



Historic Calgary Week 2019

Oh, The Fun We Had!



By Irene DeBoni with input and/or photo contributions from Walt DeBoni, Doug Coats, Cassandra Cummings, Shaun Hunter, Jackie Kleiner, Nidia McIntosh, Janet McMaster, Jen Peddlesden, Lynda Purdy, Kathleen Rogers, Carolyn Ryder, Martin Stocker, George Webber, Phyllis Wheaton and Monica Zurowski.

The summary below can't begin to highlight all the events of HCW 2019. We have attempted to give you a flavour for the "week."

Our theme this year was "Oh, The Fun We Had!" and did we live up to it. There were many highlights for me.

As usual, Mayor Nenshi started off the week. We are fortunate to have a mayor who is interested in history – for the past few years he has made a point of coming to our opening and he always tailors his remarks to fit the occasion. He was not the only "celebrity" to grace our proceedings. The Honourable Lois Mitchell, our Lieutenant Governor, surprised us by asking to attend Doug Coats "In Praise of Ordinary People." Her Honour has made history education an important part of her focus while in office. She is the Founding Patron of the History and Heroes Foundation. And, at the Bragg Creek tour, The Right Honourable Stephen Harper, P.C. was in attendance.



Mayor Naheed Nenshi at the opening ceremonies of HCW in the SAPD building. Courtesy Walt DeBoni

McKay family. I was impressed that they have been in Western Canada since the 1700s. Sometimes family histories are only of interest to that family, but Bill Jackson too, made his family story interesting. Doug

Levis made art history come alive with his anecdotes of being in the art auction business for many years. But it was Shelly McElroy who blew us all away with her rousing history of football in Calgary. I'm not a sports fan, but even I became a cheerleader under Shelly's influence. Her PowerPoint was expertly done and her presentation dynamic.



The Right Honourable Stephen Harper, P.C. with volunteer Keryle Amidon (left) and presenter (Fun at the Cinema) Ruth Manning at Bragg Creek.

Courtesy Martin Stocker

Overall, I thought everything went very well and there was such an amazing variety of walks and talks offered this year. Mayor Nenshi started off HCW with his enthusiastic welcome and official opening, and that enthusiasm carried on throughout the week. I always learn so much about Calgary during HCW and this year was no exception – it also always makes me appreciate what a wonderful city Calgary is and what a rich history we have. Janet McMaster, HCW Volunteer

From Scott Graham of the Archaeological Society of Alberta, we learned how First Nations people traded with others to obtain the obsidian they needed to make their tools. I had wondered where local First Nations had obtained the raw materials and here was the answer – it comes from hundreds of miles away from here – the inference was that they travelled the distance to obtain it, but I was left wondering whether perhaps traders would only go part way where they would meet up with others coming from the other direction as happened during the Silk Road Days. Our tour was on location at Ft. Calgary and Scott showed us the raised ground that had once been the railbed for the Grand Trunk railway. While I had known that the Grand Trunk had owned the land, I never really thought to connect the dots with the raised earth.

That afternoon a group of us drove to High River to take in the “Highwood North Film Walking Tour.” This was a fun walk through memory lane as we heard about Hollywood stars that had filmed in the area and visited locations that had been used in various movies or television shows. Irene Kerr and Olivia Cotton Cornwall had embellished the movie theme by having a popcorn stop for us half way through the tour. But a sudden wind came up and popcorn floated through the air like balloons. It actually became quite magical. Of course, the whole town feels like a movie set with its myriad of murals on walls of buildings and we vowed to return to explore it more fully. Naturally we did have to indulge in an ice cream at the old-fashioned diner before returning to Calgary.



Mark Vazquez-Mackay, the artist behind the Northern Hills Mural. Courtesy Walt DeBoni

During HCW 2018 we had heard about the Northern Hills Mural so drove up to see it. We were impressed and made note to include it in the lineup for 2019. So glad we did. The artist behind the mural, Mark Vazquez-Mackay, guided us from panel to panel, explaining the inspiration behind each. Taken as a whole, the fence panels tell Calgary’s history from prehistoric times to the present. While some panels had originally had no meaning to me (for example, Indigenous symbolism), now they did. Others again made me smile, such as Eddy the Eagle and Heidi & Howdy, being used to symbolize the 1988 Olympics.

