

OH Terri Moon Cronk

SHEA: -- you.

CRONK: [00:00:00] Okay. Okay, I'm Terri Moon Cronk. It's T-E-R-R-I. Double last name is Moon, M-O-O-N Cronk, C-R-O-N-K. Date of birth is December 30th, 1954. I'm 68. I live in Rose Haven, Maryland in the Herrington Harbor South Marina area. It's a little neighborhood next to the marina. And let's see. I'm retired by almost a year from Department of Defense [DOD], where I was a journalist for 47 years, but I have some newspaper experience too and radio and TV in the early days. But in the Pentagon, I was assigned to DOD News, which was a website to keep military and civilians in the Pentagon informed of what was, you know... Anything military, really, is what that was about, and national security was the overriding theme. So we followed the Secretary of Defense around, his deputy, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. We traveled with them and followed them around. If they were giving speeches somewhere, we were on it, and we covered the speech and write a story. That's basically what we did. Or if there was some new initiative or something, it was... It was highly technical. It was the toughest job I ever

had because it was a... It was a... Like, a daily newspaper. We were expected to write every day and file a story every day, which wasn't a problem during Iraq and Afghanistan, but then when things started leveling off, we started finding other things to write about. Like, for me, it was military medicine. That was a big thing for me that I really enjoyed because I used to work at Walter Reed in the old Bethesda Naval Hospital, which is now Walter Reed National Military Medical Center. The name was changed of the old Bethesda... And I'm sure you know where that is because you're, you know, Bethesda. So...where was I going with that?

SHEA: How did you get involved with the Her Helm Project?

CRONK: [00:02:39] Actually, I was Facebook friends with another woman, Eunice Lin. You might... She might be on your list. And she posted some really adorable photos that Kristen took of her, and she said, "It's for this project called Her Helm about women who were captains of their boats," and... Is the recording okay?

SHEA: Yeah.

CRONK: [00:03:04] Okay. And I thought, "Scott doesn't know that much about sailing," [laughs] even though, you know, it's like a co-ownership thing, but... So he leaned on me

to teach him some things, and then he's picked up a lot, and he's doing really well now, so we... We're kind of co-captain, I guess, these days. But I saw that Eunice, you know, was featured in this thing, and I thought, "Well, that's kind of cool. Maybe I'll call Kristen and see if she can use me. You know, I don't know what she needs, but..." And she came out and sat and we chatted. She didn't take a single note, and she got my story straight, you know, from the beginning. When I started sailing at 15 in the marina itself before it was built out, it was, like, a big... There was, like, a big pond at the back of the marina. So... Let's see...

SHEA: Did your family sail? Were they boaters at all?

CRONK: [00:04:09] They were boaters. My dad's family and my stepfather's family, my mom, all of them were into powerboating. I was the only one out of all those people who wanted to sail, and I just decided when I was about 13 or 14 that's what I wanted to do. And it was probably... Well, it was very much because you're at the whim of Mother Nature, you know? You're under sail. You don't know where it's going to take you, necessarily, with the wind and the currents, and... Instead of just [claps] getting into a powerboat and taking off and going from point A to point B,

this one involved a little bit more of a challenge, sailing did. So I just thought it would be cool to sail. In fact, I think I remember trying to build with my little friends here in the community... When I was probably about 10, I think we built a raft... Well, we tried to... And put a sail on it, and we dragged it down to the beach, and it promptly sank. [Laughter] So we didn't get very far, but I... I've just always wanted to sail, and yeah, nobody in my family sails at all.

SHEA: So what inspired you? What made you want to do it?

CRONK: [00:05:24] Just being... The challenge of the wind and the tides and the currents and being at the whim of Mother Nature and, you know, taking on that challenge, really. I just... I don't know. I guess I wanted more of an adventure than powerboating would afford me. So I bought my first sailboat when I was 15. I was with my mom at Fort Belvoir and we took a ride through the area where boats were on the hard, and here was this little Comet, 16-foot wood boat for sale. It came with all kinds of sails and a trailer and everything. It was 500 dollars. Let me think about that a minute. Five hundred dollars. So my mother wrote a check and then I had that money in my account, so I gave it to her, and we dragged it home, and I

didn't know what to do with it because I had never sailed. But there was an old farmer who lived his whole life up here on the hill... Chesapeake Overlook is what it's called now, where the homes are. He sold his farm to a developer and those homes were built, and then he moved down right on the marina, this little green clapboard house, just a little... You know, for one person. And he had a little dock, and I approached him about keeping my sailboat there, and he was like, "Oh, sure, honey, you know, no problem. You can keep your boat there. And when I was a lad, I used to sail." You know, right here in Herring Bay because his farm overlooked... It gives me goosebumps, thinking about it. It overlooked Herring Bay. It was one of two... I don't know if they're mansions, but one of two big barn houses up at the top of the hill around 261. If you go out of here and you go around the big curve on the marina and you go up the hill, those two houses are there, and he... One of those was his. His name was Hamilton... We called him Ham, I guess... Samsbury. And he was an older gentleman. He was... He had to be in his seventies, and we'd sit out under his oak tree overlooking this big pond where Joe Rose had stopped building docks. Of course, now it's all filled in with docks that Steuart

