloop. I hate interior painting for all the obvious reasons: endless ins and outs, cramped spaces, fumes, runs, and the fact that "One Coat" never is. Why can't someone do this for me? I love exterior painting. It's fast and flat, with uninterrupted surfaces always so beautiful when finished. I don't want anyone doing my topsides.



Graham's make-shift shop

But the first shop was primitive at best. We had gutted out Elf's interior after removing the cabin and set all the pieces outside next to the boat. The interior cabinets were set up on a make shift bench. The cabinets made covered spaces where we could store tools and stuff out of the weather — and the weather was coming. We needed a roof, so we draped an old blue tarp off the starboard side down over the bench and cabinets. We tried to tie it all down so it would stay put, and not pocket water when it rained. Less than ideal conditions for preservation, compared to what we have now, but the old tarp did function as a lean-to and wind break of sorts, and I remember thinking about Joshua Slocum, the old "Spray" and the tarp attached to an oak tree — a legendary restoration so much like our own — and carried out in much the same setting over a hundred years ago in a field in New Bedford, Massachusetts. I'm always struck by the endless repeating of history we all participate in.

And so began the work on Elf, with the area gradually looking more and more like a junk yard, as old rotted timbers and frames began to pile up around the hull. Two frames grew into dozens, stacked like dinosaur bones at a dig. The old cabin became a doghouse-away-from-home for Skipper, I seem to recall.

We were amazed when we removed the old rudder and rudder post. Originally I must assume, and still at that time, packed with white lard. Could it be possible? White lard a hundred years old and still very much lard.

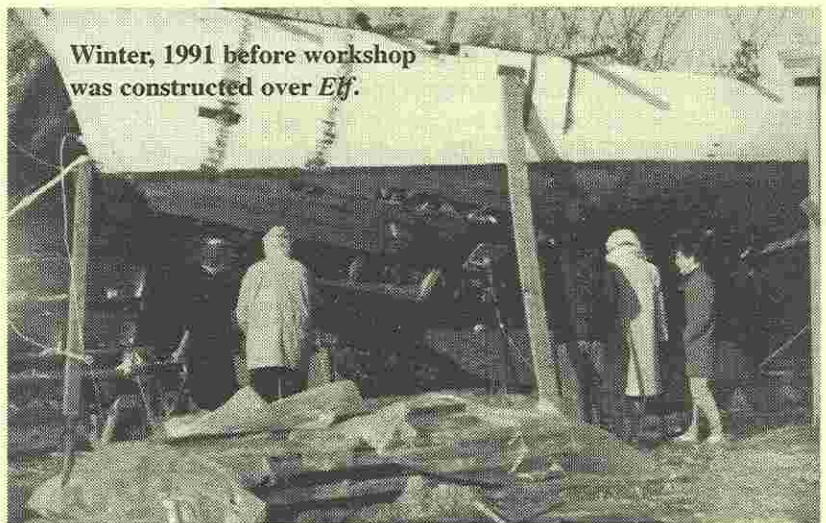
So much that Skipper ate some of it. He loved it, and it didn't kill him.

With our original make-shift shop, the first winter was difficult going. Mud, rain, snow, and cold. However, we plugged away and made progress. Eventually it became clear just how extensive this restoration was going to be for the boat to be truly sound. There would be no quick fix; no short cuts were ever discussed.

I found an old picture in the archives of the original camp so you can see just how far we've come. I also found a wonderful picture of Gus and Vita. This has turned into a saga! I can't wait until we write the book. What began as a job has become a family affair, and a project I'm proud to be a part of.

In considering a new message for the newsletter, I was thinking that it might be too early to begin to reminisce, but then again it's been 10 years, so why not? For some of the newer members who didn't see the early efforts, this might be fun. With the fine building that now houses Elf, with tools and equipment scattered about, stacks of lumber arranged according to size and function, stairs and catwalk constructed, and masts and rigging hanging from the rafters, it may be hard to envision how it was when the project first got underway.