I chose to see a Polo Game that afternoon. It has been played in Calgary since the late 1800s. While I had seen polo on TV before, I had never seen it live. I found, just as in other sports, music, or theatre, there is no substitute for actually being there. We were so close to the game that we could hear the panting of the horses and the pounding of the hooves as they galloped down the field. It was very exciting and I would definitely go again.

Ruth Manning is a speaker that I never miss. In her talk on “Fun at the Cinema” she recounted many stories from her time managing various theatres in Calgary. Although she had reams of notes (and was obviously well prepared), she never used them. Rather she just talked and we were captivated.

The magic continued during the presentation of “The Valiant Five” – the story behind our amazing Albertan women, Nellie McClung, Louise McKinney, Henrietta Muir Edwards, Irene Parlby, and Emily Ferguson Murphy. Dressed in period costume and pretending to



Evelyn's Diner, High River. Courtesy Walt DeBoni

drink from dainty tea cups, the storytellers “gathered” to tell us of their fight to improve the status of women in Canada.



A re-enactment of the Valiant Five. Left to right: Irene Parlby (Karen Gummo), Nellie McClung (Donna Barnfield), Louise McKinney (Mary Hayes), Henrietta Muir Edwards (Betty Hersberger) and Emily Ferguson Murphy (Doreen Vanderstoop). Courtesy Walt DeBoni

A tremendous crowd of about 200 people invaded Stephen Avenue for Josh Traptow’s Stephen Avenue Ghost Signage tour. Not sure if people were there to see ghost signs or hoping to see signs of ghosts. We did see several of the former but none of the latter, sadly.

Walt DeBoni, HCW Committee

Since the Grain Academy & Museum will be closed later this year, I thought I “had better” go to this session but was not really looking forward to it. But Gord Franson did such a great job of leading us (divided into two groups because of our numbers) that I was thoroughly glad I had attended.



Gord Franson leading the Grain Academy tour. Courtesy Walt DeBoni

Melissa Ledingham, the Corporate Program Coordinator at the Calgary Zoo was our leader for our tour of the Canadian Wilds at the Calgary Zoo. Since I had not met her before, I wondered how someone with a “desk job” would fare as an interpreter. After the first five minutes I knew she was the perfect guide for explaining the animals, why they were in the zoo, and how our zoo is being proactive in protecting endangered species. She was passionate and extremely knowledgeable. In addition to seeing the animals in front of our eyes, she had a backpack full of specimens to further explain how the animals were adapted to their environment. And bonus, since we were there at opening on a lovely day, all the animals were out and active.

Lawrence Gervais is an excellent presenter and obviously knows what he’s talking about. Métis history is an important topic – one we don’t hear enough about, and his positivity made it one I would like to know more about. Doug Coats, HCW Committee

George Webber was commissioned to photograph the new Central Library as it was being built. As donors, we had been on many tours during the process, and took our own pictures, but were interested to see what a professional would have taken. The photos were good, but what really had us almost in tears was the heartfelt thanks that he gave to Bill Ptacek, the CEO that really allowed us all to see the vision he had for our library. Following his presentation, another professional photographer, Neil Zeller, took the group to his favourite locations in the library for taking pictures and conducted a photography class on how to get the best shots.



Shadows in the Central Library. Courtesy Walt DeBoni

It was an honour for me to share the story of the construction of Calgary’s beloved new Central Library. George Webber

What can I say about Tim Williams and Great Blues North. He is not only a great blues player, but gave us the history of the various forms of the Blues. This was a real highlight for sure! Julia Harrington at Memorial Park library had partnered with the Calgary Blues Music Presentation to put on this free concert and hopefully the partnership can be maintained because it definitely enhanced our week.

The behind the scenes tour of the Indigenous Collections at the Glenbow led by the Curator of Indigenous Studies, Joanne Schmidt was very special. She had assembled toys from Inuit peoples, local First Nations and even from places as far away as Indonesia. One of the tour participants was one of our First Nations and verified not only that her people not only used many of these toys but how some of the games are played. The commonality of the toys made me think once again that we have much in common with each other.



