

OH 510 McClaskey

Q: This is Jennifer Shea. It's June 20th, 2023. And I'm in Annapolis with Lynn McClaskey. And we are talking about her role as the skipper captain of her boat *Cimarron* for the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum's "Her Helm" oral history project. Could we begin by having you introduce yourself?

A: [00:00:30] Sure. I'm Lynn McClaskey. My date of birth is 8/14/63. And I live in Annapolis, Maryland. And I have a little boat with big adventures named *Cimarron*.

Q: So, why *Cimarron*?

A: [00:00:53] *Cimarron* is a, the place where I grew up and the place where I learned to sail. It's the local name for part of the Arkansas River in Oklahoma, and it's also kind of used colloquially as a name for a person that kind of is headstrong and goes their own way. So, I thought that fit me pretty well.

Q: Wow. That's great. What kind of boat is she?

A: [00:01:20] She's a J/110. There were 16 of them build by J/Boats, some here and some in France. And mine is 36 feet long, a sprint boat.

Q: How long have you owned her?

A: [00:01:38] Nine years. So, this is my ninth season racing around the bay.

Q: So, how did you get into sailing?

A: [00:01:47] My family. We lived on Long Island in New York for a long time near the beach and right on Long Island Sound. And we always wanted a boat. But my dad was working way too hard. So, he said when we retired, we'd get a boat. And after a long road trip in a giant Buick, we landed in Oklahoma with no water. And my brother and I had all the brochures. I had the, you know, pontoon boat with a slide off the back and the floaties all around. He had the speedboat with the water skier. And my dad had the stupid sailboat. [laughter] So, we got a sailboat. And we all learned together on Lake Keystone, Oklahoma.

Q: So, what did you enjoy about sailing when you started?

A: [00:02:47] When I started, I didn't enjoy it at all. I was scared to death. [laughter] And most of the sailing was on the weekends, and that interrupted my Saturday morning cartoons. So, I did not enjoy it at all. I came to enjoy it once I was set free on my own little boat. My family bought my brother a Sunfish, which he raced in our junior program. And after he was done racing, if I was good, we could change places and he would go home on the big boat,

and I could take the Sunfish back to the dock. So, I enjoyed that sense of freedom having my own boat.

Q: What happened after that?

A: [00:03:36] After that, my brother and I were really, pretty competitive racing, for Oklahoma, and we did national regattas together in the 470 mostly. And we, we won some trophies. And then, he went to college and graduated and got married and kind of left the sailing life. But I continued, not so much in college, but when I got to Boston, my first job. I was sad. I was away from everybody I knew. But there was water.

Q: So, where did you -- What kind of boats did you start sailing in Boston?

A: [00:04:20] In Boston, there was a sailing club, Boston Harbor Sailing Club, that had just boats you could check out. So, the smallest member ship was Soling. And I figured if I could get the student discount, I could afford it on my meager salary. So, I got my work to pay for me to go back to school to get a master's degree, primarily so I could have a parking place and a student discount to join the sailing club. [laughter]

Q: So, sailing is clearly important in your life.

A: [00:04:59] Well, a master's degree didn't hurt my career any.

Q: Who taught you how to sail?

A: [00:05:09] I came up through the junior program at our sailing club, Windycrest Sailing Club, in Oklahoma. And so, it was a cast of characters.

Q: Does Oklahoma have a lot of sailing?

A: [00:05:23] Well, the water supply is all dammed for power and, and the wind comes sweeping down the plain, just like in the song. So, there's a lot of water recreation in Oklahoma. But it's small boats, not like Annapolis.

Q: So, when you moved east, did you continue to sail?

A: [00:05:48] I did. That was, you know, my comfort from being alone without family around or anything. And that was also my social activity that, if I was trying to make a friend, I could just invite them to go sailing with me. Yeah. So, that was a way of being home without being home.

Q: So, what kind of boats did you sail when you were here, when you first moved to the D.C. area?

A: [00:06:24] When I first moved to D.C., I made a connection through work. One of my, one of my mentors said, "You know, a friend of mine sails. So, maybe you should go out with him." And I wound up crewing for him for, I don't know, about five years on the West River. And then, I just started making friends and eventually started sailing here in Annapolis too.

Q: What kinds of boats?