Elf was brought to the farm in 1991 and set down in a clearing near the house. When the demolition began it was downright scary. It would have been easy to do way too much too fast, but once she began to come apart her appalling condition became apparent. As I have said many times since, we found a dozen major defects, any one of which would have sunk a normal boat. The job of getting Elf back in the water was going to be more extensive than we had predicted, and it needed to be done right.



Winter, 1991 before workshop was constructed over Elf.

Elf's Shipwright

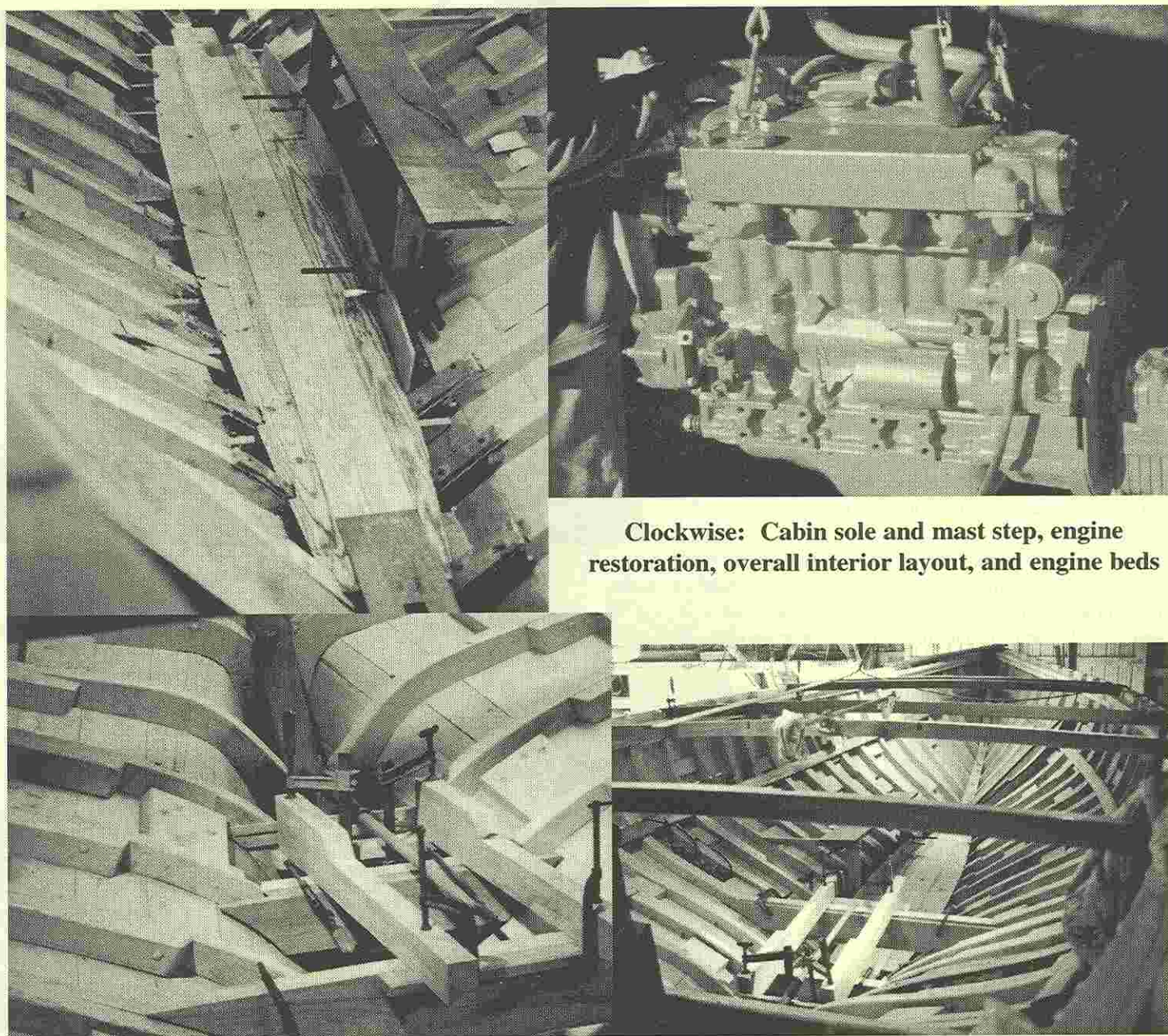
The Restoration of ELF

... by John Griffiths, NAMS CMS
Marine Surveyor

It seems so many years ago that I saw Elf sailing with Rick and his friends on the Sassafras River. Elf at that time had a cut down rig and was in need of work but still had the lines of a traditional wooden sailing vessel.

Since that first meeting there have been a lot of changes, the Classic Yacht Restoration Guild, Inc. was formed and Elf was transported by road from Georgetown Yacht Basin to Rick's house in Earleville, MD. ELF is in the process of being restored by Rick with the help of Graham Ero and many volunteers from the Restoration Guild. Before the start of the restoration I was contacted by Rick to evaluate the condition of the vessel. It was obvious at that time that if the vessel was to be preserved and used that major restoration work was required. The major structural restoration work on the hull has now been completed this includes all new floors, frames, planks, stem, stringers, carlins, fastenings, etc. The deck beams are completed and varnished and they are ready for installation. The standard of the restoration is excellent. An auxiliary diesel engine has been donated and is in the final process of being rebuilt. At long last the project is taking shape and ELF is once again starting to appear like she was when constructed in 1888. There are still major items to be completed before the vessel is commissioned. This includes the completion of the deck, rudder, propeller shaft, mast, rigging & sails, installation of the engine, and the interior of the vessel.

