

THE HELM

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Elf, past and future



President's Message

Off to the Races!

... by Rick Carrion

For the second year in a row, ELF and the CYRG participated in the Squan Tri Sail Regatta. It is a bit of a hike from the Chesapeake Bay to Bay Head, NJ, but well worth the efforts. Just before we took off we hauled ELF out to inspect and paint from the rails down to the bottom of the keel; we wanted her to shine. The only problem was the heat, which made it a bit tough to work and equally problematic to paint. It was nearly impossible to lay on a flawless coat on all surfaces, but we did the best we could. Thanks to the many Guild volunteers, we were able to pace ourselves and get the jobs done well. We do plan to haul out a little earlier next year before the area heats up, possibly in late May after the ELF CLASSIC.

Several members and friends moved ELF from the Sassafras River to Chesapeake City, MD. Then Tom

Sevco and I made our way from there, getting up well before sunrise to get underway with a favorable tide. Due to our draft and mast height, we had to go around Cape May NJ and enter from the ocean side, adding a few additional working hours to a long day. The next day we motor sailed to Barnegat Inlet and it seemed as though Atlantic City was in view all day. What a landmark! Then we had a short day getting up to Manasquan Inlet, through the bridges and canal, and reached Bay Head by mid afternoon.

It was a wonderful place to visit with New Jersey A-cats sailing by at all hours with the captains inviting me for a sail. There was a remarkable fleet of other unique and restored vintage watercraft plying the waters. Our mooring was right in front of the historic Bay Head Yacht Club, which was started the

same year ELF was built, 1888. Once Tom and I caught our breath, we got the dress ship flags up to set the stage for a great weekend. From the club ELF looked wonderful and caught the eyes of many admirers.

The next couple of days we visited several museums and marinas, moved boats around, and made final preparations for the races.

Friday afternoon ELF's crew arrived and got acclimated aboard motor yacht Barnegat before the captains' meeting and dinner. Saturday morning was a flurry, getting crew aboard and underway, with an outgoing tide pushing us toward the bridges. As we



Elf and Silent Maid
pacing to start

Photo by
Dan McGrath

waited for them to go up it was just a little un-nerving in the narrow canal. After we were in the ocean we started to get sails up and began timing our approach to the starting line. The one-minute gun sounded and we were ready and made a good start sailing across the line to the Southeast mark. ELF rounded the first mark doing well and then the second mark keeping up with the Classics. Then SUR-

PRISE! The main throat hal-yard bridal parted and, CRASH, the forward end of the gaff boom came down with a loud BANG! Fortunately, no one was hurt. After a quick assessment we started to carefully bring the sails down,

withdraw from the race, and head back to the Bay Head Yacht Club. We got in just ahead of a major thunderstorm, which caused the cancellation of the day's second race. Once the storm passed I did some splicing of new lines, made a trip up the mast for installation and we were ready to go for Sunday's races.

We were off to the Sunday races with a little more breeze. We thought at first of putting a reef in the main, but decided not to when we were on the race-course. We had bigger wave action and a strong tide pushing south that did not help us, but that's racing! We had another fine start, though again short-handed. We normally race with a twelve-member whereas we only had seven aboard. So, everyone had double duty, and I always say, "You do not need to go to the gym after a day sailing aboard ELF." We made our way around the course with a respectable finish. The second race started quickly after the end of the first race, not giving me a chance to rig the lines for the topsail, which were taken off after Saturday's CRASH BANG! The breeze lightened and we really could have used the topsail. None-the-less the finish was adjusted for us, which we really appreciated. At the awards program we had our local crewmember

Austin receive our third place trophy, something he really appreciated. Hey, he was a great addition to our crew with a lot of local knowledge and the strength to haul in a line.

Monday after fueling, icing, and re-provisioning, James Downer and I headed out, making Atlantic City before dark. Then, we were up early Tuesday and watched the sunrise. We were well south of

Atlantic City heading for Chesapeake City, MD, a very long eighteen-hour day. We arrived back at Georgetown Yacht Basin on Wednesday before noon. What a great trip!

After a little rest I settled in at home to catch up, mowing the lawn, cutting up storm-downed trees and just playing catch up on a number of fronts before heading out again. Next

stop, Annapolis to the National Sailing Hall of Fame to teach math and science through sailing to high school students aboard ELF. Then back to our home-port at the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum to help with their "Apprentice For a Day" program.

Please plan to visit us aboard ELF in St. Michaels, MD, and weather permitting, go sailing. We will be there, for the most part, into mid September and then off to another round of races and events.

On another note, please plan to attend the 32nd Annual Crab Feast, BBQ, & Silent Auction on September 8th at the Cherry Grove waterfront!



"Lawley Built"

Rick

We want to thank Peter R. Kellogg, the Bayhead Yacht Club, and the Squan Tri-Sail Race Committee for their support and hospitality.