Chaney's put in. But at the time, it was, like, a big pond, and we'd sit under his oak tree, and he'd chew tobacco and spit it on the ground and tell me stories about soft crabbing under sail. I don't know how he did it, but they rigged some kind of a sailboat when he was a kid, and that side... It's Old Colony Cove Farm that opens directly into Herrington... Or Herring Bay, rather, on the other side of the channel. It's very shallow there, and people can walk almost a mile before they're in deep water. So a lot of the tenant farmers and things would go out there with these great big crab nets and... On poles and just scoop up soft shell crabs. But Mr. Samsbury would actually do it under sail, so he was, like, "Well, honey, I could teach you how to sail." He was an old Southern Maryland farmer, you know, grew tobacco and corn and stuff like that, and that was his life. And he used to tell me, you know, some of the local lore, some of the... You know, some of the old houses here that have since fallen down. But he said, "Yeah, when that house was occupied, the people could see the bay and see, like, dolphin feeding off fish and sharks feeding off whatever... Crabs or whatever." And it was just a real illustrative history of Herring Bay when he was a boy. So we got the boat, got the

sailboat in the water at his dock, and we decided to take it for a sail on its maiden journey... Maiden voyage. And the only thing we didn't do was secure the sail to the boom [laughs] and we got out there on that big expansive water. It's... You know, used to be there, and the wind caught us, and we were just going around, and this way and that way, and because the sail wasn't on the boom, you know, we were kind of in trouble. And he had this great, big straw hat on, you know, like a farmer would wear, and it went blowing off, and [laughs] I remember him going, "Oh my." You know? And we circled back and grabbed his hat, and... But he taught me some of the basics of sailing, as much as I knew. He taught me everything. And I used... Here I was 15, so I'd take a lot of my neighborhood friends and pile into the boat and just take off. My mother probably would have a heart attack now if she knew. One time we got... We sailed over toward Deale and the wind picked up and we got marooned on somebody's riprap in front of their house... Their rocks. So we had to tie the boat down, you know, to keep it safe and get a ride home. I don't even remember how we got home. But, you know, we had our little mishaps. [laughs]

SHEA: Did you take any classes?

CRONK: [00:11:23] Not at that point, but when I was 17, I took my first class in Edgewater because my parents were living... My mother and stepfather were living in Edgewater, even... I was here with my grandmother. So I landed in Edgewater to live there, and there was a coastguard course on sailing. So I signed up for it, and my stepfather, the big powerboater with the 32-foot cruiser and all that stuff, he signed up with me to take the sailing class, knowing full well he would never sail. He just took it with me and aced it. I mean, he just did really well. They used to take... My parents took... What's it called? Power auxiliary classes? Something like that. Power squadron.

SHEA: Yeah.

CRONK: [00:12:17] That's what it was, power squadron classes, which are more advanced than, like, the coastguard introductory classes. So they took a lot of classes. They were very serious about boating safely. So I think that's why he took that course with me, to make sure that I did things right. [Laughs] But I was flattered that he did that for me. It was really nice. And then I learned a lot from that class, and I think it was a couple years after that, I went to Annapolis Sailing School and took their

weekend, four-day class... Something like that, three or four days, where they actually put you in Rainbows and take you out and... Because the coastguard class was just a lecture. There was no boating involved. I think they taught us how to tie knots, but that... You know, there was no hands-on boat stuff. So I went to Annapolis Sailing School and really, really learned a lot, and... Like, how to get back without a motor and stuff [laughs] because I didn't have a motor on my little Comet.

SHEA: So were you the only female? Or were you supported, being a woman taking these classes? Or what was that like?

CRONK: [00:13:34] Oh boy.

SHEA: I think that's wonderful, your stepfather. [Laughs]

CRONK: [00:13:37] Yeah. It really was cool because he...

You know, he wasn't my biological dad, but he felt like he was, you know. And I don't remember... You know, I just kept my boat... My sailboat at their house because they lived right on the water at Edgewater. Selby was the name of the community. And I would just [claps] take off on my boat and, you know, take a friend or not, just do solo sailing, because it was only 16 feet. It wasn't a big boat. It had a jib [claps] and mainsail. I don't remember... Of course, that was 50 years ago [laughs] so I

don't really remember, like, any discrimination or whatever you want to call it. You know, like, "You're just a girl sailing," or something like that. I just didn't run into people who thought that. And Annapolis Sailing School, it was probably mostly men in my class. Probably was. But I don't remember having any issues because of it. It's just... I mean, here it is, 2023, and people look at the boat and assume it's Scott's and not mine, and that I don't know... I'm just a person on the bow of the boat with the boathook, you know? Last year, we were coming in from a sail, and some guy was on his 65-foot cruiser, and he yelled over something like, "You can always tell...you can always tell who the woman is on the boat because she's standing on the bow with the boathook," and I started to say, "Listen, dude, [laughs] I know more about sailing than he does." You know, because Scott was piloting it in. But yeah, that assumption was there, that I was just backup. So even today. And I mentioned earlier when we brought my little sailboat back from the marina, my 21-footer, to put it in the driveway, my neighbor just said, "Hey Scott, when did you get a sailboat?" And I was like, "Chris, it's mine." He goes, "Oh, it is?" I'm like, "Yeah. I've been sailing all my life, you know?" The only time I didn't

sail was when I moved to Colorado to raise my kids for 22 years because there's just no sailing out there. We got into horses instead. But I always took this boat with me. This boat, this little one that looks like a... Yeah, what did I call it? You said Laser. I said Sunfish. I've dragged that thing all over the country and... Just to have it. So I don't know if I'm going to take it this time or not because I don't know if the trailer's really up to it. But yeah, I've always had a sailboat, even... Whether or not I was in an active sailing role or position or whatever. So when I came back here in 2010 to assume my federal government employment again, you know, for retirement and all that stuff... Because I had worked for a newspaper out there as a crime reporter and copyeditor and special sections editor, and we got to do everything because it was a nonunion job. We took photos, and I... My first crime case was a triple homicide. You know, it was crazy. But I just didn't sail. I just... You know, something was broken on the stern, and I just couldn't... There was nobody out there to help me because there's very little sailing.

SHEA: Did you miss it?

CRONK: [00:17:47] I did. I did, yeah, and I tried to rig it only to find that I couldn't connect the rudder because a piece had broken off and there was just nobody who was maritime-oriented in Denver who knew what to do with it. So it just kind of sat in the barn. But yeah, I've been dragging that boat... The story with the Comet, when I was keeping it at my parents' house in Selby because they were on the water, Hurricane... This is '72, '73... Agnes.

