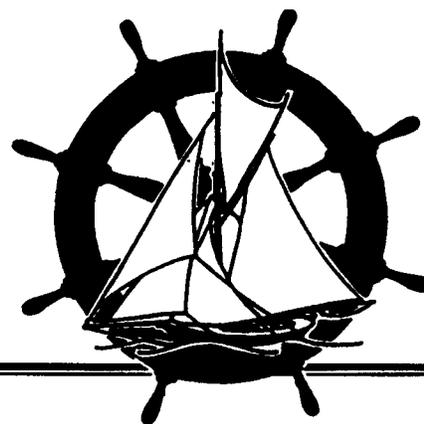


# THE HELM

Summer, 2005 - Volume 23, No. 2



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

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*Elf, past and future*

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### President's Message

**Reality CHECK!**

**More bang for the buck!**

*... by Rick Carrion*

**L**ately the summer temps have hovered daily in the mid 90's and with what feels like 100% relative humidity. I do look forward to the cooler fall temperatures, making the restoration work more productive. We are in the final phase and I chafe at the bit for the re-launch! We do have a lot of projects ahead that are taking shape as you are reading this message.

Speaking of productivity, I recently read an article about a national non-profit organization, and was shocked to follow the money trail. In short, it started with a \$25.00 donation to the local organization based in Oregon. The local forwarded \$10.00 to the national headquarters in Washington, DC. The local used another \$10.00 for operating expenses. Long story short, in the end only \$5.00 actually went to benefit the people the donation was made to help. The article was careful to point out that not all non-profits fit the profile, but went on to suggest that this scenario was pretty consistent with many.

Shocked with how others operate, I felt it necessary to set the record straight. Maybe it is just me wanting to be different than the norm all my life, or perhaps I am obsessed with the dream of sailing the restored *ELF* — you decide.

I formed the Classic Yacht Restoration Guild, Inc. in 1982 as a non-profit, membership organization. The primary goal was the *ELF* restoration, by creating a network of people, skill, materials, and money to facilitate the projects ahead, each component of the network being equally important. In the early days it was slow going, but now all is coming together well to finish the restoration. And of course, once *ELF* splashes down the ways again, we will have other restorations ahead.

Now the meat of story: EVERY PENNY raised goes directly into the restoration efforts! The only person paid is *ELF*'s shipwright Graham Ero. Every other hour of labor has been donated, mine included. I also provide, at my own expense, the workshop, electricity, phone, insurance, and wood for *ELF*'s restoration. Most material purchases are deeply discounted or donated. Through this approach I have made every penny stretch, making the million-dollar restoration more affordable and achievable. At times it has been a jumble, keeping everything in order, without a secretary, office, or other staff, but it's actually been very productive in getting the job done well at the lowest possible cost. I want to thank everyone who has helped in every way, great and small. Your contributions of cash, time, and materials are not only greatly appreciated, but are utilized in a manner of infinite frugality. Thus, more bang for the buck!

I hope to see everyone at our annual crab feast/BBQ and silent auction September 17, at our favorite Cherry Grove Farm waterfront (Veasey's Cove, on the Bohemia River). Plan to bring a friend, your beach toys, and something to donate to the silent auction, to help raise needed money (as much as \$50,000) to complete the final phase of *ELF*'s restoration. This figure could be reduced depending upon donated goods and services. Remember that all donations are tax deductible.

Visits to see *ELF*'s progress will take place throughout the day. So please plan to join in the celebration on September 17 from 1:00 p.m. to dusk.

Let Rick know by September 10 that you are coming and how many guests will be with you so we can order ample crabs and libations. At the same time, it is important to let Rick know what you may want to donate for the silent auction. If you cannot attend, but plan to donate an item for the silent auction, Rick will pick it up. His phone number is 410-275-2819 or email him at [elf1888@earthlink.net](mailto:elf1888@earthlink.net).

The rain date is September 24. Check our new web site for further information and directions: [www.cyr.org](http://www.cyr.org).

