

THE HELM



Winter/Spring 2015 - Vol. 32, No. 1

Elf, past and future



President's Message Looking Forward to Another Great Season

... by Rick Carrion

Thanks to the energy and enthusiasm of CYRG members, 2014 was another successful year of classic yacht racing, with two first places, one second and one third. (See the articles by Pete Carrico and Wayne Brown). During the September celebration in Baltimore of the war of 1812, we welcomed literally thousands of visitors aboard. ELF also was a proud participant in the parade of ships, invited to sail by Fort McHenry for the 9:00 AM large flag raising, 200 years to the minute after the original large flag was raised, ending a twenty-five hour bombardment. Fortunately, our crew of 21 was hale and hearty, since with no saluting cannon, we saluted with a loud and emphatic: *one two three BOOM!* It was a fun and inspiring day, something we will all remember forever.

Of course, ELF's official season begins in May, for the Annual ELF Classic Race, this year to be held Saturday, May 16. Racing starts at 9:00 AM in Annapolis with the finish and reception held about 3 PM at the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum (CBMM). The Classic is a destination race, re-creating yacht racing from the 1880's, near the time of ELF's beginning. Our modern version begins on sure at the Eastport Yacht Club (EYC) in Annapolis. We will cross the Bay to the CBMM in St. Michaels, where sails and anchors go down before yachtsmen row ashore to sign in and finish the race. It is referred to as a true gentlemen's race. The yachtsmen *and* women truly enjoy racing their classic vessels followed by drinks

and appetizers at the awards ceremony reception. Plan to join us however you can!!

If you have not witnessed the beauty of the ELF classic, visit our website (cyrg.org) and watch the fantastic film of last year's race, featuring ELF and incredible photography by a drone! In addition, we will soon be posting a variety of historic information about ELF on our website. You will be able to read articles, early race results, and view photos of ELF's long and fascinating history. But we need your help! We want all members to consider themselves detectives, with the mission of finding absolutely everything you can about ELF including photos, clippings, or whatever information you can find. Great places to look: museums, yacht club records, shipyards and memorabilia. My ultimate goal is to complete a coffee-table book about ELF and her restoration, as yet another fundraising tool for the CYRG.

This is my 45th year with ELF... a real derelict at first with a sense of urgency, as I later learned she was to be scuttled within a matter of months. During ELF's 127 years she has sailed to ports from Halifax, Nova Scotia, along the East Coast to the Bahamas and the Caribbean. Now it is important to preserve and celebrate the historically accurate restoration, sharing ELF as an ambassador of the Chesapeake Bay at events, races, or just dockside visitation and boarding. The ELF story goes on, and your pursuit of pertinent ELF photos and artifacts will be so greatly appreciated, you will be rewarded with a one-year CYRG membership, or else merchandise or an invitation to come sailing!!

While visiting the CYRG website, be sure to regularly check the Events section and mark your calendar to join us in celebrating the 5th Annual ELF Classic, CBMM 50th anniversary, Cutts &

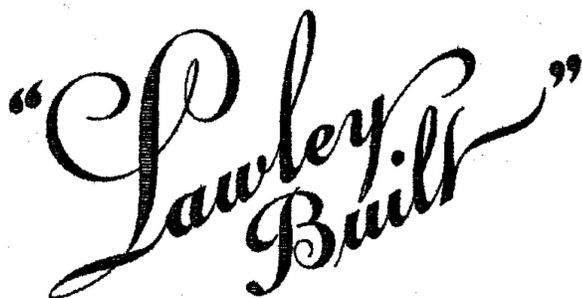
Case Boatyard 50th anniversary, the tall ships in Philly at Independence Seaport Museum, or any of the many races or dockside visits. CYRG members are always welcome to visit ELF.

Fortunately for everyone, my daughter Cassidy has agreed to teach me how to better use the functions of my cell phone and to be better able to communicate with you via emails and E-blasts. I am the old dog when it comes to new technologies. As I become more technically savvy, I will be able to use my phone to invite you aboard during races, dockside visits, and pleasure sails. Please let me know your preferred method for me to announce ELF's whereabouts, since the weather may sometimes impact our scheduled activities.

