

OH Kate Dumhart combined

SHEA: Just start with that.

DUMHART: [00:00:02] All right, great. So my name is Kate Dumhart. Kate's not short for anything. K-A-T-E is my full name, Dumhart, D-U-M-H-A-R-T, is my husband's name. But I took it because my maiden name is Grimes, and Grimes sounds too much like grimy when you work with a bunch of children, so. [Laughs] I decided to adhere to that one patriarchal tradition, but my birthday, January 20, 1987. Who am I? What am I doing here? I'm the captain of the schooner *Sultana*.

SHEA: How did you become the captain of the *Sultana*?

DUMHART: [00:00:45] I worked as the mate on *Sultana* for two seasons, was fortunate to be the mate when they were hiring a second captain at the end of 2021. How I ended up on *Sultana* is a better question, and that is that I was working for another institution in a town that *Sultana* visits, and I went out to observe their programming as part of professional development for my employer at the time and realized that it was worlds above the program that I had been offering there, and I asked the captain for a job, and I went home to my husband that day and said, "I am going to

move away for a year. I must work for them instead. Like, the experience will be invaluable to my career." And he said, "Okay, great." So.

SHEA: So had you ever worked on the water before you [laughs] started working on the *Sultana*?

DUMHART: [00:01:42] I did, yes, actually. My first job out of college... My degree is in biology. I graduated from Salisbury in 2008, when no one in the country could really get a job, and so after many, many, many interviews and many hours of job hunting and applications, I got a job as an education intern at a camp in the Florida Keys that paid 100 dollars a week for a six-day work week, and they taught us how to drive. They had tri-hull flat top 25-foot, like, snorkeling boats, and so we would take kids out snorkeling or wading or do a science lab for, like, two three-hour classes a day, like, class between breakfast and lunch, class between lunch and dinner, and, like, a little night activity. And so I learned how to drive boats then. I had had very little experience on the water before that. And I loved it, but I am too pale to work in Florida, so [laughs] I did not stay on with them. I went and worked at an environmental education outdoor Y camp [YMCA] in Washington State, which was really fun. I stayed there for several

years, and during the summer, I ran the logistics for their expedition programs. So they would send up to 200 teenagers kayaking or sailing or hiking or biking, and I made sure they all had enough food to eat, and their gear was in good working order. And then I drove a, like, 20-foot Boston whaler around the San Juan Islands to resupply the longer trips. You know, if they're out for two weeks, they need a resupply halfway through. And so I would, you know, do these runs around the pristine waters of the San Juans, which was really lovely. And was ready for, like, maybe something else, a little bit, so I worked another outdoor ed job in Maine... In Southern Maine. It was really great. No boats, just wading. And at that time, my husband got a job back in Maryland. We're both from Maryland. We have the same degree. In, like, his dream role, running... Or at the time, he got hired as a technician for the oyster hatchery that's managed by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources in Piney Point, and that's what prompted us to move back here. So then with all of that experience of living in Southern Maryland, I couldn't quite figure out what to do, so I just refreshed Calvert Marine Museum's hiring page every day until they were hiring education staff. And through... I don't know,

the luck of the universe, they had taken possession of the skipjack *Dee of St. Mary's* the very same month that I started my employment, and they said, "Gosh, your resume has a lot of, like, time of boats and lots of teaching outdoors. You know, that, like, changing environment, it's a different way to teach. And then in the museum, if you learn to sail, you can teach on this boat." And so I learned to sail so I could teach on the boat. And then I realized that that was way more fun than teaching inside. And then to circle back around, about six years later is when I went out on *Sultana* and said, "Oh, wait a second. Actually, teaching on a boat does seem to be what I wanted to do this whole time and didn't know about."

SHEA: So who taught you to sail? I mean, or who inspired you, I guess?

DUMHART: [00:05:10] Who inspired me? I think I always loved the ocean and water, and my parents will tell you that as a kid, anytime we went to the beach, I couldn't be convinced that the horizon wasn't reachable. I was constantly asking my parents to, like, "I want to go there. I want to go there." And they could not convince four-year-old Kate that, like, the horizon, like, it moves. It's a thing. Like, I couldn't be consoled that I couldn't get to the

edge of what I could see in the water. And so I think, honestly, the fact that I made it to the edge of 26 years old without sailing is just impressive because it should have been what I had been doing the whole time, and I just didn't know that that was an option. And in working outdoor ed, there's kind of an overlap between the type of tall ship sailing that I do now and outdoor education. People kind of move back and forth a little bit. And so I had met some people who had worked for Clear Water or Sound Waters who had so much to say about, like, the wonderful environment, sailing for education, living on board, and camaraderie with crew members that, like, it sounded like what I wanted to do. I just didn't know how to access it until *Sultana* sailed into town one day and all the pieces came together.

SHEA: So who taught you?

DUMHART: [00:06:39] I probably should credit the crew of the *Dee of St. Mary's* in 2013, particularly John Fulchiron who has been on that boat longer than I've been alive, and, you know, knows more about it than anyone on earth, probably. But there's only so much you can learn about sailing a skipjack, especially one with a volunteer corps that, you know, runs 20 to 30 people deep. Skipjacks don't have that

many lines to pull on, so it... You know, from 2013 to 2019, I was there for six years and training once a week and learning everything that I could. And I think I learned more my first week in *Sultana* than I did in those six years because they're... You know, it's just a vastly more complicated boat that operates a much more rigorous schedule. I had a very steep learning curve when I started on *Sultana*, but I definitely wouldn't have been interested in continuing the field without the time I spent on the *Dee*.

SHEA: So I was impressed [laughs] today on the *Sultana*-

DUMHART: Oh my gosh I am so sorry.

SHEA: By the... All the different protocols you have, different... Is everything...

DUMHART: [00:08:02] Yes, everything's okay.

SHEA: Good. But all the different protocols you have for, you know, the docking, the this, the thats. Is... Was that part of what they taught you? Or is that just part of the script for doing it?

DUMHART: [00:08:20] It's a little bit of both, and, you know, there's only so many different ways that you can run dock lines, right? There's only so many different ways that you can tell the crew what you want with those dock lines. The

way that *Sultana* does it is certainly more rigid and more practiced than programs that I've worked with that have a crew that's more than 50 percent volunteer. You know, at *Sultana*, the crew that we sail with every day... There are six of us, including myself... Do the same thing at least twice a day five or six days a week, and I pay the crew, or *Sultana* pays the crew, to do those things. And so the standards that I can set for them and what I can expect from them is much higher than a rotating cast of volunteers who maybe haven't been on the boat for two weeks, you know, or typically are retirees, right? So I can't expect them to be as strong or as familiar or even hear me as well as, you know, my five crew of 20-year-olds. But the mechanics for a lot of boats that do what we do are very similar. We number our dock lines the same, you know. We send them in... Limited number of orders and use them the same way. And so those skills are pretty transferrable within tall ships, anyway. I lost track of the question. [Laughs]

SHEA: Oh no, I was just curious by all of the protocols you have.