This is a great way to support the restoration while enjoying a wonderful day along the Chesapeake Bay eating some of the Bay's bounty. Hope to see you there!

## Graham's Letter

### Graham's Treasure

Usually I write about the project and progress we're making. If there isn't much to report I've been known to resort to personal stories or reflections. This time, although there has been some progress, my thoughts have been very much on something else. Her name is "Live Yankee" and Syrta and I acquired her just this spring. But, as is often the case, the story starts back many years ago.

I saw my first Concordia yawl in Connecticut in 1988 in a yard in North Haven. Her owner had died and she was going cheap, but I was planning to relocate to the Eastern Shore and it was out of the question. I remember saying to myself at the time, "You'll never get another shot at a Concordia." I was wrong. For those who may not know, the Concordia yawl may just be one of the most acclaimed small yacht designs in yachting history. You only have to see one to understand why. Built in Germany from 1938 to 1966 only 103 were produced. By the way, all 103 are still sailing and they sail as good as they look. A classic in wood.

"Live Yankee" arrived in Gregg Neck Boat Yard about 15 years ago. I was amazed and made what was at the time a ridiculous request. I said to the owner, "If you ever have to sell her call me first." Fifteen years later the owners, Dr. Nichols and Charlie Gruber and their lovely wives, made one call and we had a shot at it. Syrta and I agonized over the decision for 10 days but in the end it was one of those "life's too short, you're dead a long time" decisions that can supercede common sense. But there have been no regrets. Just working on her has been a pleasure. Since it's what we both do it seems easy and a great project to share. When people walk by as we scrape and varnish and say, "better you than me", we just grin and say, "you bet." And to top it all off we finally get out there and see some of this beautiful Chesapeake Bay everyone talks about.



Elf's Shipwright

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### Request for Recipes for Boating *Elf* Cookbook

You will receive credit for your recipe and a free cookbook!

*Bad cooking is responsible for more trouble at sea than all other things put together.*

... Thomas Fleming Day

## Guild Vision

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.



PROTECTION YOU CAN TRUST

### Matching Contributions

We encourage all members to ask their employers if they match contributions made to non-profit organizations. If so, please send along the necessary paperwork with your contribution. We want to thank SAP and CHASE for matching contributions made by their employees. If your employer will participate, we will be able to double your contribution. I will fill out any necessary paperwork. Please talk to your employer. It could get us into the water much faster!

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## SHARE THE HELM WITH FRIENDS

### Save Us Time, Money, and the Environment

We would be glad to send you future issues of our newsletter HELM electronically as pdf files. Then you could also post or forward it easily to friends. **Be sure to forward your new email address should you change it.**

Send your email address to:  
elf1888@earthlink.net

# Eternal *Elf*

... by Jean Korten Moser

*Probably the oldest small yacht in America, Elf will take the water again next spring after years of painstaking restoration by Classic Yacht Restoration Guild.*

**I**n 1888 George Frederick Lawley of Boston launched a dainty little gaff-rigged [cutter sloop] as sprightly as a mythical creature she was named for. *Elf* was 35 feet on deck with a 17 1/2 foot bowsprit at, a boom extending 14 1/2 feet off the transom, a gaff topsail cutter rig rising 55 ft. from the deck and a whopping 2,300 square feet of sail.

“She was always pretty,” said boatwright Graham Ero who owns the Wooden Boat Shop in Still Pond, Md., and is helping restore the boat, which has been on the Chesapeake Bay for the last 50 years. “Ugly boats die. Pretty boats survive.”

*Elf* is certainly a survivor. The 117 year-old vessel is believed to be the oldest small yacht in America and the third oldest in the world. She is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as well as the Cecil County (Md.) Historic Register. These days she is owned by the Classic Yacht Restoration Guild (CYRG), which has been working on her off and on for the past 30 years—since guild President Rick Carrion and purchased the vessel in 1971 from [Judson Branning] who had brought her to the bay in the 1940’s. (sic)<sup>1</sup>

By then nearly a century old, *Elf* needed extensive restoration in order to continue her life afloat. “She was a tired boat when I got her,” says Carrion, a high-school teacher at the time who planned to fix her up and use her for environmental education programs on the Bay, “and I didn’t realize how tired.”

