

JENNIFER KUHN: He's a worker.

JENIFER DOLDE: Okay. All right. So this is Jenifer Dolde.

It's Wednesday, July 7th. I'm here at the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum with my colleague. And Jenn, why don't you give us your full name and, please, your date of birth as well?

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:00:16] All right. Jennifer Elizabeth Kuhn, and April 5th, 1975.

JENIFER DOLDE: Let's start with the basics. Tell me about where you were born and a little bit about your growing up years.

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:00:30] Okay. I was born in Baltimore City. My mom and I almost died. I was a month early. But I didn't, so that's really great, I think, for both of us. I grew up in Emmitsburg, Maryland on a small sort of -- I guess you could call it like a hobby farm. We had a bunch of -- probably a dozen pigs, some chickens, some cows. We had ducks when I was really young. Of course, dogs and the tons of barn cats. And yeah, I spent a lot of time outdoors, be in by dusk, lots of wide, open spaces, digging in the dirt, and tromping around doing whatever, riding my bike five miles, 10 miles to the little detour store to get a sub and a Coke, and whatever, just stuff that you do as a

kid. And then I had a lot of time feeding the animals, and doing the garden, and all that kind of stuff that comes with just living in a rural area and sort of sharing responsibility of the work that needs to be done around the house.

JENIFER DOLDE: And Emmitsburg is -- itself is -- you were kind of outside of it?

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:01:49] Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. I was in the...

JENIFER DOLDE: It's not a big town anyway, but --

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:01:52] No, there's just a stoplight. Yeah. No, no. I was definitely not in the town. I was definitely out [in the country], kind of closer -- the Monocacy River ran behind part of our house.

JENIFER DOLDE: And this was not your parents' occupation?

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:02:05] No. Gosh, no. No. My dad had a -- he had started a mechanic shop back when he was, like, 27. It had been in Gaithersburg, and then when they bought [the house in Emmitsburg before I was born] at some point, [Redacted] I don't remember. That's a little fuzzy. But doesn't really matter. But yeah, for a while, the shop was just like a shop that was next to the house pretty much. And I was amazed that he was able to do business because it wasn't right off the highway or anything like that. It was

definitely off the beaten path. But he had a good clientele, and so, he would just work there. And then my mom was a stay-at-home mom until I was probably pretty young, five, six maybe. And then she went back to college, and then she worked at -- did administrative stuff [at Mount Saint Mary's College]. Yeah. And that was kind of Emmitsburg in the country.

JENIFER DOLDE: So did you -- you said the river ran behind the house. Did you spend time on the water either there or elsewhere? What was your -- did you have a connection to that?

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:03:16] Yeah, I lived at that house till I was, like, 12, just turned 13. And we -- yeah, my brother and I would kind of roll down there and we'd tube or float along the river. And of course, go -- I had one neighbor friend that was pretty close, or half a mile away, and we'd always walk down to another [section of the river closer to her house] -- and just collect tadpoles and all of those things, and just spent a ton of time just splashing around in the river and [climbing around her folks dairy farm] ...

JENIFER DOLDE: But not necessarily on boats?

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:03:51] No. No, not at all. And then it wasn't until -- probably when I was 13, we moved to Gettysburg and -- my dad and I, and my brother. And we

lived in my -- grandfather's rental property on Lake Heritage. And so, that was really my first introduction into boats, I would say, just being power boating, water skiing, sort of doing that recreational avenue. And then probably in high school, I dated a guy for a little bit, and he had a little Hobie Cat. So I went out, but I didn't really -- we didn't really sail that much. We kind of putzed around, and then that was my only sailing experience up until I moved out to Seattle and stumbled into boatbuilding, and went to the boat-building school. And then I learned, in my thirties, how to sail.

JENIFER DOLDE: Cool. And I'm not familiar with Lake Heritage.

How -- it's a little small to sail on anyway?

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:04:50] It's a little lake. Yeah. I mean, you can sail on it, and you can power boat on it. I don't know what the mileage is for it off the top of my head. But yeah, it's a fairly small lake. But really great place after living in Emmitsburg, Maryland in the country -- with [only] my one neighbor friend and my brother to kind of hang out with. To be sort of in a cul-de-sac, and have neighbors, and be on the water, and just be able to ride bikes, and go swimming, and do all of that really kind of fun stuff.

JENIFER DOLDE: Yeah, absolutely.

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:05:22] I know, yeah. [Thinking back] It was a perfect time to live there, I would say, through high school. [Redacted].

JENIFER DOLDE: So -- and I think you've talked to me about this before, but so -- but basic hand skills. You acquired some of those, I think, as a younger person from your dad.

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:05:37] He's not a carpenter.

JENIFER DOLDE: But I mean...

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:05:40] He's a car guy. But yeah --

JENIFER DOLDE: But didn't you work...

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:05:42] -- I definitely handed him many a wrench, and I painted fences, [dug holes and mowed lawns] as a young kid.

JENIFER DOLDE: But he didn't teach you mechanics?

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:05:50] Not really. My brother got all that. [Redacted] Bill was in the shop. He's three years older than me [and in adulthood took over the business]. I would hang around, but yeah, it wasn't -- that wasn't something that dad and I did together necessarily. I definitely passed him things and used to drill, and things like that, and hammer, and some small stuff. Just -- that's sort of the nature of being on a farm, a small farm, digging in the dirt and fixing things like that.

JENIFER DOLDE: But you didn't necessarily seek it out. It's not like you...

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:06:21] Right.

JENIFER DOLDE: Okay. Fair. Being fair.

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:06:24] No. I had no real interest. But I have always liked to make things sort of more -- artistically make things.

JENIFER DOLDE: So what did you do when you were younger artistically? What was your...

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:06:37] I would draw and pretty much just -- I don't even know what I would do. I mean, I spent so much time outside. I was always outside, all the time, moving my body.

JENIFER DOLDE: Was that unusual among your -- I don't know if you had a lot of friends. Was that unusual? I mean because you're a little -- you're younger than me, but sort of the start of the TV generation. I mean, I was the same. I spent a lot of time outside. But that was -- I was fairly unique. A lot of people were just -- particularly women, girls were inside all the time.

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:07:09] I don't know because my neighbor friend, they had a milking farm [Redacted] -- I mean, it was another farm. And so, yes, all of us, we were out and about. And it was like a treat to watch Saturday --

morning cartoons. We were like -- my brother and I were so excited. And then, of course, high school and MTV and stuff. And then that sort of shifted a little bit. Most of the people I sort of rolled around with are definitely -- through the years, have been definitely more active. I have to get outside [or I go stir crazy]. I mean, I have those friends too that are couch potatoes.

JENIFER DOLDE: Fair enough. So tell me a little bit about your path from high school and then moving out West and going to boat-building school. How did that come about?

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:07:54] So when I -- graduated high school, and then I moved -- I just decided to move down to South Carolina. My aunt had -- was training horses in Aiken. And so, I was like, oh, I'll just go there [and help her while finishing up by AA]. Let's see. Previously, I did a year and a half at Frederick Community College. And I didn't really know what I wanted to do. I had no idea. I was just going and taking my prerequisite courses, and working at restaurants and stuff, and hanging out [with friends]. And then I was like, well, I'm going to transfer anyways. Why don't I go to South Carolina? I've never lived there. So I'm going down there and help my aunt with her horses or whatever and then finish that last semester of school. And then, from there, that was not -- that was

great for a semester, but I was never going to stay there. And then I ended up in -- I went to Vermont for a summer to sublet a room with a friend. And then I applied for an AmeriCorps program and did AmeriCorps for two years, one year in Baltimore City, [working with 'Magic Me'] an intergenerational program, matching high school and middle school intercity students with retirement centers, and doing -- just sort of [leading activities aimed at] bridging [and addressing issues around race, gender, ageism and] that sort of -- those gaps and stuff. And so, that was fun to do, sort of programming that way. And a big eye-opener too because I didn't go to a school that was hundreds of people and had metal detectors and police when you go through [the front doors]. That was not my experience growing up. And so, that was a really great eye-opener for just the other -- just how [different] the world is in other places, even if it's the same state.

JENIFER DOLDE: What did you enjoy most about that job? The kids? The older people? Both? I'm just curious.

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:09:57] I really liked the -- I mean, I always liked working with kids. I liked the dynamics of [each] -- because some of the -- they were all very different groups. And so, some of the retirement centers -- one of the retirement centers, in particular, the group of kids that

were [partnered there] were all minorities, and the retirement center was a very wealthy [white majority] retirement center. And they -- were just older -- and it was really awesome to see the sort of the prejudices initially that they had, the residents, I think, against the students that -- After they kind of spent some time with them week after week, that that melted away a little bit, which was really what the program was all about. And so, that was my favorite part, to sort of see that -- those sort of preconceived notions sort of wash away a little bit [when folks are brought together and get to know each other].

JENIFER DOLDE: Out of curiosity, what were -- what kind of activities would they do together?

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:11:00] It would depend. I mean, sometimes, we'd -- arts and crafts. Sometimes, it would be throwing [and catching balloons] -- it depended on the -- how capable the residents were.

JENIFER DOLDE: I was curious about the -- really, whether they doing stuff with their hands. Very, in a very minimal way, arts and crafts.

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:11:18] For sure, yeah. They would be paired up together at a table doing something together, like a collage or whatever, or something about -- making a collage

about their lives and sort of what overlapped, and things like that. And then they [the students] would journal about it and stuff [to reflect]. Then I did another year in -- I was like, okay, well, I can either go back to school or apply for this program in Seattle. So I applied for a program in Seattle, Washington to do [a second] AmeriCorps, which was another sort of education-based program. It was based out of an alternative high school and a teen center, drop-in center, safe space. [The center] had a food bank, and clothing shelter, and drug and alcohol counseling, and it was just a safe space for kids to go. And that was -- I was the one full-time [A.C.] person in the [Redacted] alternative high school. And then there were, like, five other part-time AmeriCorps people [who I managed in this space]. And so, I sort of -- we went in and could do whatever programs we wanted to. So I worked with some of the teen moms and helped out in some of the other classrooms [as support for the teachers], and we did a variety of programs. And that was a really fun job because, if I had an idea for something [I could do it]-- it's kind of like [my position] here. What I love about being in the shipyard is that, if I have an idea for a program, I can kind of run with it. And I like that flexibility and that every day is not the same.

JENIFER DOLDE: Was it teaching them very practical, pragmatic skills? Is that -- was that the focus? Or it could be anything?

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:12:46] It could've been anything.

JENIFER DOLDE: Oh, wow.

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:12:47] Yeah. I mean, yeah, it was anything. And sometimes, it was just supporting the teachers in the classroom and with whatever they needed, was our main role there. So [my time in] the AmeriCorps is very important because then I ended up using some of that money later to go to boat school because you do get an education award. I did end up going back to college and finishing my bachelor's, and I went to Mount St. Mary's college [in Emmitsburg, MD where I lived until I was 13], which my mom worked at, third shift, as dispatch. So I got a free education there. So I didn't use a lot of my education award. I used a little of it for books and supplies.

JENIFER DOLDE: What was your bachelor's in?

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:13:31] Education and fine arts. I wanted to do art therapy, but they didn't -- that wasn't what they had. So I just made it up [with the help of my advisor], and I took a bunch of art classes and education classes. And so, I actually did my student teaching at the high school level for art. Not what I wanted to do, but it was

a good experience. And then, as soon as I finished that -- finished my college [degree] and graduated, I took myself [back] to Seattle, Washington, just to go back out and visit. Thought, sure, I'm going to go visit. Not going to [move back] -- I already lived there. Whatever. I already did that. But then -- went and had an awesome time, and decided, nope, I'm going immediately back out there without a job or anything lined up. And so, I went back out there, and [Redacted]-- I substitute taught. I worked at a preschool. And then I would still -- I had that money [some of the education award] that was going to expire, you have seven years to use it. And so, some of it -- I was like, oh, I'd take these night classes. And it had to be through an accredited school. And so, a lot of them would [be] -- art classes. But I took this one to help restore this old wooden boat [which had burned in the Lake Union Marina fire], and it [the course] was at the Wood Construction Site, which is the marine carpentry program, which [is housed within the Seattle Central Community College] [Redacted]. And I found out there was a whole program to go to school for boatbuilding.

JENIFER DOLDE: Now, how old were you at this point?

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:14:59] Oh, God. That was 2000 and -- let's see. Maybe -- let's see. I graduated 2005, I guess.

2003. Or was it 2003? Could've been 2003 I graduated, I guess. [I would have been 28] Geez.

JENIFER DOLDE: Sorry. Ancient history.

JENNIFER KUHN: It's okay. No, it's so funny though. You move around, and then all the dates and everything get all wonky and whatnot. And so...

JENIFER DOLDE: Later twenties?

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:15:31] Yeah. Yeah, for sure. Yeah, almost thir-- I would say I was probably, like, 29.

JENIFER DOLDE: And the name of the school is?

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:15:40] It's affiliated with Seattle Central Community College. But it's the Wood Construction Site when I went there. But now, it's the Wood Technology Center. It's changed [names] a few times. Yeah. And [along time ago] it was Gompers [**Redacted**]. And yeah, that was about a year and a half program. And yeah, I catered on the side because you got to make a living too, even though it's a pretty intensive Monday through Thursday program all day. I had been working with kids [when I got the call from the school]. It was an eight-month waiting list. And I didn't forget that I put my name on the waiting list, but it wasn't in the forefront of my mind because eight months had passed. And two weeks exactly to the day, they called me and said, "Hey, your name came up."

Are you still interested?" Which was perfect timing to give my notice at work. And so, I quit my job and went to boat school. And at that time, I had no clue that it would be a career shift or anything. I didn't even -- I just was burned out and wanted to do something different. And I just really was like, oh, this sounds really interesting and different. And I'm glad I did because, to have that skill set, is by far the best education I've given myself.

JENIFER DOLDE: Did you know immediately that this was something that was -- no?

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:17:04] Not really. I just kind of liked it, and I was doing it. And yeah, I wasn't [really thinking of the future] -- I was kind of also, at that time -- I was partying a lot. So I wasn't -- to be honest. And so, I wasn't really -- I don't know. I was trying to get...

JENIFER DOLDE: There was no light from above that said --

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:17:22] No. Well, and I was...

JENIFER DOLDE: -- this is what you're supposed --

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:17:24] -- I was trying to get myself out of the sort of rut that I'd gotten myself into with sort of my excessive behaviors. And so, when I went to boat school, that was sort of a [way out although I didn't know it at the time] -- I don't know. It -- I don't know. It gave me

something different, and I sort of pulled [myself] out of all that stuff.

JENIFER DOLDE: New focus and -- yeah.

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:17:40] Yeah. And then, yeah, you start -- I mean, I got a job before I finished school with Native Brightworks, and that was a woman-owned company. They did really fine, high-end yachts, like varnish work and stuff like that. And I didn't get to touch any of the varnish at that time because I was just a newbie. But I could do all the prep work and whatnot. And then I got another job before I graduated with Seven Seas with this guy, Gary. And he was a really great craftsman. Horrible businessman. And so, that was -- as soon as I graduated, I stayed on with him and not with Native Brightworks. And then worked for him for probably a -- I guess over a year maybe. But he got to the point where he was [not able to pay me regularly] -- he would underbid jobs and kind of got himself financially in disrepair. And he wasn't paying me and I had to hound him for my pay. And so, I finally was like, "You need to lay me off." And so, he laid me off. And then took me a year to get my back pay. But I stopped by every time I drove by or went by the shop. And sometimes, he would have money and give it to me, and other times, he wouldn't.

JENIFER DOLDE: Wow. So for a while, you were doing both of those at the same time?

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:19:00] School and -- yeah.

JENIFER DOLDE: And Native Brightworks and also working for Gary?

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:19:04] Yeah. They were...

JENIFER DOLDE: Wow.

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:19:05] And they -- well, but the school was like, "You're going to learn more on the job than you are here, so we'd rather you go do that." And so, I just balanced -- I just kept my after-school schedule with Native Brightworks and then just did during the day with Gary. And he did everything. And so, they [Seven Seas] -- we actually had a travel lift and did a lot of fiberglass work, and also custom teak decks and stuff like that.

JENIFER DOLDE: And it was -- was it other staff?

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:19:37] There was -- yeah, occasionally. There was one other guy I worked with for a little bit. He was kind of fresh out of -- he was out of boat school a year before me. And then there was another guy that sometimes would work and do a lot of the inflatable boat repair stuff.

JENIFER DOLDE: But this was very small group, sounds like.

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:19:55] Yeah. Oh, yeah. Very small. Very small, yeah. Very intimate for sure. And that was right

on Lake Union underneath the Fremont Bridge. Yeah. And then I worked for Seven Seas, and then I was independent for a little while, worked for a guy that did [built custom] houseboats.

JENIFER DOLDE: This is all in the same Seattle area?

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:20:15] Mm-hmm. All in Seattle, yeah. And most of it was around Lake Union area and the shipyards there. And when you work for a shipwright, you kind of do a little bit of everything. You might go to the different boatyards and work, and then you -- it's really nice when you can get a six-month wooden -- all wooden restoration because you know that's all you're going [to do] -- because fiberglass is not -- some people, I'm sure, enjoy it. I do [not]-- I can do it. I don't -- it's not my favorite thing to do.

JENIFER DOLDE: So this is when you were kind of doing independent stuff?

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:20:50] Well, this is when I worked for a shipwright, Seattle Shipwrights. Because then after Seven Seas, I worked for Seattle Shipwrights. And that was -- used to be a co-op back in the seventies I think [is when] it started. And then it kind of dwindled down to one gentleman, Bruce Marsh, owning it. And so, I worked for him. And sometimes, it would just be me and him.

Sometimes, it would be me, him, and another person. And then when he couldn't keep me busy, I just -- I got my [bus. license] -- I became an independent contractor. And then I would work for him when he had work, and then I would just do stuff on my own. And that was pretty much up until the economy tanked. And I really kept the relationship with Bruce going because I didn't have a shop. I was renting a place up on Capitol Hill or West Seattle, and it's not like I had a house. I didn't own a house. I didn't have my own shop.

JENIFER DOLDE: A place to do the work, in other words.

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:21:52] For sure, yeah. So it was nice that that was a good relationship because then I could -- he had all the industrial stuff. And so, I could do -- work on my own stuff there, as long as I made sure, when he had work for me, I worked for him.

JENIFER DOLDE: Sounds like it was -- that was a pretty good relationship.

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:22:06] It was a good relationship, yeah. For sure. Yeah. And then the economy tanked, and then I found myself here.

JENIFER DOLDE: Were you back with family or just back in a state that you were used to?

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:22:20] Well, I had a couple things happen.

So I was -- the economy tanked, and I also had gone through a divorce. And so, I was sort of rethinking about what I wanted to do and where I wanted to be. So I came back to visit because my family's back here [in Maryland]. And I came to visit my dad. And I'd heard about the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, and I was like, oh. So we came over, had lunch. We thought it was actually in Annapolis, which is really funny now to think about. So we went to the [Annapolis] maritime museum, and I was like, "They obviously don't build boats here. That's not what's going on." And then we realized that it was still -- we had to go across the bridge. And came over here, and went to [CBMM boatyard] -- just came, and I talked to Richard, and I met Danny Sutherland. I met Marc Barto and Don MacLeod [who at the time the four of them made up the boatyard staff]. And found out there was an apprenticeship program, and I know it's a little backwards to -- most people do an apprenticeship after being directly out of boat school or before working in the industry or whatever. But I was -- I applied for it and I was just concerned about keeping my foot in the maritime field, and also just curious about living back on the East Coast. I didn't know if it was what I was going to want to do, and I was like, well, I'll

just -- it's a year commitment. I was like, "I'll just do it for a year, see what happens." And then yeah, ended up staying. About a year and a half in, unfortunately, Danny Sutherland passed away. And then, yeah, they weren't sure what to do with the Apprentice for a Day program. And Michael Gorman and Richard were in the shop, and I kind of expressed an interest with my education background. I was like, "Hey, could I -- what do you think?" And Mike recommended me for the job, and then, yeah, I started doing kind of my twist on things, doing things in the evenings, offering more classes, and things like that.

JENIFER DOLDE: So you came to CBMM in 2000...

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:24:31] 2011.

JENIFER DOLDE: Eleven. Okay.

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:24:32] Yeah, January 3rd.

JENIFER DOLDE: There you go. And then you said about a year and a half later is when...

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:24:38] Mm-hmm.

JENIFER DOLDE: So I didn't realize the apprentice program -- I know it was much smaller than it is now -- existed then. But also, Apprentice for a Day was also in place at that point?

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:24:48] Yeah. It was only strictly building a boat. It wasn't any of the -- it wasn't anything else. It

was just like they were building some -- they did a variety of these skiffs, Good Little Skiffs, and then they did a couple crabbing skiffs, and that was it. And then Danny built a -- did a Rushton canoe, a couple Ruston canoes and stuff. But yeah, it was strictly only Saturdays -- some Saturdays and Sundays, and it was just building boats.

JENIFER DOLDE: Great. Well, and so, is -- what -- your job title currently is?

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:25:28] Shipyard Education Programs Manager.

JENIFER DOLDE: And so, it was probably something somewhat different then. But are you -- you're just doing an expanded version of what you started then? What -- how have your role -- how has your role expanded?

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:25:41] Well, now, I've encompassed managing the apprentice program, which lead to -- has morphed since when I was in the program. When I was in the program, you had to have gone through a marine carpentry program to even be considered to be an apprentice. And it was -- funding for that was lumped into whatever restoration project was happening. So we were able to have -- I was the first apprentice. Myself and Joe Green were the first apprentices in probably three years or something because the -- it had been kind of a very low financial state. So there -- it was a pretty lean times in the shipyard. And

so, we were the first apprentices in a long time that came through. And then it's been a pretty steady stream since then, which has been really great. Some people last, some people don't. It's a good way to kind of -- being out in the heat, and the winter, and the elements is definitely not everybody's cup of tea. And then -- so now, the apprentice program has been accredited from the Department of Labor, [since] November of 2018. And about a year -- probably two years ago now, I took over managing it [the program]. And then it's sort of in conjunction with Michael Allen [the construction manager]. Michael Allen really does the sort of construction, maintenance side of things with the apprentices, and then I kind of take care of tracking all of their hours, and then lining up any third-party related instruction, and just sort of [aligning] other parts of the curriculum that...

JENIFER DOLDE: Ticking off those boxes, making sure that they're fulfilling...

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:27:26] Yeah, exactly. And then lining up -- sort of lining up things, sort of -- maybe some of those visiting master classes that I'll facilitate for the Apprentice for a Day public workshop side of things, incorporate that in to the shipwright apprenticeship program and sort of for the other shipwrights, as a whole,

in the shipyard, to get some other training in various fields that we don't specialize in here.

JENIFER DOLDE: Any of your past relationships from your time out West -- were you able to draw upon those to help build this? Or you're just building mostly new relationships, as far as the master crafts people and all of that?

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:28:04] I would say there -- my women's woodworking classes that I do, well, the beginning -- the first one -- I used to teach at The Center for Wooden Boats [in Seattle]. So that I didn't -- I didn't recreate the wheel. I just brought that with me. No reason to redo that. So there was a little bit of time where I would volunteer at The Center for Wooden Boats, and I would teach some women's woodworking classes there on the side in exchange for learning how to sail because that's actually where I went through a SailNOW! program and learned to sail there, on Lake Union.

JENIFER DOLDE: And did you -- in your education and your other work experience before you came here -- and I'm looking at the time. It's going great, but you can see how the time goes by. Did you -- were in you in classes? Did you work with other women?

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:28:55] So when I was in boat school, yeah, there were some other ladies, absolutely. Betsy Davis was

a year ahead of me, and she's now the director of the Northwest Boatbuilding School. She was also the director of The Center for Wooden Boats for a while. Another woman, Edele, [after boat school] she worked for The Center for Wooden Boats for a long time. She's no longer doing boat stuff, but she's still using her craft. And then Amy is in Vermont, not doing boat stuff. And then -- yeah, there were some. And when I worked for Native Brightworks. That was a woman-owned company. And yeah, there were definitely -- I feel like, out in Washington State, I could visibly see more women in the maritime industry. And I don't know if it's -- I, mean, I know there's tons of women doing it everywhere. Maybe it's just that my world -- my circle is a little smaller here on the Eastern Shore.

JENIFER DOLDE: Maybe. I mean, I'm -- that's -- [inaudible].

That's perfectly valid. But I just want to get some perspective on it. And so, as -- jump forward a little bit. As we think about the Dove projects, how involved were you in the planning part of that? And maybe talk about maybe, in general, what you're' doing now related to Dove.

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:30:31] [**Redacted**]

JENIFER DOLDE: [**Redacted**].

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:30:38] So you asked me how involved was I in the Dove planning process.

JENIFER DOLDE: Well, yeah. So let's -- I just want to move into some conversation about Dove. What are you -- I mean, I know the metal casting, things like that. Tell me what aspects of the project you had been the most involved with.

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:31:04] So yes, definitely the metal casting, casting those clench rings and making the hardware, the pintles and gudgeons, the hardware for holding the rudder on the transom. Largely that so far. But I've also been doing a large amount of virtual tours that are heavily focused on -- that are focused on the Dove. And those have been for various yacht clubs, CTE schools' programs [and woodworking groups]. I did a program for highlighting the Dove with TWSBA, which is the Teaching with Small Boats Alliance folks. And then with CAT, which is in -- South and Anne Arundel County. That's another Center for Applied Technology [program]. I do a program with them in person every year. And obviously, we couldn't do it in person this year, so we did a virtual program. So I've been doing lots of virtual tours that way. I've been doing lots of virtual monthly updates, basic shipyard updates for our members and volunteers, and those heavily focused on the Dove. So [I've been focused on] getting that information

out there. And then now that we'll be running into new -- being able to do in-person programming again, I'm going to build some Apprentice for a Day public programming around what we're doing [on the Dove] -- we've done/planned two sessions -- we'll have a second session coming up here in July, 24th, for caulking the Dove. And then I'm doing -- we're going to be doing select Saturdays from August through October for -- there's eight interior doors to build. There's a grated hatch cover to make. There's a canvas cover that'll go over the -- that'll cover up the hatch. There's [also the gimmicks and many other opportunities] [inaudible]. And I think there might be one other thing that, possibly, we'll do. But those are some of the things that I can do safely in the shop, on the shop floor, and not have paying participants kind of working on things, climbing up and down on the boat [and scaffolding].

JENNIFER DOLDE: I actually think it's a pretty amazing kind of creative way to take a look at a build and to pull out these parts and think about that. Is that -- you're taking the lead on that? Are you working together with...

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:33:24] Well, I'm working with Joe because...

JENNIFER DOLDE: To sort of --

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:33:27] For sure. Fine tune what would be helpful for him in sort of moving the project forward, and

then also helpful for us because part of why we got the contract to build this -- build the Dove was that we would be running programming -- public programming to get the public involved. Pre-COVID, we ran a couple blockmaking workshops. We did one here and we did one down in St. Mary's City. And so, it's a good way to sort of spread the word and get people kind of -- get that stickiness and get people kind of [involved and] excited about the project, hopefully, and also learn some skills. And I think people get pretty excited about being able to say I did this. I got to work on the Dove. That's pretty cool. So I mean, I get excited about that kind of stuff, so I hope that other people do. But yes, definitely working with Joe and figuring out what can be helpful and stuff that we can also physically do, [while keeping in mind and] thinking about the population of people that come to the Apprentice for a Day program.

JENIFER DOLDE: I mean, I just think integrating that is -- it's very innovative what you all have done. So I think to -- it looks easy, but making that part of the project and keep the project moving forward is quite a challenge.

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:34:46] For sure, and then balancing sort of the other day-to-day things of my job and other programs and stuff.

JENIFER DOLDE: Yeah, those apprentices.

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:34:56] Yeah.

JENIFER DOLDE: So you said you were -- you're excited about working on the project. Did you know much about -- this kind of goes back to my question about being a part of the planning. Did you know anything about Dove, either historically or the seventies Dove? I mean, had visited, I guess, a couple times.

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:35:13] Yeah, so I've -- obviously, the Dove has been here, so I know Will Gates and the crew. And I've been aboard the boat many times when it's visited us here on campus. Definitely learned a little bit about it before we started sort of that interview process to be considered to get the contract. But I'm not a big historical boat nerd as far as -- Colonial ships are not really my favorite type of boat. Maybe I shouldn't say that, but they're not. [Redacted]. I mean, it's -- I like working with wood, and I like the process, and I really like working on boats, wooden boats. And so, doesn't really matter what the boat is necessarily. I mean, it does and it doesn't. But those are not my favorite type of boats, so it's not something that I've gone down a rabbit hole.

JENIFER DOLDE: Sure. Yeah, no. That's all right. So -- and did you know -- what did you know about Mr. Jim? Did you

know anything about the seventies build? And I imagine you get questions about it all the time. So what did you know going in versus maybe what you've learned since?

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:36:25] Well, I know it was built down at the Richardson's yard with Mr. Jim and Tom Howell, and sort of those legendary folks that I've heard about just from being in the shipyard and talking to Richard, and Marc, and everybody. And just that it was -- they had a different budget. It had a different sort of availability of materials, and time, and parameters to build it under. So they worked with what they had, and they created a great -- a wonderful representation of the ship that they were commissioned to build.

JENIFER DOLDE: Fair enough. Fair enough. And Marc is Mark Adams?

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:37:14] Uh-uh, but I know him too. No, Marc Barto used to be a shipwright here.

JENIFER DOLDE: Right. Right. And so, the legend kind of came - - obviously, you were not here. You never met Mr. Jim. So the legend came from -- by word of mouth within the community.

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:37:31] For sure. Absolutely.

JENIFER DOLDE: And you heard from lots of different people?

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:37:33] Yeah, definitely, multiple people.

And then we used to have Mr. Jim, the [buyboat] that was built to look like -- it was built to look like a byboat, but it was a yacht. And so, I was familiar with that vessel and the story behind that vessel, and whatnot. And so...

JENIFER DOLDE: So from what you know about that build versus now, and speaking maybe specifically to the things you worked on, what do you see as some of the major differences in materials, techniques? Just pick out some things that are the most -- come to you most immediately.

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:38:07] Well, the materials are definitely -- whereas the seventies Dove was pine and oak, and the Dove now is all the tropical hardwoods, angelique. You've got Cortez for the keel. We've got the live oak [for the frames] from Southern Georgia. And then those are the main things. And then the Douglas Fir [from Washington State]. And I don't really know if -- who casts the hardware for the rudder hardware. I don't know anything about that. I guess I maybe should delve in a little bit more.

JENIFER DOLDE: Well, I'm starting to get some of those details. But they're coming in. It's been a long time for some of those folks. And so, they were pulling resources from all over the place too, much as you do here. So you -- and so,

as far as the techniques, I mean, they used a lot of hand tools, but you are too.

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:39:11] Yeah. I think the techniques -- I would speculate that they're pretty dang similar. They had access to all of the same tools. So I'm sure that they would've used everything at their disposal.

JENIFER DOLDE: So as far as -- and I could talk to -- I'll talk to others about this as well. But my impression is, for the most part, the only power tools they were using were the large saws.

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:39:36] Mm-hmm. Yeah, the ship saws for sure.

JENIFER DOLDE: The ship saws. Apparently, a terrifying ship saw, rickety ship saw.

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:39:42] Probably no safety gear on it.

Probably no covering, I bet. Yeah.

JENIFER DOLDE: But we are using some additional power equipment that...

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:39:55] Yeah, chainsaws, power planes.

JENIFER DOLDE: You get a lot of questions about that, though, right?

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:39:59] Absolutely. People are like, "Wait, I thought you were building this seventeenth-century ship. How come you're -- I thought you would be using only hand tools." And my comment is always, well, if they had it

back then, they probably would've used it. But sometimes, the original tool like the adz is the best tool for the job. And so, there really is no replacing the -- some of the old, traditional tools because they were specifically designed for a job.

JENIFER DOLDE: No, I like the way you put it about using what's at your disposal. So if that's more advanced, if that's more modern, that makes sense, the pragmatism of boatwrights, shipwrights, it seems to be.

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:40:41] And we're building a modern representation of the Maryland Dove, of the Dove, of a 1600 ship. It's going to have modern diesel engines in it. [Redated] Which will be hidden. You're not going to be able to see any of that stuff. And it's going to appear to be the old vessel. But...

JENIFER DOLDE: And so, there's been a number of other women on the project. One of the interesting things I'm trying to discern with the seventies project, we know that there's at least three women who were more involved in the project. Some of them -- well, there's a perception that they only did certain jobs. But as I'm digging into it, I'm finding that that's not maybe as true. So we will see. Here, at CBMM, tell me about the women who've worked here and what

they do that may or may not be different from the others on the crew.

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:41:43] Well, Clara was on the project from the beginning of the project until just recently, really. And she started as sort of an associate shipwright, which is -- the Dove project doesn't necessarily have apprentices, per se, but that was sort of the role that she played. And so, she was learning a lot about the craft and honing her skill set. And just within her year, two years of being here, her skill set has just skyrocketed. She's really, really, really taken it to a different level. Really a great craftsperson and doing everything, doing the faring of the haul, spiling for the planks, and cutting the planks out, and then steaming them, and fitting them, and shellacking all the parts [Redacted]. And so, doing everything that everybody else does. There's not -- everybody -- it's a -- everybody on the crew kind of does it all.

JENIFER DOLDE: Great. But I do think -- whereas I keep asking questions about other women that you've worked with, it's more common now. My impression is that there were very few women in the seventies that this -- that made the seventies build pretty unique and kind of an oddity in the community, the object of attention, and reporters loved it and all of

that. When you talked to the press, are they like me? Are they kind of -- keep hammering at that same kind of question? Are they perceiving that it's unusual too? And are you -- what do you say to that?

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:43:32] From when I first got here? I was the only girl on the shipyard for a long time. And then India came, and she was another apprentice with me for a year and a half, and then I was alone again. Not alone. I don't mean it like that. And then there have been -- there was another girl, Lauren, for a little bit. And then -- yeah, but mostly, until right now, till the Dove and our -- with our apprentice program, we have -- Clara was in the shop, myself. We have Megan and Danielle now. I mean, that is, like, holy crap. We have four ladies in the shipyard. That's really awesome. It's amazing. I love it. And it's just like a subtle -- it's been a longtime kind of subtle shift. But it's happening, and I think it's -- if we can keep sharing, just keep educating people, and -- I think having -- I think it's important to have the female role represented because then other people see it. I don't know if myself being in the role that I've got is -- helps other women maybe want to come work in the shipyard because they're like, oh, hey [they see themselves represented]. I don't know. I have no idea. Maybe. It could. I mean, I

would imagine it probably does. Clara used to tell me all the time that she was so happy I was here. And yeah, so, I don't know. I digressed a little bit. But...

JENIFER DOLDE: No, not at all. I was just wondering if you perceived it as a change that CBMM is trying to do or if it's in the industry, the trade, rather, as a whole. Maybe you don't have that kind of perspective but...

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:45:14] I feel like there's definitely more -- I feel like there's definitely more women getting into it. It seems that way to me. There's that Center for Applied Technology program that I mentioned. I'm always excited because they have a boatbuilding program, and they bring their level one, level two students over. And I'm always like, oh, cool, there are a couple girls in the program. There's always, like, two or three, or at least two. I'm like, oh, that's cool. **[Redacted]**. I'm affiliated with the TWSBA, the Teaching with Small Boats Alliance. And there's a lot of women that are working in schools, building boats, using that [boats] as an educational tool for reinforcing mathematics and sort of team building -- all of those other soft skills that go around it [with boat building]. There's a lot of younger -- well, just a lot of women that are doing that. So I think -- I feel like there is sort of a resurgence, in a way. Maybe not exactly in the

shipyards, per se, but definitely women in the -- this sort of field.

JENIFER DOLDE: Well, and you're in the position to sort of be paying attention to that. So you have a different perspective than I might. As we wrap up, and please add anything you'd like, but as you think about the completion of Dove, as you think about sort of the museum's role in stewardship and preserving heritage, what are you -- what do you hope? What do you think will be the legacy of Dove going forward for us, for the state?

JENNIFER KUHN: [00:46:56] Well, the legacy is that, I mean, hopefully, the boat will last another hundred years, and it can complete its mission of being able to travel up and down the bay, and be a floating ambassador, and take groups of people out, and educating them on the history, and that it will be -- if there are no other wooden boat -- if there are no other wooden craft out there, hopefully, it's still around, and it can be a continuation of -- I mean, it's why we exist here as the maritime museum, right, is that we're keeping these artifacts alive so that -- for other future generations to see and know that this is -- the -- what helped shape our world. And hopefully, everybody -- the beautiful thing about the museum and what we do in full public view with the shipyard -- it's a little interesting

to try to sometimes really focus on a project and then also stop and interpret to the public all the time. And it definitely takes a specific personality that can -- that likes to do that and also is able to sort of flip flop back from tasks to be able to interpret. But hopefully, there's enough people that have kind of seen the project and are excited about it, and maybe it turns them on to [Redacted] this is even a -- something that happens. Because a lot of people come in and they're like, "Oh, my gosh. I didn't know people were still building boats." And so, to have a project like this [in full public view], just to be able to educate people that this is something that people do or that you can even do -- that there's an apprenticeship and you can even -- you can even actually go to school for this [boat building], or you can learn how to do this, and that it's still a viable industry, even in 2021.

JENIFER DOLDE: Well said. Anything else? Perfect.

END OF AUDIO FILE