

THE HELM

Spring 2008 - Vol. 25, No. 2



Elf, past and future



President's Message

A Dream Fulfilled

... by *Rick Carrion*

I want to thank everyone who came to witness the historic re-launch of ELF on April 18, 2008. Over a hundred members and friends were on hand to celebrate on a sunny, warm day. For those of you who missed it, we worked right up to the big splash, finishing all the last minute touches. I must say that I was very happy to be nearing completion of the restoration and about to open a new chapter ... Sailing!

In reality, the launch was ceremonial, since we hauled her back out due to major leaking through the keelson. The problem actually started earlier in the week when we tried to put the new lead keel on her bottom. In actuality, I was concerned that the bolt holes in the lead would not line up correctly, and my fear was realized. Out of twelve holes, only two were lined up correctly. We worked long days all week to get the other keel bolts to go down through the lead. Most everyone said, "You can drill through the 18 inches of lead." Easier said than done. It turned out to be a major effort against the clock. Finally, the last bolt went in late Thursday, the day before the re-launch was scheduled. We had no time to pre-swell or soak the keelson, which had dried out over the 17 years of restoration. I will not make that mistake again.

We worked for the next two weeks soaking ELF from inside and eventually, she started to slow the leaking and hold the water within. At the second launching, we pumped very little water, a good sign. Since then, we have been working diligently to get all systems working well, which has taken considerable effort.

Our propulsion system presented major issues. The engine ran well, but we needed to find control cables and brackets to hold the shifter and throttle at the engine. We had to fabricate them because they were simply not available anywhere we called. Then, when we would engage the forward or reverse, it killed the engine. We had the transmission rebuilt, but still the problem persisted. We dived to look at the prop again and

checked the pitch adjustment. We called the prop manufacturer's rep several times for advice. Finally, we found that the prop needed to be taken apart and refitted to the shaft hub. Mike Haskell dove a third time, took the prop apart and correctly reassembled it under water. We now have reliable propulsion. What an effort.

Finally, we were able to start moving toward the Sassafra River and eventually, Philadelphia. What a relief! We arrived June 2, 2008 with members taking our lines at the dock. I just finished sanding and varnishing all the spars and they are in place. (See "Rigging ELF") Plan to visit ELF at Penn's Landing in Philadelphia soon.

Now, I can update you to the latest...ELF has her rig in, and it is truly impressive! We lifted the mast using the bowsprit of the historic square-rigged Moshulu. Everything went like clockwork. The crew at Independence Seaport Museum's Boat Shop did a fantastic job preparing for the lifting of the mast, as well as carrying out the entire operation. I can tell you that I am so impressed with the total professionalism that everyone displayed to get the job done right! We worked the entire week to do all kinds of rigging, attachment of deck blocks and cleats, and set the topmast into place. ELF looks like she is chafing at the bit to perform like a million dollar baby. I cannot wait to throw the dock lines off and learn to sail the original rig. It is truly awesome!

Please also realize that I want you to share in this incredible experience, so please plan to go sailing any time that you can fit it into your schedule. In addition, I want to thank all who have helped in any way to make this dream a reality! THANK YOU!

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Lawley Tender Update

The apprentice shop at the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum has started the building of our tender for ELF. Dan Southerland has completed the lofting and made a mold on which to build the tender. The plans he used came from the Mystic Seaport's collection and were very good. Our tender will be 9'3" and will stow above the companionway, skylight, and belaying pin rack underneath the main boom. It will match the one ELF carried originally.

Bill Hamilton and I selected and transported the lumber for the project. About twenty years ago, I milled a 32" diameter sassafras tree just for the project. Sassafras is a beautifully grained, honey-colored, light-weight and rot-resistant wood that will work well. The seats will be cherry burl, and other structural members will be black locust, with rails of Angelique.

Best of all, we plan to name her VIDA. Gus and Vida Van Lennep owned ELF from 1932 to 1943, and brought her to sail the Chesapeake Bay. They were also the founders of the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum. You may participate in the construction of VIDA during an apprentice-for-a-day workshop held each weekend at the Museum.

We will sail ELF to St. Michaels in mid July to help finish the effort, and take delivery. Plans are set to showcase ELF and VIDA. Please join us for a celebration at the Maritime Museum during the Chesapeake Folk Festival held on July 26th from 10 am to 4 pm.

Time to step the mast

After years of anticipation, the day finally dawned to step the mast. It is a beautiful recreation of the original, made of Sitka Spruce. Built by the crew at the Independence Seaport Museum's Boat Shop using birds mouth joinery with eight staves. It is hollow, and relatively light in weight, compared to the original. Since Sitka Spruce is a long fiber type of wood making them much stronger. After arriving in early June with ELF, I worked to keep building up the varnish on all of the spars, which glisten now with at least twelve coats of International Paints Schooner #96 varnish, and I must say they look terrific!

