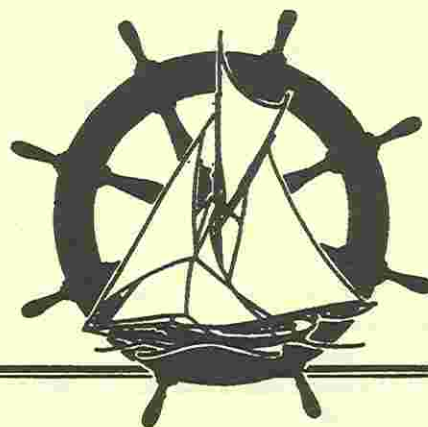


# THE HELM

Summer, 2001



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## A PUBLICATION OF THE CLASSIC YACHT RESTORATION GUILD, INC.

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*Elf*, past and future



### President's Message Freedom

... by Rick Carrion

**A**s a public high school science teacher for the past 27 years, I truly look forward to summer. In the years I lived aboard *Elf*, I cherished the moment that I dropped my docking lines and could cruise and explore the Chesapeake Bay. Although *Elf*'s 7 foot draft was sometimes challenging in the backwaters, we had many memorable days in the Chesapeake's scenic rivers and coves. It is wonderful to reminisce, reread old log books and plan the eventual return trip. So many wonderful days of adventure and great company to remember! When friends would ask about my summer job, I would enthusiastically reply, "*Elf*."

Over the years, I would have the time to do maintenance projects during the summer: replace a plank, paint the hull, tip the varnish, mend a sail..... Even though it was work, I enjoyed it. It was important to maintain a seaworthy status with a balance of sailing adventures, shows and visits to distant ports. One of my favorite work ethics is one I learned in the Bahamas: "If the work is good, you better save some for tomorrow."

Now with the summer upon us, I am devoting much of my attention to the *Elf* restoration project. So many things to do, but it is truly exciting to see the developments. Projects for this summer: cabin layout, caulking, painting, varnishing, decking..... and the list goes on. All the while I am working with members doing grant writing, giving presentations and running workshops. "Never bored" is a good way to look at it.

I guess it is partly delayed gratification or doing any job the right way the first time that keeps me optimistically moving forward. I tell myself that *Elf* will again float proudly, and soon. We do not have to wait for global warming to float her off her

stands! Plan to drop by to check the progress or help on a project or simply offer encouragement. I look forward to the days, in the not too distant future, when members and friends will step aboard, shove off and create wonderful sailing memories once more.

### Graham's Letter

**I** just learned about flow charts. My wife said, "You really need a flow chart," emphasis on the "really." Well I got one and it's on the wall next to the big calendar that was going to organize my life in January. Just like writing reminders on the back of your hand, you still have to remember to look at the back of your hand.

All the same, as I look at my brand new flow chart starting in July, it says, "*Elf*, *Elf*, *Elf*..." through August. Some days set aside for in-shop work which includes a brand new sixteen-foot Swampscott dory, among other things that I am excited about. I'm really excited about going back to work on *Elf*. With so much dirty work behind us, what is ahead is the best. Decks, bullwarks, deck light, dovetailed companion way hatch, mast and spars, and rope work and rigging: the boat builder's art, or as close as it comes to that. This next push will include caulking, puttying the seams, and painting the hull all of which means, for the first time in ten years *Elf* will be able to float again. The day she floats again is the rebirth we've all been waiting for.

Elf's Shipwright

# ANTIQUÉ PHOTOS DOCUMENT ELF HISTORY AND RESTORATION DETAILS

William A. Sonntag

**E**LF's 113 year history has been pieced together from many sources over the years. U.S. Department of Transportation vessel documentation records helped with the first clues about identity, but one of the best sources for information about her early provenance has come from the Hart Nautical Collections of the MIT Museum, Cambridge, Massachusetts. Parts of these collections have revealed numerous clues for her accurate restoration.