Artifacts in the Glenbow's Indigenous Collection.
Courtesy Cassandra Cummings

I always look forward to Historic Calgary Week, both as an attendee, and in the last few years as a presenter. There is such an amazing array of stories to be told about our City and the surrounding areas, and in just as many ways- biking, walking, food, breweries, music, behind the scenes of historic sites... I eagerly await

my brochure so I can highlight all of the talks, tours and activities I'd love to participate in, knowing from the beginning there's physically no way I'll be able to do it. But I do know that whatever sessions I can join will be fantastic! There is always something new to learn and experience. This year I was able to attend the Behind The Scenes Tour: Indigenous Studies Collection at Glenbow, led by Curator Joanne Schmidt. This tiny glimpse into Glenbow's collections was interesting as always. I've also

loved being able to share tiny parts of Calgary's history myself, making connections between different sites and people, sharing favourite artifacts (like the makeup compact made from a plane fuselage at The Hangar Flight Museum), or being real about what happens behind those staff doors in museums (it gets pretty dusty, and there's more paperwork than you'd expect!), and having conversations with Calgarians about their stories and what they connect to.

Historic Calgary Week has been such a great way to learn more, explore more, and get to know our city and neighbours a bit more. It's reinforced every year how many of us feel that way- eager to explore- as I heard many stories of pre-registered events booked up in hours or a couple of days, and events without pre-registration having more an 100 or 200 attendees! In a city where you often hear that we have no history or that it doesn't matter, I think events like Historic Calgary Week show us that it really does, and particularly this year, that it's really fun too! Cassandra Cummings, Hangar Flight Museum

Shaun Hunter is another speaker that I will not miss as she is always well prepared and her delivery is excellent. In this case, she took us through the Beltline area, stopping at locations where various famous writers had either been or had written about. In all cases, she had a selection to read from their works.

Late at night, under a stalking moon," Calgary author Aritha van Herk writes, "our history sings behind closed doors." Those doors cracked open during Historic Calgary Week and the past came out to play. Highlights? Foraging for



Shaun Hunter reading from the works of authors during her Beltline tour.
Courtesy Walt DeBoni

food and story with Karen Gummo along the Bow River during her "Walking with the Ancestors" tour. (There are amazing Saskatoon bushes near Fort Calgary.) Following five fearless storytellers into the lives of the Valiant Five at Central United Church — the same place the real Nellie McClung's voice once resonated decades

ago. Calgary's poet-photographer George Webber and his record of the "unintended choreography" of the Central Library construction. Shooting the library — a place that gives photographers "carte blanche for not following the rules" -- with Neil Zeller. And seeing real dance cards (Strathmore circa 1914) in Marcia Slater's behind-the-scenes tour at the Glenbow. Bravo to all the presenters who sang the city's past, and the organizers who pulled the choir together. *Shaun Hunter, Author*

Square Dancing is not something that I associate with universities, but that was the focus of the presentation of the U of C this year. First, we participated in a pancake breakfast, then had an expertly prepared presentation on the history of square dancing. (Who knew that while square dancing in North America is declining, young people are actually taking it up in Europe!) This was followed by demonstration dances by two local clubs and of course finally, we were all invited up to join them. This was fun.



Square Dancing at the University of Calgary on 8th Avenue SW. Courtesy Walt DeBoni

The Calgary Herald has been a business in Calgary almost from the very beginning of the city and presenters Monica Zurowski and Norma Marr showed us, through a very effective PowerPoint, the history of Calgary as viewed from the lens of the newspaper. This presentation actually made me sad because we saw examples of how powerful the newspaper once was, and we can't help but realize that newspapers have less influence today.

I truly enjoyed this year's HCW, as I always do, and was happy to be given the opportunity to share some of the Calgary Herald's history with fellow citizens.

I found you to be very organized and very responsive to my questions. It was easy to present at an event where all logistics and details are taken care of. . . All of your volunteers and venue partners seemed to be on top of this and it was greatly appreciated.

On a more general note, the breadth and diversity of the sessions during HCW were amazing. There was really something for every taste and the brochure did a great job of capturing the essence of these sessions in just a few words.

I'm glad the Herald can support an event that brings our local history to life and adds so much vibrancy to our city each summer.

Monica Zurowski, Deputy Managing Editor, Calgary Herald

Excellent presentation by Monica Zurowski – not just lively and informative, but full of her own experiences too. She was able to choose from the gazillion events available, selections that were fun and often unknown – like Calgary Herald clocks and the "Weatherizer" on the roof. For those of us who only see the finished product, the "behind the scenes" stories gave us an idea of the stress and fun that must go into every issue of the paper.