A: [00:06:51] He had a Tartan 34, which is kind of a plastic classic fantastic. We had a lot of fun with it. And then, up here, I connected through a local magazine. At the time, it was called *Rags* and now, it's kind of evolved into *SpinSheet* magazine. I just put my name of the crew finder board, and I met all kinds of people and all kinds of boats. But I wound up, pretty much, in the J/30 fleet. And I still sail in the J/30 fleet.

Q: With your boat?

A: [00:07:30] No, I sail on *Insatiable*.

Q: So, when did you become a captain? How did, how did that evolve?

A: [00:07:38] Well, officially, with the Coast Guard just in March. I just became a captain. I got my master's license. And that was a bucket list item. I don't know what I'm going to do with it. But we'll see. It opens up some new doors for me. And then, just sailing my own boat -- I bought one. I had a near-death experience. And when I became well, I said, "I'm not going to wait any longer to buy a boat. I'm going to get my own boat." So, that was when I was 30. And then, we kind of outgrew that boat pretty quickly.

Q: What kind of boat was that?

A: [00:08:20] A C&C 27 Mark V. So, it's a little more sea racer, a midget, midget ocean racer. And we had it for 20 years. My kids grew up on it. Then when, when they grew up a little bit more, we outgrew the boat. So, we bought a bigger one.

Q: What was that?

A: [00:08:47] The J/110, *Cimarron*.

Q: Why did you name her *Cimarron* again?

A: [00:08:57] Because that's where I grew up. That's that junior program and Windycrest Sailing Club in Oklahoma.

Q: So, what's she like to sail?

A: [00:09:07] She's pretty nice. I haven't heard anybody say anything wrong about her. But I bought it in Maine, kind of sight unseen. And when I got to Maine, I had a friend with me, and we worked on it for about a week. And I had plans for, you know, things breaking down and bad weather. And I had planned for the passage from Maine down here to take about three weeks. I was pretty sure we were going to have to stop and fix things and I was going to be afraid. And when we set off, we made one stop, just to pick up another crewmember, and it was like the most perfect passage. One thing broke down, and we were able to fix it underway and flew the spinnaker and caught all the correct tides and everything. It was like a dream passage.

Q: Did you go in or out?

A: [00:10:08] Out.

Q: Out. Wow.

A: [00:10:11] So, that was my first offshore as a skipper.

Q: And what did that feel like?

A: [00:10:18] It was amazing. It really, it really was a big step up in responsibility. But the crew that I picked, they could have all done that on their own, and they have on other boats. And when somebody would ask a question, they all knew the answer. They were waiting for me to answer. [laughter] And hats off to them for getting me up on the step.

Q: That's wonderful. How did you find such a great crew?

A: [00:10:53] Well, from crewing around here. I've just built a huge network of people.

Q: That's wonderful because that's sometimes one of the biggest challenges.

A: [00:11:06] Yes, yeah. But I've been at it a while and, like you said, a lot of people are passionate about this thing. And I am too. So, that's an easy connection to make.

Q: So, why are you so passionate about sailing and racing?

A: [00:11:23] I don't really know. That's a great question because it's a lot of work to get, you know, a diver to

clean the bottom, the sails right, the crew, the crew lunch, the registration, the handicap thing sent in and -- It's hard. But then, when the gun goes off and you start racing and you see a lot of boats being sailed really well --

Q: So, you just came back from the Annapolis to -- No, it was Annapolis Newport.

A: [00:12:06] Newport. Yeah.

Q: Tell me about that. What was that like? [laughter]

A: [00:12:12] That didn't turn out quite the way I wanted it to. We had a good crew and the boat was in pretty good shape, I thought. And the weather forecast looked really challenging. But it wasn't something that we hadn't done before. It was forecasted to be about 30 knots upwind all the way to Newport once we left the bay. And we had done that in 2019. That's what the race was like in 2019. And we didn't do well on that one, but we finished. And then, the last Bermuda race I did was very similar. So, 1,500 miles of really similar upwind in heavy weather work in this boat. And I thought we had the crew and the boat to prevail. I thought we were going to do really well. And we were doing well going down the bay. And we were getting set up to go out in the ocean, changing down our sails and making all those last checks before you get out in the open

water. And our sail ripped. So -- And it was the main sail, which you usually don't carry a spare. So, that was kind of the end of our race there. And once everybody saw the damage to the sail it was a no decision to not continue. The only decision was do we tack or to we jibe to start our journey home. And we tacked and headed home. But I wanted to be a good sport. So, we loaded up the wagon and we drove to Newport to congratulate the people that did make it because it was not an easy race this time.