I would like to wish the Classic Yacht Restoration Guild, Inc. and in particular, Rick Carrion, Graham Ero and all the volunteers the very best for the completion and launching of ELF.



Clockwise: Cabin sole and mast step, engine restoration, overall interior layout, and engine beds

**Lawley Symposium
At Eastern Yacht Club
Rick's Confirming Experience**

I considered it to be an honor to present an update of the ELF restoration progress to Lawley boat owners and friends. My talk and slide show was part of a series of activities at Eastern Yacht Club of Marblehead, Massachusetts. Not only did I enjoy the event, but I also met several very interesting people, each one with some sort of nautical story to share.

The day started with setting up a display on ELF's history and artifacts. Member Dan McGrath brought along ELF T-shirts and computer mouse pads as Guild membership promotionals. He helped us to welcome guests and to share historic features of ELF's colorful past.

I enjoyed all of the presentations, and found that each seemed to be tied into ELF in one way or another. One particularly interesting presentation was marine surveyor Captain Paul Haley's, which confirmed in my mind the need to do as extensive a restoration as we have done.... **including renewing and replacing all futtocks and planks....** ELF originally was fastened with galvanized iron rose head cut nails, which degrade the wood surrounding them as they are eaten away by the marine elements over time. The term "icicling" is generally used, which means a nail the size of a pencil will be eaten away to the size of a thread (as an icicle melts away as it warms). Wanting to go offshore, I knew I needed to do the right thing and replace each plank and futtock, and not do a "patch-up" with epoxy saturation.

Mark your calendar now for **July 13, 2002 for the Lawley Symposium** to be held at the **Boston Yacht Club**, across the harbor from the Eastern Yacht Club in Marblehead, Massachusetts.

Many thanks to Albert Hickey for organizing such a wonderful event. I look forward to the next!

