

# THE HELM

Winter 2008 - Vol. 25, No. 1



**Elf, past and future**



## President's Message

### Sprint to the Finish

... by Rick Carrion

**T**hanks to a mild winter in our area, we have made fantastic progress. I can honestly say that I have really enjoyed getting up each day looking forward to working on something so rewarding. One of my favorite aspects of the project is using North American Black Cherry on the interior. From the beginning, I used book-matched burl planks from the centerline outward. That gives a stunning effect. Throughout the interior you will find four different types of cherry burl – zebra, rope, crotch, and rooster tail – all of which I harvested, saving the best for Elf. Each additional coat of varnish just makes them look better and better.

Currently, we are working on the navigation station, head and ceiling. As the weather holds above 50 degrees, we will be putting the topcoats of paint on the hull, then painting the name on the transom along with the artwork on the bow. Yes, there is still a lot to accomplish before the April 11 re-launch, but I honestly feel good about being able to complete all of the essential tasks at hand. And I want to thank the many wonderful volunteers who have gotten us to this point. Also, I welcome your continued support. We still have several projects that volunteers can be very helpful with, so please call or e-mail me to schedule a good time to join the efforts. And of

course, plan to join us to celebrate the re-launch, one hundred and twenty years after the original.

Once we launch, we will take about 10 days for the hull planking to swell. Then we will go to Independence Seaport Museum at Penn's Landing in Philadelphia to rig and shake her down. Then we want to come home to the Sasfras River. At that point, we will start educating our members as to how to sail Elf, because with all the lines and equipment, supporting over 2300 feet of sail, it will take some time to put together a winning racing team. We are working now to get a racing rating, to be able to participate in classic and historic vessel races. We think that is important, since recent research indicates that Elf may be the oldest racing yacht in the world. And on a similar though different note, *Classic Boat* magazine in the UK wants to not only publish a series of stories, but also to nominate the Elf restoration as the best restoration in the World for 2008. WOW!

We want to invite you to join in the celebrations. So, please watch the website for updates, events and appearances. And please let me know if your local museum, yacht club or organization wants to invite us to bring Elf to some special maritime event. We will do everything possible to attend. I can not wait to be at the tiller under full sail in a moderate breeze, since it will be like having a tiger by the tail, one hell of a ride!

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## WHAT A DRAG... SAILING WITH

### A PEACH BASKET IN TOW!

. . . by *Rick Carrion*

Sailing with a 3 blade propeller seems like you are towing some sort of sea anchor or peach basket, or what slows some Chesapeake Bay sailors, the infamous CRAB TRAP. Well I am sure there are those of us that just about given up on the fixed pitch, 3-blade propeller. Yes, years ago, I think it was 1972 or 1973 that I actually had an engine in ELF that made noises, though briefly. I kept up hope that some day a miracle might make the engine come alive and sputter along, but that never happened. Well as you can just imagine we still sailed for a few years with a 3 blade propeller, which on a reasonable breeze would free wheel, making a lot of noise, and possibly damaging the transmission. The other alternative, lock the propeller shaft in one position, effectively putting the brakes on. At some point, (I think about 1975) I removed the engine, propeller and shaft, plugging the hole with a two foot White Cedar cylinder.

Yes, I know that ELF was not built with an engine, they were not invented yet, and for that matter the "Indian Wars" were raging on the western front. Her first propulsion system was a 1914 Lathrop, measuring 6 & 1/2' X 4&1/2' X 4 & 1/2' (Very heavy astern). Over the years ELF has seen many changes; four rig changes, different engines and cabin layouts, each of which made significant changes in how she looked. Over time I learned more about her history and found original photographs taken by Nathaniel Livermore Stebbins in the 1880's and 1890's, done on same size glass negatives. These along with other period photographs were our guides throughout the restoration. I knew early on that I had to try my best to actively restore this beauty of the golden age of sail.