SHEA: Agnes.

CRONK: [00:18:31] Yeah, she came through and just splintered my wooden sailboat. Splintered it. I mean, there was nothing left. So my stepfather took the insurance money, went out, and bought this one for me as a replacement, surprised me with it. So... And it's fiberglass, so it's held up all this time, and I've taken so many people sailing.

SHEA: What's her name?

CRONK: [00:18:58] Oh, the boat's name? You know, she doesn't really have a name. I should... I think I named her early on, but there's no name on her. I should probably [laughs] do that. Our Catalina 30 is called *Daze Off*, and it came with... The name came with the boat, and we liked it, and it's supposed to be sailor lore. If you change the name,

it's bad luck. So I changed the name of my MacGregor to *Trouble Again*, which is a Linda Ronstadt song, and I'm a huge fan of Linda Ronstadt, so I thought, "*Trouble Again*, me with a sailboat. Yep, that's... [Laughs] That's fitting."

SHEA: So why do you say *Trouble Again*, you and a sailboat?

CRONK: [00:19:51] Because I just... I'd go out without a motor and then try to get back in and then have to get towed in or something like that, you know, when I was younger before I really took classes, and even after I took classes. I've never been... I always had some out... I didn't always have some outboard, but eventually... And I think you can put an outboard on that. And my Comet didn't have an outboard, so I'd always have to sail in and out, and it was a little dicey. That channel at Herrington Harbor is very narrow, as you know. They don't like for you to sail in and out of it. So I'd have to get a motor, and then I couldn't start the motor because I don't have the strength. I can't start a lawnmower, so pulling on that cord was kind of tricky until I bought a four-stroke sail engine and put it on that board over there, so that helped a lot [laughs] because I just had a little two-horse, and it was old and it came with the boat and just,

you know... When it worked, it worked great. It pushed the boat along just fine. But invariably I'd get out there and the motor wouldn't start because I couldn't quite get it to trigger, you know. I can sail but when it comes to mechanics, you know, with an engine, I'm not talented at all. So sometimes I take some guy with me, some guy friend, and it's like, "Okay, you start the engine. You know, if I can't do it, maybe you can do it because you have more strength," and it kind of pulled low. And I had a problem with my shoulder. I just, you know, couldn't... Didn't do it very well. The four-horse made a big difference, though. I could start that. It was just easier. It was new, and I have all that stuff in my shed, all these motors, and... [Laughs] And I collect boats, and... Scott and I, between the two of us, we have 11 boats. We have two kayaks right there, the sailboat there in the driveway, the one on Eastern Shore, this one in the yard, and then at his place in Ocean Pines, we've got... He's got a canoe, some kind of outboard, like, fishing boat, a couple more kayaks, and then he has a place in Fort Myers, Florida, and so he's got kayaks down there. But they all total to 11 boats. Oh, plus a dinghy for the Catalina. So that's a lot of boats. We probably need

to... But wherever we go, we go boating, if it's kayaking or sailing or whatever, so we like to get out on the water regardless.

SHEA: Why? Why? Why do you enjoy going out on the water?

CRONK: [00:22:56] It's peaceful and it just feels like home.

I just can't... I don't know. When I first got to Denver, first two years I was very homesick for water. I just couldn't stand... I would actually see the bay as I looked off my patio, and there was this big valley with houses in it. It might be a little hazy. My neighbor called me one day when she saw we standing out there, and she's from Salisbury, Maryland, and she said, "What are you doing?" I said, "I'm just looking at the bay, just checking the tides, you know?" [Laughs] And she said, "Maybe you need to have another cup of coffee because there's no bay out there," and I was like, "Oh, yeah, right, right." But it was just engrained in my brain that the bay was out there, and I missed the water something horrible. I really did. And that had something to do with my coming back here, but I also came back because of a job with the DOD. So... But yeah, I got busy, got this boat fixed up. It had a hole in it from hail in Denver and a friend of mine fixed it for me, and I found a little trailer, the little red one it's

sitting on. We put that together so I was able to move it and take it down here. I was living in Silver Spring and I'd come down to Chesapeake Beach and launch it under that bridge and barely, narrowly get through. I took Scott on my... This little boat, I think, two years ago. We started out from Chesapeake Beach, got under the bridge, and what was a very calm day, all of the sudden, the wind really picked up, and we were having trouble getting out. And so somebody said... Somebody coming in said, "You guys want a tow?" Because I didn't have a motor. And I said, "Sure." He goes, "Which way are you going?" I said, "Out." He goes, "You're going out? In that wind?" And I was like, "Yeah, [laughs] sure." Scott looked at me like, "Are you nuts?" So we went out, and oh boy, you know, waves are crashing over the bow of the boat, and it was filling up the cockpit. And because I was sitting toward the stern and, you know, using the... Yeah, not the rudder. What do you call it? My brain just went blank.

SHEA: The tiller.

CRONK: [00:25:37] The tiller, thank you. Using the tiller, there's a spot that's slick on the back of the boat, and I slid right off and I had my feet hooked inside the cockpit, which is only about this big, and Scott grabbed my hand.