Crab Feast 2001

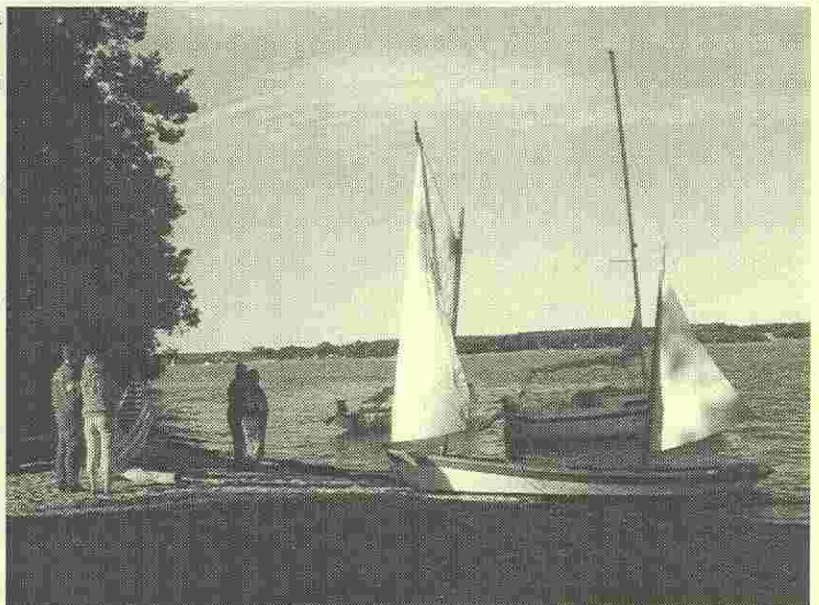
This year's crab feast was a tremendous success, and was a much needed time for resolve. September 15, 2001 was a cool, but sunny day. Although planning had been in motion for months, there were many obstacles to overcome! The biggest... Crabs were almost impossible to find. Only days after the September 11th attack many crabbers chose not to work. Plan B...**get crabs from other sources...**

**Cancellation was not an option in my mind!!!!
(Damn the torpedoes... Full speed ahead!)**

I had done a lot of the set-up the previous evening. At 8:00 am we still had no CRABS and the phone was ringing off the hook. What to do. . . ???? **STAY CALM!!!** After several other calls Cinda Steel came to the rescue. Thanks to Cinda everything went off without a glitch. She was able to acquire and deliver some of the bay's best in time for the early arrivals. Again, **MANY THANKS!**

I also want to give most sincere thanks to Mrs. Betty Ward for extending the invitation to the Cherry Grove beach front.

I must say that after all the set-up work was done I actually was able to enjoy the day. One thing I really enjoyed was greeting all the children as I was wearing a crabbie hat, bringing smiles and squeals of laughter. They all wanted to be photographed wearing the hat. (A GREAT ICE BREAKER)
It turned out to be a much needed day to relax with family and friends.



**Plan to join us for 2002.
Watch for the date.**



The Classic Yacht Restoration Guild Vision

The Classic Yacht Restoration Guild is a non-profit membership organization dedicated to the preservation of traditional watercraft, both power and sail. Yacht restorations are accomplished through a combination of member donated skills and resources. A cooperative educational setting is provided by the Guild for all members who wish to acquire or sharpen boat maintenance and restoration skills. Our membership is diverse. Each member can participate either as an instructor, a student of restoration techniques, a participant in Guild sailing events and cruises or as a supporter through dues and donations. The Guild also offers a variety of resources and skilled professionals who are qualified and interested in helping you connect with the right people to assist with your project.

Work on our flagship *Elf* currently involves restoration of the original rig, deck, and cabin configurations. In addition, the Guild has received donations of many small craft which are used as demonstration and education projects. Ships carpentry, rigging, mechanics, and fine wood finishing are all topics covered by periodic workshops held while restoration projects are underway.

Once a Guild vessel is made seaworthy, the true pleasure of operating historic or significant small craft begins. Members are encouraged to sail Guild vessels with emphasis on instruction of boating safety, piloting, navigation, and the maritime history of the Chesapeake Bay. The Guild plans several cruises to maritime and waterfront festivals every season. Members serve as crew and staff displays at these events.

