

# THE HELM



Spring, 2014 - Vol. 31, No. 1

*Elf, past and future*



## President's Message Happy Valentine's Day!

... by Rick Carrion

Honestly, it could not have been more apropos, but it was February 14th (Valentines Day). What caught my eye's attention was ELF's beautiful

color photo at the top of the page in part two of a three part series on the Chesapeake Bay in the Cecil Whig newspaper. It was Dan McGrath's photo of the first ELF Classic Race. I know the love affair with ELF (over the last 43 + years) has been interesting to say the least. (WHO

KNEW?) She surely was a diamond in the rough, but I saw her beautiful lines. Oh what a beautiful sheer.

Fortunately for all involved, I was the crazy one who stuck with her in times of thick and thin. We can now share in the rewards of knowing that we all

helped in some way in the restoration and perpetuation of ELF for a remarkable 125 years. She is a true National Maritime Treasure that I am honored to share with the world.

Looking back on seventeen years of on-again off-again work to replace all wood, except her keel, made for many interesting meetings and innovative tool re-designs. It was a rich mix of work that increased our passion to sail a truly remarkable vessel.

Well, some friends and I discussed how to "BREAK" the news such as it started with Rick making a daring rescue, but in truth I broke my Fibula (lower outer leg bone) getting up from the

table on December 7th at the Commodore's Ball. And of course, several friends said, "Winter is the best time to break a leg", but I reply, THERE IS NO GOOD TIME FOR ANYONE TO BREAK A BONE!

I am only now beginning to get a little more



*Photo by Dan McGrath*

mobility. Getting down to ELF daily or multiple times a day with the snow & ice on the docks made for several YouTube moments. Nonetheless, all is well, and we are about to start spring workshops. So THINK SPRING!

We are very happy and pleased to have Bob & Judy Hurd helping to organize and maintain our database. So please inform us of any needed updates. We want to know how to best communicate with you. It would be very helpful when you renew membership if you filled in all of the information fields clearly.

Another very important project that I have been doing in my personal down time is the creation of an [ELF Operations & Safety Manual](#). The Cecil County Arts Council awarded us a \$900 grant for sketches of ELF to help hands-on learning. After completed, printed, and put on our web site, everyone interested in sailing ELF can gain a total understanding before boarding. Greg DeCowsky, Bill Hamilton and I have been pushing hard to have it done before the 2014 season starts.

Archives are also very important. I have been going over items that I have collected over the years, page by page. I am about to post everything on our website and challenge everyone to find more photos, stories, newspaper articles, books, and yacht club archives. Everyone should be able to visit yacht clubs and museums researching anything about ELF and sending it to us. If someone researches a series of publications, I ask that you list what you researched and where you located it. Then send us the results. This information, which will be published, can help others save time repeating your efforts.

One of my major goals for this year, 2014, is to do as much sail training and races as possible, flying the Jack Yard Topsail. Granted, that will be a bit challenging, but we are ready as a team, and I want to be Flying High!\*

\*Elf's name when I bought her.



## Union League Race off Annapolis ELF took First in the Classic Division

...by Rick Carrion

**I**t was a beautiful early fall day, sunny sky with a gentle breeze, with a north bound tide. Though we were a little short handed as far as crew was concerned, we decided to head out early to get some practice, and familiarize ourselves with the lines and sail handling. All was going well. Cassidy (my daughter) and her friend Ross were working the jib sheets I was working the running backstays and getting up more sail. We put up the working topsail, spinnaker, staysail jib, and main. We were moving along well with about a ten- knot ESE breeze and a northbound tide. Everyone really got a workout.

About ten minutes before the start of the race we had a shackle let go that was attached to the spinnaker outhaul. (OH WELL, CHINESE FIRE DRILL!) Quick action by a good crew got the spinnaker down, bagged, and another pair of headsails up, giving us the power we needed just before crossing the starting line. There was a lot of race and other traffic near the starting line making it a bit of a challenge, but all went very well. Sailing a big gaff cutter rig is always exciting, making everyone think about every aspect of the vessel's sail plan, and just how to squeeze out every push of power from the wind. What a wonderful and memorable experience. I can hardly wait for the next race.