DUMHART: [00:09:54] Yeah. Oh.

SHEA: I just wondered about the training. How... I was so impressed today with the responsibility that you had

[laughter] in running the boat and keeping all the operation, so I was intrigued watching the protocols and wondering if that was just part of the system you learned.

DUMHART: [00:10:11] Yeah, and what I've found... Well, part of the way that I learned it, at least my first season on *Sultana*, the captain at that time was very good about saying, like, "We are doing this because it's the industry standard. Like, this is the way that other boats will do it." And sometimes he'd say, "We're doing this because I like it this way. This is my aesthetic preference and I'm the captain." And I do a little bit of that, but what really, I think, works for me as a leader is that I focus a lot on training the crew why we're doing something, you know? Why is it like this? Because I have found, especially working with crews of mostly volunteers, that people really get caught up in the idea of memorizing what's supposed to happen. Like, "I have to remember exactly what to do." And you sort of get wrapped around it, like, "It goes exactly like this. It goes exactly like this. Like, this mental picture is right." But then you're not set up for any change in the conditions, right? If one thing is different, like, you might have to do something a little different, and if you only understand

what it's supposed to look like but not why it's supposed to look like that, then it's much harder to adapt to new environments.

SHEA: I think you're absolutely right. I'm just sort of thinking about whether that approach is just standard with being the captain, or does part of that come from your background in education?

DUMHART: [00:11:48] I think probably a lot of it comes from my background in education, and I think it probably also comes from the very circuitous route I took to sailing. That's really how I learn things is to, like, understand the why and then make it do the what to match why I'm doing it versus, you know, memorizing what's supposed to be right. An example would be, you know, we have a gaff rigged mainsail and the other captain is six foot two, and so the boom is set pretty high so that he can drive the boat without hitting his head. And what that means for me is that it's very hard for me to reach above my head and tend the gaff when we set the sail to keep it in the lifts, right, not catch the thumb cleats. And so we have to put slack in the vang. It's a procedure that's part of prepping the sail that lots of boats that look like us do. But when I'm training the crew to do it and I say, you

know, "We're going to pull slack into the vang," for the first month of the season, every time I go to set the sail, there is slack in the vang, but it's not where it's supposed to be because it has to run aft and then inside the quarter-lift and then come straight off the gaff. So I need the slack to be straight off the gaff so I have slack to hold onto, and it's consistently outside of the lifts. Like, almost got it. There is slack here. That's true. It's not going to help me at all. The line is still tight in between the two places that it needs to not be tight. And so that's an example of, like, yes, I need slack in the vang. Why do I need slack in the vang? Like, I don't need it because I think it's fun to say, "slack in the vang." I need it because I need to control the gaff. So put the slack where I can control the gaff.

SHEA: So when you moved from being the first mate to becoming the captain, what was that like?

DUMHART: [00:13:50] I think I have a lot of empathy for how overwhelming *Sultana* can be. We hire a lot of people who are good educators who haven't sailed before or who have sailed small boats, and *Sultana* for a small boat has six sails, and they're all different. There's a lot of lines packed in a very small space. And I think I've had a

pretty steep learning curve on, like, actually sailing the vessel, you know, even though I had gotten off the dock twice a day for two years in a row. Like, I'm just pulling the strings. I don't often have the big picture. And I think that's... *Sultana's* a great place for someone to have their first command because we have two captains. You know, even though I'm the only captain on the boat, I have somebody in the office that I can say, you know, "Hey, I'm thinking about doing this. Is that the right call?" And they can say, "Did you consider XYZ? Yes, sounds great," or, like, "What about this other thing?" It was a really smooth transition just because of the way that they run the organization, and I think I would've really struggled to have a first command that was a different boat that I wasn't familiar with the rig, you know. And so I have... Especially if I am feeling, like, overwhelmed by the mental load of being the captain and what's coming tomorrow and the next day and what's the weather going to be like and if the teachers have responded, and all of those things, I can say, like, "You know what? Like, crew, why don't you do the easy job today and I'll furl the staysail?" Like, I can just sort of take that mental break and, like, do a thing that I've done a million times that, like, feels good

and is easy and say... I also could say, like, "Hey, does anybody have any questions? I've seen you struggling doing this thing." Like, it's a nice... I don't know. It's a nice environment.

SHEA: I was just going to ask you to tell me what's entailed with being the captain, and you [laughter] started cataloguing it. So what does a captain on the *Sultana* have to do, be responsible for?

DUMHART: [00:16:08] Let's see. On the, like, small scale, if we're doing a trip, I have to, you know, make sure that the kids are safe, make sure that we have an accurate headcount, make sure that I'm operating the boat safely, keep that big picture for vessel traffic, changing weather patterns. Are all the kids actually standing with their feet on the deck? Are they hanging their heads over the rail? Are the crew tending lines safely? Like, what time is it? How far away from the dock am I? What time is the station over? How long is it going to take me to dock the boat today, right? Today was a really light wind day, and we've been coming in and out of this dock for two weeks, so I know that I can get the boat tied up and get the kids off the boat in under 10 minutes, and so I can tell the ed director, "Stations can go until 10 minutes before the trip

is over." But, you know, it's a really windy day or the tide is ripping or we have new deckhands. I'm going to say, "Hey, leave me 20 minutes to dock. We might be done early, but I don't want the kids to be late." And so that's a lot of operating the boat on the daily basis. And then on the, like, bigger picture, it's training the crew, making sure that the crew are taking care of the boat in the short term with daily chores, or I'm always writing things down for our haul-out work list, which is next month, or things that can wait until our winter work list. You know, I have all of these running documents of things that I notice and I'm keeping an eye on that I'm deciding what timeline they need to be addressed. I'm working with the senior captain to keep up with all of the regulatory paperwork. When is our underway inspection? When is our dry dock inspection? When do we have to install the new smoke detectors to meet the interim ruling on fire safety? When do we want to start advertising for next year's crew? How do we want to start advertising for next year's crew?

SHEA: How many crew do you bring with you?

