

Local vessel salutes roots in celebrations

By **RON SHAWGO**
Staff Writer

When the schooner *Laura Ellen* set sail last week to join Friday's July Fourth parade in New York harbor, it began a journey back to its roots.

After honoring the Statue of Liberty's 100th anniversary and the nation's 210th, the 50-year-old yacht will travel to Fairhaven, Mass., to celebrate its own birthday.

The *Laura Ellen*, which has been moored in Norfolk's Willoughby Spit, is one of only eight vessels from Virginia invited to the Liberty celebration. The crew will consist of its owners, William and Dorothy Greenman of Hampton, their daughter Anne Greenman-Siegel and David Smith, a friend of the family.

"We've sailed her throughout Chesapeake Bay and have taken excursions to Florida, but this is the first time since we've had her that we've taken her back to New England," said Ms. Greenman-Siegel.

The boat was built in Fairhaven in 1936 by the Peirce and Kilburn Corp. The classic design is of the Bluenose Jr. class and was possibly the only one of its kind built by the company, its owners say. It is a miniature of the much larger Nova Scotia Bluenose class of sailing ships.

The 36-foot boat was known first as the *Glad Tidings* and sailed Buzzards Bay, Mass., and Long Island Sound, N.Y., during its first 25 years. The Greenmans bought her 18 years ago and speak of her now as a member of the family.

"She is very much a part of our family," said Ms. Greenman-Siegel. "I've sailed on her since I was about 11 years old."

Like her father, Ms. Greenman-Siegel gained an immediate love of sailing. She is a licensed captain and gives sailing lessons. She will navigate the craft to New York.

Their journey to New England will take them to Mystic, Conn., where the Greenmans' ancestors once owned a shipyard. So, the journey will be a homecoming for both the yacht and its crew.

"It's sort of like going back to your roots," said Greenman, who owns a home remodeling and construction business in Hampton. "I do that for income and do this for my mental health," he said as he scanned his vessel.

The boat will be among 250 sailing ships and about 40 military vessels from around the world that will be official participants in the New York parade. About 40,000 private craft are expected to join in.

Other Virginia vessels in the parade are the skipjacks *Norfolk* and *Jolly Roger*, the reproduction *Godspeed* from Jamestown Festival Park, the schooners *Alexandria* and *Sharon Virginia*, the Chinese junk *Wan Fu* and the sailing tug *Norfolk Rebel*.



Staff photo by RANSY MORRIS

One of eight craft invited to New York's Statue of Liberty fest, the *Laura Ellen* is a member of the family to Greenman and his daughter, Anne.