We are thankful and very appreciative to have Bob Hurd as our database manager. It is going to be helpful for you to put in all your current information so we can update as you make changes. Please send your information to Bob Hurd directly at bobhurd@aol.com with "CYRG DATABASE" in the subject window. Also, please realize that your membership is good for one year from the date you sign on.

Now that the grueling winter is finally over, it is time to get ready for another exciting season, starting with ELF's re-rigging in St. Michaels. Extra hands are always welcome, and it's a great way to get to know ELF and all the work required to maintain her majestic place as a jewel of the yachting world. Join us!! Please call my cell phone 443-566-2212 when you would like to come aboard!!

And as always, your continued support is greatly appreciated.



SAVE THE DATE:

Saturday, May 16, 2015
The 5th annual
ELF CLASSIC YACHT RACE
from Annapolis to St. Michaels!

Join *ELF* and other classic sailboats for a true yachtsman's race, sponsored by the Classic Yacht Restoration Guild, Inc.

In tribute to the traditions of the 1880's, the race begins on land, at the Eastport Yacht Club in Annapolis, where the skippers must row to their boats on mooring or anchor, make sail and take off for the Eastern Shore.

At the finish, the process is reversed as the boats must anchor off the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum and row into shore and sign the race log. Prizes are awarded in several categories, followed by a reception where skippers, sailors and sponsors can enjoy food and refreshments.

Proceeds from the event benefit both the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, *ELF*'s homeport on the Chesapeake, and the CYRG. If you would like to enter your classic yacht, or become a sponsor, please contact *ELF* Capt. Rick Carrion: elf1888@earthlink.net or tel: 443-556-2212. Visit the CYRG website at www.cyrg.org for more details, sign up information and updates.

Antique and Classic Boat Racing

...by Pete Carrico

“OK Crew, let’s work together on this. Raise the peak and the throat together”, “OK, more on the throat”, “Ready to ease that mainsheet!”. These were some of the commands that began our day sailing ELF in the National Sailing Hall of Fame (NSHOF) Classic Boat Regatta.

Knowing we were a few minutes late, Mike Hanyi and myself anxiously walked down the pier, at Annapolis Yacht Club, not knowing exactly what to expect with the type of crew we were to sail with on board ELF, the 1888 gaff rigged sloop owned by the Classic Yacht Restoration Guild (CYRG).

The guests on board were from a variety of experience levels. Some very new and some salty with experience but all were there with excitement and anticipation for a race. One crewmember in particular was a young sailing lad named Severn. Severn would be critical to help sail ELF this day.

Rick was busy running around getting the boat ready for underway, while Mike and I jumped into the rig prep and went over the numerous lines that needed tending for sailing this unique craft. When Mike and I risked the statement “Rick, we’re striking the banners & flags” Rick replied with “Let’s do it”! At that point I knew Rick was ready to race to win.

Also being towed behind the boat was ELF’s dinghy, Vida, with photographer Russell Levi who we cast off in Vida as we approached the racecourse. I thought “Good luck” with all the different types of boats maneuvering around in the very busy harbor.

As we maneuvered away from the dock Rick said to me, “Pete, you be skipper today, I want you to race the boat.” Wow, I felt it was like my birthday and Christmas all wrapped up into one present! Taking the tiller I went into skipper mode.

Despite the very light wind that was postponing the start sequence we took the opportunity to start sailing the boat in the shifty puffs of wind that seemed to be a battle between the light northerly and southerly sea breeze trying to form.

First we hoisted the mainsail and we started moving. The grace of ELF even in light wind is amazing. Then the staysail, then the jib, then the flying jib were raised. With 4 sails up, ELF was actually moving quite well in the light breeze.

At this point I was eager to see Severn respond to my request that he drive the boat for a bit. At first he was nervous, but my coaching methods kicked in. I encouraged his abilities with a guiding tone so his skill would later enable me to leave the helm for a bit to tend to the boat’s needs on deck.