DUMHART: [00:18:10] So we operate the vessel in normal, like, education mode with six crew. So a captain, a mate, an ed director, and three deckhands. Especially in the fall, we

work a lot of six and seven-day weeks, which is why *Sultana* has two captains, and then we'll bring on a fourth deckhand so that the captain and the crew can rotate through days off even though we don't have a weekend to dedicate. And so for us, the captain and I divide up the week, who's driving which of the seven days, and then we just rotate the crew through so the crew all hopefully get two days off, but not consecutively and not all together.

SHEA: So what's the biggest challenge in getting good crew?

DUMHART: [00:18:57] We always say that we can teach anybody to sail, but we can't teach anybody to teach. So more than sailing experience or, you know, even more rare is tall ship experience... We often have only one, maybe two crew members who've been on another tall ship, and usually maybe half the crew has, like, done some small boat sailing in college, kind of thing. But almost all the crew has always had some sort of education experience, whether it's a summer camp counselor or an after-school program or a tutor, something where they are doing a job delivering information and managing the behavior of people younger than them. That's, like, the number one thing that we look for.

SHEA: So what do you like the most about being a captain?
Or what do you like about being a captain? [Laughs] I
shouldn't ask that most question.

DUMHART: [00:19:56] I love being on the water, you know, and I
love being the platform, especially in an organization that
takes so many kids out on the water, to provide a positive
experience. Especially in Cambridge, in Saint Michaels,
even in Chestertown, there's a lot of kids who comes out
who have never been on a boat before, despite the fact that
they probably live within, I don't know, five miles of the
water. And so creating a positive first experience is
really rewarding, and also watching their crew gain
confidence as we go through the season where they're doing
the same thing every day and learning more and more and
feeling more comfortable is another hopefully positive
experience in a different way than with students. But
yeah, just, like, connecting with the water, being
somewhere where we can appreciate the quiet and the nature
and the, like, sort of timelessness of traveling under
sail.

SHEA: Have you ever had challenges by being a female on the
boat? Has that ever [laughs] caused you some problems?

DUMHART: [00:21:20] I will say in recent years with *Sultana*, the biggest problem is just passengers who are a little skeptical of my ability to drive the boat. And so I get a lot of feedback from passengers. Like, I had a guy once tell me... This was last season. He said... And I knew it was coming when he walked up to the helm and said, "I'm not sure if you're aware," and I had a feeling that it wasn't going to end well. He said, "You're not actually allowed to use the motor and the sail at the same time," because I'd just gotten off the dock. We had set the main. The Chester River's pretty narrow and so I was motorsailing down the river so I had enough room to fall off, and then I was going to shut down the engine. And I said, "No, I can motor and sail at the same time. We do it all the time. I can't claim rights as a sailboat in a passing situation, but here we are in the Chester River with no one else around. It's going to be fine." And he was like, "No, no, you can't do it." I was like, "No, I promise I can." And he said, "That's not what they teach us at the New Jersey Boating Safety School." [Laughter] And I very politely said, you know, "Like, thanks for the feedback. You know, it's time to shut down the engine anyway. Here we are in the wider part of the river." And the mate that year was

standing next to me, and he said, "Well, you were much more patient than I would have been." It's like, "What else am I going to do?" You know, I'm supposed to be providing him with a good time. It's my job to be patient. But that's... Or, you know, I had another guy say, "It's really not safe for you to allow the crew to wear sandals." Which is... We are... Our uniform policy is that they can wear sandals as long as they have a heel strap, right? The shoe is secure to their foot. If they smash their toe because they chose to wear an open-toed sandal, like, you know, you know what we're doing that day. I need this shoe to stay on their foot and be safe that way, you know? A smushed toe is an easy fix with a bandaid and a little Bactine. But he was very concerned that I hadn't set a high enough standard for the crew, and I think the fact that I was wearing sandals that day probably didn't reinforce, or did reinforce his opinion. But from the organization, I don't have any problem. Everyone's very supportive. The crew listen to me, and that was not my experience before. I had... You know, when I would... When I was driving the *Dee of St. Mary's* during the pandemic, I would say, you know, "Send three," which having spent a whole season on *Sultana* means the forward spring,

right? And I said, "Send three," and one time the person who was supposed to send it said, "Are you sure you don't want two?" And I think... Like, is that the way it's supposed to go? No. But it did teach me a lot about what it means to be a captain in that I think what they don't tell you when you're training to do this job is that, like, even if you're wrong, you're right in that if I said, "Send three," and that's what they sent, then that's what I'm going to have to work with. And maybe I did want two, but I certainly don't want to be debating it rather than having a dock line on. So, you know, just because it didn't work the way I wanted to or I might have to... You know, if I was in the same situation again, I would do it differently, or if at the end of the day I'm going to go home and write in my little notebook that I keep about things that I learn for the day, like, "In these conditions, you should definitely send two next time." None of that changes the situation that I'm in at the present where the words coming out of my mouth and what I want to happen should happen the way I said it, and it's only my responsibility to fix a problem if it arises after that. If the crew are thinking about what I should've said or what I should've been doing or what they would do differently if they're the captain,

then we're not doing the work of securing the boat to the dock in this instance. And so I started saying that to myself as, like, "In this situation, I am right because it's what I said, so it's what we're going to have to deal with." And, you know, I can be right in the moment and say, "Not going to do it again the next time," right? If every day I'm doing my best, my best can't be better unless I learn more. Just last week I had the absolute worst time getting off the dock. The wind was just pinning us on and I tried a bunch of different things and it just wasn't working, and I was so frustrated, and we ended up doing a dockside program because it was a really short trip. The kids were going to be underway for less than an hour, and I had already spent 10 minutes trying to get off the dock. So by that time, we're going to do 15-minute stations at the dock. They're still going to get the full experience they would've gotten, and it will be better than, you know, rushing through three 10-minute stations because I beat the boat up getting off the dock. But I thought really hard about all the things that I had tried, and I, you know... I felt in that moment like I could honestly tell the lead teacher that day, like, "I did everything I could and we can't get off the dock. We're going to pivot." And that's

100 percent true. Now, is everything that I could do everything the other captain could do or anything that another captain or another boat could do? Probably not. Did I stay up all night thinking about other things to try? Yes. When the wind was the same three days later, did I try those new things and manage to get off the dock in under 10 minutes? Yes. Did I beat the boat up a little bit in the process? Sure. But we're going to haul out and paint it next week. So I learned something, and now when I say, you know, "I did my best," the list of things that are my best is longer.

SHEA: That's great. [Laughter] I'm very impressed because it's such a challenge. What...

DUMHART: [00:28:00] It's very hard.

SHEA: Yeah. I... Where did you get that boat? It's huge. I was going to ask you to talk about the big challenges in being the captain. [Laughter]

DUMHART: [00:28:11] The... Well, the head rig...