After we returned to the National Sailing Hall of Fame dockside we could relax, put up the dress ship flags, ensign, and assorted burgees. After some boat hopping and socializing we all headed to a very nice dinner and awards reception at the Fleet Reserve Club. I know ELF received many first place awards in the 1880's, but I was very proud to receive ELF's first first-place award in a long time. She is on her game once again!

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## Guidelines for HELM Article Submission

**A**rticles for HELM are invited. They should be submitted, preferably in Word with .doc appended so they may be edited, if necessary. They may also be sent as a text file. Photographs are also encouraged, if available, as a jpg. Please send to Richard D. Otis, Jr. at [rdotis@yahoo.com](mailto:rdotis@yahoo.com).



# Classic Yacht Racing on the Chesapeake Bay and Jersey Shore

. . .by Steven Valihura

Over the past several years, the Classic Yacht Restoration Guild has been working with partners to promote the popularity of classic yacht racing in the region. As part of the Guild's mission of continuing education in traditional yachting and seamanship, our historic racing yacht, the 1888 Elf, now participates in three recently founded classic yacht races. The interaction amongst the race crews strengthens the classic yacht community by exchanging wooden boat building traditions and sailing techniques. Please join us at one of these events and help pass on the traditions.

This spring will mark the 4<sup>th</sup> annual Elf Classic Yacht Race from Annapolis to the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum in St. Michael's, MD.

This race has been growing in popularity with an annual increase of boats registered. Last year Peter Kellogg brought over his 1924 Silent Maid beautiful reproduction from New Jersey and took first place in the Cruisers division. There is also a Day boat division and it is not rated. It is a "Gentlemen's Race" but there are prizes for the top three finishers and a Captain's Choice. The Friday evening dinner at the Eastport Yacht Club and the Annapolis waterfront nightlife are not to be missed.

Rich Savini's detailed article about the 2013 running of this race was included in the summer 2013 edition of *The Helm* and online at [CYRG.org/news](http://CYRG.org/news). The origins of this "Lemans" style race date back to the late 1800's off the coast of Marblehead Massachusetts. The race starts with all captains on shore rowing tenders out to the moored yachts. Upon arrival at the finish the captains again row to shore to officially ring a bell and sign a log book. The finish line festivities at the museum are well worth the visit.

As the Yacht Elf and the Eifel Tower were being built in the year

## Join Us for the 4th Annual ELF Classic - May 17, 2014

Mid-May seems a long way off from this long, long winter, but we're getting ready to welcome our many returning captains, crews and some classic yachts participating for the first time in the fourth annual Elf Classic Yacht Race on Saturday, May 17th. As always we'll be raising funds for the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum and the CYRG. We have numerous yachts registered so far. This is a particularly well-advertised race this year and promises to be one of the biggest fleets yet. If you want to register your yacht, be sure to do it early by going to our event page on the CYRG webpage for the registration form. <http://www.cyrg.org/elfclassic2014.htm>

Have you ever watched the Elf Classic fleet sail off from the Eastport Yacht Club? All the classic yachts leaving in company is

1888, the Bay Head Yacht Club in New Jersey was also being organized. Each year the Bay Head Yacht Club, the Manasquan



River Yacht Club and the Metedeconk River Yacht Club host the modern Squan Tri-Sail offshore sailing race. In 2011 they added a Classic Division to the schedule. Elf, Silent Maid and several other traditional boats have joined to promote this event. Dan McGrath's article of this race can be read in the 2011 winter issue of *The Helm* online. Elf was designed and built sturdily for offshore racing seas and wind. Racing here really recalls her days past off the coast of Marblehead. The Classic Division of the Squan Tri-Sail ran again in 2012 where several more boats joined in the fun. Unfortunately due to Super Storm Sandy the race was postponed last year.