Q: I've heard that from many people.

A: [00:14:14] Yeah.

Q: Yeah. Some of our crew were on it, and we've heard that. And then, there was no air.

A: [00:14:23] Right. It was a test of will because it was, there were patches of no air going down the bay as well. And then, out in the ocean, there were a couple of weather changes. So, you had to be a pretty good sailor to go through that whole range of conditions.

Q: So, that's an interesting comment you just made. It was a question of will.

A: [00:14:45] Yeah.

Q: Do you think that's part of sailing or racing?

A: [00:14:54] I think -- I don't know. I think a little bit. We're always out there trying to interact with the

environment, and the environment isn't always what you want it to be. So, can you get along to, get along with the environment? And it's pretty easy to say, you know, like, "No, I don't want to adjust my behavior to get along with the environment." So, you have to have a strong, strong sense of self to be able to adjust your behavior to not conquer the environment but to coalesce with the environment to make this boat go where you want it to.

Q: So, is there a race you've done where things conspired in a different way for you that you particularly enjoy?

A: [00:15:54] Where things were great?

Q: Yeah. Or, or went positive for you then.

A: [00:16:01] Yeah. The Annapolis Newport race last time was beautiful. [laughter] We had a great race down the bay, and then, we set the spinnaker coming out of the bay. And then, we had 15 knots on the beam reach with the spinnaker up all the way to Newport. And that was also a special race for me because my daughter came along. That was her first offshore race.

Q: What did she think?

A: [00:16:34] She thought it was great. And people told her to quit while she was ahead because it was never going to be that great again. But then, she signed up to do the Bermuda race with me, and that was kind of the bookend of,

you know -- That one was great, and this one was pretty tough. And you did it. And so, she's been through it all with me.

Q: Did she go on that last race with you?

A: [00:17:02] Yes.

Q: What did she think?

A: [00:17:04] She thought it was maybe a blessing in disguise that our sail ripped, and we didn't go out there. So -- But she was ready to do whatever was asked of her. She's definitely a full up crew member.

Q: What does she do?

A: [00:17:23] She's a rockstar driver. But she can do it all.

Q: Does she want to become a skipper captain like you?

A: [00:17:37] This last weekend was our club's women's regatta. And the theory for the women's regatta is to step into a role you haven't done before. So, I stepped into a new role as a coach. And I let her skipper the boat.

[crying]

Q: That's pretty spectacular, Lynn.

A: [00:18:06] So, it was a new role for her. She stepped right up. We had a person who hadn't flown the spinnaker before. We had a person who hadn't raced before. And we had a person who hadn't sailed before. And on Tuesday, the, of the week of the regatta, our main was still broken,

we didn't have crew, and we didn't have a place to put the boat. But it all just kind of came together. And so, we hadn't all sailed together before and came the day of the regatta and we just -- It came together. And we won.

Q: That's fantastic. [laughter] How did your daughter feel?

A: [00:18:53] She was on a big high. She really felt good.

Q: That's terrific. That's wonderful.

A: [00:19:04] I was really proud of her.

Q: Well, you're a great role model. So, that's actually one of the questions I wanted to ask later. But what advice do you have for young women who are getting into racing and would like to become the skipper? What would, what would you tell them?

A: [00:19:27] Don't say no. Just get out there and try all kinds of different boats, all kinds of different people, cruising, racing, big boats, little boats. If, you know, you're not confident trying a skill, don't say no. Jump in and ask people to coach you. And you can learn. Don't say no.

Q: I love it. So, being a female captain -- Has that ever caused challenges for you?

A: [00:20:15] I've seen it be challenging for other women. For me, I don't think it has. I always tend to set ground rules really early. And I kind of credit that to, you

know, being in a military environment for a long time and learning lessons of leadership from the military. It's just be ready to lead and the rest will come. So, I don't -- I haven't had very many. I've had a few, but not any major kind setbacks that I've seen some other people have.