Doug Coats, HCW Committee

Archaeologist, Shari Peyerl, set the scene with her wonderful dress as she helped us see and hear the music and dance of the early 1900's. We got a glimpse into the New Year's Party held at Glenbow Village in 1910.

Jackie Kleiner, HCW Committee

While Russ Parker didn't have a PowerPoint, he did have lots of visuals, a whole array of team jerseys and a lot of memories for his presentation of "Take Me Out to the Ball Game." And when his taped beginning didn't work, an outgoing volunteer from Heritage Park took up the challenge, stood up, and led the whole audience



Shari Peyerl in period costume. Courtesy Jackie Kleiner

in a rousing chorus of Take me out to the Ball Game. It ended up being a really good session. I could see that several of the audience were nodding their heads in remembrance as Russ talked of some of the great athletes who had played in our ball parks.



Russ Parker “took us out to the ball game.”
Courtesy Walt DeBoni

YouthLink took our theme and in “The Seedy Side” led us through Calgary’s history of vices whether it be prostitution, gambling, or alcohol. The audience lapped it up. And it didn’t hurt that during the break, there was a bar to buy a drink!

At the New Calgarians event, it was gratifying to see 170 people in the audience with the majority being new Canadians. Phyllis Wheaton, Debbie Noesgaard and Carolyn Ryder illustrated stories from our books, “In The Footsteps of Giants.”

Phyllis Wheaton sang a song she composed in 2003 in commemoration of the Stones of Signal Hill. Below are the refrain and first two stanzas of her song:

***There was no battle here
Hundreds of soldiers on their knees
Arranged the stones before going to war
Let these rocks remind you, for
There was no battle here***

***All of us are gone
Our voices now are still
But we’ve left our mark in stone
Standing vigil on Signal Hill***

***Twenty thousand stones with our fingerprints
Four Battalion numbers by our Sarcee tents
A stark reminder of the lives we spent
So there’ll be no battles here***

Walt DeBoni, HCW Committee

I thought I had heard enough about early ranching, but out of a sense of duty went to Rocking P Ranch. But Warren Elofson’s presentation fit our theme perfectly. He regaled how cowboys on the ranch had to make their own fun so made up poems, songs, and activities – and he had the slides that included the words. Definitely gave us a different perspective on cowboy culture.

Bob Pearson is another favourite in his presentations at the National Music Centre. This year his theme was “Fred Bagley – Bugle Boy.” To help him, he requested people from the audience to come up. Remember that lady that led the audience for “Take Me Out to the Ball Game”? She became a drummer along with another participant. And when Bob requested people to waltz another lady quickly volunteered. Bob gallantly became her partner when no one else came forward. But his main addition to the program was eight members of the Cappy Smart Band. This band has a real history – Cappy Smart was our first fire chief and the band was created very early on and only disbanded because of war. It later came together again and is composed of retired firefighters who of course wear their firefighter’s uniforms. What a great session – truly a highlight!



Bob Pearson and his impromptu band performing at the “Fred Bagley - Bugle Boy” event.
Courtesy Janet McMaster

This year we enjoyed three different tours of Chinatown, one conducted by Ron Lee, one by Lloyd Sciban and the third by the I Love YYC Chinatown group. All three events were well received and the dinner after the latter tour was particularly appreciated by all.

Walt DeBoni, HCW Committee



*The I Love YYC Chinatown group on its tour of Chinatown.
Courtesy Janet McMaster*

That evening featured another crowd favourite – Doug Coats who told his family’s story. His point was that most families do not make it into the history books, but their efforts in establishing the west are equally important to the foundation of our country. Many of us, in thinking of our own histories, could identify with his theme.