In 2010 The National Sailing Hall of Fame in Annapolis and the Chesapeake Traditional Sailing Association started up the Classic Wooden Boat Regatta and Race which has also been growing in popularity each year. This event takes place in mid-September and seems to have the best weather with beautiful skies and cooperative breezes. There are two divisions, Day boats and Cruisers, with ratings and starting positions determined for a pursuit style race around the buoys on the Severn River. To win this style of race you need only to pass all the boats in front of you in your division while not getting passed. This makes for a thrilling finish. See the National Sailing Hall of Fame website [[insert URL for the NSHOF](#)] for more on this exciting race.

Through sponsoring and entering these events the CYRG seeks to continue and pass on the traditions of classic yacht racing. Take in one of the races, join a crew like Elf, or even restore and race a diamond-in-the-rough wooden boat. We look forward to seeing you at one of these events soon!

one of the finest sights of the season especially if a spinnaker run is in order. Plan to be there at the EYC for our 900am start. And of course our finish will be at the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum followed by an awards ceremony and reception. We are asking all CYRG members that plan to attend the Saturday afternoon reception to RSVP and make a donation either in advance or on site. We had a great party last year but just squeaked by with our catering and beverage provisions, so plan to be there, but let us know you're coming. We'll do a specific membership email close to the event.

As always we want to thank our sponsors this year, the Silent Maid, the Eastport Yacht Club, the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum and the generous members of the CYRG Board of Directors – thanks and see you in May.

# Elf Participation in the National Sailing Hall of Fame 4th Annual Classic Wooden Boat Rendezvous and Race on September 22nd in Annapolis Harbor

.... By Rich Savini

**W**hat a beautiful day it was in Annapolis on that day, although the promised 15 knot wind never really filled in for the crew. But as it always turns out on any sail on ELF, it was still a magnificent day. While there were a few minor technical issues which were dealt with by the crew, everyone on board just had a wonderful time. We got underway around 10 AM and made a practice run around the course. ELF hit the start time exactly and we were off for three turns around the race course in Annapolis Harbor. Again, if we were all professional sailors we may have placed better in the race, but as the captain always says "we are here to have fun". And I could not agree more as it was just great fun. To say that it was a beautiful day sailing on Annapolis harbor on a simply beautiful boat does not begin to describe the actual experience. What a "blast " probably more adequately describes the day we all had out on the water.



ELF finished seventh (13:56:21) in the "Diesel Class", but ELF was actually only few seconds behind the time that was posted by Bear (13:55:32) and ELF did beat the time posted by Bull (14:13:04). In retrospect, where we finished did not matter at all as this was just a beautiful day and an unbelievable experience on a very special boat. It was also a very extraordinary sight to see all of these classic wooden sailboats racing against each other in Annapolis Harbor on that ideal day.

Many, many thanks to The National Sailing Hall of Fame, the event sponsor, for a really splendid day.

Thanks again Captain Rick for another magnificent time and one more great time sailing on Elf, and I am honestly already looking forward to the next event.

# Elf honored, race planned for May

...by Craig O'Donnell/The Kent County Times  
Reprinted with permission

America's oldest racing yacht has turned 125 years old. Elf's birthday was commemorated Feb. 22 with an oyster roast and ceremony at the Rock Hall Yacht Club.

The proceeds went to maintain America's oldest active racing yacht, built in 1888. Captain Rick Carrion was given a House of Delegates resolution by Rock Hall resident Del. Jay Jacobs.

Graham Ero of Graham Ero Wooden Boats in Still Pond headed years of restoration efforts. The CYRG has had Elf listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The next chance to see Elf in action, along with at least six other classic yachts, will be Saturday, May 17.

The fourth annual Elf Classic Yacht Race begins in Annapolis at the Eastport Yacht Club.

The Classic Yacht Restoration Guild recreates the traditions of 1880s yacht racing.

Then, races began on shore, and included rowing to the boat on mooring or anchor and making sail. To finish the crews anchored and rowed ashore.

The first crew to reach the Tolchester Bandstand at the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum will be the winner.

Elf, a gaff cutter, was built in Boston in 1888 by George Lawley &

Sons. She cost \$3,500 – about \$90,000 today.

The owner was William H. Wilkinson, who wanted a state-of-the-art racing cutter. George Lawley and Sons built small racers for faster boats of modest hull size carrying impressive rigs.