Q: Are there many female skippers?

A: [00:21:06] We tend to all know each other by name. So, no.

Q: Do you see more coming up through the ranks?

A: [00:21:16] I see a few in the, in the small boat arena.

But it takes a lot of resources to purchase an outfit and run a boat season after season. And so, not only you have to be committed but whoever is sharing in your finances has to be committed to your vision. And that doesn't happen as, quite as easily for the women as it does for the men, I think.

Q: That's a good point. So, why did you choose your boat, the J?

A: [00:21:53] The J/110. I had, I had problems picking out a boat. I thought I wanted something smaller. But kind of the logistics handling a trailer or an outboard coming on and off the transom I didn't think was right for me. And the J/30 is a wonderful boat. But it has a heavy helm. It's hard to steer in heavy air. And I didn't think I was up to that task. And I kind of had visions of maybe

summering on Martha's Vineyard with my boat and, as a retirement thing. So, that's what I told the broker when I was looking for boats is that I wanted to summer on the vineyard. And I probably was going to be single handing. And can you find me a boat? And so, we looked, and we saw one that was out of my price range that seemed to fit. And so, he said, "You never know unless you ask." So, I put out an offer and, after some negotiation, it was accepted. So, I started sailing the boat, and I jumped right into racing here on the bay. But I thought, you know, if I want to be able to take this thing to Martha's Vineyard, I have to know every inch of the boat. I have to be able to fix things and at least tell people what's wrong in a technical way... to be successful and have some fun doing it. So, I thought, well, if I can get to Bermuda and back, that'll meet my goal. I think I'll be safe to go to Martha's Vineyard. So, I got a crew, and we put it together. And we made it to Bermuda in 2016. We did the Bermuda race. And I thought, "Well, you know, I'm done with that. I met my goal. Now, I can go to Martha's Vineyard." But ironically, I've not been to Martha's Vineyard with the boat because [laughter] I've got, kind of gotten stuck on ocean racing going to Newport and going to Bermuda.

Q: Why? What, what's capturing your, your passion, your imagination?

A: [00:24:26] Well, it's a big, it's a big passage for me, and this boat is kind of small to do it in. So, it's a challenge and it's different every time. And I like that kind of challenge.

Q: So, what are some of the challenges?

A: [00:24:43] Getting your crew together, getting the boat ready. There's always a list. And the, the first year that I put together for the Bermuda race, there was a lot of really big rocks. We had to replace some of the rigging and buy new sails. And I borrowed a lot of safety equipment that I needed. But, over time, the rocks have gotten smaller. And so, it makes it a little easier to take on a challenge. And then, it becomes more the chess game of looking at the weather and which way is the best way to go and how to make the boat perform and not, if you'll make it, but when you'll make it to Bermuda or Newport or -- There's a lot of places on my list still left to go.

Q: So, what are they? What are some of your dreams for the next adventures?

A: [00:25:43] I'd like to go to Maine. I'd like to go maybe down to the Bahamas, and, of course, Martha's Vineyard is still on the list. [laughter]

Q: That's wonderful. So, how about this summer? What do you have in mind for your racing schedule or cruising schedule for the summer?

A: [00:26:03] Well, the Newport race was going to be the kickoff. We did the Oxford race, and we did St. Michael's as a lead up to that, training events for the Newport race. And so, then, I'll do some of the charity regattas here on the bay. I like the CRAB [Chesapeake Regional Accessible Boating] regatta for accessible boating.

Q: What -- Could you tell me a little bit about that? I've never heard of that one.

A: [00:26:30] Oh, it's to benefit CRAB, which is Chesapeake Regional Accessible Boating. And they have a fleet of little sailboats that are specially outfitted to allow people with mobility or even mental differences to be able to go out and sail. So, they run a fundraising regatta in the summer just to raise funds to keep their program going. So, I always participate in that and, you know, maybe a little small donation in there as well. So, I like that. And I also do the Hospice Cup in the fall.

Q: What's that?

A: [00:27:15] It's the same kind of fundraising regatta. But this one goes for the hospice organization that provides care for people at end of life.

Q: And what's the regatta?