Sending a warm thank you for excellence achieved during Heritage Week programs delivered (112 in total I believe). I particularly would like to thank Doug Coats (“Let Us Praise Ordinary People,” Aug. 2nd) and Amanda Borys (Union Cemetery Tour, Aug. 4th) for their excellence. Please convey my thanks to them & all volunteers. Most enjoyable. Velma Noble, HCW attendee

The “Calgary General Strike of 1919” was much more than a talk – Kirk was the representative of an organization that has put an incredible amount of work into promoting Alberta’s labour history. They had beautiful, informative, museum-quality panels to read, handouts, even a door prize. Kirk clearly has a deep personal feeling for the welfare of workers in the past, and he was able to give us websites we could look up for more information, which I did – and there were all his posters ready to be downloaded. Doug Coats, HCW Committee

Calgary Public Library has a wonderful relationship with Chinook Country Historical Society and Historic Calgary week. This year, there was a record number of programs for Historic Calgary Week at Central and Memorial Park. Central offered 16 separate programs that were either conducted or hosted by the Library – the most ever.

The Family Heritage Festival attracted the most ever number of people to this event. This year, the Festival had the prime location in the Welcome Gallery on the Saturday of the long weekend. Some 3100 people came through the doors and many stopped at the booths of the 13 heritage organizations that participated. For the first time, we had the National Music Centre and the Calgary Chinese Community Association and Alberta Otter participate and their tables garnered much interest.

Carolyn Ryder, Calgary Public Library



The CCHS booth at the Calgary Public Library’s Family Heritage Festival in the Central Library.

Courtesy Nidia McIntosh

The Corral will soon be a piece of history so many of us took the opportunity to walk through its halls, look at the “memories” on the walls, and even to go into the press box from where the games were called. Truly a walk down memory lane.

Thank you to the Stampede for scheduling two tours of this Calgary landmark. We went behind the scenes to the media booths, dressing rooms, as well as viewing the murals and a number of the historic pictures.

Jackie Kleiner, HCW Committee



Mural on the east facade of the Corral.
 Courtesy Jackie Kleiner

While not our first bicycle tour, this was the largest with 31 cyclists and one cat. Yes, one cat was along for the ride on a special backpack, although the cat spent most of the ride on the top of the backpack or the rider's shoulders. The ride highlighted the life of A. E. Cross as well as prodigious imbibers such as Bob Edwards.
 Walt DeBoni, HCW Committee



Cat on the Bikes and Breweries tour.
 Courtesy Walt DeBoni

No HCW would be complete without the contributions of Harry Sanders. This year we gathered in the new Central Library and from its windows we were able to look out in all directions while Harry regaled us with the stories behind the buildings (Windows on History). Harry has boundless enthusiasm and

has the kind of mind where he can just bounce from one anecdote to another. And bonus, most of us were able to be seated while he told the stories. Best walking tour ever!



View of Fort Calgary from Harry Sanders' "Windows on History" tour from inside Central Library.
 Courtesy Walt DeBoni

Irena Karshenbaum was the mastermind behind moving the Montefiore Institute to Heritage Park. It is now its 10th anniversary in Heritage Park. She gave us a heartfelt rendering of that project. Having several people in the audience that had helped in that journey made it very moving.