Contemporary Lawley sister yachts include the Evelyn, Saladin, Hawk, Carmilla, Mildred, Hilda, Beatrice, Kathleen and Saracen.

She is shown in contemporary photos by famous yacht photographer Nathaniel L. Stebbins.

Elf is 35 feet on deck, and 68 feet from boom end to bowsprit. As a racing yacht, she had a tall gaff topsail rig and was one of the earliest designs to use a clipper stem, which became a fashion.

Henry Howard bought Elf in 1890 as Wilkinson went on to build another race boat. In 1893 Elf cruised round-trip from Marblehead, Massachusetts to Halifax, Nova Scotia, described in Howard's his autobiography, "Charting My Life."

The boat came to the Chesapeake in 1932 when bought by Gus and Vida Van Lennep. They founded the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum in 1965 and supported Elf's restoration. Carrion, founder of the Classic Yacht Restoration Guild, acquired the boat in 1971.

Classic Yacht Restoration Guild is a nonprofit organization. See the website [www.cyr.org](http://www.cyr.org).

*"Lawley  
Built"*



Photo by Deborah Albers



Photo by Capt. Rick

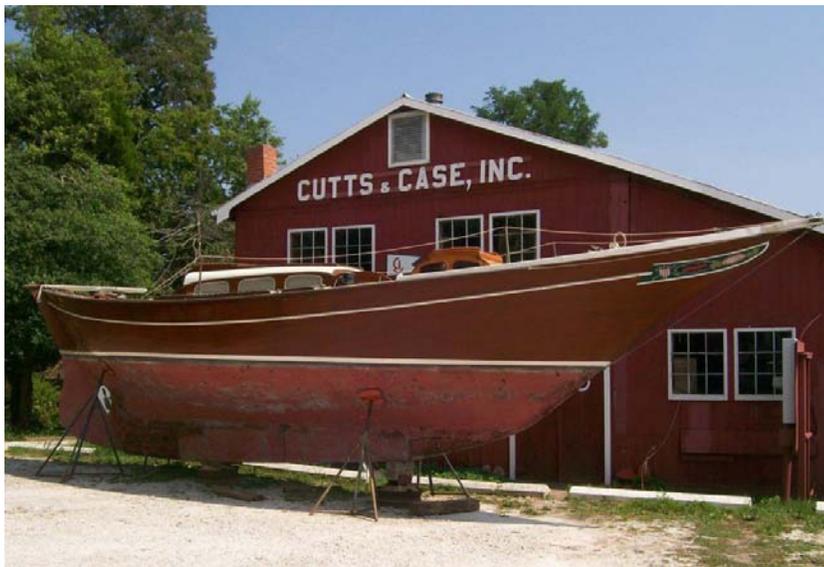


## Ralph Wiley Boats Looking for New Owners Oxford, Maryland

“Fox” was built by Ralph Wiley in his boat yard, now Cutts and Case, in Oxford, Maryland in 1938. Wiley campaigned the boat himself, notably winning the Naval Academy Fleet cup in 1952. The hull is built on the Tancook Whaler model, a Nova Scotia work boat. In his book “Preacher’s Son”, Wiley relates the tale of being passed by a Tancook Whaler while he was he crewing on a 50-foot schooner in a New York Yacht Club cruise off Vineyard Haven. He and his shipmates were “constantly tending sheets and supposedly racing”. A Tancook Whaler came out of Robinsons Hole, singled-handed by a gentleman in a derby hat puffing on a corn cob pipe. The Whaler overtook the racing schooner and was next seen anchored and sails furled with the owner already gone ashore. This impressed Wiley so much that he built a series of boats for his own use, each slightly larger than the predecessor. He built Golden Bough, Charlotte, Mocking Bird, Fox and Vixen. The current owners of “Fox” have expressed their intent to retire from sailing. “Fox” is intact and in need of a good inspection and evaluation in regards to systems and her structural components but appears to be sound overall. She has been stored inside for many years, a “barn find”. The hull is strip-planked mahogany, finished bright, with custom wooden cabinet work below decks.

