

Squan Tri Sail

by Dan McGrath

The 32nd Squan Tri Sail was hosted by three yacht clubs, Bay Head Yacht Club, Manasquan River Yacht Club and Metedeconk River Yacht Club. This event is a series of races that took place over the course of the last weekend in July with a social event each evening at one of the hosting yacht clubs. The race courses were set up in the ocean a few miles southeast of the Manasquan Inlet in New Jersey.

On my way to the Bay Head Yacht Club Friday afternoon I was hit by a severe thunder storm that snarled the shore bound traffic and brought both the visibility and the speed on I-90 to near zero. Upon arriving the storms let up just long enough for me to get from my car to the hall at the Bay Head Yacht Club where the reception was just getting under way. CYRG members Rick Carrion, Carly Sargent, Kevin Garber, Pete Mullaly, and Mike Cabler were already there enjoying the Yacht Club hospitality when I arrived. I came across Carly attending a small display of CYRG information as I entered the upstairs meeting room. Elf was moored in front of the Club. Hors d'oeuvres were being served from one table and sandwiches from another. The food was delicious. Thunder and lightning were raging outside as the various captains and crew got to know each other.

Our director Rick Carrion started off the entertainment with an excellent slide presentation of Elf's history and restoration. Following that Gary Jobson gave an entertaining and motivating presentation of the sport of sailing. Rick's and Gary's talks stimulated everyone's anticipation of the two days of racing to come. After dinner I left the captain and crew at the bar and I headed over to the elegant motor yacht Barnegat, my home for the weekend, to claim a berth. Peter Kellogg was kind enough to provide the Elf crew with these accommodations for our stay.

My job for the weekend was to ride around with Kyle Donnelly, skipper of the jumbo sized rigid inflatable White Whale and take pictures of the race. We also provided other services; towing one or the other of the A-Cats through the Point Pleasant Canal, delivering water and lunches to the various race crews, and picking up overboard spinnaker bags. Mostly, though, we had fun. We were joined by a few other passengers who came along for the ride to enjoy the races on a bright clear summer day. And what a ride it was. This boat is outfitted with three 275 HP Yamaha outboard engines. When we stepped on the gas it knocked you back in your seat. At 45 knots the race course was a small place to us.

The original plan was to have four races, two each day of the weekend. Ultimately the last race on Sunday was cancelled so the regatta consisted of three races. There were several divisions. This was the first year of the Classic Division which was, obviously, the one that involved Elf. There were five classic yachts entered: Elf, top sail gaff cutter built by Lawley in 1888, captain-Rick Carrion, skipper-various; Silent Maid (a replica of the original Silent Maid, a 1923 Barnegat Bay Cat Boat), built by the Workshop on the Water at the Independence Seaport in 2009, captain-Peter Kellogg, skipper-Gary Jobson; Torch, A Class Cat Boat built by the Workshop on the Water at the Independence Seaport in 2002, skipper-Peter Chance; Vapor, A Class Cat Boat built by the Workshop on the Water at the Independence Seaport in 1994, skipper-George Schuld; Windago, ketch, skipper-John Cunningham. In addition to the CYRG members mentioned above Elf's crew for the day were, from the Independence Seaport, John

Brady and Wen Byer, and from the Bay Head Yacht Club, Mary Beth King, Elizabeth King and Jan Davis.

Silent Maid, Vapor and Torch started the first race in company. For some reason Elf was about a half-mile out to sea when the gun went off putting her way behind. Never the less she caught up to Windago but neither vessel had completed the course when the race was called. Elf and Windago were awarded a tie for fifth place in this race. Torch, Vapor and Silent Maid placed first, second and third respectively in this race. If my memory serves me correctly I don't believe there were any lead changes in this race.

Between races we zipped about the course throwing sandwiches and water bottles at the crews for lunch. The course was set up as a beat to windward and a run back to the start. Elf was in much better position at the start of the second race but still started behind the cat boats and couldn't catch up on this course. Torch, Vapor and Silent Maid crossed the line together. It looked like Vapor, Silent Maid and Torch, in that order, as they beat together to windward slowly leaving Elf astern who was in turn distancing herself from Windago. The first time they reached the windward mark Torch had won the tacking dual and rounded first followed by Vapor, then Silent Maid.