A: [00:27:31] It's a similar race, just a short one now. It tries to get new people out racing, and it's one where you start according to what kind of boat you're in. So, the start is manageable for new racers. And then, if everybody does great, we all finish at the same time. But, so, they're fun and different from the way, the races that we usually do. And I also like the long ones. So, we'll probably go to Solomon's in the fall, Solomon's race and Oxford again in the fall.

Q: Great. Sounds like a full -- Will you have the same crew for each race or --

A: [00:28:11] We have a few characters that return time after time. [laughter] But we're always looking for great people to come sailing.

Q: That sounds like fun. So, is there a boat that you'd like to sail if you had an opportunity, a dream boat?

A: [00:28:30] So many.

Q: I know. Well, tell me some.

A: [00:28:32] I want to sail all of them. [laughter] I'd like to get back into a small boat at some point. So, two that

are on my list is the 2.4 meter, which is like a scaled down single person version of a 12-meter boat.

Q: [Unintelligible]

A: [00:28:53] And also -- So, that's kind of a modern looking sloop type boat. And then, the Herreshoff 12 and a half, which is a really traditional looking, sweet little boat that you could single hand, a full keel and a gaff rig. And I'd like to try that one. I think that's my old age boat. I could see, you know, somebody pushing me off with a sandwich and a cooler, you know, and me coming back at the end of the day. I'd like to do that rather than a nursing home situation.

Q: Sounds like Arthurian legend. [laughter]

A: [00:29:38] Yeah.

Q: So, sailing on the Chesapeake -- How is that different from sailing in Oklahoma?

A: [00:29:50] Well, Oklahoma -- It's a small, it's a river. Lake Keystone is a river that's got a dam on it to make the lake. So, it's pretty small, relatively small. And one of the challenges from our club was that there, when the lake was made, they didn't like clear the land. So, there was a stand of trees. And now, of course, they're dead trees, and now, they're gone. But when I grew up, there was a bunch of dead trees between you and the club. So, the test

was, of your sailing ability is could you get out through the trees and out into the open water. So, over the years we rescued a lot of people from the trees. [laughter] And it took me a while to learn how to be able to do that. But I finally got it.

Q: What's the secret?

A: [00:30:56] Just pay attention to your, to the wind. Be patient.

Q: So, the Chesapeake -- Or I guess you sailed in Boston first?

A: [00:31:10] Yeah, I sailed in Boston Harbor. That was really my first big boat kind of thing. And it was great because there's a lot of commercial traffic and sailing along the waterfront there with all the history and the out...out islands and weaving in between the islands and everything. I enjoyed that.

Q: And how about the Chesapeake?

A: [00:31:40] The Chesapeake is great. It has wind. It doesn't have wind. And it has, you can go to, you know, like a big city. You can go to a little tourist town. And you can still have a quiet anchorage. And every kind of condition is here. But you can get pretty much anything you want here.

Q: There's so many different places to explore, a lot of --

A: [00:32:14] Yeah. Lots of options.

Q: Do you find it challenging at all to sail here compared to some of the other spots?

A: [00:32:22] Yes because there's not always a lot of wind. We sometimes have a lot of current depending on, you know, our rainfall situation. And that's always challenging. But the waves here, when the wind comes against the, the current, can be short and choppy and hard to make the boat keep going through those waves. And a lot of people don't know how to do that. But there's a couple people that are really good at it, and I strive to learn from them. I'm going to get it. It's one of my goals. [laughter]

Q: I, I, I hear many people say.

A: [00:33:07] Yeah.

Q: Raced here all their lives. How does spending time on the water racing fit into your overall life?

A: [00:33:21] I spend a lot of time on the water, more now that I'm retired. But, for me, it's a mental health thing that I have to spend time on the water. That's from stressful work life. To get out here and kind of get in the flow of just watching your telltales and feeling the water go through the boat -- It's calming. So, there, there have been times where my family has said, "Please, go to the -- We'll do soccer practice. You go sailing."

[laughter] So, it's a great release and it's -- You're outside. You're moving, moving around, active. And it's - - You're active in your mind as well. So, great combo.

Q: Yeah. I agree completely. So, tell me about your work life. What did you do when you were working that this was the alternative to?

A: [00:34:29] Yeah. I was a mathematician for the Air Force for most of my career. And so, you are trying to advise senior leaders on, on decisions that, you know, was the defense of the country but it also could alter people's lives. So, you want to make sure to get the answer right and have it be a timely answer. And so, some days there's a lot of pressure in that.