SHEA: Of a 250-year-old boat.

DUMHART: [00:28:14] Right? Well, the boat's only 20 years old, but the technology is 250 years old, yes. So it's a reproduction of a colonial vessel from 1768. The one that we sail today was launched in 2001. The head rig goes on

forever. That actually is one... The head rig specifically is a great example of what it's like to be the captain and not the mate because I, you know, was the mate for two summers, and we'd take kids out overnight, and we try to let them be as involved as they can, and so we have them help dock the boat. And it didn't occur to me until I went to do it how much harder it is to have kids sending dock lines than the deckhands, and I was docking the boat and it just went totally sideways, and I hooked part of the head rig on a piling in the middle of Annapolis, and it was a big mess. And I just eventually sent all the kids down below with the educator while I [laughs] fixed it with the crew, and that was a great lesson in how many times I had done that, but how few times I had been the person in charge doing that and how much more goes into running the boat even though I'm physically doing so much less. So yeah, it's a... I feel like my brain is doing, like, math and physics that I could never put on paper, but I, like, live every day all the time, and I... It's surprisingly exhausting to only pull one string back and forth and move the tiller. I don't do anything else, but I'm so tired after a long day with less than ideal wind conditions or kids who want to run laps around the binnacle or any number

of things that require a mental load that I wasn't totally prepared for.

SHEA: Other things like that? I mean, [laughter] very interesting.

DUMHART: [00:30:35] Well, there's... *Sultana* tows a small boat behind us in the summer so we can take kids ashore and go to the beach, and it's, like, a 20-foot boat built by the same builder as *Sultana*, John Swain, and it has oars and it has a sailing rig and it has a little outboard, and we tow it behind us. And last summer, I canceled a camp midweek because all the crew had COVID. They got it from a camper the week before, and so they all tested positive on Wednesday, and so I canceled the camp in the middle of the week. And I say all, it was really only half. It was exactly the number that I can't operate the boat. That's how many people were sick. So we brought the boat back to Saint Michaels because that was the closest dock and offloaded all the kids, and then I... The next day was taking it back to Chestertown to lay it up until everyone was sick... Or not sick anymore. And this series of really unfortunate events happened. And you saw today, anytime I'm out in the water, people want to come see *Sultana*, okay? It's a cool boat. I totally understand.

But this powerboat came up alongside us, really flying, throwing a big wake, pulled in front of us, and just stopped. I mean, they were under the head rig. And so I stopped *Sultana* the best I could and threw it in reverse, and the guy who had been driving the powerboat walked away from the helm. He's standing on the stern with the other three people on his boat, takes a selfie of our boat. I mean, I think he couldn't have been more than 15 feet from our figurehead. And then takes off again and guns it and wakes us again, and between these two things happening, and we're right outside of Annapolis, and we're just south of the bridge, and then a container ship went by. The towline on our little boat wasn't as tight as it should've been because I had slowed down to not hit the little powerboat. And then the wake from the container ship, and the wake just went completely over the cutter. And everything in the cutter floated away. [Laughs] And so I had to... You know, it wasn't that many things. It was, you know, the first aid kit and a couple life jackets. I pulled the boat alongside and then I had to, you know, get the electric bilge pump and turn the inverter on and pump out the cutter and run some MOB [Man Overboard] drills off of Annapolis, picking up all my life jackets and my first aid kit. It

took probably two hours to get everything back together, and, like, it was just... Like, the whole time I was thinking, "Gosh, I really don't want to be doing this [laughs] but what else was I going to do?" You know? And now I can laugh about it, but it was a very long, hot day at the time. But yeah, there's lots of situations that I find myself in that was not on the, you know, captain training list, like powerboats want to take pictures very close to you.

SHEA: That's true, that's true. [Laughter] So what's next, Kate? So what do you think's next for you with your boating life?

DUMHART: [00:33:39] That's a great question. I like being on the water and I like sailing, but I don't like adventure so much to want to... I'm not, like, a bigger, better, faster kind of person. You know, I would sail... Like, would it be so cool to sail Europe to Antarctica and watch penguins? Yes. Do I know that I get horribly seasick and I probably don't want to be on the Drake Passage? Also yes. I love sailing but I love watching kids enjoy a new environment more than I want to, you know, personally go onto bigger and better things as a sailor. So I don't see myself working for somewhere that doesn't do a program like

Sultana. You know, if they're not education-based, if they're not taking students out on the boat the majority of the time, then career-wise it's not what I'm interested in. Would I maybe like to do some, like, delivery work as a side job? Maybe, and have, you know, a little more adventure in the winter. Sure. And when my husband retires, you know, that's more his speed. He would like to, you know, just go for a relaxing sail here and there and not have quite so many strings to pull on. But I think I'll probably be at *Sultana* for a couple more years at least, and then if I go anywhere else, it'll be somewhere else that does the same thing. But I would like... I'd like to learn how other boats do it, you know. I'm a little late to the game, so I still have a lot to learn about, like, what varies by organization or by personal preference or by, you know, specific sailing rig.

SHEA: Do you think learning how to sail as an adult slightly changes your idea of sailing? That's what, you know...

DUMHART: [00:35:45] I think it does. I think that... I feel like... And maybe this isn't true, but I feel like if you look closely, you can always see the gears turning in my head. I'm not an intuitive sailor. I'm not a person, you know, who feels the helm and just knows exactly what to do.

You know, I find myself doing that more, and I'll catch myself being like, "Oh, I haven't thought about this in a while. Oh, yeah, that is still where I want to be. Okay, great." But I... No, I don't. I put a lot of work into, like, making the right choices. It doesn't come naturally. I have to think pretty hard about how the sails are going to balance and where I want to go, and all of the things that, you know, people who've been doing it since they were kids, I think they have a much greater capacity for. But I think on the other side of that, in the work that I do, it makes me more capable of explaining to new crew what has to happen, especially crew that haven't sailed before. I think people who sail intuitively don't always know how to put language on what they know where I have had to learn that language in my adulthood, and so that's, you know, something that's already in my repertoire that I can then translate easily to new people. You know, it... I'm... I will be the first to admit that I am a much better educator than I am a sailor and I think that that is one of the things that makes me a good captain in this organization because I am always enthusiastic about learning more, and I hope that I model that for the crew, and I always have the

language to explain what's going on when, you know, they are totally overwhelmed by all these new things.

SHEA: Do you ever race? Do you go out on other people's boats?