Silent Maid showed how fast she was on the downwind legs eventually closing on Vapor and passing her to place second. Torch was just too fast and kept her lead to the finish. Elf finished fourth. Windago had not completed the course when the race was called and was awarded fifth place. We had towed Vapor out to the course in the morning through the Point Pleasant canal. We towed Torch back. Words cannot describe the turbulence that gets up in the Point Pleasant Canal at peak tidal flow. It is a very narrow passage with a lot of traffic churning the waters to resemble river rapids complete with standing waves. Experience counts here, especially if you're towing a boat and waiting for bridges to rise. We got Vapor and Torch back on their moorings in front of Peter Kellogg's summer house and I went back to Barnegat to get ready for the party.

The second social event of the weekend took place at the Manasquan River Yacht Club. This was a big bash attended by just about everyone who had any involvement with the Squan Tri-Sail. The Bay Head yacht club contingent was ferried to the party by White Whale. After we were all boarded at the Bay Head dock Peter Kellogg made the following announcement: "White Whale is going to depart the party when the first person who wants to leave is ready to go home. And that person is me and I will want to leave at nine PM sharp. So if you don't want to miss your ride home I suggest you be back to the boat by then." With that we departed for another trip through the Point Pleasant canal. The event was sponsored by Mt. Gay Rum who supplied a red Mt. Gay hat commemorating the Squan Tri-Sail to just about any one who wanted one. Everyone seemed to be having a great time reliving the events of the day and telling other yachting tales, making new friends and renewing old friendships. The food, corn on the cob and filet mignon, served cafeteria style, was just delicious. No one missed the boat ride back to Bay Head and White Whale departed at exactly nine and we all went home to get ready for another wonderful day of sailing ahead.

We towed Vapor out to the course in the morning. Kyle was piloting another slightly smaller rigid inflatable with two outboard engines this morning. White Whale lost a prop the night before after dropping off the party goers at the Bay Head dock. I had also forgotten to recharge my camera batteries the night before. I couldn't take pictures so I decided to take videos with my iPhone. Elf got a great start to the first race of the day. She forced Vapor and Silent Maid to fall

off just before the start and got the jump across the line. Unfortunately Elf is not at her best beating to windward and Silent Maid and Vapor both rounded the windward mark ahead of her. Even though she held her own on the runs downwind it wasn't enough to catch up to Vapor and Silent Maid. Silent Maid came in first followed by Vapor. Elf placed third in her best performance of the weekend and Windago did not finish and was awarded sixth. Torch did not start and was also awarded sixth. We hooked up Vapor and headed back to the yacht club to get ready for the awards ceremony which was to take place at the Metedeconk River Yacht Club. Despite the adventure of navigating the Point Pleasant Canal with a yacht in tow we made it back well ahead of everyone else. I went back to Barnegat and got cleaned up and changed into fresh clothes. Elf and crew were very late due to an incident involving the current, a lift bridge, the traffic and a bump on the bottom. Even though it drew the attention of the Coast Guard it was a relatively minor affair with no harm done. I wasn't there so I suggest you ask the captain to fill you in on the details. Never the less it caused a delay necessitating a rush to get everyone over to the award ceremony.

We got there just in time. The presentation of the awards had to wait for us anyway because one of our party was Mary Beth King, Commodore of the Bay Head Yacht Club and co-commodore of the regatta, and it was her job to hand out the trophies. The ceremony was accompanied with hot dogs and hamburgers. The regatta prizes are determined by adding up the finishing places for each race and the yacht with the lowest score wins. In the Classic Division this put Elf in fourth place. Windago was fifth. Torch and Vapor were third and second respectively and Silent Maid came in first. Peter Kellogg was also awarded the Squan Tri-Sail Trophy-non spinnaker division.

After this we all went back to Mary Beth's house in Point Pleasant. We had all had such a great time over the weekend everyone seemed reluctant to leave. Eventually though it was time to go and I headed home.