See more race event photos at CYRG.org

“ELF Memories”

... by Colonel George W. Curran II

We had just arrived in Cape May, NJ when my mother introduced me to her brother Gus VanLennep. He had recently married Vita, and they were honeymooning on a sailboat named ELF who he purchased with money they had received as a wedding gift. My father had only recently purchased a small duck boat in order to get me involved in sailing at our home yacht club in Bay Head, NJ. What a thrill having my own boat and to be introduced to big boat sailing on ELF. Every day that we were in Cape May Gus and Vita would take me out sailing in the ocean.

Over the years my schooling and military service kept me away from the Chesapeake Bay where Gus and Vita had settled. It was not until the mid 1960's when assigned to the Pentagon that Mary Ellen and I got a chance to visit Gus and Vita at “Crooked Intentions”, one of Gus's restored houses on the Miles River in St. Michael's, MD, where they were currently living. During one of our first visits I questioned Gus about what had happened to ELF. He told me that he sold her in the 1940's when I was in the Navy.

Only recently I came across an article in the *Annapolis Lifestyle Magazine* titled “The Perfect Mate” which highlighted Rick Carrion's “lifelong kinship with ELF”. All of a sudden I realized that this was the same boat that I sailed on as a youngster in Cape May over 80 years ago. I got in touch with Rick and through my friend Rear Commodore John Melchner of the Cruising Club of America arranged for Rick to sail her to the Annapolis Yacht Club for our June meeting. He docked ELF at the club and with his crew joined us for lunch. The price of lunch was for Rick to present a slide show which he astutely crafted that showed some pictures of the boat under sail as well as the construction process during her renovation. For those of you who have not seen this presentation you have missed a wonderful adventure of dedication and years of hard work in order to restore ELF to its current like-new condition. John and I had the opportunity to go aboard ELF before the luncheon to inspect this masterpiece.

Thank you Rick for all the memories.

ELF Research Updates

... by Rick Carrion

Over the years, I have done extensive research associated with ELF and her owners. Her documentation numbers, found in the early 1970's, led us to the National Archives where her documentation papers are housed. They sent a copy confirming the numbers and her original name, ELF, to start researching. I sent letters to sixteen maritime museums along the east coast and received some information. After a few cycles of letters most museums invited me to visit and do my own research, which I did during my summer vacation from teaching school. It was very time consuming because the records were on microfiche. Regardless I was able to find twenty photos of ELF taken before launching in 1888, and under sail through 1897. I also found several books that included her. Yacht Club members to which ELF's owners belonged have also provided interesting tidbits of information. For example, the Boston Yacht Club has the race results recorded. Henry Howard missed the noontime train bound for one of them in Marblehead, Massachusetts. He took the 1:00 PM train, putting him an hour behind the other yachtsmen. Upon boarding ELF he saw the fleet in light breeze, and

chose a different, breezier course and won the race.

Currently I am working with the New York Yacht Club's librarian, Vanessa Cameron, to put together a complete listing of all owners and associated Yacht Clubs. After this work is completed we plan to post it on our web site along with all known publications featuring ELF. You can help us by adding to our research using whatever methods are easiest for you. Fortunately, museums are now using searchable databases, making it easier for anyone to access materials. You can help research any information associated with ELF, the owners, yacht clubs, stories, and possibly surviving owners or their descendants. I am now trying to reach relatives of owners to hear their tales of ELF's past and you can play a big role by helping.

This spring the Annapolis Life Style Magazine featured ELF in the May/June issue. One of the readers contacted me because he sailed aboard ELF in the 1930's with his aunt and uncle, Gus & Vita Van Lennep. The gentleman arranged for ELF to be docked at the Annapolis Yacht Club while I gave a lunch presentation. We had planned to sail afterwards, but the weather did not cooperate.

SOS – Membership Update

I realize how the folks at Public Broadcasting must feel. Their frustration at knowing so many listeners and viewers take advantage of their wonderful programs — yet how few actually donate anything to the cause.

The Classic Yacht Restoration Guild shares their frustration. Many, many of us are pleased and proud to be associated with such a great organization. The CYRG gives so much to so many and yet there are so few who are paid members in support of our mission.

Far fewer individuals than you may think are currently supporting the CYRG financially. It is a small number when considering all those who benefit from our mission which is “dedicated to the preservation and proper use of traditional watercraft.” Please act now to help us. We need your input, your passion, and your paid dues for this year.

It is surprising how quickly one year passes. Many of us may think we are current. As a reminder, your membership expires 365 days following your prior dues payment. We need your help to renew now and sup-

port our campaign. Please act now to renew and/or start your membership. Heck, the member price for the Crab Feast makes it worthwhile—not to mention having a great time!

Please help us — Use the enclosed form or go to our website (www.cyrg.org) and sign-up with our PayPal account for your tax-deductible payment. We need you!

Thank you in advance for your support.

Stevens Remillard, CYRG Treasurer

Contact Information Updates

Over the years many members have asked to receive HELM and notifications only by email, which we have made happen. Unfortunately, we sometimes lose contact with members when they do not forward changes in contact information. We try to make every effort to keep lines of communication open but we need your help. Please take time to update your contact information including your email address by sending a note elf1888@earthlink.net.



**Visit us at:
www.cyrg.org**

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