DUMHART: [00:38:00] I do. I have been sailing on log canoes for a couple years. I sail with Silver Heel. I am a lowly third onboard. I spend a lot of the race bailing the bilge, which is... Like, is honestly where I like to be because I can watch what's going on. I'm a very visual learner, and so, you know, the more I do it, the more I understand all of the mechanics and get sort of the experience that I missed out, not having grown up sailing or racing, of, you know, seeing all the tactics, right, and things that *Sultana* doesn't do, like, "How close can I get to that mark? And, like, how fast can I tack the boat?" *Sultana* tacks real [laughs] slow and needs a very wide radius. So I... It gives me a different frame of reference, and I think even though I'm not, you know, trimming sails or not at the end of a board, I still am a better sailor because of my participation from the bottom of the bilge. [Laughs]

SHEA: What's it like, sailing a log canoe?

DUMHART: [00:39:22] Insanity. [Laughter] Not one single thing about it makes sense, but it's so fun. It's an amazing amount of teamwork and coordination, and the sort of, like, generational relationships... You know, people have been sailing these same boats together for so many years that sail evolutions that, you know, would require a 10-minute conversation on *Sultana* before I started it, everybody just knows and does and executes without much talking. [Birds cawing] And it feels like it shouldn't work, but it does, most of the time, and it's... I think it's a different relationship with the boat and the water. Everything is so much faster and closer to the water and just, like, wet. [Laughs] That it feels like... It feels like calling that sailing and calling what we do on *Sultana* sailing shouldn't be the same thing.

SHEA: [Laughter] That's an interesting one. But they are.

DUMHART: [00:40:38] They are, yeah, mm-hmm.

SHEA: Interesting. So what makes sailing on the Chesapeake special?

DUMHART: [00:40:54] It's... Something I... Maybe it's that, you know, a lot of places we go, we can tuck into these corners with, like, really undeveloped shoreline, or, you know, be out in the middle of the bay when you can't really

see the details on shore. It feels... And especially doing it on *Sultana* feels sort of timeless or not, like, untethered from time. You know, on days that we're anchored, I'm updating the log. I'm sitting at the lieutenant's desk in the aft cabin. You know, like, is my pen different? Is my book different? Do I have an anchor alarm? Sure. But, you know, this boat would've been doing that 250 years ago. I think that's really cool. And I think because we trawl a lot with programs, seeing what marine life there is and watching it change as we move around the bay is really cool. I try... If I'm running the summer camp, I try to trawl every day or every other day, and we typically go from one river to another in a week of summer camp, and so the kids can really see, "Oh, we caught a bunch of crabs outside of Cambridge. Oh, we caught a bunch of perch in the Chester River. Oh, we caught..." This weekend, we caught some really weird... I caught a hake and an oyster toadfish in Saint Michaels, and we saw dolphins. So there's, you know, a constantly changing environment all within, like, a close geographic area.

SHEA: You've done sailing in the Solomons area too?

DUMHART: [00:42:50] Mm-hmm.

SHEA: And up here? Are there differences in those?

DUMHART: [00:42:57] So sailing for the museum in Solomons, we go in the Patuxent River, which is an exceptionally wide river basin, and so I didn't realize coming to Chester Town how different that was. There's so few days of the year where there's a wind direction that *Sultana* can sail a whole trip when we're in our home port. You know, if it's not out of the west, I just can't sail close enough to the wind to sail either downriver or upriver. I can pick one, but I can't pick both most of the days of the year. And then every fall, we go to Solomons, and it's like... Well, coming home because all the buoys are familiar and all my friends come to visit, but I also have the joy of, you know, we get off the dock and I can just sail in any direction for as long as I want, and then go back the other way. It's a nice sort of break in the routine, and it makes me appreciate the river more than I did when that was the only body of water that I knew.

SHEA: How about compared to Washington State? What's the difference at sailing on the Chesapeake compared to the San Juan Islands? [Laughter]

DUMHART: [00:44:07] I've never sailed in the San Juans. I've done... I did quite a bit of powerboating, and now having

learned to sail since I've been there, going back, I think... You know, there's a lot more rocks there [laughs] which reduces the margin of error quite a bit. So I don't know that you'll find me sailing there in the future unless it's, you know, as a passenger or in my free time, although fingers crossed, I'm at the top of the list for... There's a private boat that the camp where I used to work owns, and they own a private island, and they ferry the kids...

Every kid who stays at camp gets to spend one night on the private island, and so they need a full-time boat driver for the summer. And so the same guy's been doing it for 20 years, but if he retires any time soon, I think I'm at the top of that list. [Laughter] That would be lovely.

SHEA: So are there any particular challenges for sailing on the Chesapeake for you other than these narrow rivers?

DUMHART: [00:45:20] An eight-foot draft, I think, is just...

Is like... Is the worst draft around here because if it was six, I could go so many more places. And if it was 10, I would know my limits so much better. But there's so much of the chart that says nine feet that I'm like, "How long ago was it nine feet? Do I want to go there?" And, you know, the longer I do it, the more I learn the underwater geography. I get familiar with spots. I know what to

expect from the depth sounder or I know what to expect from my ability to back the boat off the mud if I find it. So I think the space that's available to *Sultana* is growing for me, but I think that's certainly a challenge is the temptation to go where, you know, it's a maybe, and there's so many maybes for an eight-foot draft in all the places that we go.

SHEA: Have you noticed any changes in the Chesapeake Bay in the years you've been doing this?

DUMHART: [00:46:34] I have noticed, I think, that the weather is increasingly less predictable. You know, if I had told the crew to pack for this trip, I probably would've told them to, like, bring one pair of pants and a bunch of pairs of khaki shorts because we were going to leave on a cool day and then have the rest of the month of May, and I typically could expect it to be, you know, in the upper seventies, low eighties, sunny, and it has been, you know, in the forties at night almost every night of the three weeks we've been gone, and that's not expected. Or, you know, we have a lot of rain or none at all versus your sort of typical, like, showery days in April, right? We got a couple pounding rains in April and then very little else. And that doesn't... It doesn't feel like the weather that

I grew up with, and it doesn't even feel familiar to, like, my first time traveling on *Sultana*, so yeah. I think weather patterns are anecdotally different.

SHEA: Do you have a favorite Chesapeake tradition? I mean, as somebody who sails log canoes in winter. [Laughs]

DUMHART: [00:48:04] I love picking crabs. You know, I think of Chesapeake traditions, that really is... It's something that most people who grew up around here know how to do, and it's also something that everyone has opinions on how to do, and I will... I'll confess here on the record that for the first three years that I was dating my husband, I pretended not to know how to pick crabs because he and his dad have differing opinions on how it should be done, and so every time for three years... And his dad likes to crab pretty much every weekend, so we ate many bushels of crabs in three years. They would have an ongoing competition to prove that their method was better and would sit on either side of me saying, "Look, if you do it like this, you get this much meat. Here, have this." "Look, if you do it like this, you get this much meat. Here, have this." [Laughter] Until I finally confessed that I did, in fact, know how to do it. I had my own method that my dad had taught me because his landlord, when my parents were

dating, were, like, retired crab pickers, and so they're sharp knife people. My in-laws are dull knife people. It's a... You know, they... It's a whole other way that my in-laws had never done it, and so then one day I brought a sharp knife and went to town and had my own crabs. [Laughs] They were not amused that they had been had for the last three years and I'd been eating all of their crab meat.