Still, the Race Committee was further delaying the start because the wind shifted between North & Southeast at the start area of Triton Point at the Naval Academy. Then I asked, “Rick, what about the topsail?” Rick had that look... “Aw man... That’s going to be complicated. We need to attach some blocks to the gaff and rig 3 lines. That might take some time.” I said, “But Rick, we’re racing!” “OK, let’s do it!” said Rick. The crew worked great together lowering the mainsail and helping Rick rig the topsail and we had it all sorted out in about 8 minutes. Great crew work!!!

Now ELF was really responding and moving quite nicely as other boats were also maneuvering during the long two-hour wait for the race to start. This wait was the best thing for our crew because we went into frequent tacks and jibes getting everyone comfortable with their positions. Critical also for speed was getting the crew to sit to leeward so the heavy sails could be eased out and to enhance the weather helm feel of the boat so ELF could get in the groove. And groove we did!

The race began with the smaller boats going first in a timed sequence because if everyone sailed to their rating that we’d all finish together. We were giving some boats a 20-minute head start!

As luck would have it, the strongest wind for the day came as ELF was approaching the starting line. ELF was moving at 6.5 knots we had to slow down or we would be over the line early. With about 15 seconds to go I put the bow down and the trimmers did the rest of the work getting ELF up to full speed as we crossed the line.

The harbor had an anchored boat off the port tack layline from the first mark at the mouth of the harbor, therefore we pinched slightly to get a clear lane into the Severn River. On starboard tack we were free and clear to let ELF sail herself to windward. The next tack was a bit early where we pinched slightly to clear the Horn Point shoal marker, and again the next tack onto starboard with some adverse current put ELF into pinch mode again, but still the boat never stalled and gracefully climbed to windward, rounding G5 with a few feet to spare.

The downwind leg was ELF’s grand leap forward with that topsail being very effective and the trimmer’s doing their thing making the sails work with the crew weight to the lee and forward.

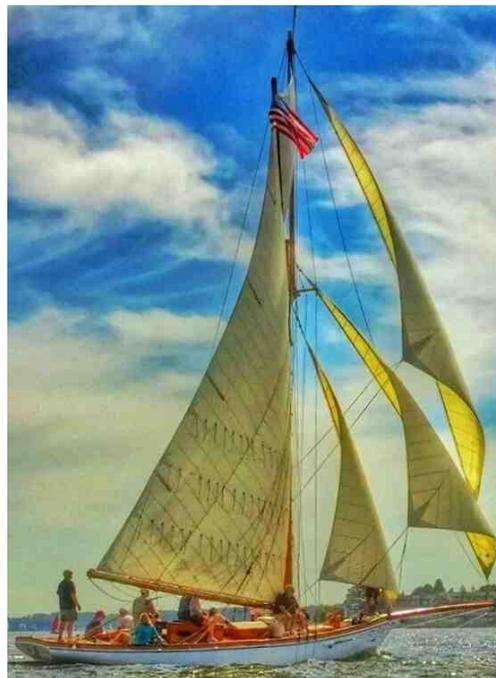
As the wind began to abate the race committee shortened the race because the lead boats were crossing the Triton Point finish line just ahead of us although we were ready for more. But the wind was still in our favor with the last gasp of wind pushing us across the finish line.

We were less concerned of how well we did in the race and far more concerned with how well we did as a crew sailing ELF. The magic of the day was how well ELF responded to everyone working together as a team, and for me, the best part was watching the young lad Severn grow from the timorous 6 year old to the intrepid boy having an experience steering ELF in a race that he would never forget.

As it turns out ELF did win overall for the NSHOF Classic Boat Regatta.

Nice!

Photo by Russell Levi



My ELF Experience

By Marlin Plymette

From October 28 to 31, 2014, I was privy to three amazing experiences with the Elf and her crew. At 9:00 Tuesday morning, my wife, Jean, daughter Kari, and her fiancé, Joshua and I met with Captain Rick to plan out our day of sailing. We sailed that day with Rick and a crew that included Carl and Derek. Captain Rick filled us in on the safety precautions for everyone sailing on the Elf before we could leave the dock, including what to do in the event we had the unthinkable tragedy of a man overboard and how to rescue him or her.