You know, my butt went in and I laid back in the water like this, like, "Oh great, here I go," [laughs] you know? And, you know, it was two-foot waves or something or more, so it was probably 15 knots, and between having my feet in the cockpit and him pulling me in, I was able to pull myself back up and get back in the boat. But if he had lost me, I don't know what he would've done because he didn't know how to sail it. [Laughs] He was just... Oh gosh, I've had so many... I capsized it one time. I've only capsized once in my life and I had my daughter with me from Denver and she really wanted to go sailing, and we took the boat up to a lake above Silver... Above Gaithersburg, and I pulled... I got caught up in conversation, pulled a jib, and... Because I couldn't come about the other way, and she, I think, had her foot on the line or something, and over we went. It happened just like that, you know? And I was mortified because here I was, sixty-something, and I had never flipped a boat, not ever, ever, ever, not ever. So I think it was the park police came and got us and towed us with the boat upside down, and the sail was still up upside down because we just clung to the bottom of the hull. And some guy about my age, when we got to the dock, he said, "Don't worry about it." He said, "Everybody who sails

capsizes once in a while." And I said, "I've just never done it." [Laughs] So I... And my daughter's freezing to death and doesn't understand, and to me... And I hit that water. It was May and it was cold. It was a really deep lake, and... But adrenaline kicked in, like, "I've got to save us," and, you know, I lost my phone, my keys, my... You know, all this stuff I had on me. It was just a dumb move. I just was telling her some story and I was like... I can't come about because the wind is just not where it should be, you know, and I tried and tried, and I couldn't. I was like, "Oh, to hell with it." So I just threw it the other way... The tiller the other way and went and threw that jib, and we went over in about a second. So [laughs] I felt so bad for her because she was so cold, but I was like... The adrenaline kept me warm. But she went sailing with me again. She did go again twice, at least, with the MacGregor, and then the Catalina. So she has a connection to the Bay, even though she was five when we left here. She just loves the water and feels very connected to the Chesapeake Bay and Herring Bay because of me, because you can go pretty far on Herring Bay before you get out even close to the channel. And it's great down here because you don't have to deal with Annapolis traffic, boat traffic.

You can just go out here and not see a soul, you know, or at least no one you're going to run into or they're going to run into you or something. And so I don't know if I'm telling what you...

SHEA: Yeah.

CRONK: [00:29:22] ...what you want to know or not.

SHEA: So you grew up here? So what was Rose Haven like? Who was this... What's his name?

CRONK: [00:29:32] Joe Rose?

SHEA: Joe Rose. And who was the new guy, and... So what's the history of Rose Haven, this whole area?

CRONK: [00:29:38] Okay.

SHEA: What's happened out here?

CRONK: [00:29:40] Joe Rose was probably... He was a native New Yorker, he and his wife Jean, and he had back in the... Back in its heyday in North Beach... I don't know how much you know about North Beach or Chesapeake Beach, but North Beach was a real hot spot for gambling and nightclubs and bands and dancing and Hell's Angels coming through and breaking up everything, you know. And my grandmother and I... I was, like, three, a little older... We'd sit out there. She was a people watcher and they had these long wooden and iron benches. She'd play bingo and then we'd

sit out there and watch the motorcycle groups come in and, you know, hear blaring music from this club and Uncle Billy's and Joe Rose's Musical Bar, and the Gold Key Club, which was a gay club at the time. Actually, it was always a gay club, but, you know, nobody really talked about it. But Joe Rose had a nightclub and it was called Rose's Musical Bar, and for some reason... I don't know what his motivation was, but he started walking from North Beach, which is a mile away, and he just cut through this wooded area. All of this was just wooded and swampy, and he saw that there was a natural channel and marina, you know, that kind of formed itself. And he and his wife had it dug out and established this community of, like, 225 homes, and he built the Rose Haven Yacht Club across the street with the... An Olympics-sized pool, a motel, of course, huge marina. It now holds 600 boats. I think when he had it, it probably had 300 boats in it. And he was all about marketing recreational boating because people used boating for fishing and crabbing and... But not for recreational purposes, so he'd have these big, you know, tournaments... Fishing tournaments and stuff and put out these great books, you know, publications that say, "Go boating. You know, come down and do recreational boating. It's fun,

it's great, it's... You know." So he was really a pioneer for that, for recreational boating, and he was just... He was great. And my father was a musician who had his own orchestra... On-the-road orchestra before World War II. He played sax and clarinet, and he got drafted in the Army, so he went to work at Walter Reed. That's where he was stationed, in the blood bank. And he played music on the side, and he married my mom. She was also enlisted in the Army as a WAC, a Women's Army Corps soldier. She worked in payroll and they got married, and he started working weekends for Joe Rose. He was the very first musician across the street, the very first band, had a little combo, like... Gosh, he played sax, clarinet, there was a drummer, and maybe a keyboardist or something. But he did that every weekend, and the slot machines were going on the time, and all the roulette wheels and stuff, and you couldn't get a toothpick in there because they'd be having these big, like, South Pacific shows, and these women would dress up in, you know, South Pacific grass skirts and stuff, put on shows. And my dad, I've got pictures of him just smiling like, "This is the best," you know? Because he used to really pack people in there. And eventually, I think it was about 1965, the slot machines went out. I'm

thinking it was '65. And Rose Haven just kind of dried up. You know, people just... It kept people from coming. And North Beach too. North Beach became a haven for alcoholics and drug addicts. It was a pit. It was awful. The only people who lived there were really down on their luck, and North Beach, if you lived in North Beach, you immediately had a bad reputation after its heyday and, you know, with the slot machines. So Joe Rose was getting up in his years and he passed away, and his wife Jean sold Rose Haven to Steuart Chaney, who is a boy from the beach, Chesapeake Beach, big group of boys. And he was the straitlaced one who was... You know, they had a lot of money. There was a restaurant called Chaney's, and they had a cement company, and they still do. But he had the money. He was 27 years old and he bought Rose Haven proper... Not the neighborhood, because that was separate, but he bought the yacht club, the gas station, the pool, the motel, and the marina. That whole complex, and turned it in... He changed the name to Herrington Harbor. He did some research... And I haven't been able to duplicate it. I've tried, but I'm not done yet... About the history of this area, and, you know, like, what Native Americans lived here? And he knows all that stuff. And that's how he came

up with the name Herrington, from Herring Bay, and just put a lot of money into it and then expanded out those docks in that little pond area, where Mr. Samsbury was. Mr. Samsbury had passed on by then. And so now he's got 600 slips just here.