SHEA: Well, I think it's brilliant. I've heard that there are regional ways to pick too.

DUMHART: [00:49:35] Mm-hmm. That's true, and my dad's family is all from Charles County, and my in-laws now live in Calvert, but grew up in the... What is it? The Olney Chesapeake City area.

SHEA: A little different. [Laughs] This is... I was just thinking about how does spending time on the water work into your life, shape it? [Laughter] And I was...

DUMHART: [00:50:07] How do I make time to spend time off the water, I think, is the better question.

SHEA: ...is probably a better question. [Laughter]

DUMHART: [00:50:15] You know, it's cold in the winter, so [laughs] I don't spend that much time on the water when it's cold out.

SHEA: Does the *Sultana* go out in the winter?

DUMHART: [00:50:25] No, we typically end our season the week before Thanksgiving, so right after tea party... I'm sorry, downrigging. Right after downrigging weekend, we throw a big party, and then we actually... We say Big D Downrigging Festival, little d downrig the boat, take the boat apart, the crew do some maintenance, and then we send them all home for the winter. And then the boat just stays. We move to the inside slip and we'll stay there until the first week in March. We'll put the boat back together. And so we do a lot of maintenance in the shop, or I can use time off for... You know, do professional development. The Tall Ships of America Conference is usually then. So lots happens in the winter, but not on... Not moving the boat on the water.

SHEA: That was a question, like, I did have for you about the systems on the boat.

DUMHART: [00:51:08] Mm-hmm?

SHEA: Are you responsible for maintaining all the systems or is that some...

DUMHART: [00:51:13] Yes. So the captains are in charge of maintaining systems or supervising. You know, we have checklists of... For the crew to check things on a daily,

monthly, quarterly basis. We're responsible for troubleshooting, repairing, and then, you know, calling a professional for anything that we can't take care of ourselves. So we typically, like, have a diesel engine mechanic come out and do an oil change at the start of the season, and then we maintain an engine throughout the season, and if there's a problem we can't fix, we call them, and then we have them do an oil change at the end of the season... Or, you know, a whole, like, systems check at the end of the season. Or, like, you know, we got a new VHF [Very High Frequency Radio] this winter, and so the other captain and I worked together and installed that and, like, reran the antenna wire and, yeah, things that are in the wheelhouse, we take care of, and things that are not... Like, the GPS receiver has been a little spotty. We'll have the, you know, marine electrician out to look at that probably, you know, while we're hauled out next month.

SHEA: So you haul out in June?

DUMHART: [00:52:29] Usually it's August. It's June this year because the yard we usually go to was closed last year and we couldn't get in with anybody else. And so we're trying something new. We'll see if we like it.

SHEA: Mm-hmm.

DUMHART: [00:52:43] Maybe it'll be cooler than August. That would be nice. If it's less humid, the paint will dry better. Mm-hmm.

SHEA: That would be good, yeah. So what will you do in June, then? Now that she's out?

DUMHART: [00:52:57] Yeah. So we'll be hauled for a little over... Probably just three weeks, and the crew all do the work of maintaining the boat. So we'll haul out, we have a dry dock inspection with the coastguard, and then we'll put new bottom paint on and we'll sand and paint the top sides. We'll do a couple other little projects. We're installing a new propane stove. We're installing a new wakefulness of the watch system, which is another part of the interim ruling on fire safety. So now when crew do anchor watch, they're going to have to press a button every half hour or it's going to make very loud noises in my cabin and let me know the crew has fallen asleep or is derelict in their duties, so.

SHEA: Could you explain that more?

DUMHART: [00:53:43] Yeah.

SHEA: What happened? Why is there this new ruling?

DUMHART: [00:53:46] If you remember the dive boat fire on the *Conception* back in 2019, so this new interim ruling on fire

safety is meant to mitigate a lot of the factors in that tragedy. And so we now have interconnected smoke detectors, so if one goes off, they all go off. And we have... The easiest thing to implement is we do training on how to use the fire exits with our overnight passengers versus just pointing them out. We actually set it up and use them and have added more signage about where they are and how to use them. And then this wakefulness of the watch system is to ensure that when we're at anchor, the crew and the... Have been doing this for hundreds of years, right? Somebody is awake and checking on the boat and making sure that everything's fine. And so what we're adding is these boxes which there's a lot of different companies. The one we chose works by... Like, you have a, like, command station, which will be in the captain's cabin, and you have a key to turn it on, and you can set the interval somewhere between zero and, like, 90 minutes or something. And then there's, like, remote buttons where you just have to push the button before the interval is up or loud noises happen. [Laughs] And so the, like, official legal term is wakefulness of the watch. You have to make sure that your officer on watch is awake and keeping the boat safe so that if there is a fire, they get everyone off

the boat, which is one of the things that didn't happen in the *Conception* tragedy is that all of the ship's crew were asleep when the fire broke out. So we'll have one in the main hold where kids sleep and one at the binnacle where all our electronics are, and the crew will just have to patrol the boat and push the button and push the button every half hour so I know that they haven't fallen asleep.

SHEA: How many people can you sleep on the *Sultana*?

DUMHART: [00:55:58] We can carry 10 passengers overnight. We limit it to nine just for space and comfort. So nine passengers and six crew is 15 total.

SHEA: Do you have your own captain's cabin?

DUMHART: [00:56:18] Yes. So down below is very historically accurate. Most of the modern accommodations... Luxuries are hidden, so kids don't see our, like, marine toilet or our stove or our refrigerator or, you know, our 12-volt power system. And so the lieutenant's cabin on the original *Sultana* and the way we have it set up today is, like, the back third... Quarter of the boat, which has its own door. It has three bunks. Two of them are open to, like, the room, and the desk is in the room, and then what would've been the bread room or where the provisions were stored on the original *Sultana* is the modern day captain's

cabin. And so with school groups, we keep the door closed. We're like, "That's where the bread would be. Here's where the gunpowder would be." But if you open the door, you'll find the breaker panel for all of the 12-volt power and all of our document storage and the captain's bunk.