We set sail from the docks of CBMM in St. Michaels and sailed East on the Miles River before turning around to head to Tilghman Point and into the Eastern Bay. As we sailed, everyone had a chance to try his/her hand at manning the helm. This was an exciting, first-time experience for my family to be able to sail and for it to be on the historic, recreated 1888 Elf with Captain Rick was a double pleasure.



When we returned to shore that Tuesday, we started removing the sails, boom, bowsprit, and the gaff boom in preparation for the final down rigging chores—securing the lines and lifting the mainmast. Wednesday saw the time to down-rig Elf to prepare her for her winter residence. Captain Rick, Carl, and I started the tasks of removing and folding sails, untying and labeling lines, and securing rigging for the winter.



Fig 1 Ready for final down rigging

Fig 2: Elf lines secured for mast lifting

Fig 3: Bucket connected

By 1:00 that day, the lines were labeled, secured, tied to the mainmast, and ready for the bucket truck. My family had arrived to view the excitement of seeing the huge mast pulled up and out of the Elf by the bucket truck. Captain Rick secured the lift line to the mast and the crosstree to hoist the mast out of the deck. Once free and on land, we began the task of coiling lines.

With the threat of rain, everyone jumped in to lend a hand with removing and coiling the lines and finally, transporting the mast to its winter home below the rafters of the small boat shed at the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum (CBMM).





You can see it is a good thing we had strong support lifting that mast onto the cart.

To most, it would seem like that would be enough excitement and fun for one week working on the Elf. But not true. We still had to get Elf to her winter home. So there was one more day of enjoyment and bonding with Elf. Friday morning, October 31 I joined Rick and Jane Hruska in the early hours at the docks of CBMM. We departed in the pre-dawn for our motor excursion from St. Michaels to deliver Elf to her winter home on the Sassafras River at the Georgetown Yacht Club marina.

It was a beautiful, calm, but chilly morning as we left the safety of the dock at CBMM headed out into the Miles River at 6:26 a.m. As we sailed out toward Tilghman Point and headed for Eastern Bay, the sun arose about 7:15. (NOTE: The time stamps are incorrect on the photos.)



6:26 10/31 St. Michaels harbor

Jane bundled against the cold

Rick steers us to Eastern Bay

As we motored up the Chesapeake Bay, we kept watch for crab pots, other small craft, and of course, large vessels coming and going on the bay to and from other ports.

We made our way under the Bay Bridge at about 10:30 after I had asked Captain Rick if I could take the helm to navigate under the bridge. Seeing no large vessels coming or going, we steered our course to go directly under the main shipping channel beneath the center spans.



Jane and Captain Rick “lounged” on the deck of Elf and looked back at the Bay Bridge as I gently steered us beneath the spans and I took a selfie as we passed our largest milestone of the trip, knowing we were about 1/2 way to our destination.





The rest of our trip was uneventful as Rick spotted and pointed out our milestones and next landmarks making our way to the Sassafas River; Baltimore Light, Love Point, Gibson Island, Rock Hall, Chestertown (Rosie Parks was sailing there today for the Sultana down rigging), Aberdeen Proving Grounds and several others. Finally, we made the starboard turn into the Sassafas River. This last section of the trip is peaceful, natural, and a beauty to behold. At about 4:15 we put in at the Georgetown Yacht Club.



It was the end of a wonderful experience with Elf, her crew and especially her owner and captain. After this series of experiences, I am even more excited and hoping for the opportunity to sail on the Elf more and to begin to learn how to sail her. What an exciting opportunity to dream to one day be a part of the crew that races Elf in the Elf Classic. For now, I can only dream and savor the time spent experiencing Elf for three days in October.



Guidelines for HELM Article Submission

Articles 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 Rick Carrion at elf1888@earthlink.net

CLASSIC SAILBOATS RENDEZVOUS IN ANNAPOLIS

Special Handicapping System Used

... by Wayne Brown

The Annapolis Harbor docks off Prince George Street welcomed a large number of classic wooden sailboats on September 20. Streams of visitors and boat enthusiasts looked over the yachts and often went aboard to look below. All the boats had been built before 1971.

The National Sailing Hall of Fame once again sponsored this 5th Annual Classic Wooden Sailboat Rendezvous and Regatta which took place from the docks just beyond their building. On Sunday, September 21, there was a race that used a most unique handicapping system.