To get ready to set the mast we had to first install the Sampson post and bowsprit, finish the whisker stays, and bobstay. The wire cables had to be spliced and served with another woven wire, very time consuming, and a true skill. Once the bowsprit was finalized, it was time to put the rigging on the mast and topmast, and attach the steaming light and pull the wire to the mast base. All the rigging was double checked before it was readied to be carried to ELF.

The next day I awoke at 4:30 AM with a moment reflection as to the twenty years that I had sailed ELF with the Marconi yawl rig she carried when I purchased her. A new chapter was about to be opened, and I love it. I would often dream about the day I would be sailing ELF the way she was designed and built for... (Drum roll if you please!). As the day progressed we got the order to line up and pick up the mast and start the journey out of the shop, down the dock and set it on saw horses on ELF's deck. After strapping it down, we were ready to move into position for the lifting and stepping. Now I want you to realize we made another historic moment, since we lifted the mast from the bowsprit of the famous square rigged Moshulu, which is docked in the Penn's Landing basin. By the way, the Moshulu is currently a fine dining and entertainment establishment that you really should visit next time you are in the area.

Once ELF was positioned, we started the lifting with a chain come-along that gave us the ability to move the mast up and down with great accuracy and safety. It all went like clock work, thanks in part to all of the advanced planning and preparations. In a matter of what seemed like only a minutes ELF took on a new look supporting a new mast. In addition, yes, I did put the 1888 silver dollar under the mast face up in a special slot as the tradition for good luck. Incidentally, silver oxide is a rot preventative, another added benefit. Once we had the shrouds and head-stay attached, we weighed anchor and headed back to our slip, not bad for a mornings work. All of the action was filmed for our eventual documentary, which should be available later this year.

The rest of the week was filled with rigging, attaching deck blocks, cleats, and other hardware. We also set up the topmast, locked it into place and spliced the for-stay. We have only a few more pieces of hardware to attach, and then we will start some sea trials to fine-tune the rig. In person it is fantastic to see all the wonderful pieces come together so well, I am truly excited!

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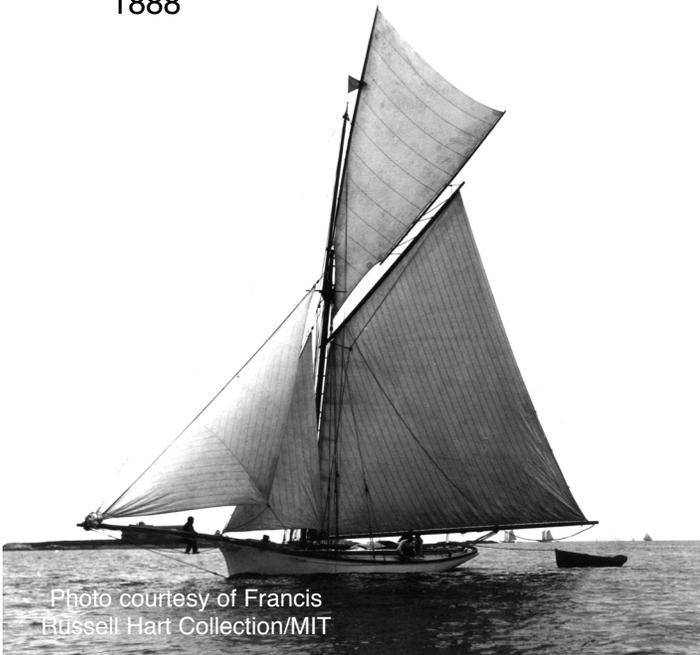


Photo courtesy of Francis
Russell Hart Collection/MIT

SPECIAL THANKS:

For outstanding service to the CYRG

John Brady and crew at the Independence Seaport Museum's Boat Shop designed and built Elf's rig and creatively installed it using the bowsprit of the historic square rigged Moshulu. They also rigged the mast, topmast, and installed all the deck blocks, cleats, and other gear to prep ELF for a successful maiden voyage after the restoration. ELF now looks truly awesome, like she did when she first was launched in 1888.

Neal Carter undertook many different projects, which included installing the rudder and totally rebuilding and installing the engine exhaust system as well as the bilge pump system. He also installed and wired several electrical systems. Most of this work required being in a very cramped area around the engine and aft section which Harry Houdini would have most likely had trouble navigating. Neal donated a plethora of materials to make the jobs work correctly.

John Eaton restored completely the original antique head so that it is in pristine condition. He also restored and wired the running lights and navigated our route to Philadelphia.

Bill Hamilton worked with me to finish the cabin interior. He and I started the cabin last summer, and I appreciate Bill coming down almost every week to spend a day or two building the galley, head, navigation station, and install the cypress ceiling. We spent many long hard days of meticulously fitting and shaping the book matched cherry burly panels. Bill also was instrumental in plugging and caulking the deck.