SHEA: So what's it like to spend all this time living on the boat?

DUMHART: [00:57:24] It's so fun. It really... It is fun to watch the crew, like, enjoy each other's company. You know, they all played a board game last night. And it's really nice to, like... I don't know. It allows us to be more a part of the communities that we're serving. You know, the crew all get to know their favorite spots in Saint Michaels or their favorite spots in Cambridge. And it adds some variety to our programming. I worked with someone who... On the boat many years ago who said, you know, "Every time you get bored with something, it's time to do a different thing," which is true. We sail for a month out of Chestertown, and so just when you think, like, "I cannot go down to 37A and turn around and come back one more time," then it's time to leave and go on travel for the month of May. And then, you know, we've been doing the same trips over and over here in Saint Michaels, and just

when you think, "If I sail this same lap around the harbor one more time," then oh my gosh, it's time to go back for Tea Party, and, you know, fire a bunch of blank guns at reenactors and then haul the boat and then sand and paint, and then when you can't sand one more day, it's time to paint it again. But yeah, I like living on the boat because it's part of the, like, cyclical nature of the season. It, like, always marks, like, "Oh, now it's really spring. It's almost... Like, it's almost summer, and the crew are really going to know each other well and know the boat really well, and it gives them time to get comfortable on board so that next month when we have kids on board, they'll say, like, Oh, this is, like, a good spot to sit and eat your lunch, or, like, this is the best spot in the shade when it's this time of day." And yeah, it's a fun way to get to know the boat and each other better.

SHEA: So do you rotate cooking or...

DUMHART: [00:59:30] In the spring and the fall, we do. So the crew rotate through duty all the time, whether we're in Chestertown or out of town, and so in the spring and the fall, the duty person cooks dinner. And then during the summer, one of the deckhands, which this year is Taia, will be acting as the cook all summer. And that makes it a

little easier for the duration of summer programs because they get to get in a routine and, like, you know, every Wednesday, we have the same thing for lunch, so, you know, the first week might be a little rocky, but the second week, they're going to make the same thing and have learned everything that went wrong the first time. So by eight weeks of summer camp, like, everybody's in their groove and, like, knows how long things take and knows what to expect and what to provision. And that's really... And then all of the rest of the crew have the mental space to do more of the heavy lifting in behavior management and keeping the kids engaged and what education content do we want to focus on today? Or what sails do we want to set? And all those things.

SHEA: It's a well-oiled machine here.

DUMHART: [01:00:32] *Sultana* has been... You know, they do a lot of things right, have really found a program that works for them and just continue to improve on what's already a great model, so.

SHEA: So yeah, I was thinking this on the boat. Do you have scripts that you use or just everybody invents their own script that they... [Coughs]

DUMHART: [01:00:56] We have...

SHEA: It was very good. [Laughs]

DUMHART: [01:00:59] We have... Hidden in each education bin for the different stations is a little laminated sheet of, like, key vocabulary words, and it's in three tiers. It's, like, the basic, or, like, you have extra time, or, like, you have extra extra time. But that's... It's not a script and there's no, like... There's no way to do the station wrong unless you give information that's factually wrong or the kids don't have fun, right? So if the points we want to hit during navigation, which you saw several times, is, like, you use a chart, right? A chart is like a map for the water. The depth is important and a lead line measures depth, right? If they don't remember the word chart, if they don't remember the word lead line, but they remember, like, I threw something off the boat and I learned how deep the water was, I... You know, we don't need to attach vocabulary to that. Like, I just want them to have had an experience. The memorable experience is goal number one, and, like, what words and what order you want to use to meet the other goals is totally up to the educator. Now, there's a... You know, I've been doing this for a long time, and so I can always offer advice. I can say, "If you phrase it this way, you might be more

successful." But there's no rules for, "You have to say this," or, "You have to say this." Or, like, the staysail station today, right? If the sail goes up and the sail comes down and the kids had fun, I don't care if they know if they pulled on the halyard or downhaul. Like, those are bonus things. That's great. But, you know, if you are spending the time drilling the vocabulary into the kids' heads and they didn't get the joy of pulling on the rope, that's not a win.

SHEA: How did you get involved with this Her Helm project?

DUMHART: [01:02:56] What a crazy small world story. [Laughter]

So I was hanging out with our... Sultana Education Foundation, not the boat, but the organization in the whole Education Center... Like, our shore-based education had an education assistant last year, and we were hanging out, and I was talking about that camp that paid me 100 dollars a week for a six-day work week, and he was like, "Oh, is that Sea Camp?" And I was like, "Yeah, it is." He said, "Oh, my friend Erica worked at Sea Camp." And I said, "Erica Baugh?" And he said, "Yeah, how do you know her?"

[Laughs] I said, "Erica Baugh was my roommate at Sea Camp. It was both of our first jobs when, you know, we had just graduated college in 2008." And he said, "No way, she

lives on her boat in Kent Narrows." I said, "No way." And it turned out that she actually had just moved her boat from Kent Narrows to Cambridge where *Sultana* was going next week. He said, "I have her number." He texted her. She texted me. She said, "You're going to be in Cambridge. Let's get together." We got together and she said, "My friend Kristen is doing this really cool project. She should definitely contact you. Your boat's so cool." Every time Erica introduces me to someone, she says, "This is my friend Kate. She docks *Sultana* without bow thrusters." [Laughter]

SHEA: She's right.

DUMHART: [01:04:20] Right? So that's how I found out about it. Erica had already been photographed for the project. That's how I got involved. And now every time I'm in Cambridge, Erica and I catch up, and yeah, it's really... It's a wonderful small world.

SHEA: So do you have any advice for future female captains? I mean, what advice would you give them?