Q: Some days. [laughter].

A: [00:34:57] Yeah.

Q: I can imagine a lot.

A: [00:35:01] And living around here and in Arundel County and commuting into the Pentagon on a daily basis is also stressful.

Q: So, what are some of your other passions, in addition to sailing?

A: [00:35:17] I've always liked music. I went through my public school's music program from fourth grade all the way. And I was even a college musician in marching band.

And so, after kids, that kind of dropped off a little bit. But I've rediscovered it now with ukelele, which is, you know, something you can take on a boat. It's very portable. And it's kind of coming up in the world as far as a lot of people are trying it out and enjoying it. It's easy to learn, social. And I, I've really enjoyed it.

Q: That's great. I'm sure the way you've learned about racing you've done with ukelele playing.

A: [00:36:06] Yeah. [laughter]

Q: That's great. So, just thinking about what you might want future female captains who might be listening to this recording know about you. What's important about you for them to know or what would you like them to know about you?

A: [00:36:43] I would like them to know that I don't think gender makes a huge difference in the way that you're interacting with the environment as you're out there. The storms are going to come. They don't care if you're a girl or a boy or something in between or however you identify. The storm is coming, and the way you interact with that storm that's going to make a big difference. So, don't let gender hold you back. Just get out there and do it. So, men and women are going to approach things differently, I think. And that's why I always like to sail with a mixed

crew. I try to get 50/50 for my crews because everybody brings something to the table.

Q: Could you tell me more about that? What do, why do you think men and women react differently in a situation on a boat?

A: [00:37:53] I think men -- I hate painting with broad brushstrokes. But, in general, I've seen men try to power through something, you know, like brute strength just grinding the sail or manhandle the wheel where a woman is going to maybe try to coalesce the situation a little bit more, like balance things out, have the sail and the rudder be balanced so the boat goes through the water easier. And I, I think we notice that more as women and try to bring balance to the situation where men can bring strength. And I think you need both.

Q: That's a wonderful point there. What else would you, or what do you think people, female captains, other captains, male captains who might be listening to this, what should they know about sailing and racing on the Chesapeake?

A: [00:39:16] They should try it. [laughter] I think people should try it. Racing is a great way to get to know your boat and to kind of push your envelope into conditions where maybe you would have stayed at the dock. The racers are out there giving it ago. So, I think even if your

ambition is to cruise to Tahiti or summer in Martha's Vineyard, racing is a great way to get your skills up. And there's a community of people that will help you. A lot of people helped me get up on the step when I bought the J/110. And everything from technical advice, you know, like, "This is why your engine doesn't run," or, you know, "We'll tow you in after you finish," to, you know, like, "Have you tried doing this with your main sail? Have you tried -- You know, maybe you should have gone this way because of the way the current was running." People will always help you. We have great sailors here.

Q: Are there any particular mentors that have been inspiring?

A: [00:40:32] Since I bought my boat *Sight Unseen*, there was another one here on the bay that, I did go look at it, owned by Joe Loran. And he has always helped me, even though he hasn't owned that boat in a couple of years now. He still continues to help me refine my skills. And his support has been invaluable. Really, he's always just been a true mentor for me, getting, getting going. And he was my main competition when he had the same boat. And we got to the point where we were trading winds back and forth. And that makes it more fun for everybody.

Q: That's great. So, a little bit ago you talked about the frightening moments with your sailing. Could you recall,

you know, what some of your most frightening moments, a race, a moment sailing?

A: [00:41:40] Well, there was -- My brother and I were in a pretty big accident. And we were sailing in a race in Oklahoma on our 470. And the wind was blowing, and we were in the lead of this race. And we had the spinnaker up. And that particular boat has a trapeze. So, you're wearing this big diaper kind of harness thing and you're clipped in where you're, the crew has only their feet on the edge of the boat and your body is laid out over the water. So, we have the spinnaker up, and the jib is up, and the main is up. And water is flying everywhere and I'm out on the trapeze trimming the spinnaker. And a very large gust of wind came and flipped us over. Well, you know, we were kind of expecting that at some point. We knew how to get the boat back up. And so, we got the boat back up and everything is okay. We've just got some cleaning up to do. And meanwhile, other boats are catching up to us in the race. And my brother decided that I wasn't going fast enough with the cleanup. So, okay, well, we'll swap places. So, I started helming the boat, and he was doing all the cleanup of the spinnaker lines and everything was a giant knot. And I accidentally jibed the boat. And I wasn't used to being in the helm position, and the boom hit