SHEA: And how many at North?

CRONK: [00:36:23] Fewer, but I'm not sure how many. Maybe 400. Something like that. Yeah, big money. His son handles that one at North, so... But yeah, when we were... It was great as a kid around here because we could just... You know, we had the beach, we had boats, we had crab nets and we'd walk along the docks and scoop up crabs off the pilings, [clears throat] and we had the pool and a teen bar that Joe Rose set up for us... Like, a teen night. Friday night, we'd have one of the parents watching over us. We'd stop and talk to the cook, the main cook at the club. Her name was Grace and we'd stand outside her window and talk to her. There were about 20 of us, 25 of us who were in school, and we'd stand inside the gas station with the night security guard because he just loved us. He didn't have a family. He was a lonely guy who lived in the motel and he didn't have much, and, you know, except us kids, and he let us come in and get warm while we waited for the bus.

So we were just known as the Rose Haven kids, and there was a rivalry between Rose Haven and the North Beach kids because they were Calvert County, so they'd come cruising through and try to harass our boys in Rose Haven, and our boys would just take off on their bikes and cut through yards and, you know, the guys in the cars from Calvert County couldn't catch them. And it was just crazy stuff. But yeah, the two just didn't mix. [Laughs] It was almost like *West Side Story*, you know? So... But it was a great place. In fact, my parents, I was 10 when they got divorced, and we lived in Wheaton and had the summer house down here in Alabama, this street out here at the end. And when my parents got divorced, my mother said to me, "Where do you want to live? Do you want to live in Wheaton or do you want to live in Rose Haven?" And I said, "Oh, Rose Haven." I wanted to be near the water and I was 10, and my grandmother who lived with us and raised me, my mother said to her, "Where do you want to live?" And she said, "Wherever Terri wants to live." So the three of us somehow lived in that little two-bedroom house, and my grandmother and I shared a room, and my mom had her own room because she got up at four o'clock in the morning to commute to Bethesda Naval Hospital. And... But I had been kind of a

sickly child up until I was 10. I had a lot of pneumonia when I lived in town, and I missed a lot of school. As soon as we moved down here, all those illnesses were gone, just running, playing on the beach and, you know, being in boats and crabbing and just being outdoors and having a bunch of friends. And we just... Yeah, we had a great time. We'd play all these games on bikes and in the pool, and the other thing we did was we used to put on... When Joe Rose had the big fishing extravaganza, Saturday night, he'd let the Rose Haven kids put on a water show. We had water ballet. We'd choreograph it, and the boys would do a clown act off the high board. You know, it was funny stuff, and then we'd do the serious, you know, water ballet. And I did that for several years and then started choreographing it just because I knew the basic moves. But I probably did that for seven years or so. But the boys would always pretend like there was a big explosion in the pump room and come out and go, "Oh my God," and have ratty clothes on and, like, baby powder to look like they'd been blown up and then crawl up the high board, which is now gone. Steuart took it down for liability purposes, probably. And they'd jump off the high board, going, "Oh

my God," and we would pack people in all around that pool.
You've been to the pool, right?

SHEA: Mm-hmm.

CRONK: [00:41:00] So you know it's got a big deck all the way around. And it would just be jammed with people watching us, and [laughs] it was just local kids. But we put on a pretty good show, actually, so.

SHEA: What kind of boats were here then? Were they working boats, watermen? Or was it all pleasure boats?

CRONK: [00:41:19] It was pleasure boats and they were powerboats. There were very few sailboats, very few. I can't even remember more than a couple sailboats. There were some people who lived on their boats, and in the wintertime when the marina would freeze over, Mr. Samsbury and I would go walk on the ice and go knock on windows, you know, on these boats and say, "Time to get up," you know? "We want coffee." And he was like the grandfather I never had, you know. He really was and he knew everybody and everybody knew him. And he was just a dear. He really was. But if it hadn't been for him, I don't know how I would've learned to sail, you know, because he taught me how to work with the wind and watch the currents and, you know, when you could go out, when you had to come in, and

things like that. And again, I was, you know, this was coming from a farmer, so... Who had grown up sailing, but not... I mean, he wasn't, like, a racer or anything like that. He just... He did it for food, sailed for food to get the soft crabs. So they'd just go along and they'd just scoop them up out in their sailboat, so.

SHEA: So it makes me want to ask two very different questions.

CRONK: [00:42:52] Sure.

SHEA: The first is how has the bay changed? I mean, I... Since those days, I mean, this whole area has clearly grown up, but how has the bay changed, in terms of how you see it?

CRONK: [00:43:05] Erosion's been horrible. I think Steuart Chaney filled in the main beach in front of the inn, the motel. He has to have. He's put rock jetties out there. Joe Rose had... His jetty was a series of about four old barges that were latched together. That was his jetty. And so Steuart got rid of all that stuff. He actually found a submarine in the marina that Joe Rose had and sank it, I guess. I don't know. But Steuart put up rock jetties and some rock formations. But the bay, erosion has just taken over so much. We used to have a beach

between... At the motel and down at the end of Rose Haven where there's a little park. It's the Rose Haven Beach Park. We could walk all along the beach, and now there's no beach. It's just riprap for people who live on the front... Live on the water. They had to put in... You know, there's big boulders and a couple docks and stuff, but it used to be a beach we could run and play on. But the erosion's been bad. If you're familiar with Calvert Cliffs...

SHEA: Yep.

