

THE HELM

Summer 2007 - Vol. 25, No. 2



Elf, past and future



President's Message

Where to Start?

... by Rick Carrion

“Where to start,” I ask myself? First, I want to thank all of our dedicated members, supporters and volunteers who have contributed so much during the ELF restoration efforts. We have come a long way since July 7, 1991, when we moved ELF to my back yard to start the restoration. In addition, yes, the project evolved from what was thought to be a few years into a total, historically accurate restoration of museum quality.

With the desire to go to sea safely, and return, we renewed every piece of wood except her original wooden keel. Not only the woodworking, but also the fundraising, grant writing, ordering materials, and associated efforts to keep the Guild moving forward, have taken time. Throughout this effort, I have tried to stay optimistic, and have done as much as humanly possible to make things work to completion. Part of my decision to retire from teaching was deeply rooted in my desire to help speed up the restoration process.

As you know, I made the decision to postpone the re-launch until Spring, 2008. For me it was a hard decision to make because I felt that I was letting down so many members and friends who had planned to help me SPLASH this summer. The truth of the matter is that we missed the Independence Seaport Museum boat shop's June rigging deadline — though we were so close. I take full responsibility for this delay, and I am sincerely sorry to have disappointed you.

Museum quality restorations require major time alloca-

tions for each and every job. Now with additional time, we will be able to finish the interior as well as all systems. We still have quite a lot of work to accomplish, but I know that it is achievable by early spring 2008. We are now planning to re-launch the week of ELF's original launch, which was the week of April 12, 1888, according to *Forest and Stream* magazine.

In addition, yes, your time as a volunteer is greatly appreciated and needed. As the weather cools off a bit from the summer heat, we welcome your help. I will be here most every day to provide instruction (though it is good to call ahead...1-410-275-2819). Also, plan on a potluck lunch and/or dinner. Crabs are a treat that I try to organize for big weekend work parties, and I must say that they have been very tasty this summer.

In closing, I want to say that I have always said that in life you have to dream. Dreaming about what can be has propelled me past tough times. I think about how exciting and awesome it will be to be at the tiller with ELF's restored rig set for a beam reach with just the right breeze and all sails pulling to a new sunrise, a new day. Looking back, I am glad to have had the unique opportunities and learning experiences that ELF gave me while sailing her from 1971 to 1991 when we started the restoration. I feel that I must now share with you a well kept secret. Years after I purchased ELF, it was told to me that had I not purchased her, and she was still around later that fall, she was scheduled to be decommissioned, scuttled...actually pulled across the river and burned. Current research has found that ELF is the oldest small yacht in America and the oldest racing yacht in the world. It is important to say here that together we have saved a very important global maritime treasure.

Thank You!

Graham's Letter

July 27, 2007

Dear C.Y.R.G. members and friends,

As I write this, my part of the Elf restoration project has finally ended. As you can clearly see, "Elf" is once again a whole boat in every way. I am a boat builder, a carpenter, and the carpentry is for the most part complete. Some time ago Rick made the decision to finish the remaining interior, the galley and navigation station, with help from Charlie York. So now, with the completion of the major components on deck and the building of the rudder, my work is done. Although it is difficult to relinquish any part of a boat that I have invested so much time and effort in, the project has lasted longer than I ever imagined. I am anxious to get to new and waiting projects. I admit, I won't miss the forty mile commute when I can walk across the street with my coffee mug in hand and go to work in my boat shop here in Still Pond, where peace and tranquility prevail and where, as my father always said, "there is a place for everything and everything in its place".

I know that the new launch date is a disappointment for many of you but it is a relief to me. For Elf to receive the focus and attention to detail that she deserves it was a necessary decision. When your guild took on the restoration of this historic yacht you took on the responsibility of honoring the craftsmanship of one of the finest builders and designers of that era. It's the kind of work I have devoted thirty five years of my life to and I take it seriously. As we have said before, the devil is in the details and when it comes to a yacht such as Elf, few people fully understand the amount of time the myriad of details that still remain will require.

Most of the remaining work includes the systems that will protect and keep the thousands of hours of wooden boat building that has taken place, safe. Such as, batteries that will always

keep their charge, an engine that will always start when needed, throttle and transmission linkage that will work reliably for years of service, interior and running lights, and reliable bilge pump. A well found electrical panel and gauges that will keep the crew apprised of the status of the engine. There is plumbing, water and fuel deck fills to install and hook up. You will all appreciate a working head and running water. There is more but you get the point. These things only happen when the work is done carefully by skilled mechanics and electricians with that same attention to detail, there's that word again. This work cannot be rushed.

With the summer rapidly disappearing it was important to resort back to a more reasonable time table and to finish the boat 100% complete and fully prepared for service. The survival of the boat and crew depends on it. The job isn't over until it is done and the one thing I've learned over the years is that March will be here before you know it.

It's been my pleasure to be the boatwright in the restoration of Elf and to get to know the membership. I look forward to experiencing Elf under sail and can imagine seeing her on the bay from the deck of our own lovely boat, "Live Yankee".