my head. So, large gushing amounts of blood were added to the knot of mess in the front of the boat. [laughter] And I was just kind of -- I didn't even see stars or anything. But when my brother turned around and looked at me, I saw all the blood drain from his face. And then, I became frightened. But it turned out okay. A couple of stitches and a night in the hospital, good as new.

Q: You're amazing, Lynn. [laughter]. So, the, so, are there particularly wonderful moments, memories of being on the boat?

A: [00:44:05] Sure, a lot, probably too many to talk about here. But one of the things when we were coming back from Maine, that first passage that I made -- We were approaching landfall at Cape May, and it was at night. So, we had kind of slowed the boat down. "Let's eat some dinner. Sleep a little bit extra before we come into Cape May because there's rocks on both sides there." So, I was on the helm. Everybody was down below getting the dinner ready and taking a shower, just getting ready to make landfall. And a giant pod of dolphins came. And at night, you can hear them usually, but you may not see them. But this particular area is where they feed. There's a lot of plankton. And when they hit the plankton, the plankton kind of ignite. So, it's like sparkles in the water. But

when they zoom underneath your keel and jump and everything, it's like the water just lights up. It's amazing.

Q: Yeah.

A: [00:45:25] So, that's one of my great memories of just getting the boat.

Q: That's terrific. This is a general one. But what should we know about you in your experience racing, sailing, owning a boat, that we haven't talked about, we haven't discussed yet?

A: [00:45:51] Maintenance.

Q: Tell me about maintenance. [laughter]

A: [00:45:55] Maintenance and docking. I think those are the two big drawbacks of women owning a boat is that they have some anxiety about docking and they have some anxiety about maintenance because they're women, which totally doesn't make sense to me because when you drive a car and you dock the car in the parking spot, you know, you know how to do it. You don't know how to maintain a car. But you know to change the oil, to put gas in. You learn. And as your car breaks down, you know, you take it to the mechanic, and you learn more. So, it's the same with a boat. You might bump a dock in docking. But you learn. And so, don't let that hold you back. And then, my personal hangup was

maintenance. And when I bought the boat, it was like, "Okay, tell me who to make the check out to." And then, things would come back sometimes great, but sometimes not so great. And over time, I've learned to like try to, try myself before just writing a check. So, rather than, "Who do I make the check out to," it's become, "Hand me that screwdriver and let's open this thing up." So, I've learned a lot about diesel engines. I've learned a lot about, you know, how to repair a sail. I've even taken my propane stove apart and put it back together again. If you're hungry enough, you'll learn. [laughter] So, so, it's just a matter of getting in there, getting your hands dirty, asking a lot of questions. YouTube, everything's on YouTube. So, give it a try. And then, if it doesn't work, ask for backup.

Q: That's great. So, what are you trying to work on right now in terms of your sailing goals?

A: [00:48:11] Sailing goals, I think, is to just enjoy it a little more. And as I age out of being, you know, like a winch grinder on a competitive boat, is to try to reach out and maybe bring other people into the sport. So, I'm volunteering with a bunch of different organizations. I'm volunteering with the Naval Academy. And they have the command and leadership training program where you take kids

from the academy who haven't been sailing before and you have a week, week and a half to teach them how to sail. And then, you take them offshore on a cruise. So, last year, I did that program. And there's a lot of training before they trust you to do that. But I went through the training. It took me about a year to get through the training. And then, I did the cruise with the midshipmen last year to Mystic, Connecticut. So, that was great. Really enjoyed working with the, the midshipmen. I'm also volunteering with Sail Beyond Cancer, where you take somebody out of the medical environment just to enjoy for a day. And they can bring their family, friends, whoever they want, just on a three-hour sail, just to give them a break.

Q: What boats do you go on?

A: [00:49:41] Sail Beyond Cancer has one of their own boats. But typically, the captains provide their own boats. So, they'll be welcomed on *Cimarron*.