"We use the modified Portsmouth Yardstick," Paul Miller, head of the Racing Committee, said. "Every boat is rated to other boats as a percentage. Ratings have numbers like 97, 98, 70. These are really references to a percentage speed ratio against the scratch boat."

Sunday's light wind was a problem so the 11 a.m. start was postponed until 1 p.m. Eddie Cutts, who with his brother Ron raced *Spellbound*, a ketch designed and built by his father, said it was a "light, meandering wind, shifting around." At times it was 6 k. and at other times it was 2 k." He had praise for the winning skipper of *Elf*, a 35 ft. cutter, for sailing "a beautiful race. They beat everybody in a very unlikely situation."

This was Rick Carrion who said they were watching the breezes that piped up in different areas.

Asked about his strategy, he said, "We played all the breezes and watched our current, because the current was coming into port. We tried to stay off the current." But the current helped them in the repeating triangle course with a start and finish off the naval academy. "We came up along the western side of the channel and ran all the way down and came around the course. We just ate up all the other boats," he said. "We were thrilled to do that." Hull speed read 5.7 knots when *Elf* was passing the competition, he said.

Elf flew three jibs, the gaffed main and a working top sail, but not the jackyard topsail which goes 12 feet higher than the mast. There were 16 people on board, and all played a part, including a seven year old boy named Severn, who took a turn at the helm. George F. Lawley designed her in 1888, but over time, Carrion said, she has been completely rebuilt. He has done this for years before he donated her to the Antique Boat Restoration Guild which has made recent repairs. As seen in the photo, *Elf* is a fine looking cutter due to Lawley's excellent design.

Photo by Liza Zimmerman

Using the Portsmouth Yardstick

Paul Miller, speaking in the NSHF building, explained how he had sent all the previous results for the different boats to the Portsmouth Yardstick Committee. "There's one in England, and one in the U.S. – U.S. Sailing in Middleton, RI." They publish a new value on their web site for a large list of boats. For sailboats without a number, Paul has to do research, which begins by asking the owners for the basic sail dimensions. "I go on line and try to find more. I go into the library and find – maybe – a book that the designer wrote."

Then he uses something he called the Velocity Prediction Program. "You enter all the data about the sail areas, etc. It gives a prediction of how fast the boat is," he said. "You take the value for a speed of seven knots. I compare it with one of the scratch



boats, with the Portsmouth Yardstick," he said. "That gives me the percent ratio with the new boat, that is being handicapped, and one of our existing boats.

"The idea is for a low tech informal race where the boats are shown in their best light." Ideally they should all finish at the same time in the pursuit-type race. A dingy might start, and the last to race might be the star boats. "The key thing is we are given boats, not sailors," he said. Some are active racers while others prefer cruising. "Some of the boats have racing quality sails, and some have cruising quality sails," he said. "Each year they get adjusted as well, so what we see is the smaller lighter boats, because the course is so short, are tacking a lot. The big heavy boats don't tack well, so they end up with their handicap a larger number, because they end up being slower." And, he said, handicaps drop for the smaller maneuverable boats. When told it was extensive and complicated research, he said, "Yes but I'm a naval architect so it's fun." His smallest boat is just 47 inches in length, a computer controlled craft used for oceanographic research. His largest design is an 82 ft. America's Cup yacht.

2015 Events

May 8-14: Do shake down sails with members: (CYRG Members Sailing

May 15 depart CBMM for Annapolis (CYRG Members Sailing)

May 16 5th Annual ELF Classic Yacht Race

May 22-24 ELF on display (Dressed Ship) at CBMM

May 29 (CYRG Members Sail) to Oxford, MD (Cutts & Case)

May 30-31 (CYRG Members Sailing)

June 1 (CYRG Members Sailing) ELF to the Sassafras River for Annual haul out and bottom work

June 3 & 4 (CYRG Members Sailing) on the Sassafras

June 5 haul out for a week of bottom maintenance

June 6-12 Bottom work parties

June 13-21 (CYRG Members Sailing) on the Sassafras River

Elf, past and future



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