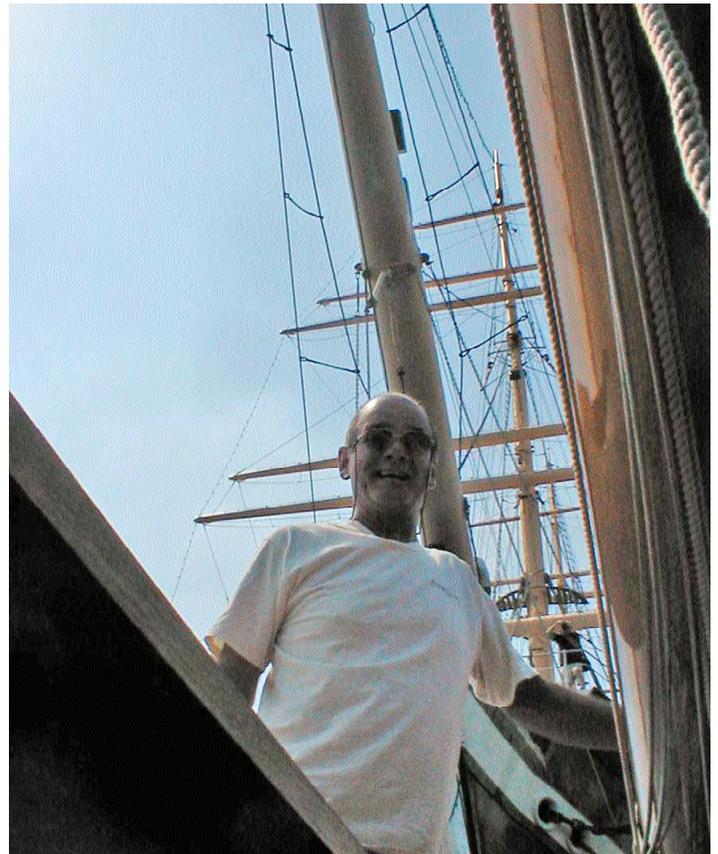
Mike Haskell dove, on three different occasions, to correct our Mar Tech propeller alignment. After we realized that there had been an error in the final installation of the propeller before re-launch, Mike took the propeller apart and reassembled it correctly under water, saving the CYRG haul-out expenses and time.

Peter R. Kellogg provided the rig, sails, new lead keel, and our new feathering Mar Tech propeller.

John Murry took on several projects to assure smooth sailing. John meticulously payed in the underwater seam compound. He also sanded and painted the bottom with two coats of primer and four coats of bottom paint. The hull leaks are a thing of the past; now I have to turn on the pumps in order to hear them to be sure they still work.

Bill Sonntag, over the past couple of years, took on the project of filling, sanding, and prepping the topsides, which took many applications. ELF has 16 coats of paint, which almost makes her look like a fiberglass boat. Bill applied fairing compound and sanded it down between each coat of paint. We will do a final sanding and painting since the hull swelling pushed some fairing compound out of the seams.

In addition, please realize that many, many others helped in a variety of ways to ensure our success. I want to extend my sincerest thanks to all of our friends who have helped to turn this dream into a reality. In addition, please plan to visit us along the way and experience a sail of a lifetime!



Watch the Website for a
calendar of events.

Plan to join us.

Invite ELF to an appear-
ance at one of your events.

CYRG's "wish list"
includes corporate or pri-
vate funding for a profes-
sional quality DVD of the
vessel's history, restora-
tion, and future sailing
activities.

To learn more, visit
www.cyrg.org or email
elf1888@earthlink.net

Photo courtesy of Francis
Russell Hart Collection/MIT



THE HELM



The Classic Yacht Restoration Guild, Inc.
P.O. Box 237
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Earleville, MD 21919-0237

Guild Wish List

Help in finding a company that will provide marine insurance coverage for ELF.

If you have not updated your 2008 membership, please renew as soon as possible.

Members who are serious about learning to sail ELF as a racing yacht

Although a plan has been started, we are still looking for creative ideas for generating funds to cover annual operating expenses at approximately \$30,000/year.

A video production documenting the life of ELF from her beginning to the present

Balance to raise for ELF's tender (VIDA) at an approximate cost of \$3,880

Marine electronics at an approximate cost of \$20,000

Please put elf1888@earthlink.net in your contact list so that your computer

Membership Renewal/Wish List Contributions



Please Print:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ E-Mail _____

Make your tax-deductible check payable to the Classic Yacht Restoration Guild, Inc.

___ Basic membership (\$20) ___ Sponsor (\$100) ___ Contributor (\$50) ___ Donor (\$500)

___ Other \$ _____

Classic Yacht Restoration Guild, Inc.
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Email: elf1888@earthlink.net

Website: CYRG@ORG

Wish List Contributions

Lawley Tender "Vida" Amount: _____

Marine Electronics Amount: _____

Annual Operating Costs Amount: _____

Video Documentary Amount: _____