Now we are witnessing the ELF restoration project now nearing completion and only recently have I learned that ELF may be the oldest racing yacht in the world. We hope to race her again in some of the classic and historic boat races. Win lose or draw, it will be great to just reinvent the spirit! Work has been done to smooth the hull to a fine finish, install flush mounted through hull fittings, and the real go fast item...a self-feathering propeller. Gary M. Beck, president of MARTEC Engineering Corporation is working with us to match the proper propeller to ELF's hull, and engine propulsion, (not cheap), but he has given us significant cost reductions. Thank You Gary! We will cruise with the safety and convenience that a modern day engine offers along with minimal resistance from a propeller. We may even win a race or two. Now I need to develop a crew that wants to learn the ropes to push ELF over the finish line first. We plan to do a lot of sail training in the Chesapeake Bay area in early and mid summer before heading north to participate in as many races and regattas as possible. We really need at least eight experienced deck hands to even think about racing, so please plan on joining us in the sail training, and racing.

Please watch our progress on CYRG.ORG and plan to join us throughout the 2008 season!

## The Classic Yacht Restoration Guild

The Classic Yacht Restoration Guild is a non-profit membership organization dedicated to the preservation of traditional watercraft, both power and sail. Yacht restorations are accomplished through a combination of member donated skills and resources. A cooperative educational setting is provided by the Guild for all members who wish to acquire or sharpen boat maintenance and restoration skills. Our membership is diverse. Each member can participate either as an instructor, a student of restoration techniques, a participant in Guild sailing events and cruises or as a supporter through dues and donations. The Guild also offers a variety of resources and skilled professionals who are qualified and interested in helping you connect with the right people to assist with your project.

Work on our flagship ELF currently involves restoration of the original rig, deck, and cabin configurations. In addition, the Guild has received donations of many small craft which are used as demonstration and education projects. Ships carpentry, rigging, mechanics, and fine wood finishing are all topics covered by periodic workshops held while restoration projects are underway.

Once a guild vessel is made seaworthy, the true pleasure of operating historic or significant small craft begins. Members are encouraged to sail Guild vessels with emphasis on instruction of boating safety, piloting, navigation, and the maritime history of the Chesapeake Bay. The Guild plans several cruises to maritime and waterfront festivals every season. Members serve as crew and staff displays at these events.

As a non-profit organization, the Guild always welcomes tax-deductible contributions. For example, the Guild received a 1963 vintage Lightning class racing sailboat and a large library of titles on boat building, maintenance, and maritime history. Also, donation of items used for restoration or fund raising are also tax deductible.

With a growing membership, the Classic Yacht Restoration Guild looks forward to increasing activity and good times. Please ask a member for further information and details.

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### Membership Renewal - Important!!

We want to thank you who have faithfully supported our efforts to this point. It has been a long sixteen years and without your physical and financial help, we would not be at this point. During a recent board meeting we passed a motion to make everyone who has financially supported the restoration of ELF to the date of launch a **Founding Member**. That means that you may continue supporting the CYRG at the same level while retaining all of the benefits. **Please update your 2008 membership now!**

**New members** will see a revised membership structure which is on our website (CYRG.ORG) and in our new brochure. I want **Founding Members** to be the first to sail aboard ELF and not feel you need to break the bank in order to do so. As soon as we launch and rig her we will be sailing every possible day. Let's work together to schedule some sailing time.

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# Elf's Tag Along

...by Bill Hamilton

Lawley always made tenders for the yachts under construction; handy little wooden boats small enough to be stowed on deck out in blue water but roomy enough to carry cargo and passengers to and from the mooring and shore. So....where to find a suitable companion for the newly restored Elf? Arriving off Marblehead or Block Island with an inflatable on deck sends a cold shiver of embarrassment down this purist's spine. The obvious choice was to build one, and we found a nine foot Lawley tender, a lapstrake, built by Lance Lee and the gang at the Apprenticeshop in Rockland, Maine, that would fit on Elf and would do very well. Since they build these tenders, they must possess the plans and maybe could be persuaded to share them with us. I dashed a letter off to my old acquaintance Lance and waited for a return. In no time a most charming letter was in my mailbox, praising our work in restoring Elf and referring our request to Kevin Carney, the current head of the Apprenticeshop. A week or so later the telephone rang and Kevin was on the other end; he told me that the tender in question was the "Madelon," and he gave me all of the information I needed but said sharing the plans was not an option, because Mystic Seaport had asked them not to! The plans for Madelon were for sale at Mystic Seaport and, as luck would have it, we were planning to be in Mystic two weeks later for the annual American Schooner Association (ASA) meeting on Saturday, February 2, 2008.