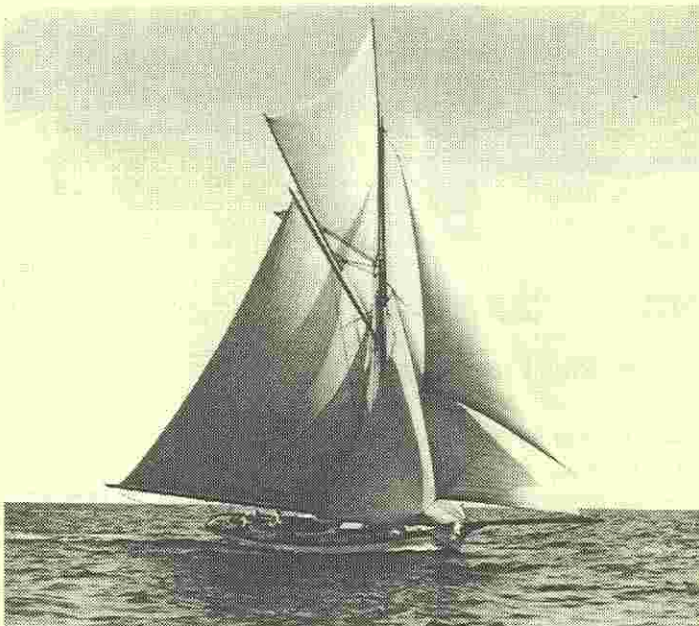
The curator of the Collections, Kurt Hasselbalch has consistently provided valuable support for the CYRG and the Lawley Boat Owners Association. Mr. Hasselbalch has often participated in the activities and programs of the Lawley Association and has provided much appreciated help in response to CYRG requests. The Collections include numerous records, plans, documents and other artifacts from the long history of the George F. Lawley yard, builders of *ELF*. Although searches of the Collections have never turned up plans or drawings for *ELF*, they do include a series of glass plate photographic negatives that provide a startlingly evocative look at the antique era of *ELF*'s construction and initial sailing seasons.

These glass plate negatives were taken by a renowned Boston-based commercial photographer, Nathaniel Livermore Stebbins. His commercial work stretched through the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century from 1884 until his death in 1922. During his career his records indicate that he exposed some 25,000 glass plate negatives. Of these about 65% appear to have been marine subjects along the New England coast. Among the maritime subjects, yachts and yachting scenes predominate with a good representation of commercial vessels as well. The largest number of the plates and prints was bought by the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities (SPNEA). Thus preserved, they were saved from the unfortunately common fate of glass plate negatives, sold as old glass to be installed as panes in a greenhouse.<sup>1</sup>

The photographs of *ELF* found in the Hart Nautical Collections provide remarkable documentation. One taken and dated April 9, 1888 shows *ELF* "on-the-ways" in the Lawley yard, with the tools of her construction alongside. We have deduced from this photograph that her launching took place during that week. Others show *ELF* with contemporary sailing yachts such as "EVELYN," a sister Thirty Footer Class vessel, and include detailed images of *ELF*'s original deck configuration, rig and

gear. The backdrop on some of the photos include period shoreline images of Marblehead, Massachusetts and the Eastern Yacht Club. They bring to life the descriptions of *ELF* and her early history elaborated by *ELF*'s second owner Henry Howard in his autobiography published in 1943.<sup>2</sup>

This small portion of Nathaniel Stebbins' life's work of 25,000 glass plate negatives is remarkable not just for its documentation of an era but also as a technical and logistical achievement. The



use of glass plate negatives had been common since about 1851. Just a few years before the start of Mr. Stebbins' career, wet plate processes were replaced by dry plates using a silver gelatin emulsion applied not by the photographer but by a manufacturer. These more portable glass plates were the type used by Stebbins and others and made possible location photography using bulky bellows-type field cameras. These antique cameras are now quite collectable with very finely detailed construction of wood, fabric, leather and brass. Common negative or plate sizes were 4 x 5 inches, 5 x 8 inches and 8 x 10 inches, and larger sizes

were not uncommon. In the hands of a skilled photographer, and because of the nature of the emulsions, they often contain a great deal of detail and subtlety of tone.<sup>3</sup> Creation of these images by Stebbins, often from the deck of another boat or in the midst of a 19<sup>th</sup> century shipyard, indicates that Mr. Stebbins was one such skilled photographer and must have developed a highly specialized technique.

We will feature these images in upcoming editions of "The Helm" and invite you to view the prints and other materials provided by the Hart Nautical Collections at upcoming CYRG events.

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<sup>1</sup> SPNEA background information on N.L. Stebbins provided by Hart Nautical Collections of the MIT Museum, 265 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, MA 02139; kurt@mit.edu

<sup>2</sup> "Charting My Life"; Henry Howard;

<sup>3</sup> Background material on glass plate negatives - Minnesota Historical Society - Minnesota History Interpreter, July 1999

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

# TOOLS/CAULKING 101 (PART I)

Rick

**I** think I need to set the stage first with some background information. So please bear with me. Even though it was 30 years ago, I can still remember the moment as though it happened yesterday.