CRONK: [00:44:29] Erosion's really bad down there, really bad. In fact, the cliffs are covered in some kind of, you know, wire or something to keep it from falling... Keep them from falling down or chipping off or whatever. Same with North Beach. I mean, we used to have nice big beaches with white sand, and it's just eroding away, you know? That's why you see more and more riprap, those great big boulders out there. It's the only thing that's going to hold it back to some extent, at least for a while. So that's been the biggest change. But I also remember as a little girl, I could stand into water up to here and see my feet, and then thereafter it was so murky, you know, it was just... You know, people using the wrong detergent, and

then there was runoff from the farms, and it polluted the heck out of the bay. And there have been two, as far as I remember, 20-year plans to save the bay, to clean it up, and the military wasn't involved in the first cleanup, but was involved in the second cleanup, and that's finally... You can now stand in the bay up to your knees or maybe here and see your feet. You can see grass. So it's working, whatever they're doing. I think when Trump was president, he killed that plan, and I was like, "[laughs] Why? Why?" You know, and so he just left it up to Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia to continue a cleanup. Yeah, you probably know more about it than I do.

SHEA: It changes.

CRONK: [00:46:22] Yeah.

SHEA: Yep.

CRONK: [00:46:24] Yeah.

SHEA: So the other question, I keep thinking how wonderful it was for you to grow up here, and of course you had to become part of the water. I mean, it's just a wonderful organic story. So you're moving to Colorado. What do you think you're going to miss the most?

CRONK: [00:46:42] Oh, the water, no doubt. That's why I want to take this boat with me. I just don't know if I can

because of the trailer. It's just... It's built for, you know, around here, but not 1,600 miles of travel, probably. Unless I can find a way to strap it on my trailer, then I will. [Laughs] But, oh, I'll miss the water. I'll miss getting out. There are a couple of reservoirs in Denver that are dangerous, dangerous, dangerous because people get jet skis. They don't know what the hell they're doing, and they go out there, take a case of beer, get loaded, then somebody's skiing and there's a jet ski coming through. Someone gets decapitated by the line, and there are these big... I call them cocktail boats. They just sit at a dock. They don't go out because there's nowhere to go. They're just reservoirs from dams. There is one reservoir... Actually, there's more than one, but there's one in the Denver area called Aurora Reservoir where I... If I can't take my boat, I'll go rent one over there because I don't want to... The first time I was out there for 22 years, when I didn't sail, I lost a lot of my skills, so I'm still building... You know, it took a while to build those back up and get my nerve up to... I remember being really nervous when we bought the Catalina because it was the biggest boat that I'd ever been on. My ex-husband and I had a 22-foot O'Day, and I was comfortable

with that. But you know, the 30, I was like, "Oh boy."
Getting out of Annapolis, because that's where we bought
it, you know, there were just boats everywhere, everywhere.
We couldn't even get out of the slip. And we left early in
the morning to make sure that we got down here, and I knew
that I was going to be doing the majority of the sailing
because Scott didn't... You know, he's taken a course or
two, but it's been a lot of years, so he just had to...
It's like anything. Any sailboat, you've got to learn that
boat, you know, because they're all different, and they all
handle differently and all have... You know, the lines are
all different, and so I've even taken seasoned sailors out
on my MacGregor, and they're like, "Okay, I don't know this
boat, so why don't you sail it and I'll just sit back or
something?" So I don't know. But...

SHEA: So when you're in Colorado, what do you like to tell
people about sailing the Chesapeake?

CRONK: [00:49:30] Oh, there's nothing like it. It's
heavenly. It's just heavenly. It's just... Of course,
the wind can die in a second. It used to be at two
o'clock, you know, the wind would just stop and you'd be
stuck, and if you didn't have an engine... Like I said,
the *Trouble Again* name came from incidents like that. But,

I mean, you can go forever, and especially down this way in Herring Bay and the Chesapeake Bay. You can just go, go, go, go, go, and stay out of the shipping lanes or at least give them clearance, you know, and quickly, because they come up so fast, and then they're hovering over you. It looks like a little speck in the water, and all of the sudden here's this big ship. But I just... I don't know. I tell people, just, it's huge, expansive water that just is... It's just heavenly. It's just lovely, you know, and it's... I've never ocean sailed. I've never blue water sailed at all. I've always just done the bay and maybe a couple lakes and stuff like...stuff like that. But this is my... This is where I've been since... I don't know how many years that is, 68 minus 15. Fifty-three years, is that right?

SHEA: Mm-hmm.

CRONK: [00:51:00] I've sailed out of here. So...

SHEA: That's quite a legacy. That's great.

CRONK: [00:51:05] Yeah, yeah. Except for the time in Colorado, you know...

SHEA: Longing for the bay, right? [Laughs]

CRONK: [00:51:10] Longing for the bay, seeing...seeing things thinking it was the bay, and...

SHEA: I love that image. That is just wonderful to Terri.

CRONK: [00:51:19] It was really like a hallucination, and I think it was out of desire, you know, because I missed it so much, and even my daughter, you know, she was five and she'd...she'd say, "Why did we move out here anyway?" And I'm thinking, "She got that from me. She's picking it up from me, you know. So maybe I should cool it on what I say." But I did miss the water desperately. There's just... When I came home for a high school reunion, couldn't wait to go rent a boat on South River, you know, a little... We rented a Catamaran. I'd never been on one before, a little Hobie Cat, and it was so much fun. That was the highlight of the reunion was getting out on the water, and yeah, I don't know. I've always had...I've always had a sailboat like that one, and I still take that one out. But we try to spend as much time as possible on the Catalina, and it's... The thing that was so nice about having it here, I'd say, "Oh yeah, I've got, you know, a load of blankets I need to put on the boat. I'm just going to walk over and, you know, put them in there, and..." Or Scott would, "I need to work on the toilet, you know, or on the...you know I've got to dewinterize it," and just walk across the street. And it was... You know, it was just

right there, and I miss that already. We were on end dock, so we really had to access it from the other side. But... And we had a perfect slip. It was a straight shot into the channel. You didn't have to wind around docks or anything. So that was... I hated giving that up. That made me ill. In fact, the day we moved the boat, I took my camera and I took pictures of pulling away from the dock, you know, and things around the dock and just, you know, Scott at the helm, and I just snapped away. You know, the beach as we were pulling out, and Marcie's house up on the hill, my old friend, because we used to use his house as a landmark when we were out in the middle of the bay going, "Okay, GPS says so-and-so, but that's Rose Haven because that's Marcie's house up there." You know? But yeah, it was a sad day to move it, really was. It's still sad to me, but... And I don't get to use the pool because I'm not a member, and I grew up in that pool, you know, from that big. But I'm going to go as my neighbor's guest, I think, until I move, so.