As a non-profit organization, the Guild always welcomes tax-deductible contributions. For example, the Guild received a 1963 vintage Lightning class racing sailboat and a large library of titles on boat building, maintenance, and maritime history. Also, donation of items used for restoration or fund raising are also tax deductible.

With a growing membership, the Classic Yacht Restoration Guild looks forward to increasing activity and good times. Please ask a member for further information and details.

"Lawley Built"

We're Doing Great!

But we need your help to make it a timely reality! With the possibility of a 2002 launch date, there are so many facets of *Elf's* restoration. We'd really like to know where you see yourself with the restoration process, because there are so many unfilled roles that you may not have considered. And once we launch, what do you want to do? Sail? Or watch us sail by? Your choice!

Success of a project as dynamic and historically important as this requires funding as well as hands-on volunteers, from which you can learn a valuable skill! We really want all of you to feel part of every aspect of *Elf's* restoration. This can be done by responding to Rick on any of following categories that need attention:

- Financial contribution
- Volunteering at the *Elf* shop – Saturday morning workshops, stop by!
Sanding, Painting, Varnishing, Caulking, Decking, Rigging, etc.
- Used computer system
- Graphic design for promotional brochure
- Send in your favorite recipes for the *Elf* cookbook – you will be credited
- Publications coordinator
- Membership strategist and recruiting

Funding: Keeping the Boats Afloat

As you can understand, the issue of funding is always critical to any organization. We are constantly trying to find new and painless ways to generate funding for our many projects. Your continued membership contributions are very important, so please continue. If you are not a current member, please consider rejoining or joining as a new member.

Another source of funding has, in the past, been grants. Over the years we have received grants from the National Historic Trust, the Maryland Historical Trust, the Cecil County Historic Trust, and others. Grant writing is sometimes a long and tedious effort and very competitive. This year's grant application to the Maryland Historical Trust for *Elf's* sails and rigging was not successful. (Back to the drawing board . . . Oh well . . .)

Other funding comes from the sale of donated boats and materials which we have available. You can donate your vessel and gear and/or buy your next boat and equipment from the Guild.

Other sources of funding come from the sale of T-Shirts, sweat-shirts, mouse pads, and other collectibles along with our crab feast and sale of wood.

We are delighted to announce a recent large contribution of \$10,000 from a new member which will be very helpful with the deck and interior layout work. Many thanks! This new member also had many very specific and useful suggestions to expand our funding base. We are currently exploring his thoughts and ideas with an eye toward implementation.

If we were to buy our way into finishing the project, we would need approximately \$80,000. However, many of the expenses associated with *Elf's* completion can be covered with volunteer efforts. The needs are diverse. We invite you to participate at whatever level you choose.

Boats for Sale

- Lightning, fiberglass, needs some work (Best Offer)
- Lightning, wood, needs minor work (B.O. above \$2,500)
- 15' Runabout 35hp Johnson, needs work (B.O.)
- Pringell 16' Catamaran, needs minor work (B.O.)
- FJ (Flying Junior) minor work (B.O.)
- Catalina 22 (B.O. above \$2000)

... by

Brian McCandless

Elf Open Workshops

Plan to Join Us

Call Ahead

410-275-2819

January 19
February 2
February 16
March 2

March 16
April 13
April 27

Plan to drop in to help, watch, or advise.

Look forward to seeing you.

Plan to stay for dinner.

Membership Update

We are still looking forward to the day when *Elf* is launched and want you to be a part of her life. With your continued support, that day will come soon. The *Elf* project is truly unique, and I thank you for being part of making it a reality.

All contributions are tax-deductible.
Members are invited to all activities.
Share the newsletter with a friend.

Call Rick for workshop details at 410-275-2819 or
E-Mail: elf1888@earthlink.net



Elf
Off Marblehead
1888

Stebbins, *ELF* photo courtesy of:
Hart Nautical Collections, MIT Museum



Interlux

PROTECTION YOU CAN TRUST

THE HELM



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