I was 19 years old, putting myself through college, working at Sailing Associates on the Sassafras River as dockmaster. *Elf* was for sale in a rather tired condition in 1971. Her owner, Judston Branning, had purchased another boat in 1970. On Friday of Fourth of July weekend, Judston and I agreed on a fair, affordable market price of \$950, before he departed for a long sailing weekend aboard his new boat. I even took off my Swiss made Benrus watch and gave it to him for collateral. After the weekend the broker, Kathy Peterson, claimed that another offer of \$1,500 had come in and I would have to match it or lose out on my option. Hmmmm..... what to do?

I thought long and hard, considering every way possible to buy *Elf* and still afford college. It was a real shell game but I found a way. Then the real glitch surfaced: my boss, Fred Middleton, insisted that my mother understand the dynamics of what I was getting into and agree to my purchase. What to do NOW?

Well, every spare second I could find went into a sustained appeal to convince Mom that I was ready to move up from a 13 foot sunfish to a 37 foot LOD cutter — and live on it! Keep in mind that I had never had any formal sailing classes.

On July 11, 1971, I took my day off, starting going with Mother to the bank. I withdrew \$1,500 which made a bump in my pocket, but did not tell Mother the purpose of the transaction. Then

came the challenge: show Mother *Elf* and convince her I should buy the boat. Once aboard, I tried to make the proverbial silk purse out of a sow's ear. It must have been convincing. After a few questions and answers, Mother said, "I guess it would be alright for you to buy her." Hallelujah! Without delay, I hurriedly walked her to the brokerage office and told them with excitement that Mother had said, "Yes!" Then I think I surprised everyone with the bulging wad of money I pulled out of my pocket. (WOW!) I moved to the ranks of a proud yacht owner.

I immediately started a major cleaning project, saying goodbye to mildew, mushrooms, mud-dobbers' nests — the 3 M's. Life as I knew it was about to change. I moved aboard. I was in "seventh heaven." (PINCH ME!)

Day 2 of life aboard was great! I developed a long-term maintenance plan, and actually started scraping and sanding some wood. After a long day, I turned in shortly after sunset. Later that night, I got up to make a nature call and stepped into ankle deep water above the cabin sole. (What a reality check!) I charged off and got a pump. The next day, I scheduled a haul-out and quizzed everyone about the fine points of caulking. I had no idea about pounding cotton into seams, what tools were used or how to do it.

Over the years, I have gained considerable how-to knowledge and have acquired the proper tools to do it. And yes, I have also used a putty knife instead of a caulking iron.

In the next issue, I will try to impart a step-by-step how-to article on caulking, the tools, the materials, etc. If you would like to share your experiences and techniques, write to me at address on the newsletter, or e-mail me at [elf1888@earthlink.net](mailto:elf1888@earthlink.net).

## Free to Good Home (perhaps a cash donation to the Guild?)

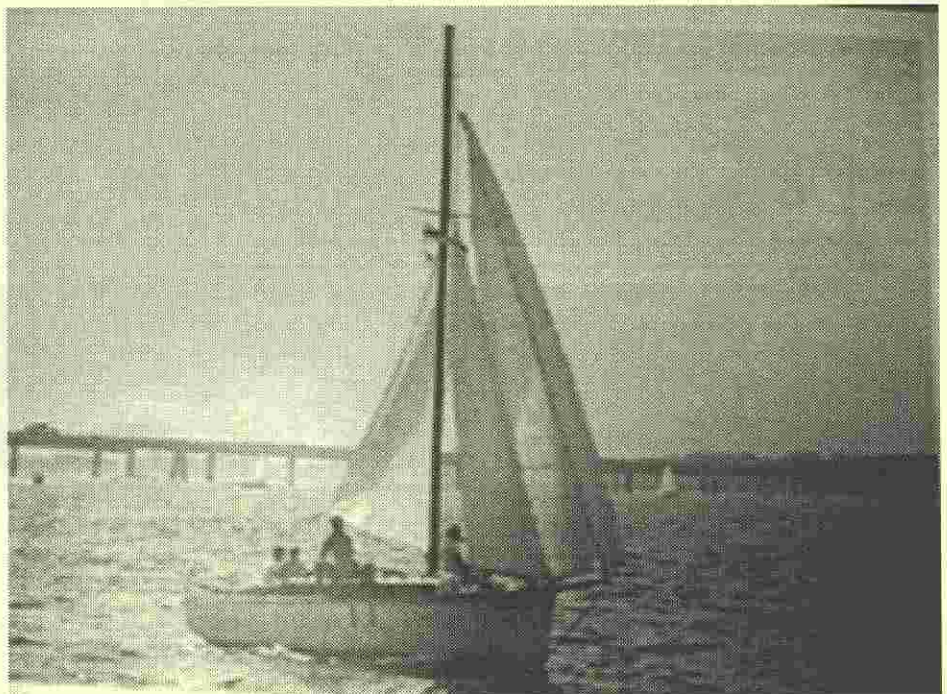
**We wish to find a home for FINEST KIND, a 25' centerboard cutter built in 1945 in Casco Bay, Maine.**