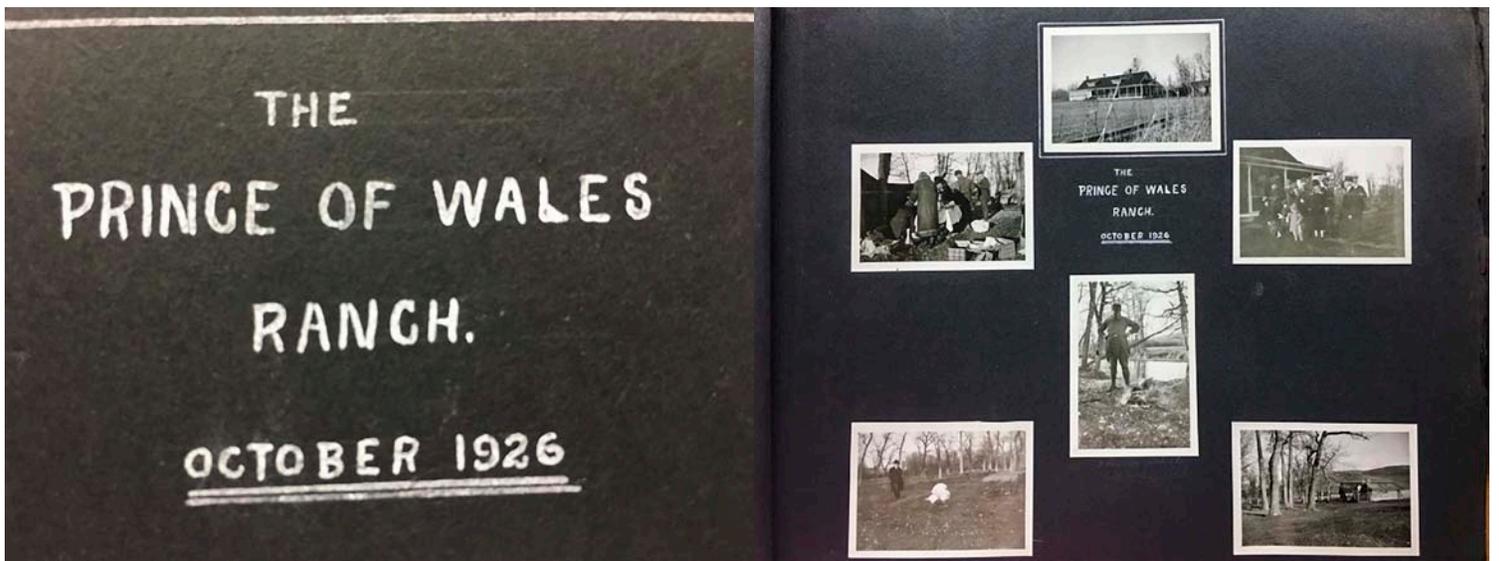


Irena Karshenbaum highlighting the history of the Montefiore Institute at Heritage Park.
 Courtesy Walt DeBoni

And finally, I had never been in the little Anglican Church in Midnapore so “had” to go on that tour. Neil Brown’s ancestors, the Shaws, had been instrumental in settling that area, so he was able to give a very personalized account of the area. The Church is beautiful inside and its graveyard not only contains historical figures but we were surprised to learn that current members of the parish can elect to be buried there as well.



*St. Paul's Anglican Church, Midnapore.
Courtesy Walt DeBoni*



*Pages from the Linton Family album of a visit to the EP Ranch in 1926.
Courtesy Kathleen Rogers*



Views at the Hangar Flight Museum, above and right.
Courtesy of Collections at Hangar Flight Museum - Cassandra Cummings



Josh Traptow's Ghost Signage tour met in front of the Palace Theatre on Stephen Avenue.
Courtesy Walt DeBoni



Ghost sign in a back alley between Stephen Avenue and 9th Avenue SW.
Courtesy Walt DeBoni



Fun and Games in Fish Creek Provincial Park.
Courtesy Jackie Kleiner



Webster's barn, Chestermere.
Courtesy Jackie Kleiner



*Tour of the EP Ranch.
Courtesy Kathleen Rogers*



*Debbie Noesgaard presenting at the New Calgarians event.
Courtesy Phyllis Wheaton*



*Dover Gardens tour, above, Games Inside and Out, Heritage Park, right.
Courtesy Janet McMaster*



*Tour of the historic Calgary Brewery site.
Courtesy Walt DeBoni*



*Lloyd Sciban's tour of Chinatown.
Courtesy Walt DeBoni*



*John Hutchings presents the McKay Family history.
Courtesy Walt DeBoni*



*Shelly McElroy, A Fan's History of the Calgary Stampeders.
Courtesy Walt DeBoni*



*The Cappy Smart band playing at the Fred Bagley event at Studio Bell.
Courtesy Walt DeBoni*



*Remnants of the Grand Trunk Railway track bed into Fort Calgary.
Courtesy Walt DeBoni*



*Neil Brown presenting inside St. Paul's Anglican Church in Midnapore.
Courtesy Walt DeBoni*



*The View from the St. Paul's Anglican Church Altar.
Courtesy Lynda Purdy*



*Banners highlighting the Calgary Strike of 1919.
Courtesy Walt DeBoni*



*Machinery at Custom Woolen Mills.
Courtesy Lynda Purdy*



*Spools of wool at Custom Woolen Mills.
Courtesy Lynda Purdy*



*An Inukshuk at Oksi Hill (Dover Gardens.)
Courtesy Lynda Purdy*



*Left: Flowers and a statue at
Oksi Hill (Dover Gardens.)
Courtesy Lynda Purdy*



*A 1913 painting of Chestermere by A. H. Buck that was viewed by attendees at the Chestermere event on Monday, July 29.
Courtesy Jen Peddesden*

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