You are always welcome to visit the Wooden Boat Shop in scenic Still Pond, MD. There are already several new projects underway. Look for more information soon at Erowoodenboats.com or call me at 410-348-2296.

Sincerely,

Elf's
Boatwright

National Sailing Hall of Fame & Museum

Recently, Lee Tawney from the National Sailing Hall of Fame visited the ELF restoration project to inspect our efforts. Lee was so impressed that we are invited to have ELF on display at their facility in Annapolis, MD. We are looking forward to having ELF on display at their city docks facility and museum. Lee also suggested that we try to organize a classic sailing vessel regatta, which I will gladly work on and ask every member to spread the word. Please visit their website:

lee.tawney@nshof.org

**Check for Updates for the
Re-Launch on our Website:
www.cyr.org**

Request for Submissions

Please consider writing an article for our next newsletter. It can be about any aspect of boating, cooking aboard, boat maintenance, or any area of sailing that excites your passion. It may be submitted in writing, or by email (Word attachments are acceptable) to:

ray.zeigler@verizon.net

or

elf1888@earthlink.net

The deadline for the next newsletter is October 26, 2007.



Can you say “FGCSCF”? OK, can you say “Fugscuff”?

... by Greg DeCowsky

I took a few days off from spring maintenance on Driftwood for the second annual Florida Gulf Coast Small Craft Festival (a/k/a FGCSCF or Fugscuff), usually at Florida Maritime Museum at Cortez but this year temporarily relocated to the Sarasota Sailing Squadron due to construction and dredging in Cortez.

My sister Nancy and I left Cortez on April 12, sailing to Sister Key for a gunkhole campout. Our vessel, Babe, belongs to the museum, whose director, Roger Allen, generously lent her to us for the weekend. The boat is a classic 15' Abaco dinghy built in 1956 by the famous Winer Malone. She's a very simple and sweet-sailing cat-rigged inshore fishing boat.

Five boatloads of us camped for the night amid mangroves and Australian pines, fending off marauding raccoons, but luckily didn't get Nancy's bottle of Gosling's.

On Friday the 13th (ha, there's the problem!) we sailed to Sarasota in about a 15-knot southerly breeze. I made it a point to search for the shallowest areas so that we could study Floridian benthic creatures at leisure (that's my story, and I'm sticking to it).

But mindful of the sunburn potential, we made it to SSS in plenty of time for cold beverages, a trip to Cortez to retrieve vehicles, a splash in the Gulf at Coquina Beach, and back to SSS for dinner.

On Saturday, Roger, with his wife Michelle and I as ringers (Nancy stayed ashore and took pictures), raced Babe in winds of about 20 knots and managed to keep her upright (lots of ballast!) to take 3rd place in the Traditional class while numerous other boats were capsizing. Saturday night featured a mahi-mahi dinner and a very interesting speaker, Kendall Butler, of the Bahamas Cultural Ministries Office, who spoke about the influence of

Bahamian maritime culture on the mainland. We are currently trying to figure out how to take him up on his offer of boatbuilding tours and dinghy races this winter (more on this in a future Helm, maybe).

Heavy winds and a fair amount of rain forced the cancellation of Sunday's on-the-water events (and, we found later to our chagrin, caused horrendous airline gridlock over most of the eastern U.S.), so we stood around SSS drinking coffee, eating donuts, and observing the deceptively tame-seeming squirrels, one of which bit me when I attempted to share my donut. Luckily, the bartender was a retired doctor, and her two customers (at 9 a.m.!) were RNs, so I was in good hands. (And my doctor at home tells me squirrels don't carry rabies, so no worries.)

All in all, a great weekend, and a well-deserved respite from spring commissioning chores. I recommend FGCSCF and Cortez highly as a vacation destination for small-boat sailors as well as seafood connoisseurs (try the smoked mullet or the grouper with Caribbean salsa at the Star Fish Co. dock bar, while you watch the dolphins and pelicans). Cortez is an old commercial fishing town facing the same kind of development pressures - possibly even more intense - that Rock Hall and other Chesapeake towns have been experiencing. The museum is

an active and vital force working for the preservation of Old Cortez and its cultural heritage. You can see photos at <http://fgcscf.org/>. Next year FGCSCF is expected to return to Cortez. See you there!



Greg DeCowsky at the Florida Gulf Coast Small Craft Festival at the Sarasota Sailing Squadron. The boat is a classic 15' Abaco dinghy, Babe, flying the burgee of Rock Hall Yacht Club. (Photo by Nancy DeCowsky.)



Crab Feast/BBQ and Silent Auction

September 15, 2007

1:00 P.M.

It is time to think of gathering items for our annual silent auction (Elf fund raiser). Please consider donating items that will help us move toward our goal to raise additional funding to complete the restoration. Please copy and distribute the enclosed flyer to encourage you favorite stores, restaurants, and so on, to contribute gift certificates or unique items for the auction. We also need friends to help plan, organize, and work at the Crab Feast. Just email Rick to let him know how you can help.

elf1888@ earthlink.net



**Check our Progress and Photos at:
cyrg.org**

THE HELM



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