Through records, and from people like veteran sailor and author Donald M. Street Jr., Carrion learned more about the yacht and founded the nonprofit CYRG to restore her, enlisting Ero’s professional help and using grant money from the Maryland Historical Trust and the Cecil County Historic Commission. A few weeks into the project Ero had made a devastating assessment.

“She was falling apart faster than we knew. Any one of a number of things I found would have sunk any normal boat,” Ero says. “It became apparent we would have to replace everything.”

That decision sparked some controversy among those who thought they should do more repairing and less replacing. “People said ‘soak it in epoxy,’” Ero says. But in the end, the group decided to replace rotted timbers and rebuild the boat from the keel up. As the boat had been altered over the years, they relied heavily on old photographs for construction information. “The only way to really find out what she looked like a hundred years ago was to use a magnifying glass [on the photos] and pick at details,” says Ero. “Every time we looked we saw something we hadn’t seen before.”

Restoration was as tedious as it was meticulous. For example, the group had to make a plywood pattern for each of the boat’s 42 frames before replacing them, one at a time. That process went on for years, but proceeding cautiously was the only way to preserve the vessel’s integrity.

“If we lost her shape we could never get it back, because there were no drawings,” Ero says. “We did in the last ten years what normally would have been done over fifty years. [But when we’re finished] she’ll be more like her original self than she has been in a half century.”

When *Elf* is launched in spring 2006, she will be decked out in [fir deck strips], black locust frames, steel [floor frames] and Dacron sails. Her bowsprit will be a tad shorter, the main boom will have less overhang, she will have a slightly smaller rig, and the sail area will be reduced about ten percent— to balance the lighter 1929 steel keel that replaced the original 5-ton lead keel.<sup>2</sup> Though she will have state-of-the-art electronics and a Westerbeke 33 engine, she will retain many of her original features— bronze deck access ports, documentation board, compass, blocks, oil running lights, cleats and chronometer.

Now retired, Carrion still plans to use the restored vessel for environmental education and to introduce kids to the magic of sailing. Interested folks can jump on board (figuratively) at the CYRG’s annual crab feast this month to help raise the funds needed to finish the project. The festivities begin at 1:00 p.m. Saturday, September 17 at Cherry Grove Farm, on Veazey Cove off the Bohemia River. \$35 For members; \$50 for nonmembers, free for children 15 and under. (Rain date: Saturday, September 24). For more information contact Rick Carrion at 410-275-2819 or visit the Classic Yacht Restoration Guild at [www.cyrg.org](http://www.cyrg.org).

<sup>1</sup> Gus and Vida Van Lennep purchased *Elf* in 1932 and brought the boat to the Chesapeake Bay. They later sold her in 1941 to Reed Combs. Carrion purchased the boat from Judson Branning in 1971 while a student at Salisbury State College. He lived aboard while attending college and for several years after.

<sup>2</sup> The original ballast Keel was removed to support the war effort during World War I and later re-ballasted with an iron keel approximately 1.2 tons lighter than the original.

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*“Lawley Built”*

## Crab Feast/BBQ and Silent Auction September 17, 2005

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 of \$50,000, the approximate amount needed to finish Elf's restoration. We 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**



### 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 to:

**elf1888@earthlink.net.**

**The deadline for the next newsletter is November 5.**

### Book on *Elf* in the Works

We have a member that is starting to organize a rough draft of a book about ELF. It will include the history, the people who have owned and worked on her, and the restoration project. Now is the time to think back to some memorable moment you recall aboard ELF. Who knows? You may be published. So please send them to me soon and we may also publish them in the HELM.

# THE HELM



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