The current owners of “Vixen” have also expressed a desire to retire from boating. The boat has been in the same family since 1985. Of the two Whaler models available for sale, “Vixen” is the most ready to go. She recently underwent a refastening program and had the deck stripped and sealed. New keel bolts were installed and the interior re-done in the 1990s. The boat has been only lightly used on the Chesapeake and still has a set of Downes Curtis sails in working order. She has her original spinnaker, which the current owner advises caution with. The heavy and light and light Genoas are from the 1990s. Ralph Wiley won the 1962 Poker Cup aboard “Vixen”, beating 50 other boats. This was his last race, moving on to motor-sailors. “Vixen” could be put together in short order and would likely make a great showing for herself in the upcoming 2014 Elf Classic!

Cutts and Case is interested in finding new owners for these important boats and going forward, in building a long-term working relationship in order to keep “Fox” and “Vixen” in their home port of Oxford. Please contact Cutts and Case 410-226-5416 to arrange an inspection.



For more Information,  
please call Cutts and Case at  
410-226-5416



# StewardSHIP

... by Treasurer Stevens Remillard

Everyone likes a bargain.

We express interest in “Going Out of Business” or “Spring Clearance” or “Inventory Reduction”. Not to mention the manifold enticements for every conceivable holiday event – National Potato Chip Day?

The Guild is (sort of) having a sale, too. Understandably, like everything else, our dues will be increasing.

Therefore, you gain a benefit by renewing your membership now and avoiding a future increase.

Even with an all-volunteer crew, the expense to maintain and campaign America’s oldest, active small racing yacht is considerable. We need your help.

Please renew now. Your membership lasts a full year. Just like so many other annual bills, e.g. auto insurance, it seems as if we just paid – and it’s back again. Those 365 days just seem to fly by!

Please renew now and help us to have a successful sailing season. Please use our website [www.cyrg.org](http://www.cyrg.org) <<http://www.cyrg.org>> for PayPal payments and of course – we welcome your checks mailed to our Earleville address.

Please print carefully and indicate any changes such as email address, phone number, etc.

Your continued support for our cause is greatly appreciated!



## Annual Membership Form

Classic Yacht Restoration Guild  
P O. Box 237  
Earleville, MD 21919-0237  
(410) 275-2819  
Tax ID#: 23-2240518

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (other) \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Membership levels:</b> Basic <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 Crew <input type="checkbox"/> \$65 Bosun/family <input type="checkbox"/> \$125 Navigator <input type="checkbox"/> \$250 Voyager <input type="checkbox"/> \$500	<b>T- shirt size:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Small <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Large <input type="checkbox"/> X Large <input type="checkbox"/> XX Large	Membership Contribution: \$ _____ Additional Contribution \$ _____ Total: \$ _____  Make your check payable to the: <b>Classic Yacht Restoration Guild</b> or go to <a href="http://www.cyrg.org">www.cyrg.org</a> to donate securely online.
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Briefly state you nautical experience and areas of interest: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I am interested in volunteer opportunities:  Elf maintenance  crew positions  events  other \_\_\_\_\_

The CYRG is a registered 501(C) 3 nonprofit institution. All donations are tax-deductable to the full extent of the law.

# Schedule of Events for ELF

**Depart GYB for CBMM: April 16th**

**Varnish & Rig: April 17-22**

**Step mast: April 23rd**

**Bend on sails: April 24th**

**Sail Training as much as possible All Season (Jack Yard Top)**

**2014 Fundraising events**

**MAST Student Sailing - NSHOF TBA**

**4th Annual ELF Classic May 17th**

**Wooden Boat gathering at Cutts & Case, Oxford May 30th –June1st**

**ELF Hall Out: June 13th –20th**

**Sassafras River Fest. June 22th**

**Philadelphia TBA**

**Squan Tri Sail Race July 25-27**

**36th Annual Crab Feast at Rock Hall YC TBA**

**Baltimore (1812) September 10 – 16**

**AYC Keels and Wheels September 20**

**NSHOF Race September 21**

**Union League Race TBA**

**US Sailboat Show**

## **THE HELM**



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