**There are new deck beams, carlins, stringers and many frames.**

**There is a wood mast and rigging. Bronze ports and coachroof which are not attached.**

**This vessel is in need of considerable work but would be a fun project and when finished would be quite lovely (see photo).**

**Call John Griffiths @ 410-275-8750 or email @ [griffsea@dpnet.net](mailto:griffsea@dpnet.net)**



# A MESSAGE FROM CAPT'N RICK'S GALLEY\*

Cyndi McNicholas

**W**hat does EVERYONE do more of while boating than they do on dry land?  
Answer: EAT! Consume, imbibe, chow down, dine, snack, munch, nosh..... call it whatever you like, but it's a universal truth that we all eat more while on the water.

Probably for the same reasons (whatever they are), it is also true that everything TASTES better out at sea.

It follows, then, that many of you out there reading this newsletter have some pretty tasty recipes which are well-loved by your family, friends, neighbors, dock-party buddies, raft-up partners, fellow tailgaters, etc. Do you have the absolute best barbeque sauce on the block? The most mouthwatering potato salad at the picnic? The most delectable corn chowder in the county? Is your dish easy to prepare and store while away from home?

You're probably thinking that it's time to share your recipe with the world! If so, send it in to The Classic Yacht Restoration Guild, or Rick Carrion, at P.O. Box 237, Earleville, MD 21919. We'll publish the best submissions in upcoming issues of "The Helm," giving credit by name to the creator, and who knows..... if we receive too many for that purpose, we'll gather the recipes in a cookbook and donate some of the sales proceeds to the Guild. How's that for incentive -- see your name in print, show off your favorite recipe AND support the Guild!

To help get your creative juices flowing, here is Rick's recipe for marinated salmon. This is one that Georges Perrier would be proud of..... and your guests will rave about!

## *Marinated Salmon from Capt'n Rick's Galley\**

Serves four. This recipe can be prepared at home and brought to your boat -- and your first night's dinner will be quick, easy and delicious!

1 1/2 lb. salmon fillets  
2 Tbsp. olive oil  
4 to 8 strips roasted sweet peppers (available in jars at supermarket, if you don't make your own)  
Juice of one lemon (or two if small)  
Juice of one-half lime (or whole if small)  
1/4 c. Chardonnay  
3 shakes or 2 Tbsp. mesquite marinade (such as McCormick's Golden Dipt Fat Free Mesquite Marinade -- or a combination of vinegar, garlic, salt, sugar and Liquid Smoke or other grill flavor)  
2 heaping Tbsp. (more or less) dill

Use a bowl or dish large enough to accommodate the fish, such as a plastic container with tight-fitting lid, or even a heavy-duty zippered plastic bag. Combine lemon juice, lime juice, wine, marinade and dill and stir all ingredients together. Add salmon fillets and marinate anywhere from 30 minutes to 24 hours, turning a couple of times.

To cook, heat olive oil over medium heat in a large lidded skillet, or even a wok. When olive oil is hot, add fish and marinade. Add roasted sweet peppers. Cook, covered, 3 to 5 minutes per side. Serve with rice, a vegetable (such as green beans or steamed asparagus) and some good, crusty bread to soak up every last drop of the wonderful sauce. A nice Pinot Grigio or Chardonnay tastes great with this dish.

Now -- does that get you thinking? Send your recipe in by August 31st and you may be featured in the next newsletter! Be sure to include your address and phone number so that we can contact you with any questions.

And here's the fine print: Any recipe submitted to the Classic Yacht Restoration Guild or Rick Carrion may be used in The Helm or any future publication without further permission. \*All Rights Reserved.

## ANNUAL CRAB FEAST & BARBECUE BY THE CHESAPEAKE BAY

September 15 (Rain Date: September 22)

\$25 Adult Members - \$35 Adult Non-Members - Members' Children: Free

Reservations by September 7: 410-275-2819 or E-Mail: elf1888@earthlink.net