SHEA: It's a good pool.

CRONK: [00:54:19] Yeah.

SHEA: So what would you like future female captains to know about you?

CRONK: [00:54:29] Oh, to know about me? Oh boy. You can do it. You can sail it, or you can powerboat it. If I can do it, anybody can do it. [Laughs] Starting out with no lessons except from a farmer, you know, and then gradually taking classes. If I can do it, anybody can do it. Any male or female can do it. It's... All you need is the desire and the draw. I can just walk down on the water and smell the salt, and it's like a tranquilizer to me, you know, or having a drink. I'm not a big drinker, but I just relax. I just... You know, going back to my childhood when we were, you know, all buddy buddy and running around here, there was this great big tree on the beach. Erosion was starting to uproot it. But I would sit under that tree as a teenager and work out all my problems. You know, I would just sit there all alone and think about, "Oh my God, I've got to pass this math test, or what about that new boyfriend? Is he really..." Or, you know, whatever. I had a fight with a girlfriend or something. I'd sit under that tree and I swear to God, I'd get up after whatever period of time, an hour or two, and I'd have a plan. You know, it was just that tree. And I have a watercolor of that tree that a local artist painted in, like, 1972, and it shows Joe Rose's old boatyard behind it. And I'll show

it to you. It's really... Yeah, I saw that and I was like, "Oh my God, I've got to have that." And it was in my friend's house, and he took it off his wall and gave it to me, because I told him. I said, "That was my tree where I used to sit there for hours and just..." You know, there were no safety issues. This was a very safe place to live as a child because everybody watched out for everybody else, and it was off the beaten path. A lot of people don't even know we're down here. They just take Route 2 and go around to Solomons or something. They don't come down this way. So a lot of people. This is still kind of a well-kept secret, Rose Haven is. When I first got my MacGregor, the one in the driveway, I thought, "I'd like to take it to Rose Haven, but I doubt that I can afford it." So my cousin said, "Well, we're going to put our boat down there. Why don't you move yours to Herrington Harbor?" And I was like, "I can call and see what the rates are." And the rates were commensurate with where I was going to put it in Edgewater, this little... That didn't have any amenities or anything. So I moved it down here in July of '17, and then... No, I moved it in March of '17 or April of '17. And I had it on I-dock and I was so proud of that boat. I just... I kept it scrubbed and, you know, it

was an older 1978 boat, but it was, like... It was... I don't know. It just represented a freedom to me to be able to get in it, and that's what sailing's all about. It's freedom. It's, "Okay, the wind's changing. We've got to alter things here a little bit and current is changing too, and we're starting to see some whitecaps, and better hunker down a little bit." And it's the challenge of it too that's really appealing to me, and...

SHEA: I love that line. Sailing's about freedom.

CRONK: [00:58:45] Yeah, it really is. I mean, you're totally at the whim of Mother Nature, and it's just... Yeah, you do whatever Mother Nature wants you to do in some terms... In some ways. But yeah, it's just... It is about freedom, and I think that's why I wanted to sail in the first place, because like I said, powerboats, they go from A to B, back to A or to C and back to A, and whatever. And I waterskied and all that stuff with my family and went out on their boats, and... But I just got the itch to sail, just out of the blue because I thought it would represent a freedom kind of way to express, you know, how I felt about the bay. And the bay's always been important to me. I've always felt it was my bay, you know, because I've been here since I was... I don't even know if I was born when my

parents... When my dad played across the street, and then they bought a lot and built a house, a summer house, the one that we would later move into. I always felt like this was my community. [Laughs] [01:00:00] And I still feel that way even though I'm not a member across the street anymore. I'm still going to use the beach. If I get caught, oh well, you know?

SHEA: So do you have any good sailing plans for... Before you go or for the future? Your next sailing adventure?

CRONK: [01:00:20] Yeah. We're going to go down, I think, later this week. We've got to go to Ocean Pines so he can cut the lawn or whatever, but we're going to stop at the boat, get lunch, and just sit on the boat and just enjoy sitting on it, eating lunch, you know, which is one of my favorite things to do. We'd get dinner from the deli across the street and go sit on the boat in the early days, when we first got her, and I just love doing that. I just... You know, I did it with my MacGregor. I'd just go get a pizza and just sit in the water and sit there and relax and eat something, and... Or we'd drop anchor and, you know, get out the iced tea or whatever because we don't drink alcohol anyway under sail or any kind of boating, kayaking or anything. It's just too dangerous because

there are too many lunatics. This bay-built boat almost killed us when we had the O'Day. He was coming straight, you know, to t-bone us, and he was drunk. I could see him, you know. His wife was holding this big bottle like, "Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum," and the guy was at the helm. It was the old bay-built boat, you know, with the big... Not cabin. What am I trying to say? I just said it. The passenger area where...

SHEA: Oh, the cockpit.

CRONK: [01:01:51] The cockpit. Thank you. Ever since I retired, I have trouble with remembering words. But they were coming...

SHEA: It comes with the age. [Laughs]

CRONK: [01:01:58] ...dead for... Yeah.

SHEA: I understand.

