

Elf Participation in Baltimore at the Star-Spangled Sailabration June 13 -19, 2012

.... By Rich Savini

When my wife and I first found out about the Star-Spangled Sailabration being held in Baltimore in mid-June 2012, we could not wait to start our plan to attend. And with talk of visiting tall ships and naval vessels from around the world, together with a “Blue Angels” air show, and fireworks to be launched from Fort McHenry, all commemorating the Bicentennial of the War of 1812 and The Star Spangled Banner, it was indeed a “no



brainer” to plan to fit this event into our summer cruising schedule. And when we found out that Elf was going to be participating, our anticipation of this event grew exponentially. The first order of business was to find a slip for our boat in Baltimore for that week in mid-June. Our search started in March when we called the “Anchorage Marina” in Canton because this is where we usually stay when we visit Baltimore. We quickly found out that all of their transient slips had already been booked long ago for this event. Scrambling to find a slip, we called Henderson Wharf Marina in Fells Point, and we were able to book a slip reservation for June 12 – June 20.

When we finally arrived at Henderson Wharf Marina on June 12th we were very pleasantly surprised. While this marina was not perfect, but due to its very central location, we did have an excellent vantage point to view the parade of boats scheduled for the next day.



That evening, after returning back from dinner in “Little Italy” and walking around in Fells Point, we noticed a city truck pull up and we saw that it was delivering event signs. As luck would have it, we noticed a workman carrying a sign for Elf and followed him to a location right in front of Shuckers in Fells Point where he placed the sign, so we knew where Elf was going to be located the next day.



Promptly at 7 AM on Wednesday, June 13th the parade of boats started with the naval vessels coming down the river first. The initial boat that we saw coming down the river was the HMCS Iroquois, which was actually berthed directly beside Elf on Broadway Pier in Fells Point.

There was also a tremendous amount of security both in the air and on the water. It was amazing to watch all of the naval vessels being pushed into slips at Pier Five by the Baltimore fleet of tugs.



At about noon that day we got our first sighting of Elf. For me, words cannot adequately describe my feelings seeing this beautiful example of nautical history which we have all grown to love and have become a part of over the years, either through attending various fund raiser events, making contributions, or just donating time to work on her, coming down the river with all of the other tall ships and naval vessels from around the world. After spending most of the day watching the rest of the ships come in, we walked over from our location to where Elf was berthed in Fells Point. We

spent some time saying hello to the crew and helping visitors on and off Elf. That evening we also enjoyed a very nice dinner at Shuckers.

The next day a welcome ceremony was planned at the Inner Harbor for all of the captains from all of the visiting vessels, which also included Captain Rick Carrion from Elf. It was at this ceremony our Captain Rick was greeted by the mayor of Baltimore, Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake.





And Captain Rick, along with all of the other visiting captains, was then given a special commemorative memento of this very special occasion from Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake.

After the opening ceremony it was then time to start touring the visiting ships.

We did board all of the tall ships that day and had a wonderful time touring these ships and talking to sailors from the USA, Brazil, Mexico, Indonesia, Colombia, and Ecuador just to name a few . In my opinion the Mexican tall ship ARM Cuauhtémoc was the finest ship in the harbor.



Photo by Rich Savini

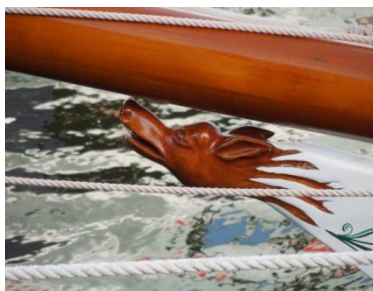
Thursday evening's activities also included a trip to Oriole Park at Camden Yards to see a baseball game. It was funny to see many sailors from the visiting countries probably watching their first live baseball game in a "Big League" baseball stadium. We all had a GREAT time.



Friday's activities included more touring of visiting ships together with a stopover on the USCGC Eagle, the HMCS Iroquois which was berthed beside Elf, and the Lynx from Newport Beach, California, also a neighbor to Elf berthed at Broadway Pier.



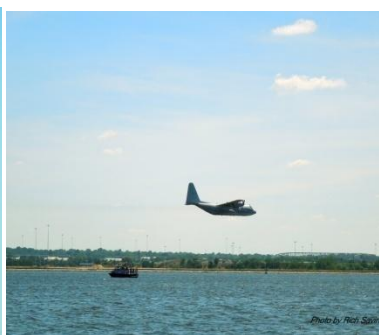
On Friday we also helped a little with assisting visiting guests on and off Elf. It was truly amazing to sit back and watch how much attention the boat did receive from people passing by in Fells Point. It was also equally amazing to watch children become so excited to hear the story of the banshee in the woods.



The Elf crew also spent some time Friday evening having dinner and a few drinks at the Dead End Saloon in Fells Point.



Saturday was a day full of activity which included Captain Rick taking the Elf and crew out to an area in front of Fort McHenry to view the "Blue Angels" air show. Almost immediately after anchoring Elf in a position that seemed to be perfect and directly in-between buoys that marked the anchorage, Captain Rick was asked to move Elf by the Coast Guard. And again after about one-half hour the Coast Guard asked our captain to move Elf again. The really funny thing was that Captain Rick was asked to move Elf again for a third time, and it would seem that the boat ended up to be almost exactly where Captain Rick had initially anchored Elf. But, all things considered, we could not have been in a better position to view the Navy Seal demo and the "Blue Angels" air show. It was SPECTACULAR!!!!



And on Saturday evening my wife and I were treated to a very special dinner in Fells Point at the Thames Street Oyster Bar by our boat guests for the weekend, Captain Bill Sontag and his lovely wife Deborah. Thanks again for a wonderful evening.

On Sunday we were entertained again by a second “Blue Angels” air show. We also spent time with Elf helping visitors on and off the boat and answering questions. Sunday evening was capped off by dinner with Captain Rick at Bertha’s in Fells Point where we enjoyed some beer and fantastic paella. Then back to Elf where we all kicked back with my new favorite drink which is a “Dark and Stormy”. Captain Rick was provided the ingredients for these beverages from a wonderful event liaison that also provided ice and room at the Admiral Fell Inn for the Elf crew. We could not thank all of the event liaisons enough for the consideration that was received by the whole Elf crew.



Monday was another Day for visitors on Elf and another trip to “Little Italy” for dinner.

Around 7 AM on Tuesday marked the end of the event and the start of the parade of boats out of Baltimore Harbor. Once again we were in excellent position for viewing the activity. The first boats to exit were the Navy vessels. After the Navy vessels were gone the tall ships followed along with Elf down the river and out to the Bay. Actually, Elf followed the Mexican tall ship ARM Cuauhtémoc down the river toward the Key Bridge and out of the harbor to the Bay.



This event was one of the largest ever in Baltimore Harbor history and Elf played a part. Keep in mind that this is a three-year commemoration culminating in September 2014 with the Star-Spangled Spectacular to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the writing of the Star-Spangled Banner, so there is much more to come.

If you are not currently a Guild member, please consider going to the website www.cyr.org and becoming a Guild member and supporting this beautiful boat and enjoying all of the benefits of being a Guild member. Please keep in mind that Guild membership does include sailing privileges on this magnificent ship, and on a day with wind this is an experience like no other sailing experience that you can ever have.

Our Captain Rick and the crew represented Elf flawlessly. Thanks again Captain Rick for a magnificent time and another great event.