Q: That's nice. And with the midshipmen, what boats do they sail?

A: [00:49:54] They sail primary the Navy 44. But I'm also coaching with the offshore team that has the high-performance boats that go to Bermuda and so on.

Q: What's that like?

A: [00:50:09] It's fun. It's, it's pretty fun to see a lot of kids -- They're whip smart and very motivated, and they learn so quickly. They're, they're very good. [laughter] And sometimes they push you to be even better. And it goes both ways. I get a lot out of doing it, and I hope I'm bringing value to them. And I also volunteer with an organization called the Path Project, which brings immigrant teens to a variety of outdoor leadership opportunities. So, they've done cross fit. I helped them learn swimming in the pool. And then, we've been out sailing in partnership with the Valhalla Project.

Q: What's the Valhalla Project?

A: [00:51:07] That one's for veterans. So, they've provided some boats and some instruction for us. And we had eight teens that we were able to give access to the water. So, one teen is going to try out for her high school sailing team.

Q: That's great.

A: [00:51:30] And they'll go on and they'll learn water, rowing later in the summer. So, just giving them access to all this stuff that's at their doorstep that they typically won't have access to. So, as I, yeah, age out of this sport, I want to give back and open it up for other people to enjoy.

Q: That's a wonderful, wonderful thing. What have you gotten from the sport?

A: [00:52:02] So much. It started out as a way to build my social network in the days before Facebook. But it's kept me active over a lifetime. It's kept me learning new things, which I think is the key to successful aging. I'm not that old. But I'm getting -- I can see it from here. [laughter] So, I want to be able to have, you know, enjoy my retirement. So -- And that -- I had a health crisis. Sailing helped me come back from the health crisis just because I had that community of people to back me up. So, it's given me a lot.

Q: So, I, I just have one final question, which is -- And I'm thinking about your daughter now because she's clearly following, following your footsteps. What would you like her to know about your whole career on the boat? What, the legacy. What do you want to pass along to her?

A: [00:53:20] I might need a minute.

Q: Oh, there's -- Take all the time you want. I don't want to put you on the spot. It's just -- I love your insights. [laughter].

A: [00:53:30] Well, she didn't come to sailing until later. I kind of put her in a junior program, summer camp thing. And she did not care for it. And I said, "Well, this is

kind of how I spend my summers. So, you need to know enough to be safe if you come out with me." So, she did that, grudgingly. And then, there was a big gap until she went to college. And her college roommates were like, "Your family owns a boat? Can we go? Can we go? Can we go?" And so, we took them out. And she said, "Okay, I'll go with you, my stupid roommates." So, it was a day when it was blowing about 30 knots, and we just went out of our creek and did the Ego Alley and come back into our creek. And they were so excited. The roommates were so excited. It was just so great. And I was like, "What an awful trip. I hope I didn't sour them on sailing." But it turns out I didn't sail -- They thought it was wonderful, and they convinced her that it was wonderful. So, she has only been a sailor for about three or four years. And she kind of jumped into with both feet. She was helping me one summer prepare for one of these big races and they said -- Everybody we talked to was like, "Ooh, are you going?" And she said no. And then, one day, she said, "Mom, I want to do it. I want to go to Bermuda." And I was like, "No, no. You're not going to Bermuda. You have to have skills to go to Bermuda." And she said, "Well, what are the skills? Write me a list. I'll do it." So, we wrote a list, and it was a -- I made it purposely a long and very hard list

because she's never going to finish it. She finished the list. So then, when we went to Bermuda, I couldn't say no. And she went. She did excellent. She was our rockstar helmsman. So, I guess what I'd like to leave her with is, you know, take on life with that mentality. Write me a list. I'll do it. [crying] Any kind of thing in life that happens to you take on with that mentality. I think she'll be very successful.

Q: And follow in your footsteps. So, anything else you want to say in this lovely, lovely, lovely chat? I've had -- [laughter] I've enjoyed it so much.

A: [00:56:31] Well, we've been through a variety of stuff. I really can't give you much more to say.

Q: I think you would be wonderful to sail with, really. Thank you so much for doing this. This has been just --

A: [00:56:42] You're welcome.

Q: Just great. A real treat for me, I have to say. Let me just turn this --

END OF AUDIO FILE