CRONK: [01:02:00] Dead for us, and the guy was standing up, trying to, you know, maneuver the boat, and he kept falling down and pulling himself back up and getting behind the wheel. And we were in the O'Day, and there was hardly any wind, and I might've been pregnant at the time too. And I looked at my ex and he looked at me and it was like, "We're going to die." Because they were coming right at our port side, and they got... It's like they didn't see us or

something, and maybe they didn't because they were so wasted. I don't know. But at the last minute, they got up alongside us and cut to the port side and went off and swamped the boat, practically. But at least they didn't hit us. But it was within a couple of feet. It was that close, and there was nothing we could do. You know, we could start the engine, but we weren't going very far very fast, and there... The wind had died, so we were sitting ducks, and that irritates me. If I could do something about that, I would work with the state of Maryland to get people, you know, educated about... Because people go, you know, "Oh yeah, let's go boating. I'll get a case of beer and a couple bottles of rum." And it... They go hand in hand and they shouldn't. My stepfather liked his... Whatever he drank. Bourbon. But he would never take a drink behind the helm of that boat ever, so I kind of adopted the same thing. I mean, I don't want to be out there under the influence of anything. You know, people hit buoys all the time and, you know, they're partying, and... But yeah, and I think licensing for people to operate a boat would be a good idea because any yahoo can get in a boat and take off and, you know, it's not true for driving a car. So I would like to see some kind of

licensing and some sort of...some sort of... You know, coastguard can't be everywhere, but the drinking on the water is just a really bad situation, so...

SHEA: I think they're trying to crack down on that
[Unclear].

CRONK: [01:04:31] Yeah.

SHEA: So is there anything you would like to add to your story that we haven't talked about? [Laughs] I'm just trying to think about...

CRONK: [01:04:40] That was my standard line when I interviewed. I'm not used to being interviewed. I'm doing...

SHEA: Because, I'll tell you, you've given me some lovely images. I sort of wish I could weave this all into [laughs] just a lovely sort of profile piece. But anyway, no, just, it's really lovely. You growing up here, you've made the beauty of it part of what you do. It's really nice.

CRONK: [01:05:05] I've been back and forth here, living in Rose Haven, four or five times over the years, you know?

SHEA: It calls you home, huh?

CRONK: [01:05:11] It's home. It's definitely home. It's my home. I consider Colorado home, but it's my second home.

This is my first. Yeah, I wish I could say more about women captains. I am impressed, I will say that, that Kristen has found so many women to photograph. I had no idea there were that many. I thought I was one of a few who knew how to sail as a woman. You know, I didn't have any idea, but she's brought people out of the woodwork, charter fish captains and, you know, other sailors and powerboaters and other commercial people. And I'm impressed. I think it was like, "Girl power, yes," [laughs] because, you know, who knew? Everybody assumes it's a guy that owns the boat, and it's not... That's... She's debunked that, so I just hope it keeps developing that way.

SHEA: Maybe this will inspire the next generation the way your [laughs] farmer inspired you.

CRONK: [01:06:27] Yeah, right, right, yeah.

SHEA: Yeah. So is there anything else we should know about you and your experiences? Anything more you want to add to your story? Anything you'd like to say to posterity.

CRONK: [01:06:44] When I decided to go to Colorado, it was for two reasons, because my grandkids are out there, because I have... It's an investment property, so to make it my primary property, I have to live there two out of

five years because of the IRS and I'll get killed in capital gains taxes. But I know as soon as I set foot on Colorado ground, I'm going to want to come back to the Bay. You know, leaving this bay, I can't even imagine what a wreck I'm going to be moving day. You know, going out and taking that last look at the bay where the flag is, you know, on the jetty, it's going to be rough. It's really going to be rough. And there's not a lot of sailing on those lakes in Colorado. There's some, but that's why I'd like to take my boat, if I can. I have a nephew out there who wants a little boat like mine or a Laser or something. He can't find anything out there. So he learned to sail because I taught his father how to sail on that boat, and then he must've learned well because he took his son on... They rented a Hobie Cat at South River and just took off, never been in a Hobie Cat before, and they did great, you know? They didn't have any problems. And he still says to me, "If you ever sell that boat, this one, I want to be... Have first right of refusal," because he learned on it. You know, it's funny. But I can't get rid of it. It would be like getting rid of Grandma. So 50 years is a long time for a boat, and she's still rock solid, so.

SHEA: That's great.

CRONK: [01:08:38] And I think eventually, Scott and I might wind up in Florida where we can sail year round once my kids are... My oldest is 16, my grandchild, and the youngest... I have one in LA. He's only three. But of the three in Colorado, they're 16, almost 12, and 10, so I could be out there a little while with them, because I feel horribly guilty being here while they're out there. But I had to come back for work because I lost my job at the newspaper when newspapers were failing in 2009, and I was unemployed for a year and a half, and there was no work for a journalist anywhere in Colorado, anyplace I wanted to go. And it was bad. It was... I'm sure you can remember how...

SHEA: I do.

CRONK: [01:09:31] Yeah. So on Facebook, I ran into somebody I used to supervise, and he worked at the Pentagon and said, "Yeah, we've got some writer jobs coming up." I'm like, "Really?" So when that month came around and it... The jobs were available, I applied for and got it. I only had to apply for one job. So... And I stayed there 12 years and learned a lot about national security and all that good stuff. But anytime there was an assignment to go out on the water, I was front and center. We had a big

conference on the USS *Elizabeth II* or whatever, the British ship, and it was out by the Bay Bridge, anchored, and we were sending people out for joint conferences, and I went along. I was like, "Yeah, I'll go." It was, like, one of those nice-to-have stories, but not an absolute story to have. But I arranged to get out of the Naval Academy and go out there and get on that ship and cover one of our people speaking, so everybody in the office knew, if it's water-related, give it to Terri, you know? [Laughs] So yeah.

SHEA: Great.

CRONK: [01:10:52] Yeah.

SHEA: Well, thank you.

CRONK: [01:10:55] Sure.

SHEA: Thank you.

CRONK: [01:10:56] Sure.

SHEA: This was a treat.

END OF AUDIO FILE