I contacted the collections department at Mystic and was informed by Quinn Sayles that they would copy the plans for us and have them ready to pick up. And would we be interested in meeting with Peter Vermiglia of the curatorial staff on Friday, to see the actual tender itself? It meant leaving my house at 4 AM in order to get to Mystic on time to meet with Peter but Rick and I gladly accepted. We arrived well ahead of the ice storm that plagued the later arrivals to the ASA meeting, and we quickly found Peter. Madelon (the original) had definitely seen better days; her planking had pulled free from her stem, the paint was gone, but she was every bit a Lawley classic, right down to the turned spindles that supported the thwarts. Rick photographed her from every angle and we found our way

through the maze of 500+ small craft in the warehouse to the fire door separating it from the library. A knock or two later, the door was opened by Quinn Sayles, a very attractive young lady who I had assumed was a crusty old codger like myself and had inadvertently referred to as "Sir" in my email correspondence. A thousand apologies later we had our excellent plans in hand.

A few weeks earlier, Rick and I had visited the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum on a different matter and had the good

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Photo courtesy of Francis  
Russell Hart Collection/MIT

fortune to meet Richard Scofield, the boat yard manager there. As we admired the magnificent sailing Delaware ducker that had just been completed, he filled us in on the boat-building program there. Perhaps we could have the tender built there, right in our backyard by an organization that shared so much in common with the Guild. Richard said that they did not have any commitments after April and we resolved to pursue the possibility at a later meeting. On February 14 Rick and

I met with Richard, Dan Sutherland who heads their "Apprentice for a Day" program and Stuart Parnes, CBMM's president. By then we had the plans in hand and it was agreed that Elf's tender would be built there with "Dr. Wood" (i.e., Rick) supplying the materials and Dan and the apprentices supplying the labor and expertise. So begins what we hope will be a most rewarding ongoing collaboration between the Classic Yacht Restoration Guild and the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum. We strongly urge our members to get involved at CBMM and particularly with the Apprentice for a Day program. You could actually help build Elf's tag-along companion. Please contact Richard Scofield at (410) 745-2916 ext. 136 or [rscofield@cbmm.org](mailto:rscofield@cbmm.org) for details. Also, please consider contacting Richard, or Rick Carrion, about making a donation to help defray the cost of building the little boat.

I've saved the best for last. Elf's tender is to carry the name "Vida" on her transom in honor of CBMM's cofounder and Rick's long-time friend Vida van Lennep. Vida and her late husband Gus also owned Elf in the 1930's and 40's. It is a blessing that Vida is still with us today and we hope that she will be on hand when the fully rigged and restored Elf sails into Saint Michael to receive her tender later this Spring.

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](http://www.cyrg.org) or email  
[elf1888@earthlink.net](mailto:elf1888@earthlink.net)

Photo courtesy of Francis  
Russell Hart Collection/MIT



## THE HELM



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

## Guild Wish List

2008 membership renewal to be made as early as possible

Volunteers to help in a variety of jobs ranging from simple moving of stacks of wood to making everything work for the final preps before moving ELF in early April to Deckleman's Marina in Long Cove Marina, Rock Hall, Maryland

Members to embrace the building of ELF's tender at the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum's weekend apprentice program, May through June 2008

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

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.

Building ELF's tender (Vida) at an approximate cost of \$6,000

Feathering propeller: \$2337.00

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

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### 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.**  
**P.O. Box 237**  
**Earleville, MD 21919-0237**  
**410-275-2819**

**Email: elf1888@yahoo.com**

**Website: CYRG@ORG**

#### Wish List Contributions

Lawley Tender "Vida"    Amount: \_\_\_\_\_

Feathering Propeller    Amount: \_\_\_\_\_

Marine Electronics    Amount: \_\_\_\_\_

Annual Operating Costs    Amount: \_\_\_\_\_

Video Documentary    Amount: \_\_\_\_\_