DUMHART: [01:04:48] A little bit of what we were saying earlier is find your confidence and use your voice, and if you trust yourself to fix a problem that you create, then you should command the authority that you deserve, right? The

whole system falls apart if the true don't... If the crew don't trust me to give an order, if they're going to second guess that I'm doing the right thing, and so I have to know that the thing that I do will be the right thing because I did it. Like I said earlier, it... Even if I wouldn't do it that way again, in every situation I go into, even if I don't feel it on the inside, on the outside my demeanor and my voice, I hope, command confidence. You know, I... It's a lot about the voice, not just being heard, which when there's 25 kids talking on deck or there's power saws at the shipyard or any of those things, like, being heard, having a voice that commands attention, that your ear turns to. It's something that I had to develop. But also using my voice in the, like, philosophical sense of saying, "This is what I want. This is what I choose. This is what I think is right." And keeping the little voice of, "Is that actually right? Is this really what I wanted?" to, you know, my deep thoughts at the end of the day about how to improve or, you know, a phone call with a mentor of, "What would you have done?" But if I'm... If I have the tiller tackle in my hand, then I have to be clear and in control and calm because the crew can't succeed if I'm not setting them up to succeed, and, you know, the best way to do that

is for them to know that I have control of the situation. Even if the situation has gone sideways, I'm still in control of it. They're not in control of it. I got in a situation I was saying when I hooked the head rig on a piling, and all of the sudden I look, and all the crew have fenders in their hands, trying to, like, get the boat from hitting the piling, and that means that nobody has a dock line in their hand, which is the thing I need to fix the problem. And so we had muster at the end of the day where I said, "I know that you don't want me to hurt the boat. I understand that, you know, you want me to succeed. You want the boat to be safe, and those are all great things. But I'm standing in the back of the boat for a reason. I can see the whole picture, and unless I've told you to pick up a fender, then you need to have your hand on the dock line because you can't see what I can see for what I need to fix the situation. Like, you just have to trust that I'm going to tell you what to do. It might take a while. It might be messy. I might break a part of the boat that I'm going to have to fix later. But I need you to do what I ask you to. You can give me information, but you can't decide to do a different thing until I've told you to do it."

SHEA: [Laughter] Bravo, bravo. Is there anything else you'd like to add to this conversation that we haven't talked about? Anything else about you?

DUMHART: [01:08:35] I think... This is something Forrest, the other captain and I, have talked about some is that, you know, I was the mate for his first season, but I had already been hired to come back when they hired him, and so then he interviewed me a second time, and there was a whole turnover of captains during the pandemic. And it... Forrest has said before that because I had been on the boat so recently and was really familiar with the rig and had been trained really well by the previous captain, it made his job very easy, coming back to *Sultana*. And he had been the mate about a decade before me, and now is the senior captain. And then last year, when we were both captains, we had to train a new mate, and I was like, "I just... Why is this so hard?" And Forrest was like, "I don't... Like, why is it so hard? Like, I got this, you know, really great mate my first season, and we've got to now train this person who hasn't done it before." And I had to keep reminding him, "You got second season [laughs] Kate. Like, I was coming back, having done a whole season, gotten my license, driven a different boat." You know, it wasn't

that long ago. It was only 2019 that I was completely underwater trying to learn to be the mate on *Sultana*. In fact, if you look at my little, "What Did I Learn Today?" notebook from 2019, the day we did education training, [laughs] I wrote, "I've made a terrible mistake. I should've applied to be the ed director. It's so much easier." And I had a really excellent teacher. The captain at that time was Michael Fiorentino and he was excellent, an excellent sailor. [Birds chirping] He did a wonderful job maintaining the boat and taught me everything that I needed to know about *Sultana* to succeed at sailing *Sultana*. And that was proven when I, [laughs] a fully formed trained mate, went sailing my next season with Forrest, and, you know, he's the same captain that I saw sailing *Sultana* that prompted me to quit my job and work for *Sultana* instead. It's amazing how lucky I am to have found a place that I didn't really know that I would fit so well and the opportunity to learn to sail the boat, to be good at sailing the boat, to use the boat as a platform for the program that I'm so passionate about. And then the opportunity to spend the winter being able to pop out of my office and, you know, teach a program to kindergartners for an hour, I can't... If I had dreamed up my perfect job, I

couldn't have been able to write something that I enjoy so much.

SHEA: That's wonderful. I've got to ask you about how hard was it to do the license? But is that... I mean, was that hard? [Laughs]

DUMHART: [01:11:55] The hardest thing is the waiting period. You know, if you can read a checklist and, you know, not everyone... Especially not everyone in sailing is very academic, you know, and there's a lot. It's a hard test, and there's a lot of memorization, and there's a lot of, like, trick questions, especially in rules of the road. I self-studied partly because I was busy at work and I couldn't take time off to go to school and partly because it was the pandemic, and so if I had wanted to... I had started self-studying in February of 2020, and if I had found that self-study wasn't working and I wanted to go to school, by March of 2020 I couldn't go anywhere anyway. So I actually... I had gotten really lucky in that all my paperwork was in before February and all I needed to do was test, and so then I just had to wait and wait and wait for a time that I could go take the test in person. Yeah, as soon as I took the test, I got the paper in my hand. There's lots of other ways around to do it, and *Sultana*

tries to mentor our seasonal crew, especially ones who are looking to stay in the field. We offer professional development. If they agree to stay a second season, then we'll pay for them to go to school and get licensed and assist with all the paperwork and all the, you know, regulatory hurdles, which mostly is, you know, how closely can you read the fine print on the checklist? And how long do you want to wait?

SHEA: Thank you very much. Anything else?

DUMHART: [01:13:41] I don't think so.

SHEA: Legacy? Is there anything that you want people to know about Captain Kate?

DUMHART: [01:13:48] You know, the first day last spring that I was driving the boat and, you know, I had worked on the skipjack and I had driven a number of public sails before, but I got my license in 2020. No schools were in session. We weren't doing education. And so it wasn't until the spring of '22 that I was driving the boat for an education program, and the first day that I stepped up on the hatch to do the safety talk like I did today, and I said, "My name's Kate and I'm the captain," there was three little girls in the front row whose eyes got so big, and they looked at each other and they looked back at me, and I

thought, "Oh my gosh." [Gasps] I didn't realize that just doing something that I love could open the eyes of kids for what they could love.

SHEA: Thank you very much. Brilliant. Here we are, this.

DUMHART: [01:14:49] A lot of people come to *Sultana* and say, "Are you the first female captain?" Especially on public sails, especially older people, seeing a woman in this role is still a bit of a novelty. And *Sultana* from the beginning has been a pretty progressive organization. Their first captain was a woman. I think more of 50 percent of the captains who've sailed *Sultana* are women, and I think... I have talked with previous captains some sort of about the next generation of feminism is that I really look forward to the day that someone comes on the boat and doesn't say, "It's so great to see a woman driving," because my gender has nothing to do with my ability to steer the boat. Does it have something to do with my demeanor as a leader? Sure. Does it have something to do with the, like, empathy that I have for other women in the space? Yes. And does it have something to do with, like, how I feel the need to be overprepared, right? Overcorrect for the assumptions that especially older gentlemen have about my abilities? It certainly

impacts all those things, but it doesn't impact my ability to put the throttle down and make the boat turn. And so looking at me and looking at my ability to drive the boat... Like, what I look like has nothing to do with how I set the sails and make the boat go. And I would really love for people to stop seeing me as a woman captain and just see me as a captain who learned to sail really late [